



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



REGD. NO. DA 781 | Vol. XXXI No. 245 | ASHWIN 11, 1428 BS | **Your Right to Know** | SAFAR 18, 1443 HIJRI | 16 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00

"If Covid cases surge, the government will shut down educational institutions without any hesitation."
EDUCATION MINISTER DIPU MONI

"We're four major democracies with a long history of cooperation. We know how to get things done and we are up to the challenge."
US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN TELLS QUAD MEMBERS

"We must state that Israel, the occupying power, has one year to withdraw from the Palestinian territory it occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem."
PALESTINIAN LEADER MAHMUD ABBAS

LAW FOR EC APPOINTMENTS It's needed more than ever now

Say experts about constitutional provision citing little public trust in polls body, apathy to voting

ASHUTOSH SARKAR and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR



With the national elections about two years away, the framing of a specific law as mandated by the constitution for appointments of election commissioners is back to the fore against the backdrop of widespread mistrust in the Election Commission and an alarming apathy among voters. The state has barely four months to appoint new election commissioners as the five-year tenure of the incumbent chief election commissioner and four other commissioners ends on February 14. Though over 49 years have passed since the constitution prescribed a specific law for appointing CEC and ECs, successive governments chose not to enact one. Most of the South Asian countries, however, have similar laws in place. In the absence of the law, the appointments of election commissioners with no specific criteria defined regarding their qualifications or what will lead to the disqualification often triggered widespread controversies.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Thick clouds overcast the sky over the Buriganga in Sadarghat, Dhaka, yesterday afternoon. The gloom was accompanied by a cool breeze and a shower after a couple of days of sweltering heat and humidity.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Formulate law to form new EC

53 eminent citizens urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 53 eminent citizens yesterday called upon the government to reconstitute the election commission under an act of the parliament citing Article 118(1) of the constitution.

The term of the current Nurul Huda commission will end in February 2022.

Hence, the initiative to reconstitute the election commission must begin immediately with the enactment of a law as per the constitution, they said in a joint statement.

"We urge the government to take urgent steps in this regard to enable the election commission to take the necessary lawful steps for conducting elections independently and without any external influence. At the same time, we urge the government to start thinking of reforms so that the civil administration and the law enforcement agencies can impartially

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Will charge cars in areas like Gulshan, Baridhara

Says DNCC mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday said that car users must pay additional taxes to use their vehicles in the capital's affluent areas, like Gulshan and Baridhara.

On the occasion of the World Car-Free Day yesterday, the mayor, in a programme organised by Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority [DTCA] at Malibagh-Khilgaon area, shared the city corporation's "planning" in this regard.

The DNCC mayor said, "The number of vehicles has increased and gridlocks have gotten worse. Under the circumstances, we're contemplating tax on vehicles in affluent areas."

"From Gulshan-1 to Gulshan-2, Kakoli to Gulshan or Baridhara, only cars and cars. In a family -- father, mother, son and daughter -- everyone has individual cars. Due to this overwhelming number of vehicles, there are congestions on roads. People are cursing out but no one is considering why the situation is so bad.

"By reducing the number of cars, it is possible to reduce the traffic jam along with air pollution," he added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Plot on to tarnish country's image

PM tells a reception by US AL, says 'some of those elements stay abroad'

BSS, New York

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said people who do not believe in Bangladesh's independence are out to tarnish the country's image at home and abroad by hatching conspiracies.

"They are the enemies of the country's people," she told a reception accorded to her by the US chapter of Awami League at New York LaGuardia Airport Marriott Hotel on Friday night.

Joining the reception virtually, Hasina said some elements staying abroad are indulged in plotting against the government to taint the country's image at a time when it has taken Bangladesh to a dignified position.

The premier, also the AL president, called upon all to remain alert so that none can play ducks and drakes with people's fate.

Politics is not meant for enjoyment rather it is for sacrifice, she said, adding Ziaur Rahman, HM Ershad and Khaleda Zia never thought about the welfare of the people, rather they touted power as "a means for enjoyment and making some quick bucks".

Highlighting the country's stunning development, Hasina said Bangladesh has become a role model of uplift before the entire world due to the relentless efforts of her government.

Referring to some elements who are calling the AL government illegal, she said, "My question is how they get the chance for uttering those words?"

The AL chief said they are getting the scope for criticising the AL by taking advantage of the "Digital Bangladesh vision" which was materialised by her government.

"If they had an ideology, they could never do that. They are basically criticising the government after being paid by the BNP-Jamaat clique."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Schools will be closed if infections surge again

Says edu minister

UNB, Dhaka

Education Minister Dipu Moni has said educational institutions will be closed if there is any possibility of Covid cases going up.

"But no such situation has arisen anywhere so far. If any report indicating a rise in the cases comes, we will take steps," she told reporters after the inauguration of Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition at the capital's Shilpakala Academy yesterday.

"We don't want to bring the pre-primary level students to educational institutions now. After three weeks, we will make a decision in this regard," the minister said.

Dipu Moni said the pandemic is not over yet and people must stay careful although the daily infection rate has dropped below 5 percent.

"We'll have to keep eyes on the situation. Anyone can fall sick anywhere -- at home, on the way

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Watchdog, new laws not needed

E-commerce industry stakeholders call for strict enforcement of existing laws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no need to form a separate regulatory body for the e-commerce sector as the existing legal framework is sufficient to ensure discipline, said industry stakeholders yesterday.

The capacity of the Directorate of National Consumers' Right Protection (DNCRP), the state agency responsible for hearing and addressing consumer complaints about

goods and services, needs to be enhanced to weed out deceitful practices in the sector, said AKM Fahim Mashroor, chief executive officer of Bdjobs.com and AkerDeal.

"We do not want a new regulatory body for e-commerce. The DNCRP needs to be made more effective -- it needs to enforce the regulations strictly. It is time to hold the organisation accountable."

Mashroor's comment came at a webinar organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue styled 'Challenges in the E-commerce sector: What should be done?'

The central bank also has a big role to play in ensuring that consumers are not duped as the advance payments to e-commerce companies are made through the payment gateways.

There are transaction records available, which could have been utilised to detect foul play.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Feminist icon Kamla Bhasin passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Feminist icon, activist, development worker, educator, writer, poet, advocate for peace and mentor to multiple generations of women's rights activists in the subcontinent and beyond, Kamla Bhasin passed away at the age of 75.

She was considered one of the best gender trainers in the region and a tireless advocate of women's rights.

She was diagnosed with late-stage cancer earlier this year and breathed her last at 2:45am Saturday, confirmed Khushi Kabir, women's rights activist and long-term comrade of Kamla.

Kamla Bhasin was the founder and advisor of Sangat, a South Asian

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A long queue of migrant workers at the Dhaka airport before their flight to Saudi Arabia yesterday afternoon. On Friday night, many of the workers going to Saudi Arabia were not allowed to board their plane as they didn't get the second dose of a Covid-19 vaccine.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Still no Covid tests at HSIA

Authorities now wait on trial run results

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite several promises by government high-ups and the prime minister's instruction weeks ago, RT-PCR labs at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport are still not serving passengers, especially migrants heading to the UAE.

The authorities were only able to set up the labs yesterday after missing several dates promised by even ministers.

Only 100 tests were done on trial yesterday. The samples tested were not even of passengers.

After setting up six RT-PCR testing facilities at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport premises, officials concerned yesterday said the labs would first hold trial tests before opening

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Everyday we say to other
Thanks, Sorry, Grateful and Please

But we never say to MA
I am Grateful

মহাদায় গড়ি সমতা

Manusher Jonno Foundation and its Partner Organisations
Supported by: UKaid