

## DNCC authorities demolish 300 illegal billboards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) yesterday demolished over 300 illegal billboards and signboards in Gulshan-2, Banani-11 and Pragati Sarani areas.

Mobile courts of DNCC also realised Tk 66,700 through an auction of illegal construction materials that were put out on the footpaths at Pragati Sarani. It realised another Tk 44,000 as fine in nine cases filed over the illegal activities.

DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam treated law-abiders with sweets during the drive. “Those who paid the taxes will get treated to sweets. Those who don’t will get fined,” he said during a drive at Gulshan-2.

“We have also started a drive to put up on auction any construction materials which are found stocked on footpaths illegally,” the mayor said.

Urging people to not keep any such materials out on the footpaths, the mayor said people of the city want clean footpaths and want to walk uninterrupted.

DNCC had earlier announced the drive and asked residents and businesses to pay dues to city corporation by September 14.

Over the last three days, DNCC received around Tk 1.1 crore for the legalisation of billboards and signboards.



A rickety battery-run three-wheeler, with a sheet of polythene acting as the windscreen, plies a street of the capital's South Basabo. Although they are banned, such battery-powered vehicles -- one of the popular ones being modified rickshaws, inset -- are abundant throughout the city. Dhaka South City Corporation decided to act against them this week. These photos were taken on Monday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



## Battery-run rickshaws still rule the alleys

No action taken yet, despite DSCC mayor's announcement

HELEMUL ALAM

Although plying of battery-run rickshaws and rickshaw-vans in the capital is illegal, no one gets surprised when they see these vehicles parked at the corner of a street or moving throughout the alleys in full speed.

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh on Sunday announced to take legal action against all such vehicles from that very day, but the situation remains the same.

Movement of these three-wheelers is quite risky on roads, so the government made them unlawful. The High Court on March 8, 2015 banned plying of mechanised and battery-run rickshaws across the country, as they have no proper licence.

Crores of taka circulate in this sector, as many ruling-party individuals and local influential are behind running these vehicles in the capital, according to sources. They take Tk 20-30 from each rickshaw-driver daily, and provide them with a card to paste on their rickshaws, which works as permission.

These illegal vehicles are running under different area-based informal “samity”.

A DSCC official said they are going to act against such rickshaws shortly, as the risks they pose are significant. Although there is no record of the total number of such vehicles, he estimated it to be from 30,000-40,000.

He said LGRD ministry on July 21, 2013 issued an order to Dhaka city corporations, asking them not to give licence to these three-wheelers.

The Standing Committee on Local Government on September 1, 2013 also recommended that Local Government Division and the corporations take steps against battery-rickshaws.

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## Bay of Bengal matters

Experts urge for boosting ties among seaside countries to harness marine resources

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

As the world economy is shifting towards the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh should play a role in deepening ties among the seaside countries to harness the potential of marine resources instead of allowing confrontations that can destabilise the region, said foreign relations experts yesterday.

They said the Covid-19 pandemic has proved again that all countries are somehow dependent on each other in production and supply chain -- something that requires higher level of cooperation and collaboration. Ironically, rise of protectionist attitudes has been noticed.

The observations came at a webinar titled “Increasing political, ecological, economic and regional importance of the Bay of Bengal for Bangladesh in the post-Covid-19 world”.

The discussion was organised by the Bay of Bengal Institute Project of Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB), International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) and Bangladesh Institute of Maritime Research and Development (BIMRAD).

It is the first of a four-part webinar series on the Bay of Bengal. The Daily Star is a media partner of the event.

Addressing as chief guest, Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi said the Bay of Bengal has extraordinary opportunities, but there is a serious shortage of research on how the country or the region can benefit from it.

According to information available, half of the world's container traffic passes through this region, and its ports handles about 30 percent of the world trade.

The traffic on the seas has increased

by 470 percent since 1970 and is likely to triple in the next 20 years. It is rich in mineral and marine resources.

Gowher Rizvi said harnessing the marine resources, its preservation and tackling the threats coming out of it require multi-disciplinary researches. Developing human resources and finding the right people already seeking to help the country is essential.

“Sadly, there is a huge gap between policymakers and policy analysts. We don’t speak and thus remain in two different worlds. This culture needs a change for a greater cause,” he said.

In his keynote, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen said the rise of China and India to the status of major powers has completely recalibrated the importance of the Indo-Pacific to the world.

Apart from regional initiatives including Saarc, BIMSTEC and BBIN, there are two overlapping strategic processes across the cone of the Bay of Bengal -- namely, the US-led Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) and China-led Belt-and-Road Initiative (BRI), he said.

“At the end of 2020, what we see now is the re-emergence of a civilisational competition for dominance across all avenues of knowledge, technology, trade, finance, economy, and security -- which might directly impact the Bay of Bengal,” said Momen.

He said with decades of back-breaking preparation and build up in the South China Sea, the critical fleet parity between the Chinese and the Western and Western-allied South and Southeast Asian nations is evolving fast.

From Chinese government sources, it appears that the BRI has been devised to render a new level of opportunity for

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Speakers at the webinar.

## Bangladesh elected executive member of 3 UN organisations

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has been elected a member of the executive board of the UNDP, UN Population Fund and the UN Office for Project Services, securing the highest votes (53 out of the 54 votes with 1 abstention) for the term 2021-2023 beginning in January next year.

The election was held on Monday at the UN Headquarters where the 54 members of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) voted to elect members to eight of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, according to a statement of the Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the UN.

“Today’s election victory is the demonstration of the trust and confidence that Bangladesh enjoys due to her strong legacy of working together with the UN entities and their executive boards towards socio-economic emancipation of the country under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina,” it said.

Bangladesh is also a current member at the executive boards of Unicef and UN Women.

Ambassador Rabab Fatima is the current president of Unicef Executive Board.

## Accused Shanjida gets bail from HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted bail to Mosammat Shanjida in a case filed over the killing of 26 Bangladeshis in Libya on May 28.

The bench of Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim and Justice Md Badruzzaman passed the order of bail following a bail petition filed by Shanjida.

The HC granted bail to Shanjida as there is no specific allegation against her of human trafficking. Deputy Attorney General Dr Md Bashir Ullah told The Daily Star.

He, however, said the government will move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging the HC order.

DAG Bashir Ullah said several cases were filed on charges of human trafficking after 26 Bangladeshis national were killed in Libya on May 28.

Police arrested Shanjida from her Moghbazar's Sonalibagh residence on June 8 in connection with a case filed with Paltan Police Station on June 5.

Shanjida filed the bail petition with the HC through her lawyer Md Kamruzzaman Kachi on September 3.

## Trains to run at full capacity from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway (BR) will restart carrying passengers with full capacity from today, around three-and-a-half-month after the authorities resumed operations of passenger trains on a limited scale.

Half of the total tickets of intercity trains will be sold at stations while the rest through online and mobile app. All tickets of local, mail and commuter trains will be sold at stations.

The railways ministry took the decision at a meeting yesterday with Minister Nurul Islam Suhan in the chair, Shariful Alam, senior information officer of the ministry, told The Daily Star. All health safety guidelines will be followed, he said.

The decision came three days after the authorities started selling half of the tickets of intercity trains at stations from Saturday.

After resumption of train services from May 31 on limited scale, BR has been selling

all tickets of intercity trains through online and a mobile app.

Although authorities have started selling all tickets of local, mail and commuter trains at the stations from September 5, they started selling 50 percent tickets of the intercity trains from the counters from September 12.

BR is gradually increasing trains in its fleet in a bid to normalise services. A total of 218 trains will come into operation by September 16. The remaining 144 mail and local trains will resume operation gradually.

**RIVA GANGULY MEETS RAIL MINISTER**

Meanwhile, Indian High Commissioner Riva Ganguly Das yesterday made a courtesy call on the railways minister at his office at Rail Bhawan.

They discussed about rail projects, which are being implemented under Indian line of credit, said a press release of the ministry.

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## Compensation for victims of wrongful conviction: a review

LAW DESK

Earlier this week, death-row convict Sheikh Zahid was acquitted by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, after 20 years of his languishing in prison.

Zahid (48), was sentenced to death when he was 28 years old for the alleged murder of his wife and daughter. Although not a singular incident, the case has brought to forefront pertinent questions regarding the accused's rights in case of blatant miscarriage of justice and violation of their fundamental rights.

The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees the right of every citizen to equal protection of law in Article 27. Article 31 states that no actions detrimental to the life, liberty, body, reputation or property of a person except in accordance with law. The cumulative effects of these guarantees reiterate a need for due process of law and a criminal justice system that can adequately protect the citizens from wrongful conviction and imprisonment.

In fact, wrongful imprisonment has been identified as a violation of fundamental rights in the case of Bilkis Akhter Hossain v. Bangladesh and Others (17 BLD 395). The High Court Division, in this case, awarded monetary compensation in favour of the detenu.

According to news reports, the Appellate Division found inconsistencies in the investigation against Sheikh Zahid and expressed doubt about the

witness statements recorded by the investigating officers. In case of such miscarriage of justice, victims of violation of fundamental rights are entitled to compensation.

In 2016, the High Court Division ordered the state to pay 50 lakh in compensation to one Abdul Jalil, who was wrongfully convicted to life and kept imprisoned for 14 years. The trial court had tried Abdul Jalil, who was 15 years old at the time of the alleged offence, under the Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain instead of the Children Act 2013.

Apart from the constitutional obligations, the right to compensation of those wrongfully convicted is upheld in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). When asked about these obligations, Supreme Court lawyer Advocate Kawser Ahmed opined, “It is an utter miscarriage of justice to languish in jail for 20 years as a death row inmate for wrongful conviction. At the same time, this incident attracts Bangladesh's human rights obligation to compensate the victim in accordance with article 14(6) of the ICCPR.”

“However, it appears that Bangladesh has not yet put in place an adequate legal framework to implement this obligation. Hence, legislative measure is expeditiously required for creating avenues to remedy such miscarriage of justice through administrative and judicial means. Until legislative measures are adopted, the higher

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## Woman stabbed dead at home by ‘thief’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was stabbed to death allegedly by a thief as she recognised him while stealing in their house in Dhaka's Sabujbagh area on Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Jannatul Ferdous (25), wife of one Mustafiz, a resident of Nandipara area.

Police arrested the alleged thief -- Monir Hossain (30) -- from the rooftop of the seven-storey under-construction building.

Monir, who is employed by the building owner, used to live in the building and its inhabitants knew him well, said Sub-inspector Mir Mohammad Arif Ali of Sabujbagh Police Station.

The incident took place around 9pm when Monir entered the flat on the third floor where Jannatul used to live with his husband and child. Her husband was outside at the time.

SI Arif said Monir entered the flat with an aim to steal valuables through the balcony. There is a small entrance in the balcony that the family always kept under lock and key, but it was open that night.

As Jannatul found him in the flat and recognised him, Monir took her to kitchen forcibly, took a knife and stabbed her. She died on the spot, the SI said, quoting the arrestee.

On information, police rushed to the spot. While checking the rooftop, they found Monir hiding there, he said.

Police said they are trying to gather details and find out whether there was any other motive behind the murder.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.



The scientific name of the Kans Grass, known in Bengali as “Kashphul”, is Saccharum Spontaneum. It's not a popular name, for it fails to capture the absolute poetry of a row of Kashphul swaying ever so gently at the slightest touch of an autumn breeze, like these ones looking over a bridge at Hatirjheel. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## ‘Rastrachinta’ activist Didarul gets bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted six months' ad-interim bail to Didarul Islam Bhuiyan, an activist of a platform called “Rastrachinta”, in a case filed against him under the Digital Security Act, clearing the way of him to walk out of jail.

The court also issued a rule asking the state to show cause in four weeks why Didarul should not be granted regular bail in the case.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the order and rule following a petition filed by Didarul seeking bail in the case.

Hasnat Quaiyum, a lawyer for Didarul, told The Daily Star that there is no legal bar to his client's release from jail following the HC order.

Deputy Attorney General Sarwar Hossain Bappi told this correspondent that the HC granted bail to Didarul as Minhaz Mannan, fourth accused in the same case, has earlier obtained bail from a magistrate court.

Lawyers Jyotirmoy Barua and Kazi Zahed also appeared for Didarul during hearing his bail petition.

Didarul was arrested on May 5. He was implicated under the Digital Security Act on charges of “spreading rumours and carrying out anti-government activities”.