

Nat'l databank to be made for DAP

LGRD minister says
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special plan and a national databank will be set up to transform Dhaka into a modern and livable city, said LGRD Minister Tazul Islam yesterday.

The minister, also convener of the Detailed Area Plan, said this while addressing a discussion on DAP with the leaders of Institute of Architects Bangladesh at the conference room of the local government department of the ministry.

The minister said the special plan and database will be set up in line with the opinions of architects and urban planners, which will act as a guideline for DAP.

"The final decision will be taken after impact assessment," he added.

He said roads should be kept in line with the existing buildings in the capital. "If high-rises are built to accommodate thousands of people, roads and other facilities must be ensured."

The minister also said the canals in Dhaka would be connected to Hatirjheel in a planned way. If water transport and walkways could be set up on both sides, the city would have a unique view. The work of two projects in this regard is at final stage, he said.

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Fort Aurangabad, better known to Dhaka residents as the Lalbagh Fort, was built in the 17th century -- although never completed -- by Mughal rulers. There seems to be little respect for one of Dhaka's most iconic heritage sites, with its walls plastered with posters and banners and human hauliers parked in front of it. A notice hangs on the wall saying such actions are prohibited, enforcements seems to entirely absent. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Support packages for Covid-19 inadequate

Finds survey on 15 organisations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Covid-19 support packages were not evenly distributed among persons with disabilities of some 15 organisations, according to a survey of ADD International Bangladesh.

Those who received the support said the packages were not sufficient to their needs, the organisation said in its report "Covid-19 Impact on Persons' with Disabilities Life and Livelihood and Way Forward".

Findings of the report were disclosed yesterday during an online discussion on the topic jointly organised by ADD International Bangladesh, The Daily Star and Bangla daily Samaka.

The telephonic survey was conducted on the 15 organisations between June 9 and June 29. Some 91 respondents took part in it.

Most respondents said many persons with disabilities could not maintain health guidelines accordingly due to shortage of sanitisation kits. The report said the pandemic has adversely affected the livelihood and income opportunities of many persons with disabilities.

Amid the shutdown enforced to contain the virus, persons with disabilities were deprived of work opportunities. Many of those involved in employment either saw their salaries reduced or they lost jobs, said the report. Persons with disabilities who had small businesses had to shut those amid the pandemic, it added.

Sharing the findings, ADD International Bangladesh Field Operation Manager Rafiqzaman Biswas said how many persons with disabilities of the country have tested coronavirus positive and how many died were still unknown.

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Poet Himel Barkat no more
JU CORRESPONDENT

Noted poet and teacher Himel Barkat has passed away yesterday. He was 42 years of age.

He breathed his last at the capital's Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital around 4:30am while undergoing treatment after a massive cardiac attack. He had suffered a heart attack on Saturday morning while conducting online classes.

Himel Barkat was a professor at the Bangla Department of

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Won't let evil efforts destroy peace: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said the government would not allow any evil efforts to destroy peace in name of any programme.

"BNP again returned to their politics of carrying out arson attacks by setting fire to buses. People do not respond to their movements because of their evil politics," Quader, also general secretary of Awami League, said.

The minister said this while inaugurating a connecting-road construction project at BNS Sheikh Hasina in Cox's Bazar. He joined the event through videoconferencing from his official residence on parliament premises in Dhaka.

Quader said BNP resorted to "arson terrorism" to avenge their defeat in polls and movement. Distorting the history of independence is BNP's notion of democracy, he added.

He said every party has the right to observe peaceful political programmes, but if BNP wants to destroy peace in name of political programmes, Awami League along with people will give a befitting reply.

The minister said though BNP denied their involvement in the recent arson attack on buses, video-footages revealed everything.

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'Antimicrobial resistance a more severe threat than Covid-19 in coming years'

Experts warn of overuse and misuse of antibiotics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As disease-causing germs are becoming more and more resistant to lifesaving antibiotics owing to their irrational use, experts yesterday stressed the need for addressing the issue with highest priority and in a coordinated way.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic marginalising this one of the 10 emerging global threats to public health, the issue should not be overlooked, as it is going to pose a bigger threat than the pandemic in the years to come, they said.

The experts were speaking at a daylong discussion on "Draft National AMR Surveillance Strategy 2020-25" at a hotel in the capital yesterday.

Center for Disease Control (CDC) of the Directorate General of Health Services

organised the event marking World AMR [antimicrobial resistance] Awareness Week 2020.

The event involved researchers from different government departments and global development agencies.

AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death, according to WHO.

At the inaugural session, Prof Sayedur Rahman, chairman of the pharmacology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) presented the keynote.

He spoke of why the AMR in bacteria is a major threat to health and the way out of

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SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

Rab fails yet another probe report deadline

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again asked Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to submit by December 29 the probe report of a case filed over the murders of journalist couple Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Runi.

With yesterday's date, the investigation officer has so far taken 76 dates to complete the investigation.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Rajesh Chowdhury passed the order after Rab's Additional Superintendent Khondoker Shafiqul Alam, also investigation officer of the case, failed to submit the report yesterday.

Earlier on November 11 last year, the High Court expressed disappointment at the lack of significant progress in the investigation into the sensational murder case.

Sagar Sarwar, news editor at private TV channel Maasranga, and his wife Meherun Runi, a senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed in the early hours of February 11, 2012 in their rented flat in the capital's West Razabazar. Rab was tasked with the probe on April 18, 2012.

At least eight people, including suspects Rafiqul Islam, Bakul Miah, Masum Mintu, Kamrul Hasan alias Arun, Abu Sayeed, and two security guards of the couple's house Palash Rudra Paul and Enamul Hoque, and the couple's "family friend" Tanveer Rahman had been arrested in connection with the murder.

Municipality polls start Dec 28: EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

First phase of elections to the municipalities will be held on December 28, the Election Commission announced yesterday.

In the first phase, 25 municipalities of 23 districts will go to polls using Electronic Voting Machines, EC Senior Secretary Md Alamgir said while announcing the polls schedule.

The last date for filing nomination papers is December 1, which will be scrutinised on December 3. The deadline for withdrawal of nomination papers is December 10, according to the polls schedule.

The 25 municipalities are: Panchagarh of Panchagarh, Pirganj of Thakurgaon, Fulbari of Dinajpur, Badarganj of Rangpur, Kurigram of Kurigram, Puthia and Katakhalii of Rajshahi, Shahjadpur of Sirajganj, Chatmohor of Pabna, Kokhsa of Kushtia, Chuadanga of Chuadanga, Chalna of Khulna, Betagi of Barguna, Kuakata of Patuakhali, Ujirpur and Bakerganj of Barisal, Gafargaoan of Mymensingh, Madan of Netrokona, Dhamrai of Dhaka, Sreepur of Gazipur, Dirai of Sunanganj, Borolekha of Moulvibazar, Sayestaganj of Habiganj and Sitakunda of Chhattogram.

Asked about the risk of holding polls during the possible second wave of Covid-19, Alamgir said elections are being held as people and aspirants want elections in time.

He said the US had its election amid the pandemic while India and other countries are also holding polls. The EC would follow health measures strictly and will set up hand washing or sanitising facilities for voters, he added, saying they will hold elections to the municipalities in four or five phases.

According to Local Government Division, there are 329 municipalities in the country. The EC will hold elections to 224 municipalities. Tenures of these municipalities will expire by March 2021.

4 more arrested over recovery of 31 crude bombs in capital's Uttara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested four persons from Dhaka's Uttara and Turag areas in connection with recovering 31 crude bombs from Uttara.

The arrestees are: Sohrab Hossain (21), Tawhidul Islam (22), Selim Mia (32), and Uzzal Mia (24).

They are FIR-named accused in a case filed with Uttara Paschim Police Station under Explosive Substance Act following the bomb recovery, said Walid Hossain, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

On Friday, police recovered 31 crude bombs from an under-construction building in Uttara sector-10. A bomb disposal unit of police defused those later, Kazi Shafiqul Alam, deputy commissioner of Detective Branch (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

Police claimed that they arrested two Jubo Dal men -- Mamun, general secretary of Dhaka city's ward-54 unit, and activist Suman -- on Thursday and based on their information they made the recovery.



It's safe to say 2020 has been a cursed year. As the Gregorian calendar is set to turn new pages in less than six weeks, workers at presses in the capital's Paltan area are busy printing, binding and packaging calendars for a new year, which we can all hope will bring us better days.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



During a walk along the rail line from Malibagh Rail Gate to Tejgaon, this photojournalist found hundreds of sleeper clips -- that hold together the rails and the sleepers of the track -- either broken or completely missing. These clips pose serious risks to trains plying the lines, as political activists have in the past removed clips to derail trains and sabotage rail communication. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

5 held with 1.51 lakh yaba in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

Police in separate drives yesterday arrested five persons with 1.51 lakh yaba pills from port city's Kalurghat area and Lohagara upazila in Chattogram.

At Kalurghat, Chandgaon police seized 1.48 lakh yaba pills while those were being unloaded in BRTC Fertiliser Ghat area. They also arrested one Sohel Uddin (35) in this connection.

Atar Rahman, officer-in-charge of Chandgaon Police Station, said they raided the area and detained Sohel with two plastic drums where the pills were hidden.

Meanwhile, Lohagara police arrested Alamgir (30) and Beauty (34) with 1,800 yaba pills and Atikullah (19) and Sakib (19) with 1,200 pills early yesterday.

Separate cases were filed over the recoveries.

Agri minister worried about low Aman yield

Says govt planning to allocate additional 50,000 hectares of land for Boro cultivation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The agriculture ministry has targeted expanding land for Boro rice cultivation by 50,000 hectares in the next season due to low yield of the Aman variety.

"Due to flood and other reasons, Aman production was not good that is why the cost of paddy is high. I am worried about it," said Agriculture Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque yesterday.

"That is why at any cost we need to scale up Boro production in the next season," he said while addressing an evaluation meeting on Annual Development Programme (ADP) held virtually.

He said, "Farmers need to be motivated not to keep their Boro cultivable land idle."

The minister called upon officials to take all-out measures to increase Boro production, according to a press release.

This year, the government's Aman production target was 1.55 crore tonnes. Farmers are still harvesting paddy.

Against a 1.53 crore tonne-target, Aman paddy production was 1.55 crore tonnes last year, according to the ministry.

"Since farmers are getting good price, they are excited and inspired. On the other hand, we need to ensure proper distribution of Boro seed, fertiliser, irrigation and other facilities," the minister said, adding, "Only then will it be possible to achieve the target."

The agriculture minister also underscored the need for increasing production of onion, wheat, potato, maize, mustard, vegetables and black gram.

"There is huge possibility of maize cultivation in the southern areas. We need to take all-out efforts from now on to increase production of these crops," he said.

A total of Tk 2,361 crore was allocated for 68 projects in 2020-21. Till October 2020, the progress was 16.3 per cent.

Agriculture Secretary Mesbahul Islam moderated the meeting.