



PHOTO OF THE DAY

AMRAN HOSSAIN



LIFE IN THE CONFINES OF A HOSPITAL ... Two children -- hospitalised with dengue -- entertain themselves playing video games and watching cartoons on their parents' cellphones, as other patients and visitors join in as audience. The photo was taken earlier this week from the children's ward of Mugda General Hospital.

'Living in a time of politics without policy'

Shahdeen Malik says at 30th anniversary of Drik

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent jurist Dr Shahdeen Malik yesterday said the state's "power of violence" has increased, and its mindless application has been evident in the past three to four years.

Such phenomenon was unprecedented in the history of Bangladesh, he said at a discussion marking the 30th anniversary of Drik Picture Library.

Drik arranged the discussion on "Democracy's Struggle and Intellectuals' Silence" at its premises in the capital's Dhanmondi.

Shahdeen Malik said incidents of police brutality and vote-rigging during elections have happened in the past.

"However, suddenly in the past three-four years, a dramatic qualitative change in [the state's] power of violence has happened," he said.

Manifestation of this newly acquired "power of violence" by the state has left

people perplexed, he further said, adding that such situation could be "temporary".

He also said although politics persists in the country, at present it is directionless.

On the other hand, the intellectual segment of society is supposed to provide alternatives to every policy or decision taken by the state -- based on principle -- but at present it remains silent, Dr Malik said.

"We are living in a time of politics without policy," he added.

Addressing the discussion, noted economist Prof Anu Muhammad said since independence, the state has gradually become more "repressive, communal and discriminatory."

Besides, the strength of state machineries which are involved in repression has also increased over the years, he said.

State's surveillance capacity has developed only to repress its citizens, he added.

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DHAKA TODAY

KASHMIR ISSUE

Momen gets call from Pakistani counterpart

STAR REPORT

Pakistani Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi phoned his Bangladesh counterpart Dr AK Abdul Momen on Tuesday to discuss the current situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir.

"The [Pakistani] Foreign Minister apprised his Bangladeshi counterpart of the illegal and unilateral actions of India to alter the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir, which was in contravention of the international law and UNSC resolutions," said a statement posted on the website of Foreign Ministry of Pakistan yesterday.

Qureshi "highlighted continuously deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, including severe shortage of food and lifesaving medicines, communications blackout and complete lock-down for the last 30 days," it added.

Bangladesh earlier described the matter of Jammu and

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Elderly couple held with gold bars worth Tk 1.75 crore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) officials arrested an elderly couple with 30 gold bars -- weighing around 3.5kg -- from the city's Jatrabari area yesterday morning.

The arrestees were identified as Nirmal Saha, 66, and his wife Tapashi Saha, 60, said CIID Director General Shahidul Islam.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of CIID intercepted the couple when they got down from a bus near a toll plaza of Mayor Hanif Flyover on Dhaka-Chittagong highway around 7:45am.

Upon interrogation, Nirmal admitted that his wife had gold bars in her possession. Officials recovered gold bars worth around Tk 1.75 crore attached to a belt wrapped around Tapashi's body, Shahidul said.

The couple, during

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Tk 5.32cr DNCC proposal approved for directly purchasing mosquitocide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs yesterday approved around Tk 5.32 crore to purchase fogger machines, sprays and insecticide to control Aedes mosquitoes -- the carrier of dengue and chikungunya viruses.

The committee approved the proposal of Dhaka North City Corporation to purchase 200 fogger machines, 150 sprays and 40,000 litres of insecticide to control Aedes mosquitoes within a quick possible time.

"We have given approval to purchase these items directly, considering national interest and financial requirements, as it can take substantial time to purchase them through tender process," said Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal at a press briefing after the meeting at the Cabinet Division.

DNCC has assured them that they will improve their services so that people of the country are protected from dengue and chikungunya, he said.

Kamal said they will make the purchase within a month and this will strengthen

their capacity.

"We think they will be able to control Aedes mosquitoes," he said.

He said officials have already visited several countries, and their next destination is Singapore.

Singapore applies a method where they draw mosquitoes to one place and kill them with chemicals, he said.

8TH GRADER DIES IN DHAKA

Meanwhile, an eighth-grader of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College died of dengue at a private hospital in Dhaka yesterday, taking the death toll to 130.

However, the official figure is 57.

Isra Taskin Asmita, 13, daughter of Amanat Maula and a resident of Azimpur area passed away around 7:30pm at Millennium Heart and General Hospital in the capital's Lalmoni.

Isra, a student of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College's Azimpur branch, was admitted to the hospital on August 26.

She was diagnosed with dengue the following day and taken to the intensive

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ADB to fund expansion of four highways

Separate lanes to be made for slow-moving vehicles

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asian Development Bank (ADB) will fund the expansion of the country's four highways into four lanes, Road Transport and Highways Division said yesterday.

The highways are Dhaka-Sylhet, Rangpur-Bangladesh, Rangpur-Burimari and Barishal-Faridpur, the division said in a press release.

All four of the highways will have a separate lane for slow-moving vehicles, it added.

ADB Country Director Manmohan Prakash yesterday disclosed the funding details to Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader at the secretariat, the release said.

Following the request from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, ADB decided to fund the upgrade, it mentioned.

Manmohan further said that feasibility studies for upgrading the Barishal-Faridpur and Rangpur-Burimari highways have already been completed.

Work for widening of highways to four lanes from Joydebpur-Elempur and Hatikamrul-Rangpur under South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation Road Connectivity Projects are underway with ADB's funding.

Besides, widening of Cox's Bazar-Ukhia-Teknaf highway is also progressing with ADB's funding.

Quader, also general secretary of Awami League, thanked ADB for its continuous support for development of the country's road infrastructure.

at the InterContinental Dhaka hotel that Iran is concerned over the tense situation in Kashmir.

He also said he is concerned about the recent developments in Assam, which has published its final list of National Register of Citizens (NRC) that excluded some 1.9 million Bangla-speaking people.

"We have very good relations with India. It is a very important trade partner. But we have expressed the concerns over the tense situation in Kashmir," he said, adding that they are engaged in discussions with India to ensure that rights of Kashmiris are recognised.

"We are also discussing with Pakistan and other OIC [Organisation of Islamic Conference] member states on the kind of joint actions that can be taken to prevent further deterioration of situation in Kashmir," Zarif said.

He said he is hopeful that the discussion will lead to more dialogue and understanding.

Zarif also said Iran is in favour of addressing the Rohingya crisis through a dignified repatriation process, which is only possible if Myanmar grants citizenship to the Rohingyas.

Zarif, who also called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, said Bangladesh and Iran have huge potentials in cooperation, including in science and technology, pharmaceutical industries, nanotech, energy, aerospace technology, nuclear power and petrochemicals.

The annual trade between the two countries now stands at USD 130 million, which the Iranian foreign minister says, is only a fraction of the potentials.

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