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Your Right to Know

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PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION LAW

## Door ajar for misuse

Commendable draft leaves out state agencies from compliance

ZYMA ISLAM

In a forward-looking move, the government has set out to form a law for personal data protection fashioned on the EU's momentous General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as it looks to make Bangladesh fit for the digital age.

Like the GDPR, the law would allow citizens the right to know what personal information is being collected, how the data will be used or processed, for how long, and where the data will be kept or moved, according to the draft bill.

But where it diverged from the GDPR is that the certain state agencies like the law enforcement agencies are spared from complying with the law for "functions of the government". The Daily Star has a copy of the draft law prepared in November last year.

"The problem in the draft law is that it leaves wide loopholes for the government agencies, which will nullify the whole purpose of the law," said Md Saimum Reza Talukder, an advocate who specialises in

- » Gives citizens control over their personal data
- » But govt can use data as it wishes
- » DG of DSA can't be prosecuted for violating law
- » All private and public entities have to comply with directions from DG on data processing
- » No data can cross borders except for "strategic interests"

law, privacy and digital technologies. For example, the law will not be applicable for government agencies building a case against someone under the

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**LITTLE ONES SHOW THE WAY...** A child washes her hands while another one waits for her turn inside the circle marked on the ground. This photo taken in Holy Cross Girls High School shows how children can follow the rules and health safety guidelines impeccably whereas some adults fail to do so. Yesterday, schools reopened after nearly a year and a half.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## TAKING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS Keep environment in mind: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed the importance of considering the impact on the environment while taking any development project.

"We always focus on the environment while taking any project. We always take measures to protect the environment while taking any step," she said.

The prime minister said this while speaking at a programme to inaugurate five power plants with a total electricity generation capacity of 779 MW.

Hasina inaugurated the power plants through a videoconference from her official residence the Gono Bhaban as the programme was held at the Bijoy Hall of Bidyut Bhaban.

The five power plants are the Bibiyana-III 400MW Combined Cycle Power Plant in Habiganj, Zulda, Chittagong 100MW Power Plant Unit-2, Meghnaghat 104MW Power Plant in Narayanganj, Modhumoti 100MW Power Plant in Bagerhat and upgradation of Sylhet 150MW Power Plant to 225MW Combined Cycle Power Plant in Sylhet.

The prime minister renewed her call to people to maintain austerity while using electricity as the government provides power

at a huge subsidised price.

"The production cost of electricity is much higher. To provide services to subscribers, we are giving huge subsidies. The billing price is much lower than the production cost."

Requesting all to be careful about unnecessary usage of electricity, Hasina said, "If you don't have any need, please turn the electricity switches off."

She said how much the government could provide subsidies if people do not maintain austerity. "That should be taken care of [by consumers]."

Talking about the huge production of power in Bangladesh, the prime minister said the transmission lines have to be set up alongside increasing the production to meet the demand. "So, we're constructing the transmission lines as well."

Hasina said the main aim of the government is to extensively provide electricity to rural areas so that the scope of employment generation increases.

"The overall development of rural people is on top of our priority list. That's why we've given the highest importance to communications and power lines," she said.

Regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, Hasina said the government is providing vaccines

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## Kids' joy brings schools to life

STAR REPORT

School and college compounds across the country sprang into life once again as students stepped inside classrooms after 543 days of closure caused by the pandemic.

Relief, excitement and joy were writ large on the faces of students who once more resumed an activity that had seemed so natural until Covid-19 turned their worlds upside down on March 17, 2020.

Since then until yesterday, being stuck at home had become the natural order of things for these students.

The school authorities welcomed students while strictly maintaining health safety protocols. However, a number of guardians, especially in the capital, crowded around most school gates, flouting safety guidelines.

Many schools welcomed their students with roses, chocolates, pens and pencils and decorated campuses with festoons, balloons and motifs.

Barring a few exceptions, students wearing masks sanitised their hands at the entrances and maintained three feet distance inside classrooms. Authorities of schools split each

"As we are now returning to school, getting in touch with friends and getting suggestions from teachers, our motivation is also returning."

AN SSC EXAMINEE FROM WILLES LITTLE FLOWER SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

class into batches to maintain social distancing inside classrooms.

"I feel like today is the first day at my school," said Tasnim Mridha, a fifth-grader of University Laboratory School and College, who was delighted to return to school.

Teachers were happy to see their students back inside classrooms.

"We have long been waiting for students [to return]. We had been coming to the school for various reasons [during the closure] but we did not feel good without the hustle and bustle of students," Mirpur Government Primary School Head Teacher Nasrin Sultana told The

Daily Star. Education Minister Dipu Moni, when visiting Azimpur Government Girls' School and College in Dhaka, expressed disappointment with many parents not following the Covid-19 health guidelines.

She, however, expressed satisfaction with students following guidelines properly.

"You can drop students off at school and go home if possible. Or, you could wait outside school, maintaining the necessary distance," she told reporters.

Guardians were seen flouting social distancing guidelines by crowding at most school gates including Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, Monipur High School and College (Shewrapara branch), Shaheed Police Smrity College, Upashahar Government Primary School.

Dipu Moni also warned that if any institution was violating health guidelines, strict action would be taken.

She said other than the threat of coronavirus, contracting dengue is also a concern. She recommend that students should wear full-sleeve

clothing and use mosquito coils.

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TREATMENT ABROAD

## She has to go back to jail to seek permission

Law minister says about Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister

Anisul Haq

once again

said BNP

Chairperson

Khaleda Zia

has to return

to jail to seek

release and

permission to take

treatment abroad, even

though the law ministry

earlier opined that

her sentence could be

suspended for a further six

months.

"Khaleda Zia had

applied for release from

prison under section 401[1]

of the Code of Criminal

Procedure (CrPC). But, in

that application, she had

not applied for permission

to go abroad for treatment.

The application has already

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## SUED UNDER DSA Court accepts charges against Kishore

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday accepted the charges against cartoonist Ahmed Kabir Kishore and six others

in a case

filed under

the Digital

Security Act, allegedly

for spreading rumours

and carrying out anti-

government activities.

Judge Mohammad Ash

Sams Joglul Hossain of

Dhaka Cyber Tribunal

accepted the charge sheet

of the case after scrutinising

the case dockets and

other relevant documents,

Shamim Al Mamun, bench

assistant of the tribunal,

told The Daily Star.

The six other accused

are: Hungary-based

entrepreneur Zulkarnain

Saer Khan alias Sami;

Swedish-Bangladeshi

journalist Tasneem Khalil

who runs Netra News;

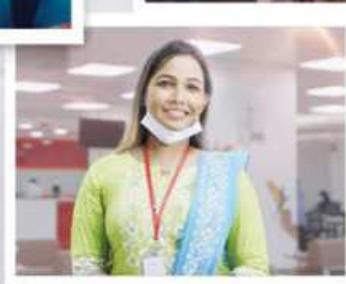
Minhaj Mannan Emon,

managing director of BLE

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করোনা সংকটে  
অসহায় মানুষের পাশে  
দাঁড়িয়েছেন যারা,  
নাম না জানা এমন  
অগণিত বীরদের জানাই

আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ



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