

'No one will remain homeless, landless'

Tk 1,000cr released to construct 50,000 more homes, says PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said she has released Tk 1,000 crore to construct 50,000 more



houses for homeless and landless people.

"Marking the Mujib Borsho, today [yesterday], I released Tk 1,000 crore for constructing 50,000 more houses for the homeless and landless," she said.

The prime minister was speaking at the oath-taking ceremony of the newly-elected mayor of Chattogram City Corporation Rezaul Karim Chowdhury and 55 ward councillors, including 14 councillors in reserved seats at Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

She attended the programme virtually from her official residence Gono Bhaban in the capital.

"We are constructing one lakh more homes for them," she said.

The premier asked the public representatives to identify the homeless and landless people in their localities as

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With Pahela Falgun, Valentine's Day and International Mother Language Day within the same calendar month, February is usually a busy month for flower sellers. After months of struggling business due to the Covid-19, traders are stocking up flowers from Jashore's Godkhali, hoping to make some profits. The photo was taken from Khulna city's Farazipara flower market area yesterday.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

Usage of menstrual products high but hygiene low: survey

88pc girls report sexual harassment during commute

MOUJIB AHMED SUJAN

Despite a higher percentage of adolescent girls using some form of menstrual products, the hygiene of menstrual practices remains very low among teenagers aged 15-19, revealed the Bangladesh Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Survey (BAHWS) 2019-20. In the survey, 88 percent respondents mentioned they were harassed during commutes.

Nineteen percent of the responses listed their schools as a place where they were sexually harassed.

The survey was conducted in five phases between 25 July 2019 and 10 January 2020 with a nationally representative sample of 72,800 households. A total of 4,926 girls who are or have been married participated in the survey, alongside 7,800 unmarried girls and 5,523 unmarried boys.

The National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) with technical assistance from Research for Decision Makers (RDM) project of icddr,b and Data for Impact (D4I) of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill conducted the research, which is the first of its kind in Bangladesh.

They found that only one in every 11 married adolescents and one in eight unmarried adolescents have hygienic menstrual practice.

On the other hand, 98 percent of both married and unmarried adolescents reported using either disposable products or reusable materials cleaned with water and soap or detergent during menstruation.

The study also revealed that one in every four married and unmarried

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My experience of taking the Covid-19 vaccine

SHAHEEN ANAM

After waiting for 12 months for that miracle, it finally happened. On December 8, 2020, a grandmother in the UK was given the first Covid-19 vaccine shot. After wreaking havoc in the world not experienced since the second World War, there was a ray of hope that life would finally go back to normal.

In Bangladesh, the first case of Covid-19 was identified on March 8, 2020. As rates of infection and deaths increased, the government ordered a complete lockdown including closure of schools, businesses, offices etc. Bangladesh was miraculously spared the worst of the outbreak. By February 2021, we had seven lakh infections and 8,500 deaths.

News of the availability of the AstraZeneca vaccine was greeted with joy mixed with apprehension. It was declared that mass inoculation will start from

February 7. Meanwhile, the vaccine was transported to all 64 districts and over 6,000 health workers were trained to administer it.

I registered on February 2 to get the vaccine, and immediately received an OTP number on my mobile phone. On February 9, I was informed that my shot will be given at the Kurmitola General Hospital, and was instructed to go there with my National ID and the "Tika Card" which was also sent to me on my phone.

As instructed, I reached the hospital at 9:06am, and to my dismay found a huge crowd of people waiting in queues outside the main building. However, the line was moving fast and I reached the table in 10 minutes, where a very polite young woman was checking papers. It took about five more minutes to find my serial number, which she wrote down on the Tika Card and asked me to sign with the date.

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Fraudster who duped jobseekers wearing 'uniform' arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) has arrested a fraud gang's ringleader, who has embezzled crores of taka from around a hundred jobseekers, introducing himself as an army official.

A Rab-4 team arrested Sheikh Selim alias Shuvo (35) from the capital's Mirpur area on Wednesday, said Sajedul Islam, senior assistant director of Rab-4.

"He used to introduce himself as an employee of a government agency. By doing so, he collected jobseekers, took interview and gave them fake appointment letters of the agency. From every jobseeker, this gang used to take Tk 5-10 lakh," he said.

The official said this gang maintains an organisational structure by which they employed people in field level. They targeted unemployed, innocent people from villages. They have duped more than a hundred jobseekers, he added.

Apart from the arrestee, 10-12 people are involved with the gang, according to Rab.

Rab seized eight fake appointment letters, three bank cheques, three ATM cards, two laptops and a car from Selim's possession.

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Latifur Rahman, Shahnaz Rahman honoured by NBR

Three sister concerns of Transcom Group also receive tax cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Late Latifur Rahman -- founder and former chairman of Transcom Group, its present chairman Shahnaz Rahman, and three of its sister concerns were once again honoured with tax cards by the National Board of revenue (NBR) for payment of highest amount of tax to the state exchequer for the fiscal year 2019-20.

Latifur Rahman and Shahnaz Rahman got the recognition yet again, to be among the 76 highest taxpaying individuals for the fiscal year 2019-20.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam and Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman continued to make in the list of top taxpayers since fiscal year 2015-16 when the NBR decided to honour biggest taxpayers in different professions and firms

operating in different sectors.

Owning companies of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo -- Mediaworld and Mediastar, and their printer Transcraft were also recognised by the NBR for the fifth year out of 53 highest taxpaying companies at national level.

Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman received the tax card of his own and on behalf of Mediastar, while Transcom Group Chief Financial Officer Kamrul Hassan received tax cards on behalf of Latifur Rahman, Shahnaz Rahman and Transcraft at a ceremony yesterday.

A representative from The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam and Mediaworld Ltd received the tax cards on behalf of both.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

'Won't stop until justice is served'

Vow journalists at event marking 9yrs of Sagar-Runi murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing frustration over the failure to complete investigation even after nine years into the murder of journalist-couple Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Rumi, journalist leaders yesterday vowed to continue their movement until families of the victims get justice.

Within the next month, they said they will coordinate among all the journalist organisations and form a "Sangram Parishad" to continue their movement. They were speaking at a programme at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.

Rezwanul Haque Raza, vice president of Jatiya Press Club and chief news editor of Masranga Television, said, "The investigation into the murders had not been completed for nine long years. But we don't want to be disappointed as trial of many murders have taken place even after a long time."

Runi's younger brother Nowsher Alam Roman and the couple's only son Mahir Sarwar Megh (14) were present at the programme.

Sagar, news editor at private TV channel Maasranga, and Rumi, a senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed in the early hours of February 11, 2012, at their rented flat in the capital's West Rajabazar.

Megh, only five at the time, was in the apartment when his parents were murdered.

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Three M'singh war criminals jailed till death

UNB, Dhaka

The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) yesterday sentenced three people of Cafargaon upazila in Mymensingh to jail unto death for their crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War.

The three-member tribunal, led by Justice Shahinur Islam, also sentenced five people to 20 years' imprisonment.

Those who were jailed unto death are Mohamamd Shamsuzzaman alias Abul Kalam, AFM Foyjullah and Abdur Razzak Mandal. Of them, Foyjullah and Razzak were tried in absentia.

Those sentenced to 20 years' jail term are Khalilur Rahman, Md Abdullah, Md Rois Uddin Azadi alias Akkel Ali, Alim Uddin Khan (absconding) and Sirajul Islam Tota.

The tribunal also acquitted Abdul Latif from the charges.

FIRE AT ENGINE ROOM

Shipbreaking worker succumbs to burn injuries after 5 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A senior shipbreaking worker died early yesterday -- five days after sustaining burn injury in a fire incident at the engine room of a ship at Sitakunda upazila of Chattogram.

The incident occurred at N R shipbreaking on February 6. Deceased Md Jashim (40), from Kumira area of Sitakunda upazila used to work at the yard.

The name of the ship could not be known. It is a container ship weighing 12,000 tonnes.

Hamidur Rahman, director of N R Shipbreaking told The Daily Star that the worker died while he was cutting a pipe. "We sent him to Dhaka for better treatment and tried our best to save the worker's life," he added.

Mohammed Ali, general secretary of Bangladesh Metal Workers Federation told The Daily Star that Jashim was a senior cutter at the yard.

He was working at the engine room of the ship to cut a pipe, but it had clogged gas inside. A fire broke out as the gas came into contact with the spark of the cutting machine. Jashim was severely injured.

Md Manik, younger brother of the victim told The Daily Star that his brother was taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital on February 6.

Quoting doctors, he said his elder brother had 45 percent burns on his body, prompting doctors to send him to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery where he died early yesterday.

MINI BYTES



Virtual Book Fairs elate booklovers in the month of February

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Due to the pandemic, Amar Ekushey Book Fair, one of the most sought-after events got halt this year. This book fair, which is largest of its kind in this region, was paused after much deliberation by the decision of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Though there were initial talks about officially hosting the book fair online, that plan was scrapped after the decision was made in a meeting between Bangla Academy, the Academic and Creative Publishers' Association of Bangladesh, and the Bangladesh Publishers and Booksellers' Association. Although the official book fair is not happening, local e-commerce ventures have come forward, to appease the booklovers in the month of February.

Rokomari, the largest specialised e-commerce for books, has started their online book fair. According to Mahmudul Hasan Sohag, founder of the venture, the uncertainty of Ekushey Boi Mela due to pandemic compelled Rokomari to arrange the fair online. "Publishing industry is under threat due to pandemic. As book fair is very close to our heart and part of our heritage, we wanted to support our book publishers with this virtual fair." During the online book fair, Rokomari is offering a minimum 25% discount on all books, 10% cashback on bKash payments, and free shipping is available on bKash payment for the orders of Tk. 700/-.

Alibaba backed e-commerce Daraz is also arranging, for the first time on their platform, a virtual book fair. The fair started from February 1 and is going to continue till February

20. According to Daraz, 3000+ book collections are currently available in their platform. "We are also providing free delivery till February 14 so that our customers can happily skip the hassles of going to real-time book fairs in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic", said Category lead of Daraz Books & Stationeries Minhaz Uddin. Daraz is also enticing customers by providing up to 70% off on selective books of different genre, plus 10% cashback or discount on selective cards and mobile financial services.

Up and coming e-commerce, Dhamaka Shopping has also hosted a book fair on its platform. According to Sirajul Islam Rana, Chief Operating Officer of Dhamaka Shopping, Dhamaka has several thousand books on its platform and hopes to deliver customers smoothly within the stipulated time. "We have added the most recent and best seller books on our platform. To encourage our customers, even more, we are offering up to 40% discount on purchase", he said. On their platform, Dhamaka will continue to keep on selling books from now on.

Aadi.com.bd, the e-commerce specialising in cross-border product delivery, is also offering local books for anyone intending to purchase books abroad. Fatima Begum, Chief Executive Officer of Aadi informed that this is the first time any local venture has formally initiated cross-border bookselling. "Currently, Aadi offers over 7,000 books both for local and global customers. We will deliver books up to 2 KGs in any part of the world for just USD 9.99", she said.



A child pushes a van full of tiffin carriers in Old Dhaka's Banglabazar area. They are delivering lunch to different offices after collecting the boxes from small-scale cooks in adjacent areas. They charge Tk 60 for delivering each package. Many small-scale operations such as this operate around Dhaka, bringing lunch to officegoers.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Man held on charge of raping 7-yr-old

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Police yesterday arrested a man on charge of raping a seven-year-old girl in Narayanganj town.

The arrestee is Abdul Mannan (65), a resident of the town.

Police said the girl was playing at a playground near her residence yesterday morning around 11am.

At that time, Mannan took her to an abandoned area, luring her with chocolates, and raped her there.

When the girl started screaming, locals rushed to the spot and caught Mannan.

On information, police arrested him, said Aslam Hossain, officer-in-charge of Fatullah Model Police Station.

Later in the evening, the victim's mother filed a case against Mannan, the officer said.