



FLYOVER OR WALKWAY? With a child in her arms, a woman walks on the narrow sidewalk of Mayor Hanif flyover, while another walks on the road beside her. There's a huge sign right next to them which says crossing or walking is prohibited. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Transgender rights still a far cry

No policy in 6 years to change legal name, gender: NHRC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

She was born a boy. She carried her identity -- Mamun Molla -- that her parents chose for her until she stepped into adulthood. With time, she discovered a woman within her and let her come out, to be known as Tanisha Yesmin Chaity.

Now aged 30, Chaity has many identities -- a transwoman, a rights activist, an entrepreneur -- but none of her legal documents, like national identity card, passport, or educational certificate, gives her protection in her changed appearance.

The government in 2013 through a gazette notification recognised people like Chaity as belonging to the "third gender". But there is no elaborate definition as to who would come under this category.

No comprehensive policy has been made either in the last six years to change their name and gender in legal documents. So, Chaity and others like her who want to live a different life than what was determined at birth, come across challenges on a daily basis; their documents contradict their claims of who they are.

The National Human Rights Commission at a programme yesterday brought to the fore the

issues transgenders face while navigating through the existing system. The Commission also shared findings of a project on "gender recognition in legal documents" supported by Asia Pacific Forum of NHRIs.

Speakers at the event said the term "Hijra" had come from centuries-old culture in this part of the world. But it leaves many excluded -- like those who undergo gender reassignment from female to male.

Transgender people are subjected to objectionable medical tests while very few doctors and psychiatrists have knowledge of gender, sexuality and sensitivity towards them, said M Rabiul Islam, deputy director of NHRC, during a presentation.

Moreover, society and family refuse to accept them as who they are. They get bullied and are refused medical services, rent, and opportunities to travel abroad.

The first step should be a comprehensive law or policy to protect their rights, a policy to change their legal identity and a clear definition of who are transgenders, as suggested by NHRC.

Chaity said she had made the journey several times from her home in Rajbari to Dhaka to change

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FAIR PRICE OF PADDY

LDA demands three ministers' resignation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Left Democratic Alliance (LDA) yesterday demanded resignation of the ministers for food, agriculture and finance, for their failure to ensure fair paddy price for farmers.

Leaders of LDA -- a platform of eight left-leaning parties -- from a press conference in the capital said Agriculture Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder and Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal cannot avoid their responsibilities as they failed to ensure fair paddy price.

"Farmers are setting fire to their paddy in fields or sacks because they cannot get fair prices. Food, agriculture and finance ministers are making irresponsible remarks. They should resign, taking responsibilities of the failure," LDA coordinator Bazlur Rashid Feroz said.

"If the farmers lose their interest to grow paddy, food safety of the country will be threatened," he added.

Feroz urged the government to ensure fair paddy price for farmers and to procure more paddy directly from farmers.

He made the comments against the backdrop of farmers' demands for fair prices for their produce, as harvested coarse paddy is being sold at a lower price than production cost across the country.

Feroz also alleged that the government is creating scope of looting in banking sector by allowing loan defaulters a grace period of 10 years, with a down payment of maximum two percent of their outstanding loans.

"You should punish loan defaulters, not reward them," he said.

On another note, Communist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Shah Alam urged the government to meet the nine-point demand of state-owned jute mill workers, who also took to the street earlier this month, seeking payment of their arrears.

Revolutionary Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque also spoke at the event.

DEATH OF NEWBORN IN RUPNAGAR

Mother and grandfather arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A murder case was filed yesterday over the death of a newborn in Dhaka's Rupnagar on Saturday.

The newborn girl was found dead in Rupnagar residential area, after reportedly being thrown through the ventilator of a bathroom on the fourth floor of a building on road 10 around 11:30am on Saturday.

The case was filed with Rupnagar Police Station, accusing three persons -- the baby's mother, her grandfather, and a relative, said Golam Rabbani, officer-in-charge (investigation) of the police station.

The baby's mother and grandfather have been arrested, the OC added.

The mother gave birth in a bathroom of the building and allegedly threw the baby through the ventilator, the OC said after primary interrogation.

He said the arrestees confessed that the mother of the baby who appeared for the recent SSC examination, had an affair with her uncle who was visiting from Qatar in November last year.

Meanwhile, autopsy of the deceased was conducted at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue and it was revealed that she died from injuries sustained after falling, morgue sources said.

No one came to the morgue to receive the dead body till yesterday evening.

DHAKA TODAY

APPAREL SHOWCASE

Moon's Gala Night
Venue: House 47, Road 11, Block H, Banani
Time: 7pm
EXHIBITION
Dawn of Black
Venue: Edge Gallery, Gulshan 2
Time: 10am
FAIR
Venue: BTI Premier Plaza, Badda

Time: 10am

EXHIBITION
Bodyspace Mindscape
Artist: Wakilur Rahman
Venue: Dwip Gallery, Lalmatia
Time: 3pm
HOME DECOR SHOWCASE
Organiser: Unimart
Title: The Artsy Home
Venue: Chef's Table, Gulshan 2
Time: 4pm

Fasting and Hypertension

Fasting could shoot up the blood pressure of hypertensive people even higher, at iftar time when they eat sweets and salty foods. Besides these, high risk people like smokers, diabetics and those with a family history of hypertension should check with their cardiologists whether it is safe for them to fast. Hypertensive patients on medication should check with their Cardiologists whether to make any special adjustments to their diet during Ramadan.

Dr. Kaisar Nasrullah Khan
Consultant, Cardiology

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PM's JAPAN-SAUDI ARABIA VISIT

Rohingya crisis to take centre stage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rohingya crisis will have a special focus during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Japan and Saudi Arabia, beginning tomorrow.

During a bilateral meeting, Sheikh Hasina will seek her Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe's assistance in addressing the Rohingya crisis.

The issue will also get special importance at the OIC conference in Makkah, Saudi Arabia on May 31, said Foreign Minister Dr Abdul Momen during a press briefing at the foreign ministry conference room yesterday.

"The Rohingya issue is gradually becoming more critical. If it is not addressed, the complexities will be more serious," he told reporters.

Also, aid for Rohingyas is dwindling, which is a matter of serious concern, he said.

"The good news is that China has recently agreed to lobby Myanmar for quick repatriation of the Rohingyas," the foreign minister said.

During the conference, Gambia's proposal of taking Myanmar's atrocities against Rohingyas to the International Court of Justice will be finalised.

"In that case, Myanmar will feel more inclined to create conducive conditions for Rohingyas' return," he said.

Around 75,000 Rohingyas fled brutal crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine since August 2017, joining some 30,000 others who had fled earlier waves of violence from the Buddhist-

majority country.

The repatriation was scheduled to begin in November last year but the refugees did not agree. Conditions in Rakhine were not conducive and there was no guarantee of citizenship, they say.

During the prime minister's three-day visit, Japan and Bangladesh will sign the 40th Official Development Assistance agreement to facilitate USD 2.5 billion loan to Bangladesh for five projects. The projects involve power, investment, metro rail, port development and energy efficiency promotion.

Sheikh Hasina will hold a meeting with Japan's top business leaders to discuss trade and investment between the two countries.

Japan International Cooperation Agency President Shinichi Kitaoka will also meet PM Hasina. She will attend a meeting with expatriate Bangladeshis as well.

The prime minister will speak as keynote speaker at an international conference on "The Future of Asia", organised by Nikkei Inc, where she will highlight the Rohingya crisis, technological change, human resources and the success story of Bangladesh.

"The relationship between Bangladesh and Japan has improved to the level of comprehensive partnership. Japan is an important trade partner of Bangladesh and one of the major sources of foreign investment," Momen said.

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Binding or carrying animals in a position that subjects them to unnecessary pain is considered an offence in the existing law, and the cabinet approved a draft Animal Welfare Act earlier this year which seeks to increase the punishment for this. But people pay little heed to the law, transporting chickens upside-down. The photo was taken in Tejturbazar.

PRABIR DAS

BNP invites Hasina, AL leaders to iftar party

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday invited Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her party's presidium members to its iftar party, to be held tomorrow.

The party will host the iftar in honour of political leaders at the Ladies Club in the capital.

A three-member BNP delegation, led by its assistant office secretary Taiful Islam Tipu, went to Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi political office around 4pm with invitation cards.

Awami League's deputy office secretary barrister Biplob Barua received the cards.

Talking to the news agency, Tipu said their party secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir invited Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, general secretary Obaidul Quader and its presidium members to Tuesday's iftar party.

"We hope they will join the event," he said.

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