

'Carry your NID on voting day'

CMP chief tells Ctg city residents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Warning that outsiders present in polling centres and the city will be dealt with strictly, Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) Commissioner Saleh Mohammed Tanvir yesterday requested city dwellers to carry their National Identity Card (NID) on Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) election day.

"I've requested the city's people to carry their NID on voting day. It helps police understand that you are voters of a certain area, and we have taken the decision to thwart movements of outsiders," said the commissioner, during briefing on last minute preparations at CMP headquarters.

"It's one of the ways...we want to prevent outsiders from entering the city. If you go to your workplace, carry the NID. We're giving a clear message to outsiders: there is no room to create any untoward situation centring the election," he said.

Asked about growing violence among Awami League rebel candidates, he said, "Let's hope for the best and prepare for the worst...We have done enough coordination meetings with bodies concerned. We have taken preparations after analysing risks."

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Concrete debris remain piled up on the road since Dhaka South City Corporation demolished evicted illegal shops at Gulistan's Sundarban Square Market last month. Commuters, pedestrians and even street hawkers seem to have just accepted the obstacle, making their way through the heap as the road has become almost entirely overtaken. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

32pc ready to take vaccine immediately

Finds survey; 52pc say they'll wait

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 32 percent of respondents of a nationwide survey have said they will take Covid-19 vaccines at the very beginning of the countrywide inoculation, set to start in February.

A majority of the people -- around 52 percent -- however, want to take the vaccine a few weeks or months after the vaccination begins.

On the other hand, some 16 percent people said they will not take the vaccine at all, revealed the survey conducted on 3,560 people from 16 upazilas of eight divisions and two city corporations of Dhaka city.

Of those (16 percent) who do not want to take vaccines, 54 percent expressed their doubt about the efficacy of the vaccine while 34 were wary of side effects. The rest were doubtful about the quality of the imported vaccines, the study said.

The Institute of Health Economics (IHE) at Dhaka University and Bangladesh Como Modeling Team jointly conducted the study between January 10 and 25.

As there are misconception about efficacy of the vaccine, its standard and side-effects, researchers recommended that the government address this issue using different media of communication.

"Along with raising awareness, we also recommended to give the vaccine jab to 'iconic' people at first. This will build trust among people," Prof Abdul Hamid, chief of the study said during the online dissemination yesterday.

The study concluded that some 84 percent people were found interested in taking the vaccine for free. Meanwhile, 66 percent said they will take it even if they need to pay for it.

Eagerness to take vaccine was more evident among rural people than in urban areas, the study revealed.

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JP lawmakers slam govt over money laundering

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Jatiya Party yesterday lawmakers criticised the government over corruption in the financial sector.

While taking part in the discussion on thanksgiving motion on the president's speech, they demanded exemplary punishment of PK Halder after bringing him back to the country.

Pir Fazlur Rahman said female friends of PK Halder are living a good life while people who have deposited their money to financial organisations are living "in hell".

"Arresting PK Halder alone will not be enough. People who were helping PK Halder, who were higher ups, should get punishment," he said.

Halder is facing a graft case for illegally amassing wealth, and has allegedly laundered over Tk 10,200 crore from four non-banking financial institutions to abroad.

Using 30 organisations owned by himself and his associates, Halder

misappropriated massive amount in loans from the NBFs and laundered the money to Canada, Singapore and India, according to ACC sources.

They said Halder, who is now in Canada, embezzled Tk 2,500 crore from International Leasing and Financial Services Limited (ILFSL), Tk 2,200 crore from FAS Finance, Tk 3,000 crore from Peoples' Leasing and Tk 2,500 crore from Reliance Finance. "We should also look into which government officials are laundering money abroad," Fazlur added.

Rowshan Ara Mannan, another Jatiya Party MP, said PK Halder should be brought back into country using Interpol, and given exemplary punishment.

"If PK Halder is not punished, this will remain as an example and many will follow his path and will launder money abroad, and take refuge in a foreign country," she said. "This has to be stopped".

She also said Hall-Mark Group General

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Padma Bridge to be completed by June 2022: Quader at JS

No. of unfit vehicles at 4.18 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday informed the parliament that the construction of Padma bridge would be completed within June 2022.

Construction work of the bridge has been delayed due to the Covid-19 situation, the minister said while responding to queries of a lawmaker. The answer was tabled at the parliament.

"Work is going on round the clock, but during Covid-19 period work remained suspended at night. The pace of work was reduced as some foreign engineers, consultants and 1,000 local workers left the project," Quader said.

The bridge, which would connect Dhaka to 21 southern districts, will be a potential catalyst for major economic changes in the lives of over 30 million people living in the region. It will also give a major boost to trade and economic activities.

The Tk 30,193-crore bridge will be one of the major

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A case of sheer negligence

How registrar, notary, lawyers 'turned a blind eye' while recording marriage of Lakingme

KHALID BIN NAZRUL, Cumilla

The government is yet to take any action against the registrar -- who recorded the marriage of deceased Lakingme Chakma, a 14-year-old girl -- based on a fake birth certificate and others involved.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha sent a letter to the Cumilla district registrar on January 20, requesting him to cancel marriage registrar (Kazi) Nurul Islam's license.

The letter signed by Shahanaz Sumi, deputy director of the organisation, also asked Md Anwarul Haque Chowdhury to take legal action in this regard after a proper investigation.

Asked, the district registrar said, "I have received the letter. We will start a probe from February 8.

After investigation, he said, they will send the findings and recommendations to the ministry concerned to take appropriate action.

Sixth grader Lakingme was allegedly abducted from her home in Shikhal Chakma para of Teknaf on January 5 last year. According to her birth certificate, she was 14 years and 10 months old on that day.

Her father Lala Aung Chakma said they went to Teknaf Police Station to file a case, but then OC Pradeep Kumar Das, accused in killing Maj (retd) Sinha, refused to record it.

"I filed a case with Cox's Bazar Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal on January 17 last year," he said.

And after 11 months and six days, Lakingme's body was found in a Cox's Bazar hospital morgue.

After her abduction, she was kept at nearby villages until January 8. On January 9, she was taken to Shahpori Island in Teknaf, where she was detained for the next two days, found a 10-member investigation team of rights activists,

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'We must progress together'

Says Indian envoy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

India and Bangladesh must progress together, said Indian High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswami yesterday, as India celebrated its 72nd Republic Day.

"I think the larger direction of our friendship is there. We believe that India and Bangladesh must progress together and so even in the time of this crisis, we have wanted to work as closely as possible with our closest neighbours, particularly Bangladesh," he said.

He said Bangladesh is one of the first countries India sent vaccines to.

India gifted 20 lakh doses of Covishield vaccine, developed by Oxford-AstraZeneca and manufactured by the

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'Mizan is a symbol of honest, brave journalism'

Speakers pay tribute to the veteran journalist

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mizanur Rahman Khan is a symbol of honest, brave and objective journalism, said speakers at a commemoration meeting yesterday.

In a meeting held at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU), they said Mizan was a complete journalist and created a new trend in reporting on law, human rights and the constitution.

Mizanur Rahman Khan, joint editor of Prothom Alo, passed away on December 11 last year in a city hospital, after contracting coronavirus.

Speakers said through his in-depth reporting and analytical write-ups, he reached people of all walks of life. That is why his death broke hearts of the masses.

They said many unknown information on the Liberation War and killing on August 15, 1975 was revealed to general people through his investigative reporting.

Sohrab Hassan, joint editor of Prothom Alo, said a situation prevails where it is difficult to remain an honest and truthful



person, but Mizan was an honest journalist, who told the truth.

Terming Mizan honest, humanitarian, brave and uncompromising, former president of College Addhayakkha Parishad Prof Mazharul Hannan said when principles and honesty are deteriorating, Mizan did his journalism with honesty, bravery and principles.

Shafiqul Karim Sabu, former president of DRU, said Mizan was dear to all, and his ideologies are worth following for all.

Mentioning Mizan's humanitarian nature, National Press Club Treasurer Shahed Chowdhury said Mizan would regularly and secretly help people by providing financial assistance for medical treatment.

Elias Khan, general secretary of Jatiya Press Club, said he was a complete journalist and a role model for all in the profession.

"Law is a critical subject, but he wrote about matters of law in a simple way, which general people could understand easily," said DRU President Morsalin Noman,

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FILLING UP OF RIVER KOHELIA Legal notice served on six govt bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela) and Youth Environment Society (YES) yesterday served a legal notice upon six government bodies including the land and environment ministries and Roads and Highways Department (RHD) over filling up Kohelia river in Cox's Bazar.

The notice was served after The Daily Star ran a report on January 25 on the sorry state of the once vibrant river in Moheshkhali upazila due to an under-construction road.

Secretaries of three ministries -- water resources, environment and land, chairman of National River Conservation Commission, chief engineer of RHD, director general of DoE, deputy commissioner and police superintendent of Cox's Bazar were asked to stop the ongoing encroachment of the river.

They were also asked to take steps to restore the waterbody to its previous condition and inform the measures to Bela and YES within seven days, the notice read.

Otherwise, legal action would be taken for their failure in saving the river, it warned.

Meanwhile, the Department of Environment issued a notice to RHD for hiding information on river encroachment in EIA (environmental impact assessment) to get approval from the regulatory body.

RAJSHAHI MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL

Nurse accuses doctor of sexual harassment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) unit of Bangladesh Nurses Association yesterday formed a human chain inside the college campus, demanding exemplary punishment of a doctor who has been accused of sexually harassing a nurse.

RMCH, on the other hand, has asked the senior staff nurse to "not take the incident outside campus". The nurses claim this is a bid to save the accused doctor from legal action.

The accused, Dr Mamunur Rashid is an authorised physician who studied at a private medical college. He has been undergoing training on anaesthesia at the hospital, RMCH Director Brig Gen Shamim Yazdani said.

The RMCH Director claimed they were not belittling the incident. He said, they withdrew the doctor from his duties and formed a five-member committee headed by Rajshahi Medical College Vice-Principal Habibullah Sarker to investigate into the matter.

"We are seriously dealing with the matter. The incident that occurred was a very small one which is not fit to be taken to the police or court," he said.

"We did not tell her not to take any legal action, but we did tell her to lay low on the issue and see what we can do about the incident," he said.

He said the hospital's staff are like a family and they can settle incidents like sexual harassment within the hospital.

This correspondent obtained a copy of the complaint that the nurse sent to the Director General of Nursing and Midwifery yesterday.

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28 UK RETURNNEES TEST COVID-19 POSITIVE

IEDCR to research on the virus strain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A specialist team of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) will be collecting samples for further research to understand the strain of Covid-19 that UK returnees are affected with.

On Monday night, 28 UK returnees were tested positive for coronavirus while they were staying in mandatory quarantine at different hotels.

Earlier, another one was tested positive. With him, all 29 UK returnees are admitted at the Khadimnagar 31-bed Hospital, a dedicated isolation and treatment centre for Covid-19.

Dr Anisur Rahman, assistant director (disease control) of Sylhet divisional health office, said, "The UK returnees' samples were collected as per the rules before releasing them from quarantine. After they were tested positive in the Shimantik laboratory, we've sent them to isolation centre."

"The IEDCR team will be collecting their samples to understand which strain of covid-19 they are infected with," he said.

A total of 157 UK returnees landed at Sylhet Osmani International Airport on January 21 on a Biman Bangladesh Airlines' flight.

As per the instruction of the Ministry of Health, they were taken into four-day mandatory institutional quarantine at different hotels.

Upon completion of their quarantine, their samples were sent to Covid-19 PCR lab on Sunday and 28 of them tested positive for coronavirus on Monday night.

As a new strain of coronavirus was spreading in UK, Bangladesh imposed mandatory institutional quarantine for UK returnees starting January 1. Since then, a total of 544 UK returnees landed in Sylhet Airport till Monday. Among them 372 returnees were sent home after they tested negative while 143 passengers are staying in quarantine at different hotels.



Workers hang off of a flimsy self-improvised harness to complete the paint job at this building in Razabazar yesterday, just another day of extremely unsafe work conditions for labourers in Dhaka.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

EVICITION DRIVE IN MIRPUR DNCC mayor, DMP chief among 7 sued for contempt of court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A contempt of court petition was filed with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday against Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Atiqul Islam and six others on charge of conducting an eviction drive in Mirpur section 11, block-C ignoring its chamber judge's order of status quo on the eviction.

Other six respondents are: chief estate officer of DNCC Mozammel Haque; its chief engineer Brigadier General Aminul Islam; commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Shafiqul Islam; its deputy commissioner (Mirpur zone) Mahtab Uddin; councillor of DNCC ward-5 of DNCC Abdur Rauf; and officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station Kazi Wazed Ali.

Masud Alam, Md Jiban and Md Nader Hossain, submitted the petition to the apex court saying the respondents evicted them (petitioners) from their designated (Bihari) camp on January 21 and 22 by willful disobedience of court's order, despite the petitioners showing the order.

The respondents have not honoured the court's order which is contempt of court,

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