

Yet another crude bomb explodes at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

A crude bomb went off near Dhaka University's Madhur Canteen yesterday. A witness said the explosion took place around 11am. No casualty was reported.

Contacted, DU Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani said they notified police of the incident and the law enforcers visited the spot. "We are trying to find out those involved in the incident. Legal actions will be taken against them," he added.

Earlier on January 5, three crude bombs exploded near the university's Kalabhaban (arts building) and Ducus building.

Also, two more crude bombs went off near Madhur Canteen on December 30 last year in which canteen staffer Hridoy sustain minor splinter wounds.

Four such bombs detonated in the morning and evening at the same place on December 29 while an unexploded bomb was found near the area on December 26.

Proctor Golam Rabbani said they could not identify anyone involved in those explosions.



Students nervously get some last-minute studying in before sitting for the first of their SSC exams. A long month of nail-biting suspense awaits them. The photo was taken yesterday at Motijheel Govt Boys High School.

PHOTO OF THE DAY

ANISUR RAHMAN

ATTACK ON JOURNOS
Freedom of media shrinking: Article 19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Article 19 yesterday expressed grave concerns over attacks on journalists during Saturday's Dhaka city polls. "Freedom of the media is constantly being shrunk by attacks on journalists, which is a huge threat to democracy," said Faruq Faisal, regional director (Bangladesh and South Asia) of the UK-based human rights body.

In a press statement, he also said although the government has reiterated its commitment towards freedom of the media and protection of journalists as well as rights activists, the reality has changed little. "Of all the attacks on journalists in the near and far past, none have been tried yet," he added.

According to the rights body, at least 10 journalists from different media houses were attacked and assaulted while performing duties during the Dhaka city corporation polls on Saturday.

Leaders and activists of the ruling party were allegedly involved in these attacks, it said, adding that journalists also voiced helplessness over non-cooperation from members of law enforcement agencies and election officials.

It also urged the government to ensure safety of journalists and human rights defenders, in line with international standards.

DUJ, CRAB ANNOUNCE PROTESTS

Dhaka Union of Journalists and Bangladesh Crime Reporters' Association yesterday condemned the attacks, and urged the authorities to bring the culprits to book immediately. The two organisations will hold separate demonstrations in the city today and tomorrow respectively.

Meanwhile, Chhatra League leader Shahidul Islam Khan Riyad, who allegedly assaulted two journalists during Saturday's polls and later filed a general diary against the victims to blame them, was suspended yesterday "for breaching organisational discipline", said a press release.

Riyad allegedly confined Mahabub Momtaji, staff reporter at Bangladesh Pratidin, and Nurul Amin, staff reporter at The Business Standard, for more than one and half hours to a polling centre in Gendaria. Nurul yesterday filed a general diary with Gendaria Police Station.

DHAKA CITY POLLS
Submit expenses in 7 days: EC to contenders

BSS, Dhaka

The Election Commission (EC) has asked candidates of Dhaka city elections to submit their polls expenditure statements within seven days of polls result announcement. The EC issued a circular in this regard yesterday, signed by its Deputy Secretary Md Atiar Rahman.

As per the Local Government (City Corporation) Election Rules-2010, every candidate is supposed to submit a statement on their election expenditures within seven days from the date of the polls result announcement.

The rules allow a mayor candidate to spend maximum Tk 7 lakh as personal and election expenditure.

As per election rules, a mayor candidate can spend Tk 1 lakh as personal expense if there are fewer than 20 lakh voters. For over 20 lakh voters, they can spend Tk 2 lakh as personal expenditure, and Tk 5 lakh as election expenses.

A councillor candidate can spend up to Tk 50,000 as personal expenditure, and Tk 6 lakh as election expenses.

There were a total of 30,10,273 voters in Dhaka North City Corporation, while 24,53,194 voters in Dhaka South City Corporation.

Recycling a nuisance
Bidyananda Foundation turning laminated posters into notebooks, bags and strings

MATHEWS CHIRAN

Amid concerns over the massive amount of laminated election posters causing serious environmental damage, a youth organisation has undertaken initiatives to recycle the material to help underprivileged children.

The flipside of the posters will be turned into notebooks, while the plastic will be used to pack clothes and made into string to bind food packets.

Bidyananda Foundation, a voluntary organisation working for street children, collected some 1 lakh posters till yesterday from Balurghat, Pallabi, Adabar, Banani and Khilgaon.

"We have six orphanages supporting 350 underprivileged children. They need notebooks to write," said Salman Khan, head of the Dhaka branch of the foundation. "Even if we can manage food for them from donations, we cannot afford notebooks adequately," he said.

"We alone cannot clean the city, but reusing the posters can play a simple part in it," said Salman, a private university student.

According to Faruque Ahmed, a volunteer, they were unsure of the initiative at first as they thought local political leaders would be offended by it, but the initiative turned out smooth. "We are getting responses from councillor candidates too. Their representatives are calling us to collect posters," he said.

DNCC mayor-elect Atiqul Islam yesterday handed over his campaign posters to the foundation.

Welcoming the initiative, DNCC's Additional Chief Waste Management Officer SM Shafiqur Rahman said, "So far we have talked to two organisations who are collecting the posters, and we are hopeful all posters will be removed soon, through our initiatives and their support."

Established in 2013, Bidyananda currently has 20 projects across the country, operated by 300 volunteers from various backgrounds. Some of their projects have gained plaudits from all corners -- like the "1-Taka meal", under which any street children can have lunch for Tk 1 every day.

Similarly, they have another project where they provide medical care to the underprivileged for Tk 1.

Tk 111cr spent on govt vehicles last year
State minister for public admin tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain yesterday told parliament that around Tk 111.23 crore was spent on operating government vehicles in last fiscal year.

He said this while replying to a query from Awami League MP Nurunnabi Chowdhury (Bhola-3).

The organisations concerned have been asked to limit their fuel expenses within the stipulated ceilings. Besides, they are being encouraged to use public transport instead of government vehicles to inspect the work at field level.

In reply to another question from treasury bench MP Benjir Ahmed (Dhaka-20), Farhad informed the House that around 3,25,082 posts remain vacant at present under different ministries.

He also said over 88,000 new posts were created in government jobs.

He said the Ministry of Public Administration gave consent to create 88,123 new posts in different ministries, departments and offices from January 1 to December 30, 2019.

Saluting cancer warriors
United Hospital honours 10 individuals for their unwavering will

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leading a healthy life, early detection and immediate treatment of cancer, and quality healthcare services can save many lives from the deadly disease, said speakers at a programme yesterday.

They said fighting cancer is one of the bravest and hardest battles one can go through, and a strong will is needed in this regard. Also, they have to be provided with every possible support, speakers stressed.

United Hospital Cancer Care Centre organised the programme on its premises at Gulshan-2 to mark the 10th anniversary of the centre, and to observe World Cancer Day today.

At the programme, 10 individuals, receiving treatment at the centre, were recognised as "Cancer Warriors" for their unwavering will to fight the disease.

Speaking at the event, noted health specialist and writer Prof Subhagata Choudhury said spreading of cancer can be prevented by avoiding smoking. "It's one of the preventing measures that people need to be aware of," he added.

He said if people see symptoms of cancer at any part of their body, they must undergo immediate screening and treatment to prevent its spread.

Speaking as a special guest, noted environmentalist Advocate Syeda Rizwana

Hasan stressed the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. She also urged doctors to be more patient friendly, which will help patients' trust physicians more.

Calling on doctors to serve patients without thinking of monetary benefits, the hospital's Managing Director Faridur Rahman said, "When patients select a specific doctor from our hospital and say they want to be treated by that physician, it makes us feel proud. It also proves that patients have confidence and trust in us."

He also acknowledged the cancer patients' struggles and spirit.

United Hospital Chief Executive Officer Faizur Rahman said the cancer care centre was inaugurated in 2010 and since then, they have been dedicated in providing quality services to people.

"We look forward to treating more with care and compassion," he said.

Cancer warriors Mohsena Tabassum Mimi and Khaleida Perveen shared the challenges they face and the determination needed to move forward. They also thanked the hospital and doctors for their care and treatment.

Cancer care centre consultants Dr Ashim Kumar Sen Gupta and Dr Rashid-Un-Nabi were also present at the event. The hospital's communication and business development chief Dr Shagufta Anwar conducted the programme.

5 held over SSC question leak rumours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab claimed to have arrested five youths allegedly involved in spreading rumours of question leak in SSC exams and taking money from people with fake questions.

The youths were arrested on Saturday and Sunday from different areas.

They deceived people and the questions they provided through social media were fake, Rab officials said.

Abu Baker Siddique (26) was arrested from Gazipur; Shakil Mahmud (20) and Saimun Islam (20) from Khulna; Al Mahmud (18) from the capital's Rampura and another 16-year-old boy from Hazaribagh.

Rab officials said the five tried to create panic among examinees by spreading rumours of question leak.



Two bookworms begin their hunt by browsing catalogues of new books at a stall in Suhrawardy Udyan, on the second day of the month-long book fair yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Child's body recovered from canal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fire-fighters yesterday recovered the body of a four-year-old boy, who drowned in Manda canal in the city's Mugda on Sunday.

Divers recovered the body of Asadul at 9:10am, said Ershad Hossain, duty officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Asadul drowned in the canal around 4pm on Sunday. Divers had failed to recover the body and called off their search that night, Hossain said.

Another team is still in search for five-year-old Toha Moni, who drowned in a ditch in Kodomtoli area on Saturday, he added.

Readers scope out catalogues

SAYED MOHMUD ULLAH

Enthusiastic publishers -- with catalogues of their new titles -- are all set to welcome bookworms at the Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela 2020, as the book fair was seen warming up to visitors in its second day yesterday.

After the fair gate opened at 3pm, some booklovers were seen collecting lists from different publication houses and discussing with friends what to buy this year.

"I am yet to buy any book, because the fair has just started; I collect catalogues first and later buy books accordingly after selecting from these lists," Fabian, a third-year student of a private university, said.

According to the Bangla Academy sources, a record number of 560 organisations have set up stalls for the fair -- on Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan premises -- this year.

Besides a rise in publishing houses, the number of new books

Prokashon (stall-33) on Suhrawardy Udyan premises.

"My novel is set against the rural background of the country's south" Imran told The Daily Star.

Prothoma Prokashon is bringing a total of 100 new books this year, including "Manobadhikar" by Asif Nazrul, "India-Pakistan-Bangladesh: A primer on political history" by Nurul Islam, "Ekusher Shaheed" by Anisul Hoque and the English translation of Sareng Bou -- titled "A seaman's wife" by prominent novelist Shahidullah Kaiser, salespersons at the stall said.

Delwar Hossain (35), employee at a private company, said he bought a book titled "Bangabandhu: The Luminous Ascetic of Midnight" from Agamee Prokashoni.

The publisher said they have published 163 books including fresh and reprinted books this year.

Meanwhile, a total of 37 books arrived at the fair yesterday.



Cancer warriors, physicians and guests at the programme yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR