

Visitors queue outside the July Mass Uprising Memorial Museum yesterday morning.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

A walk thru the memories of July

July Mass Uprising Memorial Museum opens to the public

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Hundreds of people gathered outside the July Mass Uprising Memorial Museum from morning as the former Gono Bhaban opened to the public for the first time yesterday.

Some had travelled from distant districts to enter the building that once served as the prime minister's official residence and now preserves memories of the July uprising.

Many visitors arrived as early as 9:00am. After the gates opened at 11:00am, they entered in batches following long waits in queues.

The museum was inaugurated on Wednesday, marking the second anniversary of the uprising.

Tickets cost Tk 50 for visitors above 12 years and Tk 20 for children aged between three and 12 years. Children below three years were allowed free entry. Tickets can also be purchased online through july36.gov.bd.

During a visit from noon to 5:00pm, this correspondent found madrasa and university students, professionals and families among the visitors.

They said the photographs, videos, personal belongings and other artefacts on display would help future generations understand the events of 2024.

Rafiqul Islam, 33, a pharmaceutical company employee from Moghbazar's Madhubagh, spent about four hours inside with his family.

He said footage showing protesters being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, grieving families and injured demonstrators was painful to watch.

"After so much sacrifice, preserving these memories was necessary," he said.

Nazmul Islam, 32, who works at a madrasa, travelled from Roumari in Kurigram with his younger brother, a second-year Bangla student at Dhaka University.

He said exhibits featuring clothes, personal belongings, photographs and video footage of July protesters left a deep impression on him.

The museum also features exhibits on the Shapla Chattar incident involving Hefazat-e-Islam, the BDR mutiny, the "Aynaghar" detention facility and repression during the Awami League government.

Abdul Gaffar and Abdur Rahim, madrasa students from Cumilla's Barura, came with three others. They said they had wanted to visit the former Gono Bhaban after August 5, 2024, but could not as it was not open to the public.

They praised the displays but said more photographs and video footage of the movement's leaders could have been added.

Mohammad Selim, 35, from Chittagong Road in Narayanganj, said the museum would prevent memories of the uprising from fading.

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Visitors explore exhibits inside the museum.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



PHOTO: STAR

Speakers at a roundtable on "Meaningful Participation and Political Leadership of Plainland Indigenous Women in Local Governance" at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The event was jointly organised by IFES Bangladesh and PUMDO with support from the Embassy of Sweden.

PLAINLAND INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Still denied meaningful role in local governance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite growing participation of plainland indigenous women in Bangladesh's local governance -- particularly union parishads -- structural budgetary discrimination, political marginalisation and deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes continue to prevent them from exercising meaningful leadership, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

They urged the government to ensure women elected to reserved seats receive equitable funds and allowances for the three wards they represent, guarantee their meaningful inclusion in standing committees and Gram Adalats, and strengthen protection of their land rights.

The speakers also called for structured administrative capacity-building for grassroots women leaders and urged indigenous communities to address internal divisions, social stigma and substance abuse while holding the authorities accountable.

The roundtable, titled "Meaningful Participation and Political Leadership of Plainland Indigenous Women in Local Governance", was jointly organised by IFES Bangladesh and PUMDO with support from the Embassy of Sweden at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

In her welcome address, Rumana Amin Archi, deputy country director of IFES Bangladesh, said inclusive democracy requires addressing the distinct socio-political and structural barriers faced by marginalised communities.

She stressed the need to bring the struggles and leadership potential of plainland indigenous women into mainstream governance discussions.

Presenting the keynote, researcher and activist Pavel Partha highlighted the lack of disaggregated data on plainland indigenous communities in national statistics.

He said the national voter registration form contains no field identifying ethnic identity, leaving the exact number of indigenous voters and elected women representatives unknown.

He also noted that research on plainland indigenous women remains far more limited than that on women in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Although Gram Adalats handle land disputes, domestic conflicts and violence against women at the UP level, indigenous women's participation in village courts and the 13 standing committees remains largely symbolic, excluding them from key decision-making, he said.

KEY ISSUES

- Representation rising, but decision-making power remains limited
- Reserved-seat members receive smaller budget allocations
- Role in standing committees and Gram Adalats largely symbolic
- Patriarchy and land insecurity hinder women's leadership

Partha urged policymakers to use existing frameworks, including the National Cultural Policy 2006 and the National Women Development Policy, to strengthen indigenous women's participation in local governance, political parties and the media.

Haimanti Sarkar, chief executive officer of PUMDO, said indigenous women who seek economic independence, enter politics or take on leadership roles routinely face patriarchal resistance, with character assassination often used to silence them.

She said women leaders face social stigma, defamation, baseless allegations and hostility simply for exercising their rights and serving their communities.

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416 killed in road crashes in July

Says Road Safety Foundation report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 416 people were killed and 629 others injured in 458 road accidents across Bangladesh in July, according to a report released yesterday by the Road Safety Foundation (RSF).

Those killed included 57 women and 48 children, the report said.

Motorcycle crashes claimed 138 lives in 159 accidents, accounting for around one-third of all road deaths recorded during the month. One hundred and six pedestrians were killed, while 51 drivers and their assistants also lost their lives.

Dhaka division recorded the highest number of road crashes and deaths, with 133 accidents killing 125 people. Barishal division recorded the lowest toll, with 24 deaths in 28 crashes.



- Motorcycle accidents claimed 138 lives
- Dhaka division recorded the highest death toll 125
- 18 killed in 34 crashes in Dhaka city
- Railway, waterway accidents killed 33 more

In Dhaka city, 34 road crashes left 18 people dead and 47 others injured.

According to the report, 169 crashes occurred on national highways, 155 on regional roads, 61 on rural roads and 66 on city roads. It said 164 crashes occurred after drivers lost control of their vehicles.

The RSF attributed the crashes to unfit vehicles, poor road conditions, speeding, reckless and unskilled driving, excessive working hours for drivers, weak traffic management and reckless motorcycle riding.

Apart from road crashes, nine people were killed and 11 injured in 13 waterway accidents in July, while 24 people were killed and 18 injured in 29 railway accidents, the report said.

The RSF recommended removing unfit vehicles from the roads, making modern vehicle safety technology mandatory, introducing route-rationalised company-based bus services in Dhaka and constructing service roads for slow-moving vehicles along highways.

Partial FSRU restart eases gas shortages

Full restoration may take two to three days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gas supply to the national grid improved after one of the two boilers at the damaged floating LNG terminal in Maheshkhali was brought back into operation, easing shortages that had disrupted power generation, industries, CNG stations and households.

The repaired boiler at the Excelerate Energy-operated floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) began operating around 3:00am yesterday, allowing the terminal to supply about 115 million cubic feet per day (mmcfd) of gas to the national grid, according to Petrobangla.

The other FSRU at Maheshkhali is supplying around 550 mmcfd, taking the combined supply from the two terminals to about 665 mmcfd.

The partial restart also improved gas pressure in Chattogram.

"Yesterday, we received 183 mmcfd [in Chattogram]. Today, we are getting more gas and the pressure in the pipeline has also increased.

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Appoint capable, impartial info commissioners

Urges RTI Forum



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The RTI Forum has called for competence, impartiality and commitment to public interest to be the top priorities in appointing the chief information commissioner and information commissioners.

The forum made the call in a letter to Justice Farah Mahbub of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, who chairs the recently reconstituted five-member Selection Committee tasked with recommending candidates for the posts of chief information commissioner and two information commissioners, according to a press release issued yesterday.

Constituted under Section 14(1) of the Right to

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Govt to install anti-drone systems at airports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will install an anti-drone system to prevent unauthorised drone operations at the country's airports.

The decision was announced at the 13th meeting of the National Civil Aviation Security Committee, held at the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh headquarters yesterday.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Afroza Khanam said the country's upcoming audit by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) makes it essential to address any compliance gaps.

"Our ICAO audit is scheduled to take place very soon, and the nation's image is tied to its observations. Therefore, necessary measures must be taken to ensure compliance in areas where ICAO may have observations," she said.

Remembering a classical music icon

Students, teachers pay tribute to Pandit Amiya Ranjan Bandyopadhyay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Government Music College in Dhaka held a memorial programme titled "Sur Sarathir Mohaproyan" yesterday to honour the life and legacy of classical music icon Pandit Amiya Ranjan Bandyopadhyay, who died in Kolkata on July 29 at the age of 99.

The event brought together faculty members, alumni and students for an afternoon of reflection, learning and tribute.

The programme began with a welcome speech by lecturer Saiful Taankar, followed by a one-minute silence. A documentary on Bandyopadhyay's life was also screened.

Archival footage and interviews traced his career as a performer, academic and torchbearer of Bengal's classical music heritage.

Born on February 21, 1927, into a family with over 150 years of musical lineage, Bandyopadhyay was trained by his father, Sangeetacharya Satya Kinkar Bandyopadhyay.

He became one of the foremost exponents of the Bishnupur gharana, Bengal's only native classical music style.

Besides performing across India, Europe and the US for All India Radio and Doordarshan, Bandyopadhyay also made significant contributions to academia.

He served as the founding head of the Vocal Music Department at Rabindra Bharati University and earned



Dr Fakir Shohedul Islam Suman, assistant professor and head of the Classical Music Department at Government Music College, speaks at the event.

PHOTO: STAR

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