



Five rickshaw vans travel through the capital's Madani Avenue, carrying a mobile exhibition of photos. This is part of Chobi Mela X's initiative to make the exhibits more accessible to the masses.

PHOTO:
ORCHID CHAKMA

'In some cases fair polls were not held'

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda yesterday said that in some cases fair polls were not held as per the commission's expectations.

"We want fair election. But in many cases we cannot hold the election the way we want to," KM Nurul Huda said while talking at a workshop for trainers, for the fifth phase of upcoming Upazila Parishad polls.

Field-level Election Commission officials attended the training at Nirbachon Bhaban in Dhaka.

Nurul Huda said that the commission does not want any questionable election and asked the officials to fulfill their responsibilities by enforcing law with an iron hand.

He also said that EC has selected some of its own officials as returning and assistant returning officers for the Upazila Parishad election.

"Officials of Election Commission will be given full responsibilities, if they perform

their duties properly with dedication," he said.

Till now government officials have been made returning and assistant returning officers for the national and local elections.

Administrative officials work under the EC for several days during election. After election they return to their original duties, the CEC said.

"If we want to have any clear idea about holding elections we cannot do that as they return to their stations," he added.

Accountability will increase if the EC officials take full responsibilities of election, he added.

EC officials said they were planning to hold the fifth phase of Upazila Parishad election on June 18.

This year upazila elections will be held in five phases.

The first phase of the election will be held on March 10, second phase on March 18, third phase on March 24, and fourth phase on March 31.

Education startups face negative impression

Young entrepreneurs say

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Young entrepreneurs yesterday said that they face difficulties when trying to secure sponsorship and access guidance. There is also a prevailing negative attitude towards launching startups in the education sector, they added.

They made the remarks at a programme on challenges for and prospects of young entrepreneurs in education sector, organised by Center for Educational Research at Cirdap auditorium.

Discussions cited lack of innovative and skilled workforce in the education sector as the traditional education system is "exam-centric and rote learning based".

Online education platform 10 Minute School's chief instructor Sakib Bin Rashid said that on the whole, for a new entrepreneur in education sector, securing sponsorship is very difficult.

"It is tough for new startups in education to generate revenue quickly; they need sponsorship to sustain," he said.

Sakib, Onnorokom Pathshala entrepreneur Mahmudul Hasan Sohag and TechCare Technologies Limited founder Solehin Sagor all said that new startups face a general negative impression.

"Many allege that these [startups] are doing business in the name of providing education if they procure sponsorship," Sakib said.

Solehin Sagor said that he has considered starting training for creating skilled workers but refrained as people term such training programmes "education business".

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology's CSE Professor M Kaykobad put emphasis on skill

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Harnessing the Indo-Pacific Strategy

Experts discuss investment, security and stability

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday laid emphasis on harnessing benefits that Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) offers in the region, addressing the challenges through joint efforts and ensuring a win-win situation for all partners.

Speaking at the discussion on "Indo-Pacific Strategy: Implications for the Region" jointly organised by The Daily Star and Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) at The Daily Star Centre, they said Bangladesh is a key maritime nation which also occupies a strategic gateway to the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean.

It was addressed by US Ambassador Earl R. Miller; German Ambassador Peter Fahrenholz; Prof Amena Mohsin and Niloy Ranjan Biswas of International Relations Department of Dhaka University; Prof Imtiaz A Hussain of Independent University, Bangladesh; Parvez Karim



Peter Fahrenholz



Earl R. Miller



Participants at the roundtable.

PHOTO: STAR

Abbasi of East West University; Associate Editor of The Daily Star Brig Gen (retd) Mohammad Shahedul Anam Khan; Major Gen (retd) Ferdous Mia; former ambassadors Shamim Ahmed, Sirajul Islam and Selina Mohsin; and Rear Admiral (retd) ASMA Awal. President of BIPSS Maj Gen (retd) ANM Muniruzzaman moderated the discussion. Norwegian Ambassador Sidsel Bleken and diplomats from USA, UK, Australia, China and Japan were also present.

They focused on investment opportunities, security aspects and stability in the region for greater good.

However, the experts said since the IPS is still at a formative stage, it is difficult to say how things are going to take shape.

Indo-Pacific Strategy is a concept reemphasised in 2017 by US President Donald Trump and it calls for a "free and open Indo-Pacific", where nations "thrive in freedom and peace" and all states "play by the rules".

Speakers suggested that it is important for policymakers of Bangladesh to understand all the maritime strategic initiatives coming into play including Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and IPS.

They opined that these initiatives and strategies should benefit all nations and people of the region. One needs to be careful in identifying any intended aspect of strategic exclusiveness that might create unwanted fault lines of tension and conflict, they said.

FRUGAL INNOVATION FORUM 2019

Youths should focus on climate change: Sir Abed

CITY DESK

Today's youth should be very concerned about climate change because it will heavily impact their future, said Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and chairman of BRAC.

"Unless we change human behaviour in terms of consumption of resources, the future will not be sustainable. I would like to see more youth involvement with issues relating to climate change," he added.

He made the remarks while speaking at the Frugal Innovation Forum at BRAC CDM in Savar yesterday, said a press release. BRAC organised the forum with the theme "scaling opportunities for youth".

Frugal Innovation Forum is a platform for leaders from the global south to connect and explore solutions to the world's toughest challenges that feature development practitioners and funders, young change-makers and innovators to collaborate.

"The youth should understand the distinctions between government and policy and play a more engaging role in policymaking," said Radwan Mujib Siddiq, trustee of Centre for Research and Information.

Asif Saleh, senior director of BRAC and one of the key organisers of the forum, said: "We are talking about the future of jobs, as youth problems are not limited to poverty anymore, it's about security as well. This forum is about real models of what is actually happening and which model is applicable."

The conference kick-started with a day-long field visit, followed by two days of intense debates and plenaries on disruptive models and solutions.

Court directs jail authorities to ensure Khaleda's treatment

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed jail authorities to provide treatment for BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, as per jail code and advice of the government medical board.

The court also sent the documents of the order on Khaleda's treatment to the jail authorities.

Judge Sheikh Hafizur Raham passed the order after Advocate Masud Ahmed Talukder appealed to the court to give her proper treatment, during the hearing on charge framing in Niko graft case on Sunday.

The judge's order came in line with a previous High Court directive passed on October 4 last year, which instructed government to immediately admit the BNP chief at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University for treatment.

Following the order, the government formed a medical board for her treatment.

On February 24, members of the medical board met Khaleda in jail and gave some observations about her health.

"The trial court has no jurisdiction to pass any

order on the petition submitted on Sunday by Khaleda's lawyer regarding her treatment. Rather, the court can follow the High Court order and instruct jail authorities to continue her treatment as per jail code and directive of the High Court," said the judge.

Advocate Masud Ahmed Talukder said that on February 12, a petition was submitted with the court seeking Khaleda's treatment.

On Sunday, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir expressed concerns over the health condition of the BNP chief and said doctors are not providing proper treatment to her, after meeting Khaleda at the court during a hearing on charge-framing.

"Khaleda told me she is not well. We are very concerned about her health. Her blood tests have not been conducted yet. She is diabetic, but has not received any treatment for it," he said while talking to reporters in front of Old Dhaka Central jail, after meeting Khaleda during the hearing on the Niko graft case.

Meanwhile, another Dhaka court yesterday adjourned the hearing on charge framing in 11 cases filed against Khaleda till April 16.

Govt to develop 1,812 Hindu establishments

Project to be placed before Ecneec today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to develop and renovate 1,812 Hindu temples and religious establishments across the country.

The Tk 228.69-crore project will be placed today at the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) meeting, a Planning Ministry official said.

"Once the project is implemented, members of the Hindu community will be benefited, and it will help ensure a secular Bangladesh," reads the proposal of the project.

The project will be implemented by October 2021 from the government's fund, the official said. Hindu Religious Welfare Trust (HRWT) will implement it.

As per the 2011 census, there are some 1.23 crore Hindus living in Bangladesh, making them the second largest religious group, according to the project proposal.

So far, the HRWT has not taken any major project for the development and renovation of temples, holy places and cremation grounds, it said.

During the Liberation War in 1971, Pakistan army men destroyed many temples in different parts of the country, it added. "Among other problems, preservation of Hindu culture and temples is a major issue," proposal said.

Ranjit Kumar Das, secretary of HRWT, told The Daily Star

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Renowned Indian cardiologist Dr Devi Shetty pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the latter's office in Dhaka yesterday. He was called in to assess the health condition of Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader.

PHOTO:
BSS

BSMMU doctors have done their best: Dr Shetty

UNB, Dhaka

Renowned Indian cardiologist Dr Devi Shetty yesterday highly appreciated the Bangladeshi physicians who provided treatment to ailing minister and Awami League leader Obaidul Quader.

"The Bangladeshi doctors did an excellent job... you can't expect more than this even in the developed countries," he said during a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

Dr Shetty apprised the prime minister of the latest health condition of Quader, road transport and bridges minister and AL general secretary.

Sheikh Hasina thanked Dr Shetty for coming to Bangladesh quickly, responding to the call for Quader's treatment.

The prime minister also talked to Dr Shetty about the country's medical

education.

Referring to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), she said her government established such a university so that medical students can pursue post-graduation degrees and carry out research.

The Indian cardiologist lauded Bangladesh's tremendous development under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"The socioeconomic progress of the common people of Bangladesh over the last few years is remarkable," he said.

Dr Shetty suggested sending Obaidul Quader abroad for better treatment, saying local doctors have to work under tremendous pressure for treating such a celebrity.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Murad Hasan, PM's Principal Secretary Md Nojibur Rahman and PMO Secretary Sajjadul Hassan were

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Shun vindictive attitude: Rizvi to PM

BNP announces human chain demanding Khaleda Zia's release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP will form a human chain in Dhaka tomorrow, demanding "unconditional" release of party chairperson Khaleda Zia, and seeking proper treatment for her.

The programme will be held from 11am to noon in front of the Jatiya Press Club, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, senior joint secretary general of BNP, told a press briefing yesterday at the party's Nayapaltan headquarters.

He also called upon PM Sheikh Hasina to shun "vindictive attitude" towards Khaleda Zia.

The BNP chairperson has been in jail since February 8 last year, following a court verdict that convicted her in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

"Khaleda Zia herself yesterday (Sunday) said her physical condition is not good. Like the country's people, we are very concerned about her failing health," Rizvi said.

Rizvi also wished speedy recovery of ailing Awami League leader Obaidul Quader.