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What happens if a candidate exits the race?
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“The government does not want exam-centric education rather it wants education through which a student will get knowledge, acquire skills”
EDUCATION MINISTER DIPU MONI



“District Football Associations are responsible for holding district leagues but you blame us... It is not my responsibility”
KAZI SALAHUDDIN AFTER WINNING HIS FOURTH TERM AS BFF PRESIDENT **PAGE 11**



“I think that we can prosper mightily under those circumstances.”
UK PM BORIS JOHNSON ON NO-DEAL BREXIT **PAGE 6**



A DISASTER called Titas

Graft, mismanagement have turned it into cause of public sufferings, accidents

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Sirajul Haque Khan cannot recall the last time someone came to check the gas connection to his building.

In fact, the 73-year-old businessman in Pargandaria of Jatrabari never saw any official to inspect the gas lines in his neighbourhood in the last 39 years since he started living there.

“All these years, people from the city corporation worked several times to upgrade the sewage line but we did not see anyone coming from Titas gas for checking or upgrading the gas connections,” said Sirajul.

“We only see their movements after a tragic incident caused by gas leaks.”

Despite being the country's biggest gas transmission and distribution company with 60 percent share of gas connections, Titas does not have any mechanism to



identify any leakage from its vast network of underground gas pipelines.

This government-owned company acts only after getting complaints from customers about leaks in service lines or in household connections.

And the actions the Titas officials take after such events are not prompt enough, forcing customers to turn to local plumbers to fix the problems, allege a number of customers.

Energy experts said such complaints have been a common phenomenon over the years and it only speaks how badly Titas maintains its transmission and distribution lines.

They think the frequent fire incidents and the last month's blast in a Narayanganj mosque were the outcome of negligence and mismanagement over the years from the country's biggest natural gas distributor and its supervising authorities.

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TITAS SUPPLY NETWORK

- » 13,138 km underground pipeline
- » 624 km transmission line
- » 12,514 km distribution, service lines

Titas network covers Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur

The longest service line (6,000 km) covers Dhaka

COVERAGE

It has around 28.66 lakh domestic and industrial consumers

RISKY, RUSTY PIPELINE

- » More than 700 km line installed before 2001
- » One third of the pipeline installed about 25-40 years ago
- » Major part of distribution line has become rusty and risky



“People are suffering just due to the greed of those corrupt officials. Titas has turned into an enemy of the masses for this.”

PROF M SHAMSUL ALAM
ENERGY ADVISER TO
CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION
OF BANGLADESH (CAB)



“We only see their movements after a tragic incident caused by gas leaks.”

SIRAJUL HAQUE KHAN
A CONSUMER FROM
JATRABARI, TALKING ABOUT
TITAS SERVICE

China ready to improve strategic relations

Xi Jinping tells President Hamid

STAR REPORT

Chinese President Xi Jinping has said he stands ready to work with Bangladesh to better align the two countries' strategies and jointly promote the construction of the Belt and Road to take the China-Bangladesh strategic partnership of cooperation to new heights, reports Xinhua.

He made the remarks in an exchange of congratulatory messages with his Bangladesh counterpart Mohammad Abdul Hamid as the two countries celebrated the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties yesterday.

Xi said the China-Bangladesh friendship has a long history and remains ever new over time.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties 45 years ago, the two countries have

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Outrage as woman gang-raped, filmed

Graphic video making rounds in social media; 1 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Late last night, there was widespread outrage on social media came as the graphic video of a woman in Noakhali being gang-raped was uploaded and shared yesterday.

Police in the evening arrested Abdur Rahim, 22, who during primary interrogation confessed to his involvement in the crime, said Harunur Rashid Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Begumganj Police Station.

While it is unclear who uploaded the video, or initiated the sharing of it, it is evident that the rapists had filmed the rape, with the intent of spreading it on Facebook. As the woman was, one man yelled, “This will go on Facebook,” while another was heard saying, “No, let's go live”.

While the torturous actions seen in the video

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Plumbing depths of pandemic pain

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Golam Kibria used to teach at a private school in Parbatipur town in Dinajpur before the pandemic hit the country.

But the 25-year-old man lost his earnings as the schools closed, and in just a few months, he found himself carrying sacks of cement, sand, and bricks at construction sites.

“I can't find words to express how difficult it is for someone who used to teach in classrooms to work as a mason's helper,” Kibria told this correspondent last week.

The National University graduate of sociology joined Brighten Residential Model School at Parbatipur last year at a monthly salary of Tk 3,000. He supplemented that income by giving private tuitions to support his family of six.

But everything came to a grinding halt during the pandemic. The school stopped paying salaries in April. Left with no other source of income, he eventually started working as a mason's helper.

Kibria's situation mirrors those of many. Meherul Islam was a teacher of Roujatul Adab Kindergarten School in Sundarganj of Gaibnadhra for four years. He now ekes out a living by operating a boat on the Teesta river.

“As a sole breadwinner, I have to make the decision for the sake of my life. I have to feed my wife and elderly parents,” he said.

Meherul used to earn Tk 5,500 as monthly salary and around Tk 5,000 from private tuitions. He now earns about Tk 6,000 by operating the boat.

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**WORLD
TEACHER'S
DAY**

Corrupt judges have to be discharged immediately

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has observed that corrupt judges should be discharged from their duties immediately in order to keep the judiciary free from graft.

In a verdict, the HC said, “[If they are not removed,] the corrupt judges will gradually influence others onto their paths.”

The HC bench of Justice Md Ashfaque Kamal and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil made the observations in the full 144-page text of the verdict released on Thursday.

“A judiciary without any graft is one of the original pre-conditions of the rule of law, which cannot be imagined without corruption-free judiciary,” the HC said.

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SURVEY ON RMG WORKERS DURING PANDEMIC

99.8pc say they're not Covid-infected

430 workers from 21 factories took part in limited-scale study by MJF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A staggering 99.8 percent of the 430 garment workers, covered by a survey, claimed that they were not infected with Covid-19, according to a study by Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Of the workers, 95.8 percent said they didn't have information whether their co-workers were infected or not. Only 1.8 percent of them mentioned that their family members were infected with the virus, says the study titled “Covid-19 Impact on Selected RMG factories and Way Forward”.

None of the respondents visited doctors or got tested for Covid-19 while 85.7 percent of them suffered from fever and cold during the period. They doubted whether the symptoms were related to the novel coronavirus, it said.

The study is based on telephone interviews of 330 female and 100 male workers in 21 garment factories in Dhaka and Chattogram.

On wages and benefits, the study said 99.8 percent of the respondents received wages for March and April this year.

However, none of the respondents got full wage. And 91.48 percent of them said they did not get wages and allowances as per the labour law.

Besides, 80.4 percent workers said they received masks from the factories, and 95.3 percent said they were satisfied with the hand-washing

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This photo taken recently at Paglir Beel in Chakaria, Cox's Bazar, shows what appears to be a lake where four years ago there used to be a dense forest. Rampant sand-lifting in the area has put animal habitats in danger as well.

PHOTO:
MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Encroachers dig a lake out of forest

Illegal sand-lifting, tree-felling go on unabated at Dulhazra

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chattogram

Four years of illegal sand lifting and forest razing have turned what was once a dense forest in Chakaria, Cox's Bazar, into what now appears to be a lake.

The rampant tree felling takes place on both sides of the Hargoja canal in Paglir Beel area.

The canal through Dulhazra Safari Park of Cox's Bazar forest division (north) is leased out to the upazila chairman of Chakaria.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Syed Shamsul Tabriz told The Daily Star that there is a legal quarry in Hargoja canal in the Paglir Beel area, but men working for the lessee -- the upazila chairman -- are encroaching into the forest.

“We discussed the issue in our monthly meeting and decided to get the area surveyed to assess how far they have encroached,” he said. “It is getting rampant. We are doing our best to stop it.”

The continuous sand lifting is threatening to eat into the Biodiversity Conservation Zone under the Chattogram wildlife division, threatening animal habitats in greater Chattogram that are already in jeopardy.

Mohammad Moazzom Hossain, director of Department of Environment (DoE) in Chattogram region, said a team from his office visited the spot and found a grim scenario there.

“We will issue a notice to the perpetrators soon and take action as per law,” he added.

After talking to locals the team found that at least 11 locals engaged 24 large machines to dig out sand in the forest area. The razing and digging has inched perilously close to the Biodiversity Conservation Zone.

On September 15, this correspondent found no trace of forest when visiting the spot that was lush with greenery just a few years ago. Around 50 acres of the forest land was dug 10 to 15 feet deep to lift the sand,

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