



Durga Puja begins today (shashthi). Over 31,000 mandaps across the country are ready for the largest religious festival of Bengali Hindus. The photos were taken at Kalabagan (left) and Banani mandaps yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

'No extortion in transport sector'

Dhaka Road Transport Owners-Workers Association claims

UNB, Dhaka

Leaders of Dhaka Road Transport Owners-Workers Association (DRTOWA) yesterday claimed that there is no extortion in the transport sector of the country.

"Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Malik-Sramik Oikya League's (BSPMSOL) claim that there is extortion in the transport sector is false, fabricated and motivated," DRTOWA joint convenor Abul Kalam said at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

Kalam further said, "Our transport sector leaders, including Khandaker Enayetullah and secretary general of Bangladesh SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Growing use of e-cigarettes cause for concern

Health edu and family planning secretary says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday expressed concern over the growing use of e-cigarettes.

This is very harmful for public health and the production, import and marketing of e-cigarettes and other emerging tobacco products need to be stopped quickly, Health Education and Family Planning Secretary Sheikh Yousuf Harun told reporters during a press briefing at the health ministry yesterday.

Harun said they will take up the matter with the higher authorities in this regard.

According to a research by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in USA, in the last one year, the use of tobacco products among school-going teens increased by 78 percent.

Meanwhile, the most recent report by World Health Organization (WHO) on Global Tobacco Epidemic-2019 has identified e-cigarettes as "a harmful product for health".

An electronic cigarette or e-cigarette is a handheld battery-powered vaporiser that simulates smoking and provides some of the behavioral aspects of smoking, including the hand-to-mouth action, but without burning tobacco. Using an e-cigarette is known as "vaping", according to Wikipedia.

Yousuf said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced a tobacco-free country by 2040.

To achieve the target, a draft National Tobacco Control Guideline-2019 has been prepared which will be placed in the cabinet shortly, the health education and family planning secretary added.

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GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH Saima Wazed among innovative women leaders

UNB, Dhaka

Saima Wazed Hossain has been listed as one of the "Innovative Women Leaders in Global Mental Health" by Columbia University's Global Mental Health Program's publication blog "Five on Friday."

She ranked 40 out of 100 women leaders listed in the blog, who are individually and collectively improving the understanding, prevention and treatment of mental illness.

The list was published on Global Mental Health Program's website on September 20.

Saima is currently the chairperson of Bangladesh National Advisory Committee for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders as well as a member of World Health Organization's (WHO) Expert Advisory Panel on Mental Health.

Recently, she was chosen as WHO's



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7 hurt as BCL men swoop on Chhatra Dal activists at JnU

JnU CORRESPONDENT

Members of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) of Jagannath University (JnU) unit came under attack yesterday allegedly by activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) when they brought out a procession on the campus, demanding release of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

At least seven activists of JCD, a pro-BNP student organisation, were injured in the attack, said witnesses. They received primary treatment at JnU Medical Centre.

Of them, JCD activist Abdur Rashid was taken to Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital as his condition was critical.

Witnesses said a group of BCL activists of JnU led by Al-Sadik Hridoy, a student of sociology department, attacked JCD men when around 30 to 35 of them were demonstrating around 9:30am.

Shahriar Hossain, a JCD activist, told The Daily Star, "BCL men swooped on us all of a sudden, leaving



A group of youths surround a JCD man on the ground.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

seven of our activists injured."

Contacted, Hridoy claimed that some outsiders tried to create unrest on the campus and shouted "controversial" slogans.

"So we chased them away," he added.

JnU Proctor Mostofa Kamal said they will take steps if anyone lodges a written complaint in this regard.

'Khaleda does not want mercy'

Lawyer says BNP chairperson is entitled to bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is innocent and has the right to bail, her lawyer Zainul Abedin said yesterday.

"Khaleda Zia does not want release from jail on parole -- subjected to the government's mercy. She wants bail from the court," said Advocate Zainul, also a vice chairman of BNP.

The government has kept Khaleda Zia confined in jail, in order to keep her away from politics and the people, the lawyer said at a press briefing at the conference room of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA).

He said the 1/11 government had wanted to send Khaleda Zia abroad through releasing her on parole in order to deduct her from politics, but she firmly rejected that offer.

A total of 37 cases have been filed against Khaleda Zia in order to politically harass her, Zainul said.

If she gets bail in two cases -- Zia Charitable Trust and Zia Orphanage Trust cases -- she will be released from jail, he added.

The bail petitions will be moved before the court concerned very soon, he added.

Advocate Zainul further said seven BNP lawmakers have met Khaleda and they said she is now even more frail and unwell than before.

Pro-BNP lawyers Rafiqul Haque Raja, Kamrul Islam Sajal and EKM Ehsanur Rahman, among others, were present on the occasion.

KHALEDA'S ILLNESS Doctors, BNP not on same page: Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said physicians of BNP chief Khaleda Zia are not saying what the party leaders are claiming about her health condition.

The minister said this while talking to reporters at the secretariat. He suggested waiting for the report from Khaleda's doctors before drawing any conclusion.

Quader, also Awami League general secretary, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been informed about BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's health condition.

He said BNP MP Harunur Rashid met him on Wednesday and informed him about his party chief's illness. "He requested me to convey the information to the prime minister and I did so," the minister said.

Harunur visited Khaleda at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University on Tuesday evening and said she needs better treatment immediately at a specialised hospital abroad.

He said the former prime minister, who has been in jail since February last year, was willing to go abroad for treatment if she is granted bail.

Asked about the ongoing drive, Quader said, "The drive will continue... Wait and you'll receive more information."

Responding to a question, he said the prime minister has a list of leaders and activists involved in various misdeeds across the country. The list has been sent to divisional level, the minister added.

Khaleda was sent to jail on February 8 last year as she was convicted in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case. Later, she was convicted in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case.

The BNP leaders alleged that Khaleda was denied bail as the government influenced the court.

Rab member dies in accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Rab member was killed while another was injured as a truck hit the motorbike they were on at Kakraji intersection in the city early yesterday.

The deceased Hasan Mahmud, 32, was a police constable and was posted in the intelligence wing of Rab headquarters.

Both riders fell off the motorcycle after the truck rammied it around 12:30am, said Rezaul Karim, sub-inspector (SI) of Ramna Police Station.

The injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where Hasan succumbed to injuries around 2am.

The injured, whose identity could not be confirmed yet, was released after being given primary treatment, police said.

Police seized the truck and arrested its driver Alamgir Hossain, 32, and his helper Hridoy Hossain, 20, after the accident.

No seats for JCD men at Madhur Canteen!

Activists sit on floor in symbolic protest

DU CORRESPONDENT

Members of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal yesterday staged a symbolic protest by sitting on the floor of Madhur Canteen, as all the tables were occupied by Chhatra League activists.

As part of their regular political activities, around 200 JCD men led by their general secretary Iqbal Hossain Shyamol entered the canteen at around 10:30am.

But they did not find any table empty, as hundreds of BCL activists kept them occupied prior to the JCD activists' entrance.

In protest, the JCD men sat on the floor and later around 11am, Chhatra Dal president Fazlur Rahman also joined them.

Several BCL activists, wishing anonymity, told The Daily Star that they were instructed by high-ups to occupy the tables so that the JCD men could not stay at Madhur Canteen.

Contacted, Chhatra League acting president Al Nahian denied the allegations, saying they stayed at the canteen the way they have been doing.

"What can we do if they [JCD men] could not find any chairs to sit on? Do we have to make chair-table for them?" he asked.

JCD general secretary condemned the incident, terming it "political indecency".

"We would continue coming to the campus and to Madhur Canteen, defying any obstacles," he added.

After staying there till 11am, the JCD men brought out a procession from the canteen which paraded Arts Building and Memory Eternal premises before ending in the Central Shaheed Minar area.

Earlier on September 23, BCL men swooped on the Chhatra Dal activists as they entered the Dhaka University Campus, leaving nine of the JCD men injured.

DHAKA TODAY

LECTURE
History of the Sultans in Bengali Region
Organiser: Reading Club
Venue: Institute of Modern Language, University of Dhaka
Time: 4pm

ANTI SMOKING CAMPAIGN
Cleaning cigarette butts from streets
Organiser: One Action Foundation
Venue: Mohammadpur Bus Stand, Lalmatia and Jigatola
Time: 8am

HUMAN CHAIN
Demanding to stop overworking of passenger-carrying horses
Organiser: PAW Foundation
Venue: Jatiya Press Club
Time: 10:30am

BOOK FAIR
Saradiya Boi Mela
Venue: PBS Book Shop, Shantinagar
Time: 10am

DISCUSSION
The current trend of films across the globe
Organiser: Ranesh Das Gupta Film Society
Venue: Mukti Bhaban, Paltan
Time: 4pm

TRAINING
Sales and Salesmanship Competencies
Organiser: Bangladesh-Japan Training Institute
Venue: Eastern Plaza, Hatirpool
Time: 9am



A man rebuilds a home which had burned down in fire at Mirpur's Chalantika slum in August. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

ONLINE GAMBLING Salim remanded in narcotics case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed online gambling ringleader Salim Prodhan and his two associates on four-day remand each, in connection with a case filed under the Narcotics Control Act.

The other accused are Salim's assistant Md Akhtaruzzaman and staffer Md Roman.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mainul Islam passed the order after Inspector of Gulshan Police Station Aminul Islam, investigation officer of the case, produced them before the court with seven-day remand prayer for each.

The IO in his forwarding report said the accused needed to be remanded to find out vital clues about the incidents and addresses of others responsible for committing such offences.

Opposing the remand prayer, the defence told the court that their clients were implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy to harass them, adding that their client should be granted bail after rejecting the remand prayer.

Earlier in the day, the three were shown arrested in the case after the IO appealed to the court to do so.

Salim was picked up from Hazrat Shahjalal Airport on September 30. Based on information given by Salim, law SEE PAGE 4 COL 4