

UNDP cuts short election management project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has decided to shorten the tenure of its election management project in Bangladesh due to unavailability of fund. Introduced in 2012 and scheduled to run till March 2016, the Strengthening Election Management in Bangladesh (SEMB) project will now be concluded by this month's end, said a UNDP press release yesterday.

EC to start updating electoral roll July 25

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The Election Commission (EC)-appointed enumerators will start going door to door from July 25 to collect data of citizens and update the electoral roll. For the first time the EC will be collecting data of those aged 15 years and above instead of 18, EC Secretary Sirazul Islam told a press conference at the EC's media centre yesterday. However, only those aged 18 or above will be included in the electoral roll. "We are collecting their (below 18) data in advance to process their personal information for preparing national identity (NID) cards," he added. The electoral roll programme will be

implemented in 189 upazilas in the first phase, then in 184 and 141 upazilas in the second and third phases respectively. Following the first phase of data collection from July 25 to August 9, citizens will have to go to the EC-authorized centres between August 11 and September 1 and get registered and their photos taken. The corresponding periods for the second phase are August 16 to 30 and September 3 to 22 and for the third phase September 7 to 22 and September 30 to October 22. A total of 50,000 enumerators will be working with upazila-level coordination committees supervising.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2



The footpath in front of General Post Office (GPO) Dhaka was partially cleared, as hawkers left with their goods, following an eviction drive yesterday. But the presence of the wooden platforms they used suggests that they might return anytime. The drive came after this newspaper published a photograph of the walkway, completely blocked by the hawkers, on June 24.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Fight against begging needs joint efforts

Prothom Alo roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
As previous efforts like restricting beggars' presence in certain areas or sending them to the rehabilitation centre failed to eliminate the practice, there should be coordinated efforts of government and non-government organisations, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday. Speaking as chief guest, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC)

Mayor Annisul Huq stressed the need for creation of a demographic database of the country's beggars. To help eradicate child begging, the mayor on his part has taken initiatives to set up 200 schools in Dhaka's north where street children can study. The discussion, "Role of Corporate Sector and Civil Society in Eradicating Child Begging", was organised by the Prothom Alo in association with Ain o Salish Kendra

(ASK) at the newspaper's office. Dr Nishat Fatima Rahman, coordinator of Psychosocial Lab, Institute of Educational Development at Brac University, said that to keep children drowsy during begging, they were given sleeping pills. "They are fed sedatives at an age when their brains need to remain more active," she said, adding that these children could not grow up naturally

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2

Call off protest against Sust VC

Teachers' assoc chief calls on agitators

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar
President of Sust Teachers Association Prof Kabir Hossain yesterday urged the teachers, who are demanding the vice chancellor's resignation since mid-April, to call off their indefinite protest. The same call came from a Bangladesh Chhatra League-led student rally. Prof Kabir wrote to Prof Syed Shamsul Alam, convener of the protesters' platform Mohan Muktiuddher Chetonay Udbuddho Shikkhak Brindo, saying they should solve the problem together. In this regard, Prof Kabir cited a letter he received from the education minister on Wednesday, which called for an amicable solution to the impasse. The protesters yesterday besieged the VC's office for the 11th consecutive day. They say protests would continue until he steps down. However, VC Prof Aminul Haque Bhuiyan yesterday cautioned against instability and said he would stay in office till expiry of his four-year tenure. A former professor of Dhaka University, he was appointed VC of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) in July 2013. The protesters accused him of misbehaviour, misuse of funds, nepotism, and favouritism. He denied all allegations.

College admission on for 2 more days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Although the deadline for admission to colleges was supposed to end yesterday, the government has decided to allow the institution authorities to enrol students to class XI today and tomorrow considering a huge number of students who failed to get admitted. "There is no bar for the colleges to enrol students on Friday and Saturday," Prof Abu Bakar Siddique, chairman of Inter-education Board Coordination Subcommittee, told reporters at his office yesterday. He also said the student, whose names were on the first merit list, can be admitted in these two days. The government for the first time this year initiated online admission to all colleges. It also decided that the boards would publish a list of the students, specifying the colleges where they are to be enrolled. But due to a lack of preparation on the government's part, the entire system turned out to be a nightmare for more than 11 lakh applicants and their parents. Finally, the ministry Monday published the first merit list with names of over 10.93 lakh students for admission. In the first list, the ministry failed to select any college for over 62,000 students.

Gang-rapes almost tripled in 6 months

Says Mahila Parishad report
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The number of gang-rapes reported every month in the country has nearly tripled to 24 in the last six months, shows a report of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad. Nine gang-rapes were recorded in January, and in June it was 24, said a press release of the organisation. The parishad collected data on violence against women (VAW) based on reports of 14 national dailies of the country. A total of 492 rapes took place in the country from January to June 2015. The total number of violence against women incidents in the last six months was 2,079. These incidents include attempted rape, sexual harassment, abduction, murder, and child marriage. In June, 66 rapes, 56 murders, five murders after rape, 33 suicides, 25 physical assaults, and 25 incidents of harassment were reported in newspapers, according to the press release.

Crunchy, Cool CUCUMBERS IN SUMMER...

KNOW YOUR FOOD

With summer's reign and the month of Ramadan coinciding, fasting requires some extra preparations. Staying hydrated means not just drinking water but also consuming fruits and vegetables that contain a lot of water. Cucumber is one such vegetable. Similar to watermelons they contain a lot of water that aids with hydration. Eaten raw or cooked with other vegetables, they are delicious and healthy. Sliced, diced, seasoned and added to onions, tomatoes or maybe even with yoghurt or cooked with lentils this vegetable is well deserved to be classed as a super food.

Cucumbers are a good source of vitamin B complex. The combination of these vitamins boosts the immunity system, contains free radicals that prevent early aging and the development of heart diseases. It also improves HDL cholesterol; this is the good cholesterol that the body requires. Vitamin B complex also related to healthy hair skin and nails. If you struggle with chronic bad breath or cannot get your hands on some mint just slice a piece of cucumber and place it on the roof of your mouth.

It gets rid of the odour causing bacteria. The presence of potassium in the vegetable is associated with maintaining blood pressures. Cucumbers primarily consist of water and fiber. So this helps keep your digestive system in track as well as maintain weight. The skin of the vegetable is made of insoluble fiber that is good for your digestive tract and as it is low in calories you can have it as snack to curb your appetite. Never discard the skin of a cucumber when you prepare it raw as it contains a good amount of vitamin C, about 10 percent of the daily recommended.

Shwapno tries to provide its customers with the freshest batch of cucumbers. Nurul Haque Kazi from Bogra cultivates and sells cucumbers for a living. It takes roughly two months for a cucumber to mature and the process is quite simple. The soil is first prepped using natural fertilizers and then seeds are sown. The entire plot is covered by a make shift shed more commonly known as a Macha in Bangladesh. After the seeds are sown, initially poly bags are covered to protect the seeds from being eaten by birds. As they mature the bags are removed. Matured cucumbers are then harvested. Nurul Haque Kazi does this in the morning and takes to common meeting point where the Shwapno team inspects the lot. They pick the best and freshest, wrap them up in banana leaves and then sends them directly to the city to respective Shwapno outlets.

Available throughout the year, this vegetable appears regularly in the Bangladeshi food scene as a salad. Fasting for long hours in the summer increases the chances of dehydration which manifests through unlikely symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, and electrolyte imbalance. Aside from drinking a lot of water this summer do not forget your crunchy cucumbers as well!!

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The Daily Star

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