

# Life before livelihood

PM asks all to come forward to ensure road safety

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said ensuring road safety is not the responsibility of the government or drivers alone; all will have to come forward to ensure it.

"Ensuring safe roads is not the responsibility of the government or the drivers only; it is the responsibility of all citizens. Everyone should perform their duty," she said.

The premier said this while addressing a programme marking National Road Safety Day 2019 at Krishibid Institution, organised by Road Transport and Highways Division.

This year's theme of the day is "Life before livelihood; no more road accidents."

The prime minister asked all -- especially educated people -- to obey traffic rules. "Our footpaths are always occupied... these have to be freed [from illegal occupants]," she said.

On illegal and indiscriminate car parking on roads, Sheikh Hasina said many shopping malls, while taking approval from the authorities concerned, show car-parking spaces in their designs, but later sell those spaces to shops.

The PM asked traffic officials to be strict about illegal car parking on roads and impose fine if any rules are broken.

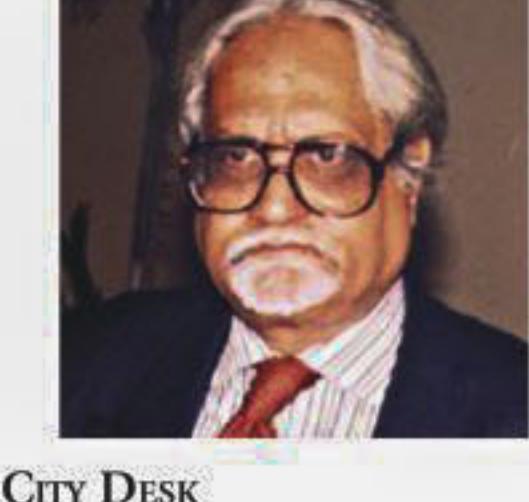
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WINTER HAS NOT ARRIVED... Although it looks like fog, these photos are a testament to Dhaka's worsening air quality. The area around Postogola Bridge is shrouded in dust due to the construction of Padma bridge, diminishing visibility and creating health hazards for commuters. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

18th death anniversary of Azimur Rahman



CITY DESK

Today is the 18th death anniversary of Azimur Rahman, founder chairman of Mediaworld Ltd, the owning company of The Daily Star.

On this day in 2001, he died in Dhaka.

Azimur Rahman was born in Kolkata in 1935, and completed his BSc honors in science from Dhaka University and his MSc in mechanical

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## 'Seniors stopped us from taking him to hospital'

Another accused testifies in Abrar murder case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

SM Nasmus Sadat, one of the accused in Buet student Abrar Fahad murder case, yesterday confessed to a magistrate that he and some other students of his batch called the victim out of his room as per directives of another accused Moniruzzaman Monir. The gruesome murder triggered a firestorm of protests at university campuses across the country.

"I didn't hit Abrar on that night," Sadat said in his confessional statement to Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Sarafuzzaman Ansary at his chamber, after being produced by investigation officer Md Wahiduzzaman, inspector of the Detective Branch (DB) of police.

In his statement, Sadat told the magistrate Abrar was brought to room 2011 of Sher-e-Bangla Hall on October 6. Seniors from batches 15 and 16 of Buet -- including Mehedi Hasan Robein, Anik Sarkar, Ifti Mosharraf Shakal, Muzahidur Rahman Muzahid and Moniruzzaman -- started hitting him (Abrar) indiscriminately.

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While Abrar was being brutally beaten, he repeatedly begged for water to drink, but was not given any, he said.

"When seniors were striking Abrar mercilessly, he begged for some water several times. But they [the seniors] did not allow us to provide him with water despite our requests," said Sadat, a 17th batch student at Buet.

He also said while Abrar was being beaten, he fell seriously ill at one stage. "We wanted to take Abrar to hospital for treatment, but again the seniors did not allow us," he continued.

Around half an hour after midnight, he left for his room in the dormitory, Sadat added.

After recording his statement, the magistrate sent him to Keraniganj Central Jail in Dhaka.

Sadat is the eighth of the 20 accused who have made confessional statements -- narrating horrific descriptions of torturing Abrar to death.

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## Invest in Bangladesh

Foreign minister to French investors; Nordic countries pledge support

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen called for French investment in Bangladesh -- with focus on infrastructure, renewable energy, waste management and ICT -- as he met French businessmen at the Bangladesh-France Economic Forum on Monday.

At the forum, organised by the Senate of France in Paris, Momen explained the advantages including economic zones, FDI (Foreign Direct Investment)-friendly regulations, one-stop services, ease of profit remittance and availability of skilled workforce in the country.

The minister highlighted the successes of Bangladesh in becoming a middle-income country and the roadmap to become a developed country, said a press release.

Representatives of the private sector from both Bangladesh and France, as well as from relevant government bodies such as Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, Bangladesh

Economic Zones Authority, Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority and relevant French agencies attended the half-day event.

Momen is on a two-week visit to Europe that began on October 16 as Bangladesh is going ahead with economic diplomacy. He was in Germany before France and is scheduled to visit Azerbaijan, Italy and Greece before his return on October 30.

Earlier on Monday, the minister held a meeting with Jean-Baptiste Lemoine, state secretary, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France.

He referred to already-successful French investments in Bangladesh, while inviting French delegations to assess the opportunities that Bangladesh offers to investors.

In the meeting with the French state secretary, Momen also requested France, along with other EU members, to exert pressure on Myanmar for the prompt repatriation of the Rohingyas to their homeland.

Lemoine informed Momen that he

will lead a French business delegation to Bangladesh early next year.

Both sides also discussed the threats of climate change and agreed continuing to work closely to address the challenges.

Momen also requested France to help Bangladesh in skills development -- an area of investment that will create a pool of young and skilled workers.

NORDIC COUNTRIES PLEDGE SUPPORT

Nordic countries have pledged support to Bangladesh in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The statement came from ambassadors of the Nordic nations -- Denmark, Norway and Sweden -- that celebrated Nordic Day at the Nordic Club in the capital on Monday evening.

Some 400 guests from the Nordic community, representatives from Bangladesh and friends of the community from the private sector, civil society organisations, media and

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Bangladesh Road Transport Authority brought out a procession on Manik Mia Avenue in the capital yesterday on the occasion of National Road Safety Day.

PHOTO: STAR

## Children's reading habit must be developed early

Experts say it can help prevent school dropouts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children who cannot develop reading habits and skills at a primary stage often struggle to grasp lessons at secondary level, forcing them to drop out, educationists said at a consultation meeting yesterday.

Stressing the need of developing reading habit from early childhood, they urged the government to make textbook lessons of primary schools more interesting, easy to understand and convenient for children.

Room to Read Bangladesh, a non-government organisation, and the Institute of Education and Research (IER) of Dhaka University jointly organised the meeting on strengthening reading skills at Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban at the university campus.

Speakers there also urged teachers to present lessons in such a way so that children take those eagerly, and suggested parents to encourage their children to read not just textbooks, but other books as well.

"Childhood is the ideal time of developing reading habit. Children who develop reading habit in an early stage have better language skills and performance in

studies than others," said Shyamoli Akbar, a professor of IER.

She suggested that textbooks of first to fifth grade should be more interesting and less complex, and lessons be written with easier words and sentences.

Zillur Rahman Siddiki, a director of Room to Read, said students who achieve proper reading skills not only perform better at classrooms but also become more successful in their professional life.

"In our country, many primary school children cannot build proper reading habit due to lack of guidance. They struggle to cope with studies after reaching secondary level. As a result, many of them are forced to discontinue education," he said.

Speaking as chief guest, State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Zakir Hossain assured that they would consider the recommendations placed at the meeting, and take steps in this regard.

The ministry's Secretary Akram-Al-Hossain, Room to Read Bangladesh Country Director Rakhi Sarkar and IER Director Syeda Tahmina Akhter also spoke at the event, among others.

## DHAKA TODAY

### SEMINAR

Hydrogen Economy in Bangladesh: Challenges and Prospects

Organiser: ASC Student Chapter

Venue: Applied Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, University of Dhaka

Time: 12pm

### CONFERENCE

National Youth Conference

Organiser: ActionAid Bangladesh

Venue: Bangla Academy

Time: 9am

### TALK

Taking the Road Less Travelled:

Rubaba Dowla

Organiser: Center for Enterprise and Society

Venue: ULAB, Dhaka

Time: 11:30am

### FESTIVAL

National English Language Festival

Organiser: Dhaka College English

### Language Club

Venue: Dhaka College

Time: 9am

### ACADEMIC SESSION

University and Scholarship Search Process

Venue: EMK Center

Time: 3pm

### FESTIVAL

Science Film Festival

Venue: Goethe-Institut Bangladesh

Time: 5pm



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