

Govt mulls four int'l stadiums

State minister for sports tells House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has a plan to build four international stadiums in the country, State Minister for Ministry of Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel informed the parliament yesterday.

They will be built in Cox's Bazar, Cumilla, Manikganj and Gazipur, he said while answering a lawmaker's query.

A project has been taken to have a feasibility test in this regard, he added.

While replying to query of another MP, he said currently, there is no possibility of arranging any international cricket match at Shaheed Chandu Stadium, Bogura according to the International Cricket Council schedule.

BNP lawmaker Gulam Mohammad Siraj said the stadium got international status in 2003 and the

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A blue pick-up truck lies overturned in the drain at a service road passing under Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Commuters on foot glance at the truck and move on -- after all, this is a regular occurrence for the last couple of years at this road in Shonir Akhra. Vehicles are forced to use this unsafe road riddled with bumps and holes, inset, as there is no U-turn for about four kilometres from Jatrabari towards Signboard area in Narayanganj.

PHOTO: RAFUL ISLAM



Duping jobseekers with fake websites

Human trafficking racket busted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Innocent people are lured in with the promise of a job in Europe by human traffickers. This time, the frauds attempted to gain people's confidence by giving them a chance to verify the job offer letters and visas of Ireland, but that plan backfired as the Police Bureau of Investigation caught the trafficking racket.

The deal is of Tk 7.50 lakh for each job seeker. The human trafficking racket makes a fake website of the company to verify the job offer letter. Their first trick was successful, but when the job seekers approached the concerned embassy for visa verification, the scam was exposed.

PBI arrested three members of such a human trafficking gang over visa and documents fraudulence from the capital's Motijheel and Gulshan areas on Wednesday.

PBI Chief Banaj Kumar Majumder, also deputy inspector general of police, said this at a press briefing at its headquarters in Dhanmondi yesterday.

The arrestees are: Shahin Hasan (49), Tarek Mahmud Galib (28), and Bokul Hossain alias Ratan Hawlader (48). Another accused Mizan alias Shahed Siddique is still on the run.

The PBI chief said this time the victim is a journalist -- Mohammad Ali Chowdhury -- of The Holy Times, who along with his seven relatives, fell victim to fraudulence.

In September last year, they made a deal of Tk 7.50 lakh with each of the eight jobseekers to enter Ireland with employment visa.

As per the deal, they first gave Tk 5.35 lakh and handed over their passports for visa processing and job letters, said Banaj Kumar.

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Two murder cases filed over deaths during CCC polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTC

Two separate murder cases were filed, accusing several, over two deaths on Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) election day.

The cases were filed with Government Railway Police Station and Paharholi Police Station yesterday.

Sohrab Hasan, sub-inspector of Government Railway Police Station, told The Daily Star that Jahanaara Begum, elder sister of Alauddin Alo (28), who died during election violence at the city's Ambagan area, filed a murder case, naming nine people and 20 other unknown assailants.

Hasan Imam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Paharholi Police Station, said Jinnat Ara, mother of Nizam Uddin Munna (30), who was reportedly killed by his younger brother Salauddin over a family feud, filed a murder case naming his own son Salauddin as key accused.

Two unknown persons were also accused, and the main accused fled his home. Police are trying to locate him.

Alo, a construction worker, was shot

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Pro-AL men win them all

First time in CCC polls history, no BNP, Jamaat-backed aspirants won councillor race in any of the 55 wards

RASHIDUL HASAN and DWAIPIYAN BARUA, from CTC

For the first time in the Chattogram City Corporation polls history, none of the BNP or Jamaat-supported councillor candidates won in any of the 41 general and 14 reserved wards in Wednesday's election.

BNP blamed widespread irregularities and capturing of polling centres by the ruling Awami League men for such results.

All 55 winning candidates in councillor posts are from AL and its rebel candidates, as per the results of CCC polls, which was held amid widespread irregularities, violence and intimidation.

AL rebel candidates won in seven wards, according to party sources.

A total of 22 AL rebel candidates contested in the CCC polls, defying directives of the party high-ups.

In 2015 CCC polls, nine BNP and Jamaat backed councillor candidates had won.

Out of the 55 general and reserved seats, ward-18 was won unopposed. Besides, election was not held in ward-31 due to the death of a candidate, said Election Commission sources.

"In 2015 Chattogram city polls, nine BNP-backed councillor candidates had won. This time, the election was so manipulated and there was widespread irregularities that not a single BNP councillor candidate could win," said Amir Khashru

Mahmud Chowdhury, a BNP standing committee member and also the chief coordinator of BNP's mayor candidate Shahadat Hossain.

Asked, Shahadat said there were several BNP-supported candidates who were incumbent councillor and popular in their respective areas.

Citing example of irregularities in the election, Shahadat said in ward-17, BNP-supported candidate Ariful Islam Duke won in the by-election following his father's demise last year. He won by getting over 5,000 votes, he said.

"Unbelievably, he got only 350 votes this time around even though this ward traditionally is a BNP stronghold," he added.

Monowara Begum Moni, a reserved seat councillor candidate, said she was a three-time elected candidate in her ward.

Mentionable, Moni was the immediate past councillor of ward-14, 15 and 19.

"But this time, I was not allowed by the ruling Awami League cadres to enter the polling centre to cast my vote. Even my supporters suffered the same fate," she alleged.

Moni, who came under attack by the AL activists several times during the Wednesday's polls, boycotted the election halfway through the voting, citing massive irregularities and capturing of several polling stations in her three wards.

Sylhet gears up but challenges remain

No vaccination list finalised; training of health workers yet to start; residents worried of rumours, misinformation

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

With residents of Sylhet eagerly waiting for the Covid-19 vaccine, the authorities concerned are struggling to ensure a smooth vaccination campaign.

Even though the cold-chain (temperature-controlled supply chain) for vaccines is ready, health

personnel are yet to finalise a priority list for vaccination. At the same time, vaccination centres in the division are being set up but health workers and volunteers are yet to be trained to conduct the programme.

Meanwhile, concerned citizens have urged the government to raise awareness among people to rule out misinformation and rumours and ensure clarity and accountability in the vaccination campaign.

Abdur Rahim, a shopkeeper in the city's Baluchar area, said, "I was hoping to get the vaccine soon, but now I'm confused after seeing media reports and social media posts on its adverse effects."

Abdul Hasib, a union healthcare assistant of Companiganj upazila in Sylhet, said, "Even though there are rumours and misinformation about the vaccine, I have seen hundreds of people in far remote villages eager to get vaccine. I'm also waiting to be vaccinated."

Faruque Mahmud Chowdhury, president of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan), Sylhet chapter, said, "People always believe in rumours but it is understandable that every vaccine may have some side effects and that's normal."

"We are seeing awareness advertisements in newspapers, but the government should start a mass awareness campaign to dispel misinformation," he said.

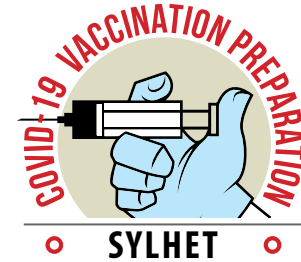
Asked, health officials assured that they will start such campaigns soon.

Meanwhile, the city and four district committees for vaccination campaign in Sylhet division are busy preparing a priority list, as per instruction of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). There are 15 priority groups who will be vaccinated in the first phase.

In the first phase, Sylhet division will get a total of 44,400 vaccines -- 22,800 for Sylhet, 6,000 for Moulvibazar, 7,200 for Habiganj and 8,400 for Sunamganj, according to

health officials.

Dr Zahidul Islam, chief health officer of Sylhet City Corporation (SCC), said, "Priority groups cover numerous sectors and we're struggling to finalise the list. Not all sectors are responding timely, while some are forwarding incomplete information."



Civil Surgeons of the districts are facing similar situations. However, they are hopeful to finalise the list soon, said Dr Premananda Mandal, civil surgeon of Sylhet.

"We have to ensure that everyone gets the vaccine..." he said.

Meanwhile, vaccination centres are being set up at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital and all district and upazila level hospitals. SCC is also preparing several city hospitals and 10 additional vaccination teams on demand. However, health officials could not confirm the total number of centres in the division yet.

Each centre will have two vaccination staff members and four volunteers. But their training has not started yet and the list of volunteers remains unprepared.

Dr Mohammad Abdullah Al Mehedy, upazila health and family planning officer of Zakiganj in Sylhet, said, "We have experiences in administering Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccines to children... we hope that we'll be able to manage Covid-19 vaccination smoothly too," he said.

"But, we are waiting for the training and further instructions," he added.

Dr Anisur Rahman, assistant director (disease control) of Sylhet divisional health office, said, "The training will start soon. It will be conducted by experts of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Serum Institute of India."

Meanwhile, to monitor adverse effects of the vaccine, a divisional committee of 14 doctors has been formed along with four district and one city committees.

So far, a total of 15,968 people have been infected with Covid-19 in Sylhet division till yesterday with 5 cases in the last 24 hours. Among the infected, 272 died and 15,058 have recovered while 39 infected patients are admitted to different hospitals in the division.

Minor poses as 'top Indian criminal' in extortion bid

DB arrests him from Munshiganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

He is not 18 yet.

The boy started working as a salesman at a clothes shop after he failed the SSC exams. With a larger than life dream to be rich overnight, he fled from the shop and started treading the path of crime to realise his "aspiration", detectives said yesterday.

They said he threatened and tried to extort Tk 20 lakh from his father's employer, a businessman in Dhaka's Gulshan, posing as a "top Indian criminal".

He even planted a fake bomb on the businessman's car, to validate his claim. But his plan fell through after detectives arrested him from Munshiganj area on Wednesday, AKM Hafiz Akhter, additional commissioner (detectives) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told a press briefing at DMP media centre.

Police did not disclose his identity as he is still a minor.

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'Women's welfare must get priority in national plans'

Speakers tell Mahila Parishad rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Issues related to women's welfare must get priority in national development plans, policies, and in parliament, said speakers at a rally yesterday.

They also demanded conducting rape trials with sensitivity, and ensuring speedy trials, punishment of rapists and safety of rape survivors.

They said rape cases must not be settled out of court, survivors must not get married to their rapists, and the practice of victim-blaming must stop.

The central committee of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) organised the rally near Sobhanbagh Masjid of the capital's Dhanmondi to demand prevention and remedy of incidents of rape and other forms of violence against women and children.

BMP acting president Fauzia Moslem presided over the programme. She said women are not safe even after 50 years of independence.

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DEATH OF SENIOR ASP AT 'HOSPITAL' Probe completed, charge-sheet soon: police

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Investigation into the death of Senior ASP Anisul Karim at Mind Aid Psychiatry and De-Addiction Hospital has progressed well, and police will submit the charge-sheet soon, according to law enforcers.

Police wanted to submit it by this month, but a few witnesses are yet to give their statements. After taking statements, they will submit the charge-sheet as soon as possible, Faruk Mollah, inspector (operation) of Adabor Police Station, who is investigating the case, told The Daily Star.

Faruk said they have already informed the witnesses. As they stay outside Dhaka and are working there, it is taking time.

Asked whether the hospital's shareholders and directors will be charged, the officer said, "Of course. They can't avoid the responsibilities, as the hospital was running without permission. The specialised private facility was mismanaged, and was operating without skilled manpower and necessary equipment. The victim would not die if it was managed properly."

Faruk said, already six of the 15 accused have given confessional statement before a Dhaka court. Police could not arrest two hospital directors, as they live abroad.

Hailing from Gazipur, Anisul, appointed as a police officer in the 31st special BCS, was working for Barishal Metropolitan Police (traffic). Earlier, he had served Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Rapid Action Battalion, and Police Headquarters.

On November 9 last year, Anisul's relatives took him to National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital (NIMH) to treat his mental illness. For better treatment, they took Anisul to Mind Aid.

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Filling up a jar with the sweetener, a molasses seller readies his product for prospective customers at the capital's Karwan Bazar. The seller sources the molasses all the way from Joydebpur and sells it in the city for Tk 220 per kg. He takes home Tk 800-1,000 in profits, after selling around 40 kg per day.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BIMAN GRAFT ALLEGATION HC wants info on ACC steps against 17 CBA leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know what steps have been taken against 17 CBA leaders of Biman Bangladesh Airlines after the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) had issued notice asking them to appear before its office in connection with corruption allegations in 2014.

The court asked ACC to submit a report on the steps taken against 17 Collective Bargaining Agency to it in seven days.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim came up with the order during hearing a pending writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) in 2014, seeking necessary order on ACC to interrogate the CBA leaders.

ACC had issued a notice on January 12, 2014 asking the CBA leaders to appear before it on January 17, 2014 for questioning them over the allegation of corruption, petitioner's lawyer Manzill Murshid told the HC.

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