

## 'A reminder of DSCC's failure'

Jurain residents exhibit belongings of dengue affected people at protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An empty can of condensed milk, stood beside a tea cup. A spoon, a toy, a t-shirt and a mug.

These and more lay in front of the speakers' table at a protest exhibit yesterday, organised by a group of Jurain residents, one of the areas hardest-hit by the ongoing dengue crisis.

They belonged to people from the area who were infected by the mosquito-borne viral disease. Some of them alive, some no longer so.

The exhibition was held near the Supreme Court area's Kodom Fountain.

The residents blamed Dhaka South City Corporations for their mishandling of the crisis and demanded the belongings be showcased in Dhaka Nagar Jadugar, as a reminder of the city corporation's failure.



Death toll 57

11 died in Sept so far

34 in Aug, 12 in July

234 more hospitalised yesterday

Total infected 15,065

Mijanur Rahman, a resident of the ward, said "Exhibiting the items in the museum will showcase the failure of the city corporation authorities to protect the city's people."

In the last three months, 20 people from Jurain's Ward-53 alone died from the virus.

The empty condensed milk can and tea cup belonged to deceased tea-seller Fatema, while the T-shirt and mug belonged to Bangla daily Prothom Alo staffer Abul Kalam Azad. The rest of them were collected from people who are currently suffering from dengue fever.

Palash Devnath, father of Alongkita (5) who is suffering from dengue, said DSCC thinks their responsibility is finished after fogging the streets, but they do nothing to take care of larvae breeding grounds inside houses.

"When I noticed larvae breeding inside our building, I notified the landlord. When he did not take any steps, I complained to the DSCC authorities. But they also didn't do anything to protect my daughter," he said.

"The ward councillor and authorities should work round the

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On August 26, another cub was added to Chattogram Zoo's ever expanding tiger population. This little one, who met the media for the first time yesterday, was born to the albino tiger Shubhra -- daughter of the famous Raj-Pori duo -- and is the 10th cub born at the zoo. But this youngling is now faced with the common problem of breeding in captivity, where mommy tigers sometimes refuse to nurse their offspring. Zoo authorities are looking to mitigate this by feeding her goat milk.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



Jurain is one of the areas hardest-hit by the dengue crisis. In Ward-53 alone, 20 people have died of the disease so far, some of whose belongings were on display yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Process on to extend Khaleda's conditional release

Says home minister

UNB, Dhaka

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said the process to extend the suspension of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's sentences in two graft cases is underway.

"We've received an application and it has been sent to the law ministry following the procedure, and now the process is underway as per the ministry's opinion," he said while speaking at the Secretariat.

On September 12, Law Minister Anisul Huq said Khaleda must return to jail for submitting a fresh application to seek permission to go abroad for treatment.

Talking to the news agency, Anisul also said his ministry has already given an opinion on extending further by six months the suspension of Khaleda's jail sentences following an application submitted by her family to the government.

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## Form laws to protect minorities

25 organisations urge government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of religious and ethnic-minority groups have asked the government to immediately formulate laws to protect minorities and eradicate discrimination, and establish a minority commission, which the ruling party had included in their pledge before the 11th parliamentary election.

They also called upon the government to issue urgent directives to establish tribunals on the return of vested property.

The demands were made yesterday at a press conference organised at the capital's Jatiya Press Club by a platform of 25 organisations of religious and minority groups.

The platform has begun a mass signature campaign in favour of their demands.

### DEMANDS

- Eradicating discrimination
- Establish minority commission
- Set up tribunals for return of vested property
- Implement CHT Peace Accord
- Form Land Dispute Commission

Chief coordinator of the platform and general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council Rana Dasgupta said they will submit a memorandum of their demands along with signatures to the Prime Minister's Office in November.

They also have plans to hold long march programmes to the

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## No archive record to be destroyed

JS passes bill; maritime bill placed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh National Archive Bill, 2021 was passed in parliament yesterday, incorporating a provision which states that no record can be destroyed.

Besides, The Territorial Waters and Maritime Zones (Amendment) Act, 2021 was placed in parliament yesterday to make it more time-befitting.

### NATIONAL ARCHIVE BILL

The bill aims to replace National Archive Ordinance, 1983, in line with a High Court judgment.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid placed the bill, which was passed by voice vote.

As per the proposed law, National Archives will provide records to any individual after receiving application and relevant fees. If anyone tampers with, destroys, erases or hacks any file of the archive, they will be imprisoned for three years or fined Tk 20,000.

If anyone takes any file illegally, smuggles it abroad or takes it out of the archive building with ill intention, they will be imprisoned for five years or fined Tk 1 lakh.

### TERRITORIAL WATERS, MARITIME ZONES (AMENDMENT) ACT

Meanwhile, placing the bill, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said the proposed law will establish Bangladesh's sovereignty over its maritime boundary, which will facilitate search and extraction of marine resources.

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## Ruet suspends tree felling

Authorities find irregularities in project director's activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Following protests from several quarters, the authorities of Rajshahi University of Engineering Technology (Ruet) suspended its ongoing tree-felling drive on the campus yesterday.

The authorities have also found that the development project -- under which the tree-felling was carried out -- was initiated without obtaining necessary permissions from the forest department.

The Ruet authorities came up with the decisions prompted by a report in The Daily Star and movement of local people, officials said.

"We didn't form any committee to investigate the matter as everything is happening before our eyes," Ruet registrar Md Selim Hossain told The Daily Star.

He said instead, top officials of Ruet summoned project director Amit Roy Chowdhury to the VC's office for queries.

"He was asked to produce necessary documents for the tree-felling, but failed to do so," the registrar said.

The project director only presented a copy of seeking permission from the Department of Environment dated March 15, 2020, but not any permission documents or evaluation report.

"Under these circumstances, we decided to stop felling the trees," the registrar said.

The officials then asked the project director to submit the necessary documents within three days.

Meanwhile, acting deputy director of DOE in Rajshahi Md Mizanur Rahman said, "Ruet never applied to us [seeking permission for tree-felling]. But even if they did, we would not have allowed them," he said.

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## PROPOSED DATA PROTECTION LAW May act as tool to control people's opinions: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday said the proposed personal data protection law may act as a tool to control people's opinions and obstruct freedom of speech, instead of actually protecting personal information.

The organisation urged the government to formulate a progressive and time-befitting law to protect personal information in a transparent way, after seeking opinions from all stakeholders.

The law cannot hinder public opinion about the government's controversial activities, corruption and irregularities, it said.

In a statement, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said such laws have been formulated in many countries and unions, including the European Union. While the main spirit of such laws is to ensure privacy of people's personal information, the words "security" and "protection" have been used to repress the people.

Warnings during the formation of Digital Security Act, 2018 later became a reality, he said.

Iftekharuzzaman also said that a provision has reportedly been included in the proposed law which states people cannot approach courts for justice and redress. This cannot be a part of the law of any democratic country.



In the gruelling heat of Bhadra, it often feels like the Kirtankhola is sending out invitations to take a break, take a dip, and cool off. Faced with the swelter, these local boys are only too happy to oblige. This photo was taken yesterday from Barishal city's Chandmari area.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## MINI BYTES



## Zoom rolls out tons of new features including live translation

NAVEED HUSSAIN

Zoom announced several upcoming updates at its Zoomtopia conference on Monday, including the addition of live translation to its automatic live transcription feature and the expansion of its whiteboard feature into a more fully featured app.

Automatic live transcriptions and closed captions in English will be available in February 2021 for free Zoom accounts. Zoom now says it "plans to provide real-time transcription for (as many as 30 additional languages) by the end of next year."

As part of that push, Zoom will also offer translation services for paid accounts, with the goal of "supporting real-time translation across as many as 12 languages by the end of next year."

Zoom's whiteboard feature will also undergo significant changes. Zoom currently allows you to create and share whiteboards during meetings so that you can doodle together while you talk, but later this year, a planned expansion will make Zoom Whiteboard available outside of meetings in Zoom apps and on the web.

The basic drawing tools appear to be the same as what Zoom currently offers; the main difference is that Whiteboard is being treated as a product alongside video calls, rather than a feature within them. On your

boards, you'll be able to add sticky notes, drawings, and comments, and you'll be able to view them at any time.

Zoom will also be available in Facebook's Horizon Workrooms early next year. According to Zoom, the shared VR meeting space will be able to host video meetings and connect to Zoom Whiteboard. You can pin a Zoom Whiteboard to your virtual desk or the wall for everyone to see in VR, and draw alongside colleagues at a meeting via a traditional computer.

Zoom is also expanding its communication platform with apps that complement its Phone Meetings, Chat, and Webinar offerings. Zoom apps have been integrated into meeting workflows to provide a more immersive experience.

Other inclusive and hybrid-specific solutions, such as Hot Desking and Zoom Rooms Smart Gallery, were also announced. Hot Desking, according to Zoom, will allow employees to reserve desks and spaces in offices, with an interactive map and simple authentication. Individual video feeds of in-room participants are created using AI in the Zoom Rooms Smart gallery. This solution is unique in that it allows those who work remotely to feel included.

Zoomtopia added a slew of new features to the platform. Some of the new inclusive solutions, such as Rooms Smart Gallery and Horizon Workroom, are one-of-a-kind, but they may take some time to implement.