

Close shops by 8pm: Taposh

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday urged shopkeepers and owners of businesses to close down their establishments by 8pm to prevent the transmission of Covid-19.

He came up with the request while talking to reporters after visiting Gopibagh Boys' Club field in the city.

"I have two requests to Dhaka dwellers -- please close shops and all business establishments by 8pm as the coronavirus infection rate is on the rise again," the mayor said.

The government has issued a public notice in this regard, he said, adding that the transmission rate of the virus will come down if health safety protocols are maintained.

DSCC Chief Executive Officer ABM Amin Ullah, Chief Waste Management Officer Air Commodore Md Badrul Amin, Chief Engineer Rezaul Rahman, Secretary Akramuzzaman were present at the event, among others.

Bangladesh is seeing an alarming rise in coronavirus infections in the past few weeks after a downtrend in both the death toll and new cases.



With Ramadan just a few weeks away, prices of essentials is already on the rise. More and more people are turning to TCB trucks to get everyday items at a fair price, but as they queue up to wait, masks and social distancing become secondary priorities. This photo was taken at Mugdapara in the capital yesterday.

MOSQUITO MENACE IN CTG

CCC leaves it up to divine intervention

Authorities say only rainfall can curb it

ARUN BIKASH DEY, CTG

Unable to bring the mosquito menace under control in the port city through drives, repellents and other action, Chattogram City Corporation seems to have "surrendered" the matter to natural phenomena like rain and storm.

Claiming that they have exhausted all alternatives for curbing the mosquito problem, CCC authorities say they have left the matter in nature's hands. An official said, "We have tried our best. Now we think only rain can improve the situation."

Expressing helplessness, the city corporation official claimed that they have applied its full strength to alleviate the mosquito problem, but to no avail.

The CCC authorities had begun a crash programme on February 20 to destroy mosquito breeding grounds. Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury inaugurated it in Chandgaon.

During the drive, they not only sprayed repellent but also used fogging machine. However, the equipment apparently made little impact. In many areas, the situation has gone from bad to worse instead of seeing any improvement.

Asked, Morshedul Alam Chowdhury, deputy conservancy officer of CCC, said four workers have been spraying repellent in every ward everyday since February 20.

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HC clears way for medical admission tests on April 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared the way for holding admission tests for MBBS enrolment on April 2.

The court rejected a writ petition that sought its directive on the authorities concerned to defer the admission test date due to sharp rise in Covid-19 infections.

The bench of Justices Md Khasruzzaman and Md Mahmud Hassan Talukder passed the rejection order considering that the petition was not placed properly before it.

During the petition hearing, the court refused to pass any deferment order on the petition after Deputy Attorney General Bipul Bagmar told the court that the authorities have taken all preparations for conducting the admission test on April 2 with strict maintenance of health guidelines.

Writ petitioner's lawyer Muntasir Mahmud Rahman told The Daily Star that there is no legal bar for holding MBBS admission test following the HC order.

Md Taymur Khan Bappi, a citizen from Jhalakathi, submitted the petition as public interest litigation to the HC on March 21.

He sought HC order to hold the MBBS admission examination in line with the admission test of other universities once the pandemic situation gets better.

Meanwhile yesterday, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said MBBS admission test will be taken in compliance with the health guidelines.

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ASSAULT CASE

Erfan Salim's bail challenged at apex court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The state has filed a petition with the Supreme Court challenging the High Court verdict that granted bail to Erfan Salim, son of Dhaka-7 lawmaker Haji Md Salim, in a case filed over attacking a navy officer in the capital's Dhanmondi in October last year.

The attorney general's (AG) office submitted the petition to the Appellate Division of the SC on Tuesday, seeking a stay on the HC verdict.

The chamber judge of the apex court may hold hearing on the stay petition on March 28, AG office sources said.

Meanwhile, Erfan Salim's lawyer Sayed Ahmed Raza told The Daily

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GOLDEN JUBILEE OF INDEPENDENCE

BNP halts all events due to Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has postponed till March 30 all its activities to celebrate the golden jubilee of the independence, considering the present coronavirus situation.

The announcement came from a press conference at the party chairperson's Gulshan office yesterday.

Khandakar Mosharruf Hossain, convener of BNP's golden jubilee celebration committee, told the programme, "The infection rate [of Covid-19] is increasing."

"When the situation improves, we will set new date to implement our programmes," said the party leader.

Mosharruf said, as part of the celebration, the party was scheduled to hold discussion on March 25, rally on March 26 and a gathering at Suhrawardy Udyan on March 30. "We did not get permission for any of those events."

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said, as a responsible political party, BNP has postponed all its activities, sensing dangerous impact of coronavirus.

He urged party leaders and activists to wear facemasks and maintain social distance, and encourage people to follow health guidelines to reduce Covid-19 transmission.

The BNP leader also urged the government to suspend all its activities and pay full attention to Covid-19 situation. "The countries across the world took steps on priority basis to contain coronavirus," he said.

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(From left) Winners Ayan Chakraborty, Mahabun Arefin Mehrab Opee, and Saraf Wamia Hassan at the award ceremony.

PHOTO: STAR

An ode to the glorious history of Bangladesh

Star 'Muktijuddho Olympiad' crowns winners

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR and SADIA TAHISIN

Muktijuddho Olympiad, an online competition based on the Liberation War, concluded yesterday, after the winners were handed prizes.

The event was organised by The Daily Star in partnership with food-tech company Efood to commemorate 50 years of independence and birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Moderated and hosted by quizmaster Ashraf Haque Emu, the event aimed at testing contestants' knowledge on a wide range of topics, including films, books, personalities, and locations related to the history of Bangladesh.

Along with crests and certificates, each of the champions, first runners-up and second runners-up received Tk 20,000, 15,000, and 10,000, respectively.

A small prize-giving ceremony with the champions only was held at The Daily Star Centre on March 24, 2021.

Md Tajdin Hassan, chief strategy and digital transformation officer of The Daily Star, hosted the ceremony. Elita Karim, editor of The Daily Star's Arts & Entertainment and Star Youth, handed over crests to the champions.

The first online round of the quiz had welcomed around 4,800 participants from across the country. The selected participants were sorted into four categories: School Category A (grade 4-6), School Category B (grade 7-10), College Category, and University Category.

Saraf Wamia Hassan from Manarat Dhaka International School and College and Afya Farzana Diya from Govt

Laboratory High School, Mymensingh emerged as champions in School A and School B categories, respectively.

"The more we learn, the more we benefit, and this competition has been an amazing learning experience indeed," shares champion Saraf.

"I am overwhelmed with this opportunity, not just with my achievement, but also for being able to learn so much and in such a fun environment," Afya says.

Ayan Chakraborty from Amrita Lal Dey College, Barishal, and Mahabun Arefin Mehrab Opee from Dhaka University, became champions in College and University categories, respectively.

"I've earned this title by exploring knowledge about my own history and existence, and this experience has left me content," shares Ayan.

The online rounds, promoted by notable influencer Munzereen Shahid, kicked off on February 21. The quarter-finals took place on March 15 and 16, and after that, five contestants from each of the four categories then battled it out in the semi-finals. The finals were held on March 23.

Popular food vlogger Iftekhar Rafsan, better known as "Rafsan the ChotoBhai", Md Sohan Haidear, founder and CEO of Smartifier Academy; Ayman Sadiq, founder of Robi 10 Minute School; and Elita Karim were individually present at finals of each category.

In School Category A, Mahbob Sobhani and Md Musavver Moula secured second and third positions, respectively.

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Man shot dead in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was shot dead in broad daylight allegedly by his neighbour, following a quarrel in the capital's Dakshinkhan area yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Abdur Rashid (38), a construction material seller and neighbour of alleged killer Aminul Islam Hannan alias Janani Hannan.

The incident happened around 11:30am in front of Hannan's Ainusbagh residence.

Police and locals said there had been a long-standing feud between the two. In the morning, an altercation took place between the two, and at one stage of the scuffle, Hannan went inside his house, got his firearm and shot Rashid dead.

"Hannan shot at least

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'A hero like him should be remembered forever'

Speakers pay tribute to late ASA founder Shafiqul Haque Chowdhury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Founder of Association for Social Advancement (ASA), Shafiqul Haque Chowdhury dedicated his life to improving the lives of underprivileged people. Through his organisation, he has played a great role in alleviating poverty in Bangladesh, speakers at a memorial event said yesterday.

They also touched on ASA's role as a leading microfinance institution at an event in the city yesterday, paying tribute to Chowdhury's lifelong work. He was an adviser to the former caretaker government, and passed away last February 12 at the age of 78.

Established in 1978, ASA has expanded in microfinance model of poverty reduction to 13 nations in Asia and Africa.

At the event, Planning Minister MA Mannan said that Chowdhury is an exceptional personality in the field of microfinance.

Shafiqul Haque Chowdhury had earned his master's degree in Sociology from Dhaka University in 1969 and worked as a trainer for the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD).

He founded ASA in late 1970s at a remote village Tapra, under the then Manikganj sub-division with a mission of welfare of the poor, marginalised and disadvantaged. His vision was to establish a poverty-free society.

Atiur Rahman, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, said that Chowdhury had particularly empowered women entrepreneurs.

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Kumudini, Jaago get Tk 90 lakh in funds from Japan

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Japan has provided a grant of Tk 70 lakh to Kumudini Welfare Trust of Bengal Ltd and Tk 20 lakh to Jaago Foundation Trust.

Japanese Ambassador Ito Naoki signed 'Grant Contracts' for its Grass-roots Human Security Projects (GGHSP) -- through which the funds are disbursed -- at the Embassy of Japan with Rajiv Prasad Shaha, managing director of Kumudini Welfare Trust, and separately with Korvi Rakshand, chairman of Jaago Foundation, said a press statement yesterday.

Kumudini was awarded the grant for "The Project for the Installation of Central Oxygen Supply System at Kumudini Hospital in Tangail District".

Kumudini has been operating to ensure health, socio-economic and welfare of poor and vulnerable women through its hospital, educational institutions, and training facilities.

With the assistance of the funding, Kumudini will procure and install medical oxygen storage pressure vessels and gas pipeline that will ensure adequate

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Probashi Kalyan Bank branches in all upazilas

Expats' welfare minister sets target

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad yesterday said they have set a target to establish branch of Probashi Kalyan Bank in the country's each upazila.

"We are moving for a system so that we can reach service-seekers at villages instead of them coming to us in Dhaka," he said.

The minister was addressing a cheque handing-over ceremony marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Probashi Kalyan Bhaban in the capital.

Undertaken by Probashi Kalyan Bank on the occasion of Bangabandhu's birth centenary, bank cheques were handed to some 138 beneficiaries under the loan scheme "Bangabandhu Ovbashi Brihot Poribar Loan".

On establishing new branches of Probashi Kalyan Bank, he said alongside an initiative to reach branches of the bank to 100 by June this year, they will try to establish another 50 branches by the end of next fiscal.

Earlier, the bank had 63 branches while the decision to reach the number to 100 has already been approved, he said, adding currently, some 80 branches of the bank are operational all over the country.

There will be no benefit if establishing the branches bear no fruit, he added.

The "Bangabandhu Ovbashi Brihot Poribar Loan" scheme aims to support family members of migrant workers so that they can invest in economic activities, said Ahmed Munir Saleheen, secretary of the expatriates' welfare ministry and chairman of the bank's board of directors.

The government established Probashi Kalyan Bank in 2010 to provide collateral-free loan to migrant workers, loans for returnee migrants for employment in the country, and facilitate sending remittance and encourage wage-earners to invest in the country.



US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R Miller takes a tour of the iconic fort in Old Dhaka, along with State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid.

PHOTO COURTESY: US EMBASSY DHAKA

USA to fund restoration of Lalbagh Fort

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

United States is funding the restoration of Old Dhaka's Lalbagh Fort under a project of Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP).

Yesterday, US embassy in Dhaka and Ministry of Cultural Affairs inaugurated the project named Lalbagh Fort Cultural Preservation and Architectural Documentation.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl Miller and State Minister for Cultural Affairs K M Khalid launched a ceremonial photographic drone to formally initiate the work and toured the grounds of the fort.

The Mughal-era Hammam Khana, one of three primary structures at the Lalbagh Fort complex dating from the 17th century, will be restored under this one-year project, said a press release of US embassy.

The initiative of restoring, retrofitting, and 3D architectural documentation of the Hammam Khana will be led by the Ministry of Culture's Department of Archaeology, using historically authentic materials to restore architectural features and an advanced retrofitting system to

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