

## Experts urge alert after four mild tremors jolt Sylhet

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

After repeated mild tremors in Sylhet yesterday, experts warned the possibility of a major earthquake at Dauki Fault Line and urged all to stay alert.

At 10:36am, people of Sylhet city experienced the first tremor. Before they could recover from the shock, another tremor -- stronger than the first one -- jolted Sylhet at 10:50am and then the third one at 11:30am.

The residents of the country's northeastern city became panicked after experiencing the fourth one at 1:58pm. They also experienced several aftershocks.

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) couldn't pinpoint the accurate location of the earthquakes as the seismic activities were recorded only in one seismic station in Sylhet as it needs data from three stations.

Sayed Ahmed Chowdhury, meteorologist of BMD in Sylhet, said, "Among the earthquakes, the one at 10:50am was of the highest magnitude, 4.1 in Richter scale."

"We were able to measure aerial distance of the epicentre, toward the north

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Students under Pragatishil Chhatra Sangathan Samuha yesterday demonstrated in front of the capital's Raju Memorial Sculpture, demanding a roadmap for opening educational institutions, ensuring vaccination for students, teachers and staffers, and health insurance for them.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## 'No pressure to reopen educational institutes'

Says Dipu Moni; students continue demands of resumption

STAR REPORT

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said there is no pressure from larger portion of students and guardians to re-open educational institutions.

She came up with the remark at a time when the demand for re-opening is getting louder.

There are some pressures from different quarters in this regard but not from the majority of students and guardians, said the minister while addressing a meeting commemorating the death of former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru at Jatiya Press Club.

"I get messages regularly over the issue. Most of the messages request not to open educational institutions right now. We have information that movements are going on at different places. But we cannot pose health risks on people. Campuses will be re-opened only when Covid-19 situation will be brought under control," she said.

Meanwhile, some progressive student bodies and Bangladesh Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal yesterday demanded immediate re-opening of educational institutions, maintaining proper health guidelines.

The student bodies announced the demand at a rally at the base of Raju Sculpture at Dhaka University in the afternoon.

They also demanded that the government declare a roadmap to reduce session jam and students' drop-out rate, which might be created due to the closure.

Their other demand was to ensure vaccination for all students. Bangladesh Chhatra Federation general secretary Zahid Sujon

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

# Situation worsened due to lockdown constraints

Finds research conducted by BIGD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although domestic violence was pervasive in Bangladesh even before the pandemic, the situation has worsened due to lockdown-induced constraints in access to justice for survivors of domestic violence, found latest research.

The pandemic is responsible for limiting survivors' access to formal institutions during the "lockdown". Movement restrictions and halt of public transport made it extremely difficult for women to travel outside their homes and reach out for help, the in-depth research mentioned.

It also pointed to courts being shut and NGOs providing legal aid having to close their physical spaces.

Although local authorities became burdened with relief distribution, and police were implementing lockdown measures, they were eventually able to respond to women seeking assistance, it said.

The findings of the research titled "Access to Justice for Survivors of Domestic Violence During Covid-19" was presented at a webinar yesterday, jointly organised by Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), Brac University and the Rule of Law Programme of GIZ Bangladesh, and was supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The research was conducted by BIGD in collaboration with Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), Brac Human Rights and Legal Aid Services (HRLS) and RDRS Bangladesh, and was commissioned by the Rule of Law Programme, which is supported by law ministry and home ministry.

According to the research, many government and non-government

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## COP26 chief Alok Sharma due in Dhaka next week

UK MP's visit to spotlight climate discussions ahead of UN summit

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UK MP and COP26 president-designate Alok Sharma will be visiting Bangladesh next week. As part of his tour to Asia, Sharma will look to strengthen support for climate priorities ahead of the UN climate change summit in Glasgow this November.

Apart from Bangladesh, he will also visit Vietnam and Indonesia, said a statement of the UK Cabinet Office.

The visit is likely to take place on June 2 or 3, a diplomatic source said.

"Meetings with senior leaders will focus on climate ambition, including a clean energy transition and efforts to help communities deal with the worst effects of climate change," the cabinet office's statement said.

Alok Sharma's visit follows commitments from G7 nations to end all new finance for coal power by the end of 2021 and increase support for countries vulnerable to climate change.



SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## 'Democracy only in mind, not in action'

Speakers stress strong institutions, freedom of speech

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Strong institutions are vital for ensuring economic development and carry forward the practice of democracy in the country, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

They also said suppressive acts like Digital Security Act-2018 should be scrapped to ensure freedom of speech, which is a fundamental element of democracy.

Centre for Governance Studies in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Bangladesh organised the webinar titled "The Future of Liberal Democracy in Bangladesh after the Covid-19 Pandemic".

Presenting the keynote paper, Dhaka University Professor Shantanu Mojumder said self-censorship has turned out to be the "new normal" for different entities like civil societies, journalists and rights defenders in fear of arbitrary use of DSA.

He reprimanded the role of politicians during the pandemic saying that the bureaucrats were in charge of all the pandemic management activities and official involvement of politicians weren't

there much.

He also criticised the role of the parliament terming its activities "rhetorical and dysfunctional" and said political parties themselves do not practise democratic norms, which is an ominous sign for democracy.

Eminent academic and historian Prof Dr Syed Anwar Husain said, "We have the democratic system in our mind, but we do not have the democratic spirit in our actions. Democracy doesn't mean being elected to power and remaining in power for some time."

He said in a democratic system there should be a government and a strong opposition party. However, there's only the government that actually play its part in Bangladesh.

"No university in Bangladesh functions as per democratic norms and rules, moreover, there's corruption. It permeates the whole fabric of society. Corruption and democracy can't go together," he added.

Questioning the role of democratic organisations like the Election Commission

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



While cyclone Yaas battered the coasts as it made landfall, it brought a much-needed respite for dwellers of the capital, with a cloud cover and gusts keeping the heat away. The scorching, humid weather has returned well and truly, as is evident from the rickshaw-puller's shirt entirely drenched in sweat. The photo was taken yesterday from Moghbazar area.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Three of a family suffer burns in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three of a family, including a child, sustained burn injuries in a fire at their tin-shed house in Dhaka's Mohammadpur area early yesterday.

The injured are Md Sohel (35), his wife Laboni Akter (25) and their son Morsalin (2).

They are undergoing treatment at the Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery. Their condition is critical.

Neighbours rescued them after hearing their screams when the fire originated around 2:45am at Nobodoy Housing area. Fire officials suspected that the fire started from a burning mosquito coil in a room where gas accumulated from a leak.

Rupa Akter, a neighbor of the victims said, "As we rushed to the spot hearing their screams, we saw the couple on fire, trying to douse it, standing in front of the house."

"They managed to come out of their room but their son was still inside. Fire officials later rescued him," she added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Oikya Parishad slams 'poor' allocation for religious minorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday condemned and expressed serious discontent over the poor allocation for religious minorities in the Annual Development Programme (ADP) in the proposed budget of the upcoming fiscal.

Oikya Parishad, a representative body of the country's religious and ethnic minorities, issued a press statement terming the poor allocation as a continuation of stark discrimination against the community.

The religious affairs ministry received Tk 15,054.03 crore under the ADP for the next fiscal's budget, of which Tk 290.08 crore is allocated for the projects related to religious minorities, reads the statement.

Of the Tk 290.08 crore, Tk 200 crore was originally allocated in 2017 and each budget mentioned the figure with the fresh budget, as the works under project have not been completed yet.

In budget, special allocations for religious majority community were made for development of their religious establishments and institutions, but no such allocation is made for Hindu, Buddhist and Christian communities, the organisation said.

They demanded Tk 5,000 crore allocation to eradicate the discrimination these minority communities are facing over the years. They also demanded of a separate ministry for religious minorities, similar to what exists in India and Pakistan.

**NRB Bank**  
Not Just Another Bank

**NOW WE ARE AT OUR NEW LOCATION**

**CORPORATE HEAD OFFICE**  
**UDAY SANZ**  
Block- SE (A) Plot # 2/B  
Road # 134, South Avenue  
Gulshan-1 Dhaka-1212

OLD ADDRESS  
NRB Bank Limited  
Corporate Head office  
Simplex Anarkali  
89, Gulshan Avenue  
KARAIL

11 min  
850m

Uday Sanz  
2/B South Avenue, Gulshan-1

**UDAY SANZ**  
2/B GULSHAN SOUTH AVENUE

www.nrbbankbd.com  
www.facebook.com/nrbankbd