



BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL... Three men, who lost their homes and belongings in Thursday's Bhasantek slum fire, scavenge for household items and scraps in the ditch above which their houses were built. Hundreds have been living without a roof above their head since the blaze, under a makeshift canopy. Some victims started building another canopy yesterday, to accommodate those under the open sky.

PHOTO: SHAHEEN MOLLAH



No new bus route in Dhaka

Decides committee concerned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a special committee to rationalise bus routes in Dhaka city already starting its work, the authorities will not give permission for any new bus route in the capital from now onward.

The decision was taken at the second meeting of the 10-member coordination committee for bus route rationalisation, formed in September last year.

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon, its convener, told reporters about the decision after the meeting at Nagar Bhaban yesterday.

If there is a special need, Regional Transport Committee (RTC) for Dhaka metro, the authority to issue route permits, can inform the special committee, he said, adding that it will then take a decision over the issue.

"You will see discipline on some routes in between April and June. New buses including AC buses will ply the routes," he said. It would take around two years to change the entire situation, the mayor added.

On September 9 last year, the government formed the committee for rationalising bus routes, bringing all public buses under a fixed number of companies and bringing public transports under discipline.

The committee -- comprising representatives of government bodies, police, transport owners, workers and an expert -- was asked to work on the issue and coordinate it considering the steps of late mayor Annisul Huq, who envisioned the initiative.

Annisul had taken the initiative to bring all buses in the

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Atiq promises a better DNCC

Says short tenure will not be a hindrance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In his first public appearance as mayor-elect of Dhaka North City Corporation, Atiqul Islam at a press conference in the capital yesterday said he would bring back road safety and transport discipline, and give the city footpaths back to pedestrians.

Dhaka would be turned into a green city by "developing" open parks and playgrounds at every neighbourhood, said Atiqul Islam, while reading out a written statement at a crowded press conference held at his Uttara residence.

Atiq won Thursday's by-election to the north Dhaka city's mayoral post. "We are going to take a crash programme to contain mosquito menace," the mayor-elect said in response to a question.

He rolled out a list of short-, medium- and long-term goals as mayor, with a view to enhancing civic life in the capital.

The other pledges he made included preventing environmental pollution, digitalisation of north Dhaka, automation of all kinds of tax payment and other financial transactions, urban forestation, extension of urban agriculture and development of 15 newly-annexed wards.

Pointed out by reporters that his tenure is merely a year long, Atiq said, "These goals are not meant for one year; I will continue working for as long as it takes."

Besides, Atiq committed to turning the newly-annexed wards that used to be under Union Parishads in the capital's fringes, into modern urban areas.

Replying to a question on poor turnout of voters in the election, Atiq said, "It is not my lookout how much the voter turnout was or which party took part in the election. I will go ahead with my work along with local lawmakers and ruling party activists."

Responding to a question on the city's traffic problems, Atiq said implementing agencies of metro rail and rapid bus transit schemes in the city must do their job in compliance with appropriate traffic management and environmental conservation.

He also called upon city dwellers to be responsible citizens in their disposal of solid waste and use of civic amenities.

Atiq himself conducted the press conference with lawmaker and Dhaka north Awami League's general secretary Sadek Khan. No top executive of DNCC was seen at the press conference.

Another fire breaks out at Chawkbazar; 3 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three youths suffered burns as a fire broke out at a scrap-metal shop in Old Dhaka's Chawkbazar area yesterday afternoon, 10 days after an inferno in the same area that left scores dead.

Yesterday's fire originated at the shop in Kamalbagh area around 5pm, leaving two workers and younger brother of the shop owner with burn injuries, police and officials of Fire Service and Civil Defence said.

Soon after the fire started, locals rushed to the spot and doused it before two units of fire service reached the spot, they said.

The injured -- Sumon, 32; Nur-e-Alam, 30; and Mohammad Suman Khan, 28 -- are now undergoing treatment at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), Sub-Inspector Bachchu Mia, in-charge of the hospital unit police outpost, told The Daily Star. Of them, Sumon sustained 18 percent burn injuries while Nur-e-Alam 30 percent and Mohammad Suman 26 percent, according to Dr Partha Sankar Paul, resident surgeon at DMCH burn unit.

Monir Hossain, a shopkeeper in the area, told The Daily Star, "I heard a boom and saw the trio running away from the tin-shed shop, which was on fire. I took them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital."

Sumon, one of the victims, said "We were smashing small metal cans of perfumes, gas and condensed milk in a machine. Suddenly, one of the cans burst, and fire erupted."

Fire Service and Civil Defence officials primarily suspected that the fire might have originated from an explosion of rejected perfume cans.

ANOTHER VICTIM OF CHURIHATTA BLAZE DIES

Yet another victim of the February 20 fire in Chawkbazar's Churihatata area died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday morning, taking the death toll to 71.

The deceased, 50-year-old Zakir Hossain, succumbed to his injuries at the Intensive Care Unit of DMCH's burn unit around 8:30am, Partha Sankar Paul, resident surgeon of the hospital's burn unit told The Daily Star.

Zakir had suffered 35 percent burn injuries.

Two more victims of the fire: Selim, 44, and Mahmudul, 52 -- are currently receiving treatment at the burn unit with 14 percent and 13 percent burn injuries respectively, said the physician.

Three other victims of the blaze -- Sohag, 22;

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Quader doubtful of 'perfect' UZ polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said he does not think the upazila parishad elections can be held in a perfect manner.

"Nothing can be termed perfect. There will be mistakes and errors, and we have to move forward along with the mistakes," Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said at a briefing at the party's Dhanmondi office in Dhaka.

Quader said this while talking about the upcoming upazila elections and the inevitability of polls-time errors.

He also expressed his satisfaction over the recently-held Dhaka North City Corporation by-election, saying there was no "ominous incident" during the polls despite so many candidates contesting the polls.

The Election Commission has already declared the schedule for Upazila Parishad elections, which will be held in five phases starting from March 10.

Schedules of four phases of the elections have already been rolled out. The fifth phase of election is likely to be held on June 18.

BCL candidate flouts Ducsu polls conduct

DU CORRESPONDENT

Violating the code of conduct for the Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu) and hall union polls, colour posters of Bangladesh Chhatra League vice-president nominee Rezwanul Haque Chowdhury have been pasted on different walls of Dhaka University, while he was also seen campaigning for his panel.

As per the section 6 (ka) and (kha) of electoral code of conduct, a candidate cannot use any picture or symbol, except for his own black and white photo in their leaflets and handbills, and those cannot be pasted on any infrastructures, walls, transport, boundary walls, trees, electric and telephone poles or any other structure situated inside the university area.

Several banners of Rezwanul were also seen in different places on the campus on Friday, including Madhur Canteen and in front of Shamsunnahar hall.

One can conduct campaigning only after their candidature is finalised by the authorities, says the section 4 (Kha) of the code of conduct.

The final list of candidates will be published today.

Asked about the matter, Rezwanul said some "over-enthusiastic" supporters pasted the posters and he has asked them to remove those.

Meanwhile, Rezwanul was also seen seeking votes for the BCL panel in the Ducsu polls, while speaking at a cultural programme at TSC yesterday evening.

Contacted, DU Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani said code of conduct is applicable to all, and they would take action upon receiving complaint.

The punishment of breaching any code of conduct is penalty of maximum Tk 10,000, cancellation of candidature, expulsion from the university or punishment as per the convenient law of the university or the state, reads 15 (Kha) of code of conduct.

(NO ATMOSPHERE FOR DUCSU POLLS: AUTHORITIES - STORY ON PAGE 5)



Posters of Rezwanul Haque Chowdhury, the vice-president aspirant from Bangladesh Chhatra League in the upcoming Ducsu polls, were seen on walls of the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Defying ban, an overloaded boat crosses the Buriganga. In many cases, trawlers are converted into this type of vessels, increasing risk of sinking. The photo was taken in Keraniganj area of Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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Govt determined to prevent violence against women

Says law minister

UNB, Dhaka

The government is dedicated in preventing domestic violence and violence against women, Law Minister Anisul Huq said yesterday.

He also emphasised on raising awareness among men and women on the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act-2010 and Domestic Violence Prevention Policy-2013.

He made the remarks while inaugurating a workshop on "Role of government legal aid to prevent domestic violence", jointly arranged by National Legal Aid Services Organization and Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) at the Judicial Administration Training Institute in Dhaka.

Huq said women are still deprived of their rights and justice.

"Violence against women will come down if victims of domestic violence become aware of the law and the perpetrators are brought to justice," he said.

He said 1,85,286 women have so far

Innovate for development

PM urges engineers

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged engineers to concentrate more on research for innovating newer technologies so that Bangladesh can take proper development strategies suiting the local soil, water and climate.

"We want you to pay a greater attention to research in the engineering sector... we'll have to innovate newer technologies through research so that we can take development strategies that will suit our country's soil, people, climate and all other things," she said.

The prime minister said this while inaugurating a four-day 59th convention of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) in the city's Ramna.

The theme of this year's convention is "Engineering Excellent: Earth to Space".

Hasina said today's world is dependent on technologies, and newer development strategies are being worked out.

She stressed the need for utilising the new strategies to take the country forward.

Hasina also said local climate, geographical location, soil, water and people will have to be considered in case of taking development plans.

The PM asked engineers to work out strategies so that Bangladesh can achieve maximum progress at lower cost.

Chaired by IEB President Engineer Mohammad Abdus Sabur, the inaugural session was addressed, among others, by its General Secretary Engineer Khandaker Manjur Murshed, EIB's Dhaka Centre Chairman Waliullah Sikder and its Secretary Engineer Shahadat Hossain Shiplu Prince.

Seminars, memorial speeches, reception to martyred engineers' families, reception to foreign guests and cultural programmes will be held during the four-day event arranged by the EIB Dhaka Centre.

The IEB started its journey on May 7, 1948.