

Won't spare anyone who betrays the city

Says new Ctg city administrator

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Newly-appointed administrator of Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) Khorshed Alam Sujon yesterday warned officials saying he will not spare anyone who will "betray" their duties and the city.

Sujon, also vice president of Chattogram city Awami League, made the remarks while taking over charge as administrator at the CCC office in the port city.

AJM Nasir Uddin, whose tenure as mayor of the city ended Wednesday, handed over the charge to Sujon.

Sujon, a seasoned politician, vowed to utilise every chance to rid city dwellers of sufferings including waterlogging.

"I got just 180 days as administrator and I would leave no stone unturned to serve the people better", he said.

Seeking support and cooperation of city corporation officials, he said, "If I can't, I will step aside from the responsibility, but I will not compromise with corruption."

He also said he would not turn the administrator's office into a party office.

"My party men do not have any business with city corporation's affairs. I even did not allow my son to come to my office today," Sujon said.



A vendor shows the two varieties of dragon fruit -- red and white -- he sells at his cart. He was seen selling the fruit for Tk 450 per kg at Palashi area in the capital yesterday. Though the fruit usually grows in Southeast Asian, and Central and South American countries, it is becoming a popular choice among farmers and consumers in the country.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

70pc ethnic minorities living in plains pushed below poverty line

Adivasi Forum tells press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The coronavirus situation has already pushed around 70 percent of ethnic minorities living in the plains below poverty line, Bangladesh Adivasi Forum said yesterday.

The pandemic has critically impacted marginalised ethnic minorities living in hills and plains, as they have lost or will lose jobs, the forum said in a virtual press conference ahead of International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (August 9). The theme of the day for this year is "Covid-19 and indigenous peoples' resilience."

Discussants at the conference claimed that only a meagre amount of financial assistance allocated for Covid-19 are reaching ethnic minorities. They demanded special financial package for these communities, so that they can sustain themselves during the crisis.

Bangladesh Adivasi Forum General Secretary Sanjeeb Drong placed a written statement and 14-point demand, providing part-time job for at least 10,000 persons and financial assistance to students so they do not drop out.

Their demands also include a timeline based roadmap for full implementation of CHT Accord signed in 1997, implementation of CHT land commission law, separate land commission for the minorities, enactment of "Adivasi Rights Protection Act", stopping communal attacks on ethnic minorities and violence against minority women, withdrawal of false cases and others.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Digital payment solutions the way forward

Experts tell PRI-The Daily Star discussion on govt cash aid to poor; stress on authentic database of beneficiaries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts and policymakers yesterday said the government's cash support to the country's poor and disadvantaged people under social safety net programmes could yield higher success through a robust use of technology-based payment system.

Addressing an online discussion, they said to make such a system effective, authentic database of the beneficiaries and their lists prepared following thorough field-level selection were required.

The experts recommended for a centralised government organisation to prepare and maintain such database and also stressed the need for better coordination among relevant ministries and government departments for the poverty alleviation.

Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh (PRI) and The Daily Star jointly organised the online discussion on "Future of G2P in Bangladesh: The Case of Social Protection System".

Addressing as keynote speaker, Azizul Alam, additional secretary of the finance division of the finance ministry, said the government in 2018

launched government-to-person (G2P) payment system with an aim to disburse cash support to the personal accounts of social protection programmes beneficiaries and without delay.

Although all major cash transfer programmes were brought under the G2P last year, it has not been possible yet to bring all beneficiaries of all programmes, especially those who are old beneficiaries, under such electronic payment system.

Some social protection programmes are old age allowance, grants for widows, allowances for financially insolvent disabled, maternity allowance, honorarium for freedom fighters, and stipend for primary and higher secondary students.

Azizul said in 2019-2020 fiscal year, they made over one crore electronic fund transfer (EFT) to individual accounts under different safety net programmes while the transferred money was more than Tk 3,000 crore.

The number of EFT could have been higher if all beneficiaries were brought under the electronic payment system, he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Garo education pioneer Protibha Sangma no more

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Protibha Sangma, considered a pioneer of education in Garo community, passed away at her home in Idilpur village under Madhupur upazila of Tangail yesterday. She was 88.

She was buried on the premises of her residence around 4pm on the day.

When Protibha Sangma's own Garo community struggled to find its place in a changing world, she was at the forefront. She had long been education's champion.

Protibha, who was born in a farmer's family at Idilpur in Madhupur upazila of the district in 1932, never married and contributed her entire life to the welfare of the local indigenous community.

Protibha studied up to fourth grade at Idilpur Primary School. Later, she completed class five to seven from St Mary's Girls' School at Haluaghat, Mymensingh. Then she studied at



SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Cultural org reaches oxygen to Covid patients in M'singh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

At a time when the country's healthcare sector is feeling the heat of the coronavirus crisis, organisations and individuals are stepping up to fill gaps in the system left open by the deadly virus. In Mymensingh, theatre troupe Bahurupi Natya Sangstha is one such cultural organisation that is providing free oxygen service to critical coronavirus patients at their home for free.

The initiative was launched on July 19.

"We bought three oxygen cylinders and other necessary equipment at a cost of Tk 60,000. Our members arranged the fund on their own," said Shahadat Hossain Khan Hilu, secretary of Bahurupi. "We have a plan to expand our service if more fund can be ensured," said the 70-year-old.

The volunteers let people know about the service through their Facebook accounts. To avail the service, patients' family members call the given numbers and volunteers take the cylinders to their home, said Hilu.

Ali Yusuf, a volunteer, said, "When we bring cylinders to patients' residences, they arrange technicians to operate those."

This correspondent also spoke to some service seekers, who expressed their gratitude

towards Bahurupi for this initiative.

Dr Pradip Chandra Kar, a retired resident physician of Community Based Medical College Hospital in Mymensingh, said the initiative was laudable. He hoped others will also come forward to help each other amid the pandemic situation.

Not just Bahurupi Natya Sangstha, HELDS Foundation, a Pulpur-based voluntary organisation, is also providing oxygen support to patients free of charge.

Though its projects are limited to health, environment, and literacy sectors, during the pandemic, it set up a 20-bed isolation centre -- Shanti Nagar -- on Pulpur Degree College premises on June 22.

Recently, they started the free oxygen service for critical Covid-19 patients, said Tasfique Haque Nafew, secretary of the foundation. "We have provided services to 11 critical Covid-19 patients at home in Pulpur and Mymensingh Sadar upazila in the last two weeks," said the 22-year-old. "We have 18 oxygen cylinders; six of them remain ready for use at a time," said Nafew.

As per doctors' recommendations, volunteers take patients from their home to the centre, said Nafew.

DHAKA SOUTH CITY CORPORATION

Drive against illegal cable lines continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the second day of the drive against illegal cable and internet lines set up haphazardly around Dhaka South City Corporation areas, DSCC yesterday conducted drives in Dhanmondi and Fulbaria areas.

Two mobile courts also evicted illegal structures from footpaths and roads. A mobile court led by Executive Magistrate Irfan Uddin Ahmed pulled down illegal cables in Fulbaria area.

The court also evicted around 50 illegal structures from Fulbaria and Gulistan areas and a political office constructed illegally at adjoining Udayan Market of DSCC in Gulistan.

"We will continue our drive as per instruction of the DSCC mayor," he said.

Another court, led by DSCC Executive Magistrate Moniruzzaman, pulled down illegal cables adjoining Rabindra Sarani and at Dhanmondi Road-7.

Moniruzzaman said they will resume their drive at other parts of Dhanmondi and Hazaribagh today.

About the drive, Anwar Hossain Anu, president of Bangladesh Internet Bebohayee Samity, said they welcome the move by the city corporation as they also want to set up their cable underground.

"We have already sent a letter to the mayor, requesting some time. We want to shift our lines underground and we want to set up it following the mayor's plan," he said.

"If without giving us time, DSCC disconnects the lines, many people will face serious problems as they are working from home during the pandemic," Anwar added.

He said there are five to six companies who have Nationwide Telecommunication Transmission Network (NTTN) licenses and only they are authorised to distribute the lines through underground and internet operators have to pay rent to them to deliver their services to clients.

But internet operators so far failed to provide them with rents following their

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

DU students protest attack on fellows

DU CORRESPONDENT

A group of Dhaka University students yesterday formed a human chain on the campus, protesting attacks on several DU students including Dhaka University Journalists Association general secretary HM Imran Hossain.

Around 50 students including activists of different student organisations took part in the programme held at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture.

The speakers demanded immediate arrest and punishment for those who attacked Imran Hossain in Jhenidah, Chhatra League leader Sayeed Khan Shawon in Sylhet, Sazzad Hossain Shihab

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Much ado about nothing

21hr suspense of bomb-like object ends in reveal of grinder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

After 21 hours of suspense, Bangladesh Army's Bomb Disposal and Destruction Unit of 17 Infantry Division confirmed that the bomb-like object found in Chowhatta area in Sylhet city was just a handheld electrical grinding machine.

Police detected the object tied to a motorcycle of a traffic sergeant of Sylhet Metropolitan Police (SMP) on Wednesday afternoon at around 6:30pm, and cordoned off the area since 7pm.

Later, a team of Rapid Action Battalion reached the spot and the disposal was further delayed till the team of Bangladesh Army reached the spot yesterday afternoon.

Lt Col Rahat of the division told journalists, "On request from Bangladesh Police to inspect and possibly diffuse the suspected object, we received instructions from Army Headquarters and reached the spot at 2pm today."

"The team consisting of bomb experts Lt Col Khaled, myself, Capt Noor, Capt Galib and others



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

An armed police officer stands guard, as the bike is cordoned off with tape.

inspected the element, detached it and confirmed that it is a grinding machine. We then handed it over to police", he said.

Azbahar Ali Sheikh, deputy commissioner (North) of SMP, said, "We can think of two sides of such incident. One, maybe someone

unintentionally put the machine there; the other possibility is that someone intentionally did it to create panic".

"We have already started our investigation regarding the matter, and will share more details in coming days", he said.



Puffed rice has long had its foothold as a snack all over the country, popular among people of all classes. In Chattogram city, small factories have sprouted that produce the light, versatile munchies. While the demand remains highest during Ramadan, workers at this factory in the port city's Chaktai area said their production runs throughout the year. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



Regular functions of courts to resume next week: CJ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday decided to run both regular and virtual proceedings of the High Court from next week for the interest of lawyers and litigants.

He took the decision at a full court meeting with the judges from both the Appellate and High Court Divisions of the Supreme Court. The lawyers will be able to move cases before the physical or virtual HC benches after the court functions resume.

Meeting sources said more than 40 HC judges of total 92 expressed views for conducting court functions in physical presence, strictly following health guidelines while the remaining judges opined for continuing virtual proceedings.

Now, the chief justice will constitute benches with the judges concerned in order to operate both the physical and virtual functions.

Most judges, who joined the virtual full court meeting, have proposed to curtail the next court vacation to recover the gaps caused by the ongoing pandemic, according to sources.

Yesterday's full court meeting did not discuss the functions of the Appellate Division as all the judges of this division are continuing to run virtual proceedings led by the chief justice.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2