



Red carpet rolled out for Abbas

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday rolled out the red carpet for Palestine President Mahmoud Abbas as he arrived in Dhaka on a three-day official visit. President Abdul Hamid and senior cabinet ministers received the Palestinian leader at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport as a 21-gun salute was fired to mark his arrival.

A special aircraft carrying Abbas touched down at the airport in the afternoon. Two children, Jeem and Namira, grandson and granddaughter of President Hamid, presented a bouquet to the Palestine president as he came down from the plane.

A joint contingent of army, navy and air force gave Abbas a guard of honour.

The entourage of Abbas includes Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad NA Maliki, Chief Justice Mahmud AL-Habbash, Presidential Spokesman

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Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is being welcomed by President Abdul Hamid at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital yesterday. This is his first official visit to Bangladesh.

PHOTO: PID

EC must be free from political interference

Those with clean image should be picked, say 4 civil society members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four civil society members yesterday suggested that the search committee pick competent, non-partisan, wise and conscientious people for constituting the five-member Election Commission.

They stressed the need for having people with clean image in the next EC and keeping it free from political interference.

The four shared their views with the search panel for EC formation at the Supreme Court Judges' Lounge in the morning.

This was the second view-exchange meeting between the committee and civil society members. Earlier on Monday, it had talks with a group of 12 civil society members.

The six-member committee, formed by President Abdul Hamid on January 25, sits at 4:00pm today to discuss the 20 names short-listed from over 100 names proposed by 27 political parties for five EC posts.

Yesterday, former chief election commissioner Abu Hena, Daily Samakal Editor Golam Sarwar, Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud and The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam had a 90-minute meeting with the panel.

Talking to journalists later, Abu Hena said they proposed that non-partisan, wise, courageous and hard-working persons should be chosen for EC formation.

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Target low-cost kidney care

New move to provide free or low-cost dialysis facilities for poor patients

PORIMOL PALMA

Weighed down by the burden of loans he had taken out for the treatment of his mother, 17-year-old Abdul Mottalib came to Dhaka in 2007 in search of a job.

His migration from Sirajganj's Kazipur, an area hit by river erosion, paid off as he got a job at an Export Processing Zone factory in Savar and eventually repaid the Tk 2.5 lakh loan in the next four years.

By that time, his mother, who was having some lung complications, also got well after a successful surgery. Two years later, he got married and became a father.

But Mottalib's happy days did not last long. His world turned upside down after he was diagnosed with kidney disease towards the end of 2015.

Since then, his treatment has been costing him around Tk 18,000 every month, whereas his salary is only Tk 15,000. Earlier, the machine operator could work for some extra hours. But now, he cannot even complete his regular work hours.

"I tried hard but could not find someone who would donate me a kidney," said Mottalib, now 27. He lives in Ashulia on the outskirts of the capital and has to go to the Kidney Foundation in Mirpur for dialysis at least twice a week.

Like him, many with similar stories go to the non-profit healthcare service facility every day. All of them dream nothing but to get better but struggle to continue the dialysis for financial constraints.

In such a situation, Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, founder of the Gonoshasthaya

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- 8 lakh people face kidney failures in Bangladesh
- Every year, 40,000 die, failing to have dialysis
- Organ transplantation act limits scopes for kidney donation
- Gonoshasthaya Dialysis Centre opens low-cost service in March

10-year-old girl feared to have 'tree man' disease

Could be the first female with the rare skin disorder



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prickly rashes were first seen on Shahana Khatun's face when she was only a year old. Her parents thought it was nothing serious and would vanish.

The rashes were almost of the same size until she turned six. Then those began to grow and spread raising the alarm but not to the extent that her father Shahjahan Mia, of Baluchara village in Netrakona sadar, would promptly take her to a doctor.

He talked to villagers and pharmacy retailers but no one seemed to have any idea.

In the next two years, similar

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Literature can keep children off wrong path

Says PM while opening Ekushey book fair

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said all parents should encourage their children to read literature as it can prevent them from slipping into a wrong path.

"We can prevent children from heading down the wrong path only by getting them involved in literary activities," she said.

The PM was addressing the opening programme of the month-long Amar Ekushey Boi Mela and the three-day International Literature Conference on the Bangla Academy premises.

She said Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela got the recognition as the biggest book fair of the world in terms of duration.

The Ekushey of the

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