

Why fingerprints, iris scans not mandatory: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why they should not be directed to mandatorily record fingerprints and iris scans of all citizens including children during their birth registration.

The registrar general of birth and death registration under the LGRD ministry, its secretary, public safety secretary of home ministry and inspector general of police have been made respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Md Khairul Alam came up with the rule following a writ petition filed by Arifur Rahman Murad Bhuiayan, founder and executive director of rights organisation Sarda Society.

He submitted the petition to the HC in March last year saying that recording of fingerprints and iris scans of citizens needs to be made mandatory to identify bodies of unidentified people and locate missing people and offenders.

Arifur Rahman Murad Bhuiayan himself placed arguments on his petition while Deputy Attorney General Tushar Kanti Roy represented the state.



Old Dhaka came to life yesterday, bringing a welcome change to the atmosphere after continued doom and gloom during the pandemic. Festivities were underway as kites soared in the skies and people gathered on the rooftops to celebrate Shakraim.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Colours of Shakraim

Old Dhaka sky lit up with kites, fireworks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The neighbourhoods of old Dhaka took on a festive look yesterday evening, as people celebrated Poush Sangkranti, also known as Shakraim. The last of the Bengali month Poush was celebrated with daylong kite flying, partying and food.

The winter twilight sky was adorned with spectacular laser light shows, fireworks and lanterns.

Shakraim is a traditional festival for the people of old Dhaka. The streets of Sutrapur, Kaltabazar, Shakhariabazar, Lalbag, Faridabad, Tatibazar, Laxmibazar, Narinda and Gendaria remained abuzz throughout the day. Enthusiastic children started flying kites from the morning.

People gathered on their rooftops with kites in a myriad of colours, shapes and designs. Some brought loudspeakers to play music, and made sure to use those speakers to challenge people on neighbouring rooftops to a kite-fight.

Crowds were gathered in front of shops selling kites. Plastic strings seemed to be more popular among kite flyers.

“Earlier, we used powdered glass to sharpen strings.... But the process is labourious and time consuming. That’s why people prefer plastic strings over cotton,” said Hafizur Rahman, a motor parts businessman at Dholaikhal.

Ahasanullah, a private university student, said they have been celebrating Shakraim since their childhood.

Their relatives from different parts of the city visit their house on this day to celebrate the festival along with them. “An open invitation is given to all of our relatives and friends. My mother prepares sweets for guests on the day,” he said.

Due to the pandemic, they limited the number of guests this year.

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CCC ELECTION

Councillor candidates flout polls rules

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Cg

Many Awami League (AL) supported councillor candidates for Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) polls are violating the electoral code of conduct.

Mentioning that they are “nominated by the ruling party” on posters and banners, they are continuing their campaigns in the port city.

According to the Election Commission (EC), the councillor election is non-partisan with no official nomination of candidates by parties. No candidate can mention that any political party nominated or support them on campaign materials. They cannot even mention it verbally during campaigning.

During a visit to West Bakalia and Chawkbazar yesterday, this correspondent noticed that at least three candidates mentioned that AL nominated them on posters.

In West Bakalia (Ward-17), Shahid-ul-Alam, AL-backed candidate in Ward-17, and Shahin



Posters of councillor candidates Md Shahidul Alam and Shahin Akter Rosy mention that they were nominated by Awami League, although no party can nominate candidates for the election.

Akter Rosy, AL-backed candidate for reserved seat for women in Ward-17, 18 and 19, mentioned nomination.

In Chawkbazar (Ward-16), Rumki Sengupta, AL-backed candidate for reserved seat for women in Ward-16, 20 and 32, mentioned nomination.

Asked, Mohammad Hasanuzzaman, regional election officer of Chattogram and returning

officer of CCC polls, said they also noticed this practice in some areas, which clearly violates the electoral code of conduct.

“We have issued show-cause notice to candidates who violated code of conduct and asked them to remove the posters and banners immediately,” he said. “We will take tough action, if they do not remove

those swiftly,” he added.

Contacted, candidate Rumki said she mentioned AL nomination as “everybody was doing it.” “I am not lying, as the party did nominate me.”

Asked whether parties can nominate candidates for non-partisan councillor posts, Rumki said AL is not nominating but supporting her. Asked if she got any notice from the returning officer, Rumki replied in the negative.

Shahid-ul-Alam, however, said he got a notice on Monday and was preparing to remove his posters and replace them. “Actually, I did not know about the law,” he said. “I always honour the law.”

Shahid said AL is supporting him, but many candidates in their campaign were claiming to voters that they were also AL-supported. “To remove confusion among voters, I mentioned it in my posters. But now that I know it is a violation, I am removing the posters,” he said.

The Daily Star could not contact Rosy for comments.

LABOUR SENDING, RECEIVING COUNTRIES

Partnership vital to ensure migrants’ wellbeing: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Better partnership at different levels between the labour-receiving and -sending countries should be developed to benefit migrant workers in post-Covid situation, said speakers at a regional consultation yesterday.

Addressing a session, they said Bangladesh needs to raise the issue of partnership in the upcoming Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) Summit as it gives an opportunity to discuss various migration issues among stakeholders.

Refugee and Migratory Movements

Research Unit (RMMRU), Bangladesh Civil Society for Migrants (BCSM), and Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) jointly organised the online consultation on the themes of the 13th GFMD titled “The Future of Human Mobility: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development and the Post Covid-19 Reality”.

The GFMD is a voluntary, inter-governmental, non-binding and informal consultative process open to all state members and observers of the United Nations.

The 13th GFMD Summit will be held in

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22 selected for Acumen Fellowship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-two changemakers were selected for the second cohort of Acumen Fellows in Bangladesh, said a statement yesterday.

To build a locally rooted, globally connected community of moral leaders, these changemakers were selected for Acumen Fellowship Program in Bangladesh in various sectors.

The sectors include Innovations in Agriculture, Fostering Inclusion through Education and Capacity Building, Improving Access to Services, Empowerment through Skills Training and Livelihood Creation, Environment Conservation, Establishing Gender Equity, Influencing Change through Communication and Storytelling, and Strengthening Existing Institutions.

The fellows for 2021 are iFarmer CEO Fahad Ifaz; Bhalo Social Enterprise CEO and Founder Subrata Kumar Kundu; Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center Operations Manager Adnin Mourin; PFDA-Vocational Training Center Trust Chairperson Sajida Rahman Danny; Identity Inclusion CEO and Lead Consultant Shamsin Ahmed; Inclusive Bangladesh Project Coordinator Mohammad Rezwanaur Rahman; Kaizen Research Specialists Ltd Managing Director Debojit Saha; Teach for Bangladesh Programme Director Maliha Fawzia; LightCastle Partners Co-founder and Director Zahedul Amin; WebAble Bangladesh Limited Founder Ovic Alam; Counter Foto Principal Saiful

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Bangladeshi-American gets key WH post

AGENCIES

United States President-elect Joe Biden has named Bangladeshi-American Zayn Siddique for a key position in the office of White House deputy chief of staff.

According to a series of new announcements made by the Biden Transition Team on Wednesday, Siddique has been named senior advisor to the White House deputy chief of staff. He becomes the first Bangladeshi-American to be appointed to a senior position in the incoming Biden administration.

Originally from Bangladesh but raised in New York, Siddique is a graduate of Princeton University and Yale Law School.

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RESPECT FOR DECEASED PP MANNAN

Proceedings on hold at lower courts of Dhaka for a day

COURT CORRESPONDENT

All the trial proceedings of the lower courts in Dhaka were suspended yesterday due to the death of Dhaka District and Sessions Judge’s Court Public Prosecutor Khandaker Abdul Mannan.

“The lower courts in Dhaka did not hold the trial proceedings for showing respect towards Public Prosecutor Khandaker Abdul Mannan,” Hossain Ali Khan Hassan, general secretary of Dhaka Bar Association (DBA).

He said Advocate Khandaker Abdul Mannan was infected with Covid-19 a few days ago and recovered from it. But he became ill again and was admitted to Square Hospital in Dhaka.

The former president and general secretary of DBA died there on January 13, aged 70, Hassan added.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at Metropolitan Sessions Judge’s Court in the capital at 11am yesterday, the lawyer said.

While attending the event, Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh said, “We are deeply saddened by his death. Khandakar Abdul Mannan had all the virtues a lawyer needs to have... He was respected by all for his qualities.”



Star celebrates Staff Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country’s leading English newspaper, The Daily Star, yesterday celebrated its Staff Day with the slogan “Glorious 50 Years of Independence; Courageous 30 Years of Journalism”.

The two-and-half-hour long programme was hosted virtually from The Daily Star Centre in the capital to mark its 30th founding anniversary.

The programme began with a tribute to the memory of late Latifur Rahman, one of the founding directors of the Mediaworld Limited, the owning company of The Daily Star.

Latifur Rahman, a legendary businessman and longtime chairman and chief executive officer of the Transcom Group, breathed his last on July 1 last year.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairperson of Mediaworld Ltd; and Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star -- cut a cake at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday, marking Staff Day. The annual celebration was held virtually this year, with over 200 staff joining via Zoom. The Daily Star Board of Directors paid tribute to late Transcom Group Chairman Latifur Rahman, while the newspaper also recognised its ‘Pandemic Heroes’ of 2020, and held a raffle draw.

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MINI BYTES



5 Android apps YOU CAN'T BE WITHOUT

EH SANUR RAZA RONNY

2 PODCAST APPS TO KEEP YOUR MIND BUSY

Podcast Addict: I feel busy all the time mostly worrying about do I or don't I have corona. Podcasts are brilliant at keeping the mind occupied with useful, interesting information. Podcast Addict is a superb app containing almost every type of subject you can think of. UI is simple though not very good looking. It is intuitive though with plenty of download options. Price: Free or \$3.99 for added features.

Pocket Casts: Pocket Casts looks excellent because it focuses a lot on podcast art as well. Like Podcast addict, it also features a deep library. Did you know that your brain considers listening to a source of information same as reading? Free on Google Play, \$10 / year for premium features.

A STABLE BROWSER WITH AN EDGE OVER THE COMPETITION

Microsoft has been bumbling along with their browser for a long, long time. It was so bad that it was the main dish for browser memes (that's a thing). Then Edge happened and offered a simple solution to people who open hundreds of tabs that we tell ourselves we will read later. To switch those tabs, we need to reach up to the top right. Well, Edge got the edge over its peers by making it just that much easier for us to switch tabs, multi task and confuse our brains. Although recently, Firefox has done that too.

Aside from that, it has a stable browser with good tracking prevention and an option to have the page read out aloud



BEST WEATHER APP EVER

Here's something to feed your morbid desires for excess, at least for weather. Want to know where in Bangladesh is the lowest temp today? Or where it becomes hot enough to boil eggs during summer? Usually Dhaka.

1Weather is an absolute joy of a weather app. A beautiful, simple multi page design shows weather forecasts up to 12 weeks along with weather fun facts Tons of info shown as layers include visibility, humidity, wind speed/direction, barometric pressure, UV index and oh, right, temperature. And it has a radar. It's free but has ads. \$1.99 takes care of those ads. Available on iOS also.

LET TECH REMEMBER YOUR PASSWORDS SAFELY

If you're on a phone, you need to safely store your passwords for all those sites and apps. Jotting them down on a piece of paper folded into the wallet simply won't do. 1Password is a password manager that will make up strong, randomized passwords for different apps you use, and safely plug them when you need to use the app or site. All you need to do is remember one password for the main app. It's good and good things aren't usually free. Subscriptions from \$2.99 / month