

Toilet for women vandalised

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Hundreds of students of Sylhet Govt Alia Madrasa yesterday vandalised an under-construction public toilet for women and people with disabilities in Chowhatta area of the city.

They claimed that Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) was building the toilet on a piece of land that belonged to the madrasa.

The land near the civil surgeon's office is close to the city centre where public toilets are insufficient.

Locals said over 100 students of the madrasa vandalised the wall of the building chanting slogans slamming SCC Mayor Ariful Haque Chowdhury until police chased them away. The incident took place around 1:30pm.

Gousul Alam, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said they are looking into the incident.

Contacted, SCC Mayor Ariful Haque Chowdhury said the nine square feet public toilet was being built on the land taken from the Madrasa authority through proper channels.

"We must take steps to accommodate the needs of women and people with disabilities; and the plan was to meet needs in an important and busy area on city roads."

This correspondent could not reach from the madrasa authority for comments.

TIB calls

FROM PAGE 2
stop unless the vested quarters, organisations and unscrupulous persons, who want to amass wealth quickly, are not brought to book.

TIB emphasised increasing skilled manpower, ability and purview of the authorities concerned, including the BB, to bring discipline in the banking and financial sector. It also called for modernisation of the institutions.

The government needs to show political commitment and courage to ensure an environment where the controlling authorities can work without any obstructions, the statement read.

TIB also called for refraining from taking ad hoc measures in the absence of necessary legal and policy guidelines. It also urged the government to cancel the amendment of relevant bank law.

The government in May approved a proposal to amend the Banking Companies Act, doubling the number of directors in a bank's board from a single family and extending the tenure of share-holding directors.

The amendment is awaiting parlia-

Blankets hung

FROM PAGE 18
well-off, there has been criticism that the gesture could have had a bigger impact in poverty-stricken areas such as Al-Oud, Al-Bathaa and Manfooha.

"The idea of the initiative should be commemorated, but the placement of the blankets was ill-advised since Al-Rayyan is inhabited by middle-class citizens," said Riyadh resident Um Yazan.

"The gesture is noble, but there should've been some thought beforehand."

In Riyadh, where the minimum temperature is 10° Celsius, the education department has reminded principals to exercise their judgment to skip the morning line-up program because of the cold weather.

This also applies to the northern regions of Al-Jouf, Hail and the Northern Borders.

In Hail, where the temperature is currently as low as 4° Celsius, last Friday a man documented rainwater found frozen in a container, a scene that residents of a usually dry climate rarely experience.

In the northwestern region, Gov Prince Fahd bin Sultan of Tabuk has issued directives to schools in the region to start the day at 8:30 am instead of 7:00 am.

That madrasa

FROM PAGE 18
the doa mahfil at Muktijoddha Sangsad office to mark the Victory Day. People were supposed to place wreaths at the mural of Bangabandhu at the office after prayers.

There was a commotion after Faijul, while conducting the doa, said, "May Allah grant heaven for those who were hanged for killing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975."

Political leaders took the situation under control and police detained Faijul on the spot.

Meanwhile in Manikganj, Bangabandhu's killer Col Aziz Pasha's brother Alamgir Pasha's home in Ghior upazila was vandalised around 6:00 pm on Saturday.

Alamgir, a retired school teacher, said he was listening to radio on the first floor his two storey building when some 30-40 motorcyclists entered the premises and the bikers threw bricks at the building, destroyed furniture and set a heap of straw on fire.

The bikers left by the time neighbours arrived and doused the fire. Rabiul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ghior Police Station, said a police team was sent to the scene.

Deforestation

FROM PAGE 18
acres was deforested and another 2,000 acres awaits the same fate following an influx of 655,000 Rohingyas.

The situation has further worsened as the Rohingyas are felling trees in the forest to collect firewood for cooking. There is no alternative to felling trees for the one million refugees to cook food.

Elephants go on foray every night at Lombasia, Modurchora, Kutupalong and Balukhali camps where the Rohingyas are exposed to attacks.

Suruj Ali who took refuge at Modurchora makeshift camp at Kutupalong extension from Myanmar's Maundaw told The Daily Star that they live in constant fear of elephant attacks.

"I do not know how to save my family from the giants' attack. We just pray to Allah to remain safe in such danger," Sujur Ali said.

The forest is fast depleting due to indiscriminate felling of trees and refugee settlements, said Md Ali Kabir, deputy conservator of Cox's Bazar South Forest Division.

He told The Daily Star that the Rohingyas' desperate move to collect firewood has further worsened the situation. They have asked higher authorities to arrange alternative means for them in order to protect the forest.

"The worst victim of the catastrophe

is the endangered Asian elephant. Their habitats are being shrunk at an alarming way. The corridors the giants used to opt for moving have disappeared thanks to the growing human settlements," he added.

He said the key corridors blocked by human settlements include Balukhali-Chumdum-Myanmar and Panerchora-Rajarkul-Naikkhanchhari. The elephants never change their routes.

"As the main corridors are blocked, they seem to be shifting to Khuniyapalong and Dhuyapalong areas of Ramu from Ukha-Teknaf," he said.

Istiaque Ahmed, country director of International Union for Conservation of Nature, told The Daily Star that habitats for elephants have already shrunk in Cox's Bazar.

He said the corridors are important as the elephants migrate from one place to another for breeding and in search of food.

"Initiatives must be taken to free the corridors as much as possible. It is not viable to feed elephants given the amount they consume a day. We must maintain the environment so that they can get their food from nature," he added.

Md Ali Hossen, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, told The Daily Star they are trying to save the remaining corridors. Given the situation on the ground, any steps to save the forest and wildlife seem very tough, he added.

Myanmar team flies

FROM PAGE 1
the Myanmar delegation.

Talking to The Daily Star, a senior official who attended the meeting said Dhaka was serious about speedy repatriation of the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals and would urge Myanmar to take back its citizens as per the agreement signed.

A 24-member JWG is likely to be composed of officials from home and foreign ministries of the two countries.

As per the November-23 agreement, the return of the Rohingyas should start within two months, but most of the officials have doubts about that.

According to the deal, Rohingyas will have to fill in forms with names of family members, addresses in Myanmar, birth date and sign a statement of voluntary return. The requirements for identification documents have been a contentious issue for the stateless Rohingyas.

UN bodies and rights groups have voiced concern over the "premature" repatriation process. They raised questions about the safety and resettlement of the returnees as hundreds of their villages have been razed and an anti-Muslim sentiment prevails in Rakhine.

More than 655,000 Rohingyas have crossed into Bangladesh since August 25, escaping a military crackdown in Rakhine State, said the International Organisation for Migration, UNB reports.

Meanwhile, 19 non-resident envoys, based in New Delhi and concurrently accredited to Bangladesh, yesterday visited Rohingya refugee camps in Ukha of Cox's Bazar, reports our Cox's Bazar correspondent.

The Rohingyas told them that they faced serious torture and repression and were forced to flee to Bangladesh

to save their lives.

The envoys were from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Georgia, Egypt, Mauritius, Portugal, Slovenia, Ukraine, Zambia, Nigeria, Czech Republic, Austria, Ghana, New Zealand, Kenya and Fiji.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Syed Moazzem Ali and its Deputy High Commissioner Rakib Uddin accompanied the envoys.

The envoys visited Balukhali and Kutupalong camps.

They called for ensuring the rightful return of the Myanmar nationals when they met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday, UNB reports.

Putting emphasis on consultation to resolve the crisis, they said the Myanmar authorities must take measures so that the Rohingyas could go back to their place of origin in Rakhine State.

They envoys highly appreciated Hasina for her gesture of humanity by giving shelter to such a huge number of Myanmar nationals in a good and well-organised manner. They said the arrangement was just wonderful.

To manage over one million people who entered Bangladesh is not so easy, rather it is too tough to organise, they said.

The envoys said the Rohingya crisis is not a problem of Bangladesh only rather it has now become an international problem.

The informed the Prime Minister that they will convey the message of the entire situation to their respective governments.

Hasina expressed her gratitude to the international community for their support to Bangladesh on the Rohingya issue.

US public health 'word ban' sparks outrage

AFP, Washington

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's reported move to ban words including "fetus," "diversity" and "transgender" in budget-related documents triggered outrage, astonishment and calls for the decision to be reversed Saturday.

The Washington Post reported Friday that policy analysts were told at a meeting of the forbidden terms, which one analyst said also included "science-based," "evidence-based," "vulnerable" and "entitlement."

Faced with a growing backlash, the Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees the CDC, termed the reported ban on use of the words a "complete mischaracterization."

"Among the words forbidden to be used in @CDCgov budget documents are 'evidence-based' and 'science-based.' Here's a word that's still

allowed: ridiculous," the American Association for the Advancement of Science wrote on its Twitter account.

Michael Halpern, the deputy director of the Center for Science and Democracy, said "effectively tackling public health challenges means being honest and open about risks and who faces these risks."

"To prevent the agency from losing its legitimacy, CDC Director Fitzgerald must speak up now to reinforce the centrality of science to the agency's work," Halpern wrote in a blog post.

The March for Science, which saw thousands of people protest in Washington and elsewhere earlier this year, called for the reported decision to be reversed.

"We call on the administration to remove this ban and on our representatives to protect the scientific communities right to openly discuss their research and its impact on our world," it said on Twitter.

Bacchu skips ACC quizzing

FROM PAGE 18
Bacchu said he was admitted to a city hospital. That was why he could not appear before the ACC and sought the time.

"We're looking into the matter. We'll decide how many days he'll be granted," the source said.

On November 24, the anti-graft body summoned Bacchu and 10 former directors for interrogation for the first time, around four years after one of the biggest loan scams in the country's banking sector came to the fore.

Bacchu was first questioned on December 4. On that day, he was interrogated in connection with Tk 4,500 crore loan scam, which

happened between 2009 and 2012 when he headed the bank's board of directors.

On December 6, Bacchu was quizzed in 10 out of 56 cases.

According to a Bangladesh Bank enquiry, about Tk 4,500 crore was siphoned off from the BASIC Bank between 2010 and 2013 when Bacchu chaired its board.

On July 14, 2014, the central bank sent a report on the scam to the ACC, detailing how people embezzled money from the bank through shell companies and dubious accounts.

The BB found that Bacchu illegally influenced all the activities of

Mob beats 'cattle thief' to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A silent burglar alarm may have prevented the theft of a farmer's cattle in Faridpur but cost another man his life.

Md Nuruddin, the farmer in question, said yesterday night, at around 3:30am, the alarm was triggered and automatically turned on his bedroom. He instantly understood that someone had entered his compound. He called the villagers for help and they managed to catch one of the thieves.

The alleged cattle thief was beaten to death by the mob at Sadipur village under Alibad union.

The victim was identified as Russel Sheikh, 27. A truck driver by profession, he lived with his wife and a son.

Local alleged that Russel and his four associates came to their village on a truck at around 3:00am. The four men then went to the house of one Nuruddin for "stealing his cattle"

but Nuruddin's shouts prevented the theft from taking place. At one stage, villagers rushed to the spot and managed to catch Russel and then beat him while the others managed to flee the scene. The villagers also torched the truck. Later, Russel was taken to Faridpur Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

"My son is an expatriate in Singapore and he sent me the device. If any unknown person enters our house at night a light in my bed room automatically goes up," Nuruddin said.

Omar Faruk, chairman of Alibad Union Parishad, said, "Cattle lifting has increased in the union and at least 13 cattle were stolen in the area in the last month, so the locals were aware about the matter and for this reason they caught Russel and beat up him."

Badana Begum, the victim's sister said, "My brother is a truck driver. They killed my brother without listening to him. I want justice for this murder."

Sub-inspector of Sadar Police Station Nazrul Islam said "On information we rushed to the spot, we recovered the body and sent it to Faridpur Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy."

Police informed that no case had been filed by the family of the victim yet and that they would themselves file a case soon.

Stalker stabs

FROM PAGE 1
Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Yahya is on the run, said Mostofa Kamal, officer-in-charge of Dirai Police Station.

Israel arrests Palestinian with explosive device

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli police yesterday arrested a Palestinian carrying an explosive device as he approached a military court in the occupied West Bank, security officials said.

Specialists examined the device, which did not explode, the Israeli police said, without providing further details.

Local media said the military court was located in the Nablus area in the north of the occupied Palestinian territory.

Israeli public radio said the Palestinian hailed from the Jenin refugee camp further north in the West Bank.

A second explosive device was discovered inside his coat, the radio added, but there was no confirmation of this from the Israeli police.

Tensions have been high in the Palestinian territories since US President Donald Trump on December 6 recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Putin thanks Trump for help in foiling attack plot

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin thanked his US counterpart Donald Trump yesterday for the CIA's help in thwarting a plot to attack the city of Saint Petersburg, the Kremlin said.

It was the second time in a week that the world's most powerful leaders have exchanged messages of praise.

Putin spoke by phone with Trump to convey his gratitude for intelligence supplied by the CIA which allowed Russia's FSB security service to break up a "terrorist cell" that was planning attacks in Russia's second city, the Kremlin said in a statement carried by Russian news agencies.

"The information received by the CIA was enough to detect, hunt down and arrest the criminals," the Kremlin said.

Putin also pledged that Russian security agencies would pass on any information received about terrorist threats to the United States and its citizens.

The FSB announced on Friday it had arrested seven members of an Islamic State group cell that had been planning a suicide bombing and "the killing of citizens" in crowded areas of Saint Petersburg on December 16.

Police confiscated a large number of explosives used to make homemade bombs, automatic rifles, munitions and

extremist literature, it said.

- On alert ahead of World Cup - Tuesday, FSB chief Alexander Bortnikov said Russia was on alert for the possible return of jihadists from Syria ahead of the World Cup and the presidential election in 2018.

Russia has suffered several attacks this year, including a bombing on the Saint Petersburg metro in April that left 14 people dead.

The threat of attack has increased since Moscow's military intervention in Syria in September 2015 to support President Bashar al-Assad's regime, making Russia a priority IS target.

As many as 40,000 fighters travelled from all over the world, including Russia, to join IS in Syria after the 2014 declaration of its self-styled "caliphate" straddling Syria and Iraq.

In 2015, Russian security services estimated that 2,900 Russian citizens had joined the jihadist group, as well as several thousand Central Asians.

In a phone call on Thursday, Trump and Putin discussed the crisis over North Korea's nuclear programme, and the US leader took the unusual step of thanking his Russian opposite number for hailing the American economy.

The pair have lavished praise on each other in the past, with commentators describing their cozy relationship as a "bromance."

Crippling gas crisis

FROM PAGE 18
The crisis has also left a bad impact on the industrial sector.

Mahbubul Alam, president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries, said more than 400 factories in Chittagong have been facing production disruption due to the gas crisis.

"The export sector has been affected very badly as the exporters cannot ship their goods in time due to the production hamper," he said.

"I will write a letter to the Ministry of Power, Gas and Mineral Resources to address the crisis as soon as possible," he added.

Saber Ahmed, a driver, said he has to spend at least one and a half hours to refuel his vehicle because of long queues at CNG station.

Haider Azam Chowdhury, president of Chittagong District and Metropolitan Auto-rickshaw Owner-Driver Unity Committee, said drivers are suffering badly due to the shortage of gas supply.

Against the demand of gas worth Tk 300, a driver hardly gets Tk-150 gas as the pressure is quite low at the refueling stations.

The drivers have to go to the CNG station in the evening that cuts a peak time from their working hours. Paying the daily deposit to the vehicle owners is becoming very difficult for them, Azam added.

Anupam Dutta, manager (load monitoring) of KGDCL, yesterday told

The Daily Star they could not supply gas adequately as they were not getting gas from the national grid as per demand.

"The demand of gas in Chittagong is more than 400 mmcf, but the city gets only 240 mmcf gas on average," he said, adding, "The supply from the national grid has recently been cut by more than 40 mmcf."

"We received just 195 mmcf on Wednesday and 197 mmcf on Thursday," he said.

"We have been forced to stop supply to Shikabaha Power Plant, Raozan Thermal Power Plant and Chittagong Urea Fertilisers Limited since last week to improve domestic supply," he said.

Asked why the supply from the national grid has decreased, Anupam said, "Actually the overall gas production has decreased."

"The country's total production was 2,750 mmcf, which has been down to 2,670 mmcf for several months," he said.

He, however, expressed the hope of improvement. "A well of Samutang gas field will go into operation next month and that might improve the situation."

In the port city, Chawk Bazar, Bakalia, Jamal Khan, Anderkilla, Dewan Bazar, Chandanpura, Askar Dighir Par, Kapasgola, Badurtala, Bahaddarhat, Katalganj, Shulakbahar, Rahamatganj, Ghatforhadbegh, Pahartali, Boxir Hat, Kala Miah Bazar and Chandgaon are the most affected areas.

'They'll not return to power'

FROM PAGE 18
killed innocent people by arson attacks.

"No, people must not support them ... they're looters ... they had promoted war criminals and terrorists, destroyed the peace ... they had driven the country from the path of development to destruction."

The PM said people under the leadership of Bangabandhu and Awami League liberated the country.

"The country is now marching forward. It'll move on and emerge as a developed and a prosperous one."

"The people of the country are moving around the world with their heads held high, Inshallah, they will continue, this is our promise today," she said.

Hasina, also the Awami League chief, said people were reaping the benefits of the country's independence which was earned through the blood of tens of thousands of martyrs.

"During the war, the collaborators of Pakistan occupation forces had handed our mothers and sisters to Pakistanis, while more than one crore people had taken shelter in India."

The entire world, including friendly countries like India, Canada, France and Nepal, extended their support to the freedom-loving nation, she said,

adding that even the Americans were in favour of the people of Bangladesh.

After independence, the PM said the Father of the Nation started the trial of war criminals and banned the political activities of the anti-liberation forces.

She regretted that the Father of the Nation was assassinated at a time when he had begun rebuilding the war-ravaged country with farsighted development programmes.

After his assassination, Hasina said Bangladesh began a backward journey as military dictator Ziaur Rahman had brought the killers, rapists, Razakars and Al-Shams of 71 to power, and even stopped the trial of war criminals and released the convicted Razakars from jail.

The PM said Khaleda Zia had gone a step further by making the Razakars members of her cabinet.

After returning to power, Hasina said her government tried the war criminals and executed the court verdicts as per her election pledge.

At the beginning of the discussion, a one-minute silence was observed in memory of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib and other martyrs of the August 15, 1975, carnage, and four national leaders and martyrs of the Liberation War.

জরুরী বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, Babycare-3 ও Babycare MF যার ব্যাচ নং N.17C0013079, N.17C0013357, N.17C0013079, N.17C0013368 যা সালমোনেলা এগোনা (Salmonella Agona) যুক্ত। উল্লেখ্য যে, ফ্রাঙ্গের Lactalis কোম্পানীর উক্ত ব্যাচের কোন পণ্যই বাংলাদেশে প্রবেশ করে নাই।

এ বিষয়ে আমরা ফ্রাঙ্গের ল্যাকটালিস কোম্পানীর সাথে কথা বলে সমুদ্রপথে যে সব পণ্য আছে তা জরুরী ভিত্তিতে ফেরত নেয়ার ব্যবস্থা গ্রহন করতে বলেছি এবং শিপিং এজেন্টদের এ বিষয়ে অবহিত করি যাতে উক্ত আমদানিকৃত পণ্য বাংলাদেশে প্রবেশ না করে। তারা এ বিষয়ে দ্রুত সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়ার পদক্ষেপ নিচ্ছে। আরো উল্লেখ্য যে, আগামীতে উক্ত ব্যাচের কোন পণ্য বাংলাদেশে প্রবেশ করবে না।

যেহেতু বাংলাদেশে উক্ত ব্যাচের Babycare-3 ও Babycare MF এর কোন পণ্য প্রবেশ করে নাই, তাই বাংলাদেশে যে সমস্ত Babycare পণ্য আছে তা ব্যবহারে কোন ঝুঁকিও নাই।

জেস ইন্টারন্যাশনাল

JES International

৩৫, চক সার্কুলার রোড, ঢাকা-১২১১।