



Areas surrounding the Secretariat were officially declared "No Horn Zone" yesterday, with multiple banners and signboards on Abdol Gani Road cautioning drivers. However, the rule had not been enforced as of yesterday afternoon, as several vehicles were heard honking.

DEVELOPMENT WORK IN CAPITAL

# DNCC mayor warns of action against non-compliant contractors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Atiqul Islam yesterday warned individuals and institutions of penalties starting December 20, if they fail to follow compliance during any development work.

He made the announcement at a roundtable titled "Unplanned pollution in Dhaka: Citizens reflect" at Jatiya Press Club.

"We have sought more magistrates from the government to conduct drives against polluters. We are also asking traders who are running different types of operations, polluting environment, to stop their businesses," said Atiqul.

He said, "Contractors of city corporations, Rajuk, Wasa and other organisations have to be environmentally compliant in Dhaka. If you (contractors) cannot abide by that, our magistrates will take action."

The mayor also warned businessmen who deal with plastic bottles and chips, saying: "You [businessmen] will either have to change your mode of conducting business, or find an alternate way to dispose or recycle plastic bottles."

He further said citizens are the ones who

suffer from waterlogging due to plastic bottles in the streets, which should not happen.

It is the responsibility of producers to ensure that plastic bottles do not end up on the streets, causing harm to the environment, Atiqul added.

"We are creating a death trap during our development works. Pollution is one of the main causes of cardiac arrest," said public health expert Dr Lelin Chowdhury.

Every year, around 2 lakh people suffer cardiac arrests in the country, he said.

Lelin suggested necessary assessment before starting development works, to reduce pollution.

"We have always been in the top four of the list of unlivable cities in the world, and are still maintaining the position," said Lelin.

The main cause of air pollution in Dhaka is brick kilns around the city, and the second is black smoke of vehicles, he said.

Suggesting the mayor to ensure environment-friendly businesses in the city, architect Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, said former

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

## Comprehensive programme needed for returnee migrants

Speakers tell nat'l consultation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dalia (23) returned home in August from Saudi Arabia, with a broken spinal cord and leg from jumping off the fourth floor of a building to save herself from torture by her employer there.

With dreams of a better future, she had gone to Saudi Arabia in July last year. However, she is now abandoned by her husband, as a "disabled" woman -- a burden for his family.

Moktar Hossain (28), who returned from Malaysia a few months back, was a little luckier than Dalia. He got a head injury as a result of torture, which has not fully cured.

However, he has managed to get job in a catering service in Dhaka with the help of the migration department of Brac.

Dalia and Muktar are just two of the hundreds of returnee migrant workers, who

find it difficult to find ground beneath their feet after coming back from a life of misery there.

In most cases, these returnee migrant workers fail to be reintegrated socially as well as economically.

In fact, the government has no comprehensive programme for them.

The government should initiate a comprehensive programme integrating civil society organisations (CSO) to this end, speakers at a national-level consultation said yesterday.

The migration department of Brac organised the event at its headquarters in the capital. Shariful Islam Hasan, head of Brac's migration programme, presented a concept paper on "Returnee reintegration and CSOs' role", where he termed returnee migration a "new crisis".

"However, neither government officials

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Uncertainty looms over Malaysian labour market reopening

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad yesterday said he is not sure when the Malaysian labour market will reopen to Bangladeshi workers.

"I cannot provide a timeline," he said, adding that he had earlier mentioned it would reopen soon.

The minister said it has been deferred a couple of times so far, due to requests from Malaysian authorities.

"We have no problem at our end... If they ask, I will say I'm ready," he further said, hoping the market will be reopened soon.

A joint working group meeting between the two countries aimed to sign an agreement for the market's reopening on November 24-25 in Dhaka. The meeting was postponed.

On November 6, the two countries issued a joint statement following

a meeting in Kuala Lumpur. In the statement, they agreed to discuss and finalise the "Draft Protocol Amending the Memorandum of Understanding 2016" at the Dhaka meeting.

Bangladesh has sent some 10.56 lakh migrant workers to Malaysia since 1978.

Malaysia suspended labour recruitment from Bangladesh in September last year, alleging monopoly by a syndicate of 10 recruiting agents and high cost of migration.

The minister was addressing a press briefing at his office, organised to inform the media about the government's preparations on International Migrants Day -- being observed globally today.

He said the government was waiting for post-mortem reports of migrant workers who died during

their stay abroad.

"We receive many questions regarding post-mortem. There has been confusion over many deaths [of migrants workers]," he said.

The ministry wants the reports so that it can "check and counter-check" the reasons behind the deaths, he added.

"Deaths of young migrant workers are disturbing," Imran Ahmad said.

Responding to a query, he said about 40 percent of Bangladeshi migrant workers are less-skilled. The government is working to increase the number of skilled workers, he said.

About the situation of female migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, he said they have already spoken to Saudi authorities and expressed hope that all issues will be resolved soon.

He said the ministry is working as

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## PM's Military Secretary Zainul Abedin passes away



CITY DESK

Maj Gen Mia Mohammad Zainul Abedin Bir Bikram, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's military secretary, passed away at a hospital in Singapore yesterday.

He breathed his last at Mount Elizabeth Hospital at 5:15pm (local time), said Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) in a press release.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Shehida Haque passes away



CITY DESK

Shehida Haque, wife of late Maj MR Haque, passed away on December 14 in Dhaka, says a press release. She left behind two sons and a daughter, four grandsons and many well-wishers.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held after Asr prayers today at Azad Masjid in Gulshan.

A doa mahfil for her will be held this Friday after Asr prayers at her son's residence: house-10, Road-118, Gulshan.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the programmes and pray for her departed soul.

## 'Made to exclude real Razakars'

Mirza Fakhrul says about govt list



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## BNP brings out a procession from its Nayapaltan office, celebrating Victory Day.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday said the government has published a list prepared by Pakistani authorities, to exclude "real Razakars".

"Why publish the list after 48 years? There were errors on the list. Why such errors? That list was prepared by Pakistanis. It is not your (government) list," said secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

Addressing a Victory Day rally organised by the party, he said, "They (government) use the Liberation War as a political tool."

The rally started from the party's Nayapaltan headquarters. Party leaders and activists with festoons, national flag and portraits of Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman participated in the rally.

"They (AL) claims they are the custodians of the spirit of Liberation War, but they are destroying that spirit," he alleged.

BNP standing committee member Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain said AL wants to stay in the office using force. He urged people to unite to "restore democracy".

## LODGING GRAFT CASES HC questions legality of some ACC rules

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of a few sections of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) rules, that curtail police's authority to directly record corruption cases.

The court issued a rule asking the ACC and the government to explain in four weeks why the sections concerned of the Anti-Corruption Commission (Amendment) Rules-2019 should not be scrapped, as the sections allegedly damaged people's right to lodge corruption case with the police station.

Secretaries to the ministries of law and home and to the parliament secretariat, chairman and secretary of the ACC, and inspector general of police have been made respondents to the rule.

The bench of Justice Moeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman came up with rule following a writ petition jointly filed by Supreme Court lawyers Subir Nandi Das and Noshin Nowal on November 13.

According to the petition, the ACC on June 20 this year issued a gazette notification amending the Anti-Corruption Commission Rules-2007.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

### DHAKA TODAY

- CONFERENCE**  
On democracy, good governance and role of root level institutions  
Organisers: CPD and Oxfam in Bangladesh  
Venue: ICCB, Kuril Bishwa Road  
Time: 3pm
- CONFERENCE**  
On environment, disaster and health  
Organiser: Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies  
Venue: Senate Building, DU  
Time: 9am
- SEMINAR**  
Present Situation of Migrant Workers: Law and Implementation  
Organiser: Kormojibi Nari  
Venue: Jatiya Press Club  
Time: 11am
- CELEBRATION**  
Marking the 25th anniversary of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (a global commitment to achieve gender equality)  
Organiser: Committee to
- Celebrate the 25th years of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action  
Venue: Central Shaheed Minar  
Time: 3:30pm
- HUMAN CHAIN**  
Demanding Int'l Recognition of 71 Genocide to the UN  
Organiser: Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote  
Venue: Jatiya Press Club  
Time: 11am

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## KERANIGANJ FIRE Condition of 8 patients improving, say doctors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The condition of at least eight out of 13 workers who sustained burns in Keraniganj fire on December 11 yesterday showed first signs of improvement, doctors said yesterday.

The eight are being treated at the High Dependency Unit (HDU) at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), while the five others are on life support at Sheikh Hasina National

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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