

No canal grabber will be spared

Says DSCC mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sayeed Khokon yesterday said anyone who grabs any canal of Dhaka city will not be spared.

"We will not consider political affiliations of grabbers, and will take action against them," said the DSCC mayor while inaugurating the cleaning work of Kutubkhali canal in Jatrabari.

Under the leadership of Bangladesh Army, a number of illegal structures have been removed from around 73km canal areas of Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra, out of 93kms, he said.

He said they will ensure flow of clean water, recovering all canals from grabbers, so that boats can ply on them.

About 20 lakh residents of the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra dam areas live with the risk of water-logging every year due to lack of long-term measures to improve the situation.

The condition of the Kutubkhali canal in Jatrabari is particularly pitiful, as most parts of the 2.1km canal is covered with solid waste.

As waste management is not being run properly, people of the area dump their daily waste into the canal, making the situation worse by the day.

The canal was earlier four to five times wider, but has become just like a drain, said locals, adding that it used to be connected to the Buriganga at Sadarghat.



With the Ekushey book fair just over a week away, preparations are underway in full swing at the Bangla Academy premises to set up stalls and other structures. This year, the fair will have 550 stalls, placed at the Bangla Academy grounds and Suhrawardy Udyan. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Ershad 'in good health': GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) acting chairman GM Quader yesterday claimed that HM Ershad is "in good health", as he has been receiving treatment in a Singapore hospital.

GM Quader, also the younger brother of Ershad made the remark while talking to reporters at the JP chief's Banani office.

He also hoped that Ershad, leader of the opposition, will return among the party's leaders and activists after successful completion of his treatment.

Ershad, who has been suffering from liver complications and low hemoglobin, went to Singapore for medical treatment on Sunday.

Before leaving the country, Ershad on Thursday appointed GM Quader as the acting chief of Jatiya Party in his absence.

'Gang-rape and murder becoming national disease'

Eminent personalities call for strict measures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent personalities at a discussion yesterday urged the government to take strict and effective measures against corruption, narcotics, rape and communalism.

They also demanded that "questionable election like the 11th parliamentary polls" not be held in future to protect democracy in the country.

Sammilito Samajik Andolon (SSA), a citizens' platform, organised the discussion on "challenges and responsibilities of the new government" at Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

Terming the national polls "farical", Oikya Nap President Pankaj Bhattacharya said the trend of police and administration favouring the ruling party during election should be stopped.

"Gang-rape, rape of children and murder are becoming a national disease. It's an ominous sign. The ruling party is also playing a role in this," said Pankaj.

Noted writer and columnist Syed Abul Maksud said, "I don't see any harm in accepting the truth... The [national] election was participatory if political parties are concerned, but there was no participation of general people."

SSA President Ziauddin Tariq Ali, Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank Khondokar Ibrahim Khaled and Dhaka University Associate Professor Robaet Ferdous, among others, also spoke at the discussion.

BFSA'S RESTAURANT GRADING SYSTEM

3 top-graded eateries fined Tk 3.45 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A day after introducing a grading system for eateries, Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection yesterday fined three restaurants Tk 3.45 lakh for preparing food in objectionable condition and charging higher than retail prices.

Bangladesh Food Safety Authority (BFSA) has introduced the grading system for restaurants on the basis of quality of food and overall hygiene of the establishments. As part of the grading system, they gave A+ grade to 18 and A grade to 39 restaurants in Motijheel, Dilkusha, Paltan and Secretariat areas on Sunday.

Yesterday, the directorate conducted drives in some restaurants including Bhoj, Bagicha, Enjoy Restaurant and Fast Food where they found employees not maintaining proper hygiene. The kitchens of the eateries were dirty too.

One of the restaurants was selling products at prices higher than retail, said Zannatul Ferdous, assistant director of the

Directorate, who led the drive.

Of the three restaurants, two were given "A+" and the other an "A" by BFSA, she told this correspondent over phone.

She said, "They seemed somewhat complacent after getting the grades."

Contacted, Mahub Kabir, member of BFSA, said the restaurants should be given more time to bring changes.

"By conducting drives through mobile court, these changes will not happen," he added.

The BFSA has set a 53-point check-list of compliance standards under 10 titles that include: necessary proof/certification documents, individual hygiene, approved source, relative contamination, cleanliness, processing procedures and temperature control, equipment/machinery, chemical substance, pests and insects control, drainage and pipe management.

Restaurants with a score of 90 and above get A+, 80 points and up get A, between 55 and 79 points get B and between 45 and 54 points get C.

France, Germany to sign new treaty today

CITY DESK

On January 22 in 1963, French President Charles de Gaulle and German Chancellor Dr Konrad Adenauer signed in Paris the Elysee Treaty that marked the beginning of an era of friendship and cooperation between the two countries after more than a century of tension and war.

It took the great leadership of both heads of state and government to create the conditions of the reconciliation and cooperation 18 years after the end of the war, says a press release.

Fifty-six years later, today a new treaty is going to be signed by French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Dr Angela Merkel in Aachen, Germany.

The representatives from the European Union institutions will also be present.

The first treaty was about reconciliation and the new one focuses on convergence, bringing closer their socio-economic models and joint positions in the international fora, in the context of the European integration.

In addition to the treaty, an agreement will be signed between the Bundestag, the German parliament; and the Assemblée Nationale, the French parliament, creating a 100-member strong French-German parliamentary assembly.

In a volatile international and European context, France and Germany recall, in the solemn form of a treaty between the two states, their shared commitment to values as the rule of law and multilateralism as well as their joint responsibility to build a sovereign and united Europe.

Security guard found dead inside ATM booth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A security guard's dead body was found inside an ATM booth in Dhaka's Baridhara area early yesterday.

Shamim, 24, an employee of Elite Security Services, was found with his head bashed in, inside an ATM booth of Jamuna Bank on Pragati Sarani around 6:15am, said Sub-inspector Bilkis Akter of Bhatara Police Station.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Kurmitola General Hospital where on-duty doctors said he had died much earlier, she said.

Shamim, who was working an eight-hour shift since 10pm on Sunday night,

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Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, in their rally yesterday, raises demands for decriminalisation of education and holding fair student union elections, such as Ducusu, in all educational institutions. The photo was taken at TSC.

DUCSU ELECTION

Most student orgs want polling centres outside halls

DU CORRESPONDENT

All student organisations except Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal's (JSD) student wing yesterday demanded that polling centres for Dhaka University Central Students Union (Ducusu) election be set up at the academic building of the university, instead of at residential halls, over "security concerns".

Twelve student organisations made the demand during a meeting of Paribesh Parishad held at Prof Abdul Matin Chaudhury virtual classroom.

Leaders of 14 active student organisations of the campus were present at the meeting with the Vice Chancellor.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) General Secretary Akram Hossain said that they raised the demand of setting up polling booths outside halls as BCL has been in control of

the dormitories for years.

"We have demanded to bring the polling booths under CCTV surveillance to make the election transparent," he said.

He also urged BCL leaders not to harass their fellow students.

Razib Das, general secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra Union's DU unit, alleged that there is no political coexistence at the dormitories due to BCL's dominance.

"A large number of students stay outside halls and they may not come to cast their votes fearing violence and unrest. We are urging the authorities to set up polling centres at the academic building to make sure the election is not tainted by any controversy," he added.

However, BCL General Secretary Golam Rabbani brushed aside the allegations, saying there is no scope of manipulating the results in this

digital era.

"All elections of the university were held peacefully and fairly under the incumbent administration. All activities of the university are hall-centric, so the polling centres should also be set up inside the halls," Rabbani said.

Asked about the coexistence of different student organisations including JCD, he said they have no objection if "regular students" among JCD activists come to campus.

Concerning students' eligibility to vote, Chhatra Union General Secretary Liton Nandi demanded to include those doing evening post-graduate courses or getting a second masters degree.

Golam Rabbani replied that if they are allowed to vote, then the age limit for voters should be the same as the age limit (30) for entry into government service.

UNHCR appoints new chief in Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the UN refugee agency, has appointed a new chief in Dhaka. Steven Corliss, the newly appointed UN official, has said that the refugee agency will extend full support to Bangladesh concerning the Rohingya crisis.

The UNHCR Representative Steven Corliss stated this during his meeting with Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen upon presentation of his credentials yesterday. Corliss becomes UNHCR's 10th Representative in a partnership with Bangladesh that dates back to 1971.

After taking up his new role, Corliss said, "The Government and the people of Bangladesh have shown remarkable solidarity and generosity to Rohingya refugees. As UNHCR's Representative, I will devote my full efforts to support the Government in

protecting, and finding lasting solutions for the refugees, as well as to addressing the impact on the host communities in Cox's Bazar."

Corliss, a national of the United States of America, brings more than 30 years of experience with UNHCR in diverse assignments around the world.

Welcoming Steven Corliss, the foreign minister highlighted Bangladesh's ethos of putting humanity above all. He mentioned Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's courageous decision of hosting over 1.1 million Rohingyas, said a Foreign Ministry press release.

The minister stated that the protracted presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh might threaten the peace and stability of the region and beyond. He urged the international community, including UNHCR to put utmost effort into the early repatriation of the Rohingyas with dignity and safety.

BRIBERY CASE

SC grants bail to Nazmul Huda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday granted bail to former BNP minister Nazmul Huda in a bribery case in which he was sentenced to four years' imprisonment by the High Court.

The apex court also permitted Nazmul Huda to move an appeal before it, against the HC verdict.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the order after hearing a leave-to-appeal petition filed by Huda.

There is no legal bar for Nazmul Huda to get released from jail following the SC order, Advocate AF Hasan Arif, a senior lawyer for Nazmul Huda, told The Daily Star.

Nazmul Huda, who was sent to prison after he surrendered to a Dhaka court on January 6, moved the petition before the apex court chamber judge on January 8, seeking bail in the case.

The SC chamber judge on that day sent the petition to its full bench, denying him bail.

On November 8, 2017, the HC in a verdict commuted his

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