Claims BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A strong opposition party is necessary to strengthen democracy, but the government is trying to eliminate the opposition force in the country, claimed the BNP at a press conference at its central headquarters in the capital yesterday.

"We urge the government to give up its strategy of destroying the opposition, and ensure that we can be politically active in the country," said BNP spokesperson Asaduzzaman Ripon.

He said the government might think that it is better if the opposition is weak, but it fails to see that democracy is weakened by

a weak opposition. Ripon urged the Awami League-led government to hold effective dialogue with the BNP to hold an inclusive election and reorganise

the election commission.

Ripon said different ministers have talked about BNP exercising political activities in a normal manner. "But we want a guarantee from the government," he added.

He added that the opposition leaders behind bars should be released, and "false cases" against them withdrawn.

Kidnapped man rescued, 7 held in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives rescued a man and arrested seven kidnappers including two agents of a mobile banking service from a hotel on the capital's Topkhana Road on Friday night.

Mohaiminul Islam, who was kidnapped from Adabor on Wednesday, had been confined to a room at Hotel Boishakhi by the criminals who demanded Tk 10 lakh from his father as ransom.

The arrested are Shahadat Hossain, Sharif Hossain, Nidhan Chandra Das, Selim, Abdul Kader, and bKash agents Nasir

Uddin and Bappi. Addressing a press conference at the media centre of Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday, DMP Joins Commissioner (Media) Monirul Islam said the victim's father lodged a

complaint with Adabor Police Station on Thursday. During primary interrogation, the arrestees confessed to kidnapping people for ransom for a long

time, he said. The bKash agents took care of the transactions of ransom through their

accounts, he added.



To mitigate waterlogging in the capital, 10 pumps at Hatirjheel are dumping rainwater collected from different parts of the city into a canal in Rampura that meets the Balu River. The pumps, built by Wasa and maintained by the Bangladesh Army, get water from Hatirpool, Dhanmondi, Lalmatia, Gulshan, Tejgaon and Moghbazar areas. The photo was taken yesterday.

said though Bangladesh has an unemploy-

ment rate of 7.5 percent, lower than the

global 13 percent, the underemployment

According to data presented by Abul Hasan

Khan, director (planning) of Department of

Youth Development (DYD), said they pro-

vided training to 4,462,855 youths, and

2,005,720 youths became self-employed with

that although secondary school enrolment

is 64 percent, the dropout rate is 42 percent.

More girls enrol in school compared to

boys, but the percentage of dropouts among

ist of Unicef, noting the lack of insufficient

secondary schools in the country,

emphasised the use of non-formal education

and youth clubs to disseminate information.

Bangladesh Skills for Employment and

Productivity (BSEP) project, ILO suggested

apprentice programmes for dropouts and

Hari Pada Das, programme officer at

Amy Delneuville, child protection special-

girls is also higher than boys, she said.

Speaking on education, Eshani noted

the help of DYD since its inception in 1981.

rate of the country is 24 percent.

Trained youths must for

PHOTO: **ANISUR RAHMAN**

RAJON KILLING CASE | Greens protest India's Another held river linking project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists yesterday protested India's fresh move to implement the controversial river linking project that will connect 30 major rivers including trans-boundary Brahmaputra and Ganges to divert water to southern Indian states, especially for irrigation. According to experts, the project,

if implemented, will diminish the water flow in Bangladesh's rivers like the Teesta, Jamuna and the Padma and affect the country's environment and economy. Quoting Indian water Resources

Minister Sanwar Lal Jat, several Indian newspapers recently reported that his ministry would soon be taking up the planning of a very important link, Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganges, in consultation with the government of Assam, West Bengal and Bihar.

At a press conference jointly organised yesterday by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), Bangladesh Environment Network and People's

SAARC Water Forum-Bangladesh at Dhaka Reporters' Unity, speakers also said the project, besides harming Bangladesh, will also affect nine Indian states including West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, and Assam.

Bangladesh on

course to end

child marriage

Five key countries with high

child marriage rates, includ-

ing Bangladesh, have begun

the legal process of ending

child marriage for the first

time, said British

International Development

Secretary Justine Greening

journey towards stopping

child marriage and female

genital mutilation on July

22, the summit was also

participated by Prime

in Bangladesh currently

aged between 20 and 24

were married off before their

18th birthday but the good

news is that the rate of child

marriage is on a downward

trend, said Greening, add-

ing that Britain is going to

keep fighting the battle of

establishing females' rights

with the help of other coun-

tries, like Bangladesh, and

campaigners.

More than half of women

Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Celebrating one-year

at The Girl Summit.

UK bureaucrat tells

ANSAR AHMED ULLAH

Girl Summit

wage movement to pressurise the government to hold talks with the Indian government in this regard. At the conference, Bapa Secretary Dr Md Abdul Matin mentioned that

The speakers urged the public to

the Indian environmentalists are also protesting the project. River and water expert Engineer M Inamul Haque said India cannot

deprive Bangladesh of its water share and with the project India will only destroy the water resources of both the countries.

Prof M Shahidul Islam of the geography and environment department of Dhaka University said if India diverted water, a large amount of saline water would enter Bangladeshi rivers during high tides. Columnist Syed Abul Maksud, Bapa vice-president, also spoke.

global youth population is 1.8 billion." She under-privileged students. PHOTO ON PAGE 4 EC begins updating electoral

Star-UNFPA roundtable told

Skill development, language training and

quality education for the youth are neces-

sary for a country to get benefits from its

large young population, said speakers at a

persons abroad," said Md Fazle Rabbi Mia,

deputy speaker of the parliament, regarding

the country's dependence on foreign remit-

Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur said a

bridge needs to be created between profes-

sionals and academics of the country to iden-

tify skills required by different industries, and

The roundtable titled "Harnessing the

Eshani Ruwanpura, programme specialist

Power of the Young" was organised by The

Daily Star and UNFPA at the newspaper's

(youth) UNFPA, said, "Bangladesh has approxi-

mately 52 million young people and the total

update relevant curriculums accordingly.

Prof AKM Nurun Nabi, vice chancellor of

tance and the garment industry.

"We have to explore how to send skilled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

roundtable yesterday.

office in the capital.

the first phase, 184 upazilas in the second

phase and 141 upazilas in the last phase. The enumerators will collect data till August 9 in the first phase. The second phase will start on

August 16 and the third phase on September 7. A total of 50,000 enumerators will work

to complete the task.

SHUJAN PRESS CONFERENCE Shushashoner Jannoy Nagorik (SHUJAN) has raised questions about the accuracy of the voter list as the number of female voters is lower than male voters.

In 2013, the total number of voters was over 9.19 crore. Of them, male voters were

over 4.61 crores and female voters over 4.58 lakh. In 2014, the total number of voters rose to over 9.61 crores. Of them, male voters were over 4.84 crores and female voters over 4.77 crores.

Such a "gender gap" in voter list remains and it can definitely raise questions about the accuracy of the voter list, claim SHUJAN,

a civil society organisation. The organisation made the claim at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club in the

capital yesterday. Addressing the function, Syed Abul Maksud criticised the role of EC and said fair election

cannot be expected from the incumbent EC.

maximising dev potential For not reporting the torture to

cops despite being an eye witness

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar



year-old Rajon, in Sheikh Para in Sylhet Sadar. Police arrested Ayaz Ali, 40, on charges of silently witnessing the excruciating torture that caused Samiul Alam Rajon's death and not informing police about it, said Akhter Hossain, officer-in-charge of

Police yesterday

arrested another

person in connec-

tion with the grue-

some murder of 13-

Jalalabad Police Station. A Sylhet court placed Ayaz on a threeday remand after police produced him with a 10-day remand prayer.

With Ayaz, 13 people have so far been arrested, including all the four named accused in the case.

Earlier on July 8, a group of men hit Rajon with a stick in the head, feet, joints of legs and shoulders for "trying to steal a rickshaw" in Kumargaon Bus Stand area of Sylhet. One of them filmed the scene on a mobile phone and shared it on social media, sparking

outrage at home and abroad. Locals caught Muhit Alam, Ali Haider, and security guard Moyna Miah and handed them over to police. Bangladeshi migrant workers in Saudi Arabia caught Muhit's brother Kamrul Islam in Jeddah after they saw Rajon's murder news on TV and handed him over to the local police through the

Bangladesh mission there. A murder case was filed.

Road crashes kill 3, injure 6

CITY DESK

Three people were killed and six others injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday and Friday.

Our Comilla correspondent reports, Md Riaz, 17, of Chandpur was killed and four people were injured when a CNG-run autorickshaw turned turtle as the driver lost control over the vehicle on Pennai-Matlab road in Nayer area of Daudkandi upazila yesterday.

Our Mymensingh correspondent reports, Lokman Ali, 60, a batteryrun auto-rickshaw driver was killed and two passengers were injured when a bus hit the auto-rickshaw in Bhaluka upazila yesterday.

Our Thakurgaon correspondent adds, Monir Uddin, 60, of Siddragargaon village was killed when a motorcycle hit him while he was crossing Pirganj-Ranishankoil road in Gonirhat village of Pirganj upazila on Friday evening.

People collecting fresh drinking water from a tap, away from their houses, in Uttar Mugda Para of the capital yesterday. Residents of Mugda Para and surrounding areas have long been suffering due to the supply of smelly water by Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa). People said the Wasa water was too smelly for drinking but they used it for bathing, cleaning and cooking. Although the problem has been repeatedly reported in the media, including The Daily Star, the authorities did not take any remedial step. PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

New Chittagong mayor

FROM PAGE 3

PUBLIC SUFFERINGS

Meanwhile, heavy rains brought immense sufferings to the hapless city dwellers.

People were seen wading through filthy water or waiting for a long time trying to catch a ride. Rupa Chowdhury, a student of class IX, waded through the water to reach her coaching centre in time. She said, "

didn't get a rickshaw despite waiting for one and a half hours." The same happened to Abdur Razzak, a private job holder, who was seen waiting for a three-wheeler to go to his

workplace at Agrabad. Waterlogging particularly affected the low-income

people who live from hand to mouth. A tea stall owner at Probortok Intersection, Md Basir said his sales dropped significantly.

"Normally daily sales average Tk 1,000 but today my sale is only Tk 200 till 12:00noon," he said.

RICKSHAW FARE JUMPS

As the city remained under water, rickshaw-pullers charged "exorbitant" fares, alleged passengers.

However, rickshaw-pullers said it was hard to drive on the waterlogged roads, so they charged a little extra.

Passengers said sometimes the fare jumped fourfold to fivefold. Roksana Akter, a master's student of Chittagong College,

said while waterlogging caused sufferings to people it become a blessing for rickshaw-pullers. The usual fare for a rickshaw ride from Munshipuker Par

to Chawkbazar is Tk 15-20, she said, adding, "I had to pay Tk 40 for the same ride today." Rickshaw-puller Md Anwar said he earned Tk 600 by

11:00am while his daily income stood at Tk 400 to Tk 500 on average. But it is very difficult to drive on the waterlogged street,

added rickshaw-puller Tyeb Ali. Contacted, Mohammad Siddique Mia, president of

Chittagong City Paddle-run Rickshaw Malik Parishad, said the drivers were always asked not to overcharge. He said he would discuss the matter.

The areas flooded were Bakalia, Shulak Bahar, Kapasgola, Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Airport Road, Halishahar, Sholoshahar, Gate No 2, Masterpool, Dewan Bazar, DC Road, KB Aman Ali Road, Bibirhat, Katalganj, Bepari Para, Muhuri Para, Aturar Depot, CDA Residential Area, Panchlaish Residential Area, and Bow Bazar.

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