

## Bangabandhu's life to be showcased at Times Square, NYC

UNB, Dhaka

The life sketch of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be screened at New York city's iconic Times Square on August 15 and 16.



Bangabandhu's digital portrait will also be screened 720 times at the place, a major commercial intersection, tourist destination, entertainment centre, and neighborhood in the Midtown Manhattan, at the junction of Broadway and Seventh Avenue.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen made the disclosure yesterday, mentioning that mainstream media will cover the event.

He thanked Fahim Feroj, a Bangladeshi expatriate who has taken the initiative.

EXIM Bank and Bangladesh Finance came forward to help him implement it.

Fahim -- through his NY Dreams Production, a New York-based organisation -- has taken the initiative to showcase Bangabandhu and his

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Residents of Khulna city's Bastohara area have been wading through knee-deep, stagnant water for the last 15 days. Due to the city's dismal drainage system, just a little rainfall results in waterlogging, submerging many of the roads and alleys. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Informal workers in dire straits: speakers

Negligence of authorities blamed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers of the country, especially informal ones, are facing serious deprivation and negligence by the authorities during the coronavirus lockdown, which has pushed them into dire situation because of joblessness or low wages, said labour leaders, activists and academics yesterday.

At a webinar on labour rights organised by civic body Nagorik, they said 86 percent of the country's labour force is in the informal sector, and they have no job contracts and thereby a lot of them were arbitrarily terminated from jobs.

After Eid holidays, garment factories were declared open but the government had no announcement on public transport -- a situation that forced the workers from their homes to take whatever means they had to travel from their homes to workplaces in Dhaka or Chattogram, they said.

"The state had thought little of how the workers will follow health rules during the lockdown. Moreover, there is no minimum protection of their jobs during this time," said Jahangirnagar University professor Anu Muhammad.

Samajtantrik Sramik Front Central Committee Chairman Razekuzzaman Ratan said a good portion of the country's GDP comes from the tourism sector, but the hotel and tourism sector workers' situation is dire during the pandemic.

They neither have any wage board or framework nor are they recognised by the labour law. With the pandemic beginning last year, lakhs of hotel workers were jobless and went home. They are still jobless and are passing hard days, he said.

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## Punish those who vandalised temples

Demand eminent citizens after Khulna incident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens yesterday issued a statement, demanding arrest and trial of those responsible for vandalising and ransacking several houses, shops and temples of the Hindu community in Khulna's Rupsha upazila on Saturday.

"This is not an isolated incident. It's a shameful example of repression of minorities during the pandemic," they said in a joint statement signed by Shamsul Huda, executive director of Association for Land Reform and Development.

"In recent years, repression of minority communities has increased. We have seen such incidents in Cox's Bazar's Ramu (2012), Pabna's Santhia (2013), Brahmanbaria's Nasimagar (2016), Bhola's Manpura (2020), and in Sunamganj's Shalla (2021)," they said.

"We have repeatedly urged authorities concerned to take necessary measures to avoid such incidents and demanded trial of the responsible persons," they continued.

"But still, investigations into the incidents have not been completed and the real criminals were never put on trial."

"Despite the local administration being aware of the chaotic situation in Rupsha, they did not take any action to stop untoward incidents, nor take any measure to ensure security of the minority community."

"We strongly protest such incidents of torture, harassment and human rights violation of members of the minority community at Shiyali village in Khulna's Rupsha upazila," they said.

"We demand the arrest and punishment of the criminals who were behind the incident," they further said in the statement.

"We also demand the government take steps to engage general people in preventing such incidents," they added.

The signatories include rights activist Sultana Kamal; Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kori; Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director, Transparency International Bangladesh; Advocate Rana Das Gupta, prosecutor at International Crimes Tribunal; Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, senior lawyer at the Supreme Court; Dr Abul Barkat, professor at Dhaka University and Advocate Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive at Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association.

## BUYING OXYGEN CYLINDERS, HFNC LGRD ministry allocates Tk 10cr for 61 districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives (LGRD) has allocated about Tk 10 crore for procuring oxygen cylinders, high-flow nasal canula and health safety materials for 61 districts of the country.

The ministry yesterday in a letter to the chief accounts and finance officer of Local Government Division (LCD), controller general of accounts, asked to release the first installment from zila parishad development assistance.

In the letter signed by LGD deputy secretary Mohammed Tanvir Azam Siddique, directives are given to the chief executive officers of the upazila parishads for spending the money for the said purpose only.

The letters show Tk 15.5 lakh each was allocated to 10 districts; Tk 16.5 lakh to 49 districts and Tk 17 lakh for Dhaka and Tk 18 lakh for Cumilla.

"The money should be spent for distributing health safety equipment including masks, hand sanitisers, high-flow nasal canula, oxygen cylinders and relief among the poor in the zila parishad areas," reads the letter.

The parishads must follow Public Procurement Rules-2008 and the respective authorities will be responsible for any irregularities.

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## SPECIAL MASS INOCULATION Seems like govt moving without plan: GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The chaotic unfolding of the mass vaccination programme is making it clear that the government is progressing without any plan, alleged Jatiya Party chairperson and deputy leader of the opposition GM Quader.

"This programme is slowly turning out to be a boomerang that could lead to even greater spread of the virus due to the failure to maintain health guidelines at the centres," he said in a statement yesterday.

"Uncertainty, chaos, and lack of coordination are so visible that it is causing anxiety and panic among people."

According to media reports, the vaccination programme is turning out to be a disaster, as there is no physical distance at the centres, he said. In addition, allegations of nepotism and corruption are rife, which should be investigated immediately, GM Quader stated.

Yet, as the rise in Covid cases and deaths show no signs of abating, the only way to tackle the pandemic is to continue the



mass vaccination programme in a planned and proper way, he said.

The JP chief rued how vaccine-seekers, especially the older demographic, are having to stand in long queues, get burned in the sun, drenched in the rain, and sit through other forms of harassment for their doses. What's worse, even after getting their jobs.

On the other hand, the programme is under increasing risk of failure due to the inadequacy of vaccines, which is another cause of frustration for people, GM Quader said.

The JP chair said at least 27 crore doses of vaccine will be required to cover the 17 crore people of the country. In order to continue the programme, the government needs to secure more vaccines in an urgent basis.

"Every day, ministers are assuring people about purchasing the required number of jobs. But with no progress made, these empty words are only keeping people in the dark."

## Eka gets bail in drug case

Mou remanded again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A virtual court in Dhaka yesterday granted bail to film actress Semon Hasan Eka in a case filed against her for possessing narcotics at her residence in Dhaka's Hatirjheel area.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Atiqul Islam passed the order upon a bond of Tk 1,000 with two guarantors after her lawyer submitted a petition, seeking bail in the case, court sources said.

She, however, cannot walk out of jail as she was not granted bail in another case filed against her for torturing her house help, said an official of General Recording Office at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

She was sent to jail on August 2.

Police arrested Eka from her residence on July 31 on charge of torturing her house help. Earlier, locals had called 999 and complained of her torturing the house help.

Police also rescued house help Hazera Begum (30) and sent her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

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## It's condemnable, if found to be true

Says HC on language used by Viqarunnisa principal in leaked phone conversation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The words allegedly used by Viqarunnisa Noon School and College Principal Kamrun Nahar in telephone conversation with a representative of guardians are "condemnable and unexpected", if the conversation is authentic, the High Court said yesterday.

Making the observation, the HC asked the committee formed by the education ministry -- to probe the leaked telephone conversation -- to submit its report to the court by August 30.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman passed the order during hearing a writ petition that sought its directive on the authorities concerned to conduct a departmental inquiry into the alleged television conversation that went viral on social media on July 26.

The bench also fixed September 1 for further hearing and passing order on the petition, petitioner's lawyer Abdullah Harun Bhuiyan told The Daily Star.

Earlier in the day, Deputy Attorney General Bipul Bagmar told the HC bench that the education ministry has

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## Writ petition seeks steps to stop eavesdropping

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten Supreme Court lawyers yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court, seeking its directive on the government to take necessary steps to prevent incidents of eavesdropping and recording of private phone conversation.

In the petition, they also sought a directive from the HC on the government to inform what necessary steps have been taken to prevent such incidents and to ensure right to privacy of telecommunication.

The lawyers said in recent years, they have come across numerous incidents of eavesdropping and recording of private telephone conversations from various reports published in national dailies, including The Daily Star.

As per its constitutional statute, Bangladesh Telecommunication and Regulatory Commission (BTRC) is delegated with the responsibility of ensuring privacy of telecommunication and upholding the sanctity of Article 43 of the Constitution.

However, the newspaper reports demonstrate the continued failure of the BTRC in carrying out its constitutional duties. Such regular incidents of eavesdropping and recording of private telephone conversation show that BTRC is failing to take any necessary actions or preventive measures or carry out investigation to prevent such breach of privacy of telecommunication, the petition said.

The officials who have been mentioned as respondents in the petition are secretaries to ministry of posts, telecommunications and information technology, post and telecommunication division, information and communication technology division, and chairman of BTRC.

The lawyers who submitted the petition are Rezwana Ferdose, Uttam

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## 'Relocate hospital project from CRB'

Nagarik Samaj urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Nagarik Samaj Chattogram, a citizens' platform, yesterday demanded that the government relocate the hospital project from CRB area.

They said this at a press conference at Chattogram Press Club.

Convener of the organisation Prof Dr Anupam Sen, also vice chancellor of Premier University, Chattogram, said with the help of people, they would resist such project for the sake of environment.

CRB, the headquarters of Bangladesh Railway's east zone, is surrounded by hills, hillocks and valleys with a number of century-old trees. The area is considered the oxygen centre of the city. It is also a habitat for different species of birds and wild animals.

People go for morning and evening walks in the area; many others visit the place to take in fresh air, said Advocate Ibrahim Hossain Chowdhury Babul, member secretary of the organisation.

"We urge the government to shift the hospital project to another area owned by Bangladesh Railway," said Babul, also vice president of Chattogram city unit of Awami League.

Mentionable, BR signed an agreement with a private company to build a hospital, a medical college and a nursing institute on six acres of land in CRB area on public private partnership basis.

## Man arrested over abduction, murder of five-year-old

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three days after a five-year-old was abducted from the capital's Khilgaon area, police yesterday recovered the child's decomposed body from an under-construction building in the area.

Analysing CCTV footage, police arrested Md Selim (32), a rickshaw-puller, over the abduction and murder, on the same day.

Abdul Ahad, deputy commissioner of Motijheel Division police, confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

Ahad said Selim's wife was suffering from kidney disease, and he needed money for her treatment.

Selim then asked for financial support from his former landlord's family. But they refused to help him. So, Selim planned to blackmail the family, said the official.

On Friday, he abducted a random child, Jisanul Islam Akayed, from the street and took him to the building belonging to the former landlord, Babul. The place was empty, and he knew about it, as he worked for the landlord many times.

Then, he killed the child, left the body there and fled. He thought the landlord would get scared seeing the body and call Selim to dispose of it. At that time, Selim would blackmail him for money, said police, quoting Selim.

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Regular commuters of the Dhaka-Narayanganj highway will have come across this bizarre sight near the Kanchpur Bridge. For this stretch of the road, fabric scraps bought from RMG factories are left to dry after washing. Once dried, they will be resold to small retailers. Although seemingly harmless, this sudden change in scenery could distract new drivers on the highway, while pedestrians are left with less space for walking. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

MITU MURDER

## Ex-SP Babul Akter denied bail, two others remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday rejected a bail petition of former Superintendent of Police (SP) Babul Akter over the murder of his wife Mahmuda Khanam Mitu.

Metropolitan Magistrate Shafi Uddin passed the order after a virtual hearing of the bail petition filed by Babul Akter's lawyer, said Additional Deputy Commissioner (Prosecution) Kazi Shahabuddin Ahmed of CMP.

Meanwhile, another court of Metropolitan Magistrate Hasan Md Reza placed two other accused -- Wasim and Anwar -- on a three-day remand each after the investigation officer concerned sought remand for them in the case.

On June 5, 2016, Mitu was stabbed and shot dead while she was taking her son to his school bus stop at the port city's GEC intersection. After the murder, Babul filed a case against three unidentified men with Panchlaish Police Station.

Later, Police Bureau of Investigation

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