

646 tonnes of plastic waste produced in Dhaka every day

Says WB country director; four teams awarded for innovative solutions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka city produces 646 tonnes of plastic waste every single day, which is 468 tonnes more than 15 years back in the capital, World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh and Bhutan Mercy Tembon said at a programme yesterday.

"In Dhaka city alone, plastic waste has gone up from 178 tonnes per day in 2005 to 646 tonnes per day in 2020," she said while addressing a workshop on "Sustainable Management of Plastic to Leverage Circular Economy and Achieve SDG in Bangladesh".

She also said addressing plastic pollution is a critical development agenda for ensuring green and smart growth.

The World Bank in association with the Department of Environment (DoE) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change organised the virtual programme as a part of the series of events. This was the fourth event in the series.

The World Bank yesterday also awarded four winning teams of a competition titled "Plastic Circularity Innovation Challenge", for bringing ideas of innovative solutions to combat plastic pollution in Bangladesh.

The contest was arranged for innovative solutions in two categories - collection or sorting, recycling of low-valued plastics and single-use plastics; and digital technology solutions in coping with plastic pollution

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Masks have become a hygienic necessity due to the pandemic. But this small traders is selling them by hanging them out on the dusty roads, which renders the hygiene aspect useless. This photo was taken yesterday from Barishal city's Girza Moholla area.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Woman dies after fall from rickshaw as muggers snatch her bag in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman died after she fell from a rickshaw as muggers from a private car pulled her bag in Dhaka's Kamalapur area early yesterday morning.

The deceased Sunita Rani Das (50), a resident of Gopibagh area, was a cleaner at the Buddhist temple in the capital's Mugda area.

The incident occurred around 6am when Sunita along with her nephew was heading towards the temple on a rickshaw.

As the rickshaw was passing BRTC bus depot, muggers from a private car pulled her bag so hard that she fell on the road and suffered severe head injury, said the deceased's son Sumon Chandra Das.

She was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared her dead around 11am.

The muggers sped away with her bag.

The body was sent for autopsy. Yasin Arafat Khan, officer-in-charge of Motijheel Police Station, said they are trying to identify the white car and arrest the muggers.

Transgender volunteers winning hearts at DMCH

NILIMA JAHAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Holding a placard inscribed with "I am a volunteer. How can I help you?" Sagarika was waiting at the entrance of Dhaka Medical College Hospital's Covid-19 unit. As soon as an ambulance arrived, she rushed towards it, helping the patient get off from the vehicle.

As the patient got down, she helped the wheelchair-bound patient get to the Covid-19 unit, while providing necessary instructions to family members.

Sagarika is one of 15 members of a group of volunteers serving patients at DMCH, 10 of whom, including Sagarika, are from the transgender community.

Clad in orange jackets, the volunteers have been an ever-present sight at the hospital since April 14, the first day of the current phase of the lockdown.

The group has been working under the platform "Brihonnola", a collective that works towards trans acceptance in Bangladesh.

"I feel very proud to be able to make such a contribution here. I'll admit, it took some time for people to accept us, but gradually their attitude towards us changed," Sagarika told The Daily Star.

Their work includes loading and unloading patients from ambulances, sanitising patients and their family members, disinfecting their belongings, providing instructions on navigating the hospital premise, administrative assistance, helping in buying medicines, and a host of other favours.

In addition, they have been transporting discharged patients -- especially destitute pregnant women, children and elderly patients, and Covid survivors -- around the city, with a battery-run auto-rickshaw.

The service is completely free.

Every day, they have been providing around 20 trips for the discharged patients, who often face difficulties in managing and affording transportation services to reach home.

Sagarika, who completed her Bachelor of Social Science from Government Rajendra College in Faridpur, joined Brihonnola in 2018, when the organisation started its journey. She said her life has changed after joining the organisation.

"People will often come to us and praise us for what we do," she said. "It's really inspiring!"

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Rab arrests yaba-peddling 'gypsies' 77,000 pills recovered in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion on Tuesday conducted a drive in the capital's Basila area in Mohammadpur and arrested five youths of a drug racket with 77,000 yaba pills on Tuesday, who they said were taking an innovative disguise to peddle the contraband.

Rab-2 Commanding Officer Lt Col Imran Ullah Sarkar made the disclosure at a press briefing at the elite force's media centre in Karwan Bazar yesterday. He said the arrestees used to pose as members of the floating Bede (gypsy) community and travel from one place to another, carrying portable stoves and cooking utensils.

To avoid suspicions of people, they used to sell small items such as bangles, hair ribbons, children's belts, chains, safety pins, and rings. But behind all this, they were carrying yaba pills inside sealed-off cookers.

To dodge law enforcers, they didn't even use the highways from Cox's Bazar to Dhaka.

The arrestees are - Tarikul Islam (23), Sinbad (23), Mim Mia (22), Emon (19), and Monir (28).

The Rab official said acting on a tip-off, Rab came to know that a group of drug traffickers was coming to the Basila Bridge area of Mohammadpur with a large consignment of yaba through Buriganga river.

"Law enforcement agencies have never seen such a

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Ensure budgetary allocation for persons with disabilities

Speakers tell virtual discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inclusive budget allocations for persons with disabilities are required to ensure accessibility for them in the society, said speakers at a virtual discussion yesterday.

Mentioning that persons with disabilities have been hit hard by the pandemic, they said the government needs to give priority to them while undertaking different plans and policies.

Access Bangladesh Foundation (ABF) and The Daily Star in collaboration with five organisations working for persons with disabilities -- Disabled Child Foundation, National Council of Disabled Women, Sitakund Federation, Turning Point Foundation, and Women with Disabilities Development Foundation -- organised the discussion on "Disability Inclusive National Budget 2021-22".

The speakers said there are strong and sufficient laws and policies for people with disabilities, but their implementation remains in poor state till date.

They stressed the importance of developing reliable database for persons with disabilities and determining their true

number through conducting nationwide census.

They said many people with disabilities who hold jobs or are self-employed have lost income opportunities amid the pandemic. The upcoming national budget needs to be prepared to deal with the Covid-19 situation, and providing support for food, cash transfer, skill development initiatives, education, health services and employment generation should be prioritised.

Presenting a concept paper, Vashkar Bhattacharjee, adviser to Sitakund Federation, said to allocate resources appropriately for development centring persons with disabilities, there is a need for reliable data, which is absent at present.

As per Household Income and Expenditure Survey-2016, persons with disabilities constitute 6.94 percent of the total population, whereas 2011-Population and Housing Census says it is 1.4 percent, Vaskar said.

On the other hand, in 2020-21 national budget, allocation for persons with disabilities is only 1.96 percent of the

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'Declaring Amin Uddin SCBA president without election against charter'

Says pro-BNP group of apex court lawyers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The pro-BNP faction of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday protested the declaration of Attorney General AM Amin Uddin, a pro-Awami League lawyer, as the new SCBA president without election.

The announcement from SCBA Vice President Muhammad Shafique Ullah on May 4 is contradictory to its constitution, said its Secretary Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal, also leader of its pro-BNP group.

He was speaking at a press conference organised by the faction under the banner of SCBA in its auditorium.

The post of SCBA president was left vacant after its newly-elected President Abdul Matin Khasru died of Covid-19 on April 14.

The SCBA secretary told the press conference that the vacant post must be filled via election as per article-16 of its constitution.

The article-16 reads, "In the case of a casual vacancy occurring on account of the removal, resignation or death of any office bearer or other member, the vacancy shall be filled within a month by election in a Special General Meeting of the Association to be held for the purpose and the manner of this election shall be decided by the meeting itself."

Ruhul Quddus said the special general meeting, which was scheduled to be held on May 4, has been postponed without any discussion and decision.

Six BNP-backed office bearers of SCBA -- including Ruhul -- attended the press conference.

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Cryptocurrency to finance militancy!

CTTC arrests two 'Neo-JMB operatives' from Jatrabari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Counterterrorism officials claimed to have arrested two members of banned militant group "Neo-JMB" from Dhaka's Jatrabari area on Tuesday.

One of the arrestees was identified as Sakib Ahmed Chowdhury alias Jaki, while the other is a 17-year-old boy.

A team of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit arrested them when the two met in Matuail area, said Saiful Islam, a deputy commissioner of CTTC.

They are active members of the militant group, he said.

Sakib, after graduating from a private university, started working as a freelancer. He used to help finance the militant group through cryptocurrency, the DC said.

Another arrestee used to communicate with others through a secret messaging app for new recruitment.

Both of them have been carrying out propaganda campaigns inspired by violent extremist ideology through social media and other online platforms, CTTC officials said.



Workers were seen cleaning buses to get the vehicles ready for the roads. Much to commuters' relief, buses are set to ply the streets of Dhaka starting today. The photo was taken yesterday at Gulistan.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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