



Clad in red and green, a mother-daughter duo is busy at play during the slow hours of their bangles business at Dhaka University area. Juggling motherhood and work this way can be a difficult undertaking, but mothers like her still find a way around it with a smile on their faces. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

DMP DRIVES AGAINST NARCOTICS

13,942 arrested in last 8 months

MUNTAKIM SAAD

Dhaka Metropolitan Police have arrested at least 13,942 people in around 9,821 drug cases in the eight months from January to August. But despite this, drug trading in the capital is yet to show any sign of stopping.

Amid this, law enforcers have admitted that merely arresting petty drug dealers won't get the job done, as long as their godfathers remain free to operate.

"It is true that only arresting peddlers will not stop the drug business," said Faruk Hossain, deputy commissioner of DMP's media wing, yesterday.

"In the past, we managed to reach the drug kingpins of Cox's Bazar by arresting small peddlers. We then confiscated their illegal wealth through court order," he said.

The official said they are trying to bring the godfathers under the law by investigating their illegal

JAN TO AUG
Total arrests 13,942
Cases filed 9,821
According to DNC, there are at least 3,500 drug dealers including 95 godfathers running the illicit trade in Dhaka division

"If you come here [for drugs], you don't need to worry. The peddlers will find you," said a shopkeeper.

A veteran of the area, he added that this has been going on right under the nose of law enforcement agencies for years. "Police only pick up the peddlers and carriers, but the kingpins remain off the hook," he said.

DRUG CONFISCATION DATA Meanwhile, DMP also released a set of data on drug trade in the city yesterday.

The data cites yaba as the most confiscated drug in the capital. Even during the coronavirus pandemic, different units of DMP seized at least 31.67 lakh pieces of yaba till August.

Officials also said there is now a growing market for newer drugs, including the expensive "crystal meth". During various drives, DMP confiscated 727 grammes of the drug.

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THE EC DEBATE

President to form EC through search committee

Says Quader; urges all political parties to take preparation for next election

STAR REPORT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday categorically said the president will form the Election Commission (EC) through a search committee after consulting with all.

"If the EC is neutral, the election will be neutral also," he said, reports our Munshiganj correspondent.

Quader, also ruling Awami League general secretary, was speaking at a programme organised to distribute deeds of plots among those who lost their land due to Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project, at the rehabilitation site at Munshiganj.

He said the caretaker government system does not exist in the country after the Supreme Court order in 2011

and it is a settled matter.

"The High Court has sent the caretaker government system to the museum. There is no room for a new debate here. Don't create chaos in the country now. Sheikh Hasina's government wants free and fair election too. I will tell everyone to get ready for the election without creating any chaos," he said.

Quader urged all political parties to take preparation for the next general election, slated for 2023, saying that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina wants fair polls and thus everyone should take preparations accordingly.

Criticising BNP for its demands for a caretaker government, Quader said, "You [BNP] want election under a

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Is there a connection?

Traffickers out on bail, trafficking victim sued in attempted rape case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In May, a 22-year-old trafficking victim filed a case with Sitakunda police.

He said he was trafficked all the way to Croatia and sold to a logging company in February, who made him work without pay. Son of a small shopkeeper, victim Alfai Al Hossain had paid Tk 8 lakh for a restaurant job in Croatia.

But with the help of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), he was repatriated back to Bangladesh on May 12.

Upon arrival, he assisted Rab-3 in arresting four recruiting agency staffers, two from Sitakunda and two from Feni.

But in a turn of events, while all of the arrested are now out on bail, Alfai finds himself and his parents arrested in a case filed against them on charge of molesting a domestic worker.

The Muradpur union resident was arrested on Friday night in an attempted rape case filed with Chattogram's Women and Children Repression Tribunal-4 on September 1.

The case was filed by a 28-year-old woman who claimed she was employed by Alfai's family as a house help for Tk 6,000 per month. The woman is a resident of Firozshah neighbourhood in port city.

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The wall that appeared out of nowhere!

It was built around drain where Sadia fell; CDA, CCC clueless



Though it covers the drain where Sadia fell and died, the wall takes up the entirety of the pavement, leaving pedestrians to get down on the road -- one of the busiest in the city -- to circumvent it. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

SANJOY KUMAR BARUA, Ctg

In a rather mysterious turn of events, a brick wall popped up around the drain where university student Sehrin Mahbub Sadia fell and died last Monday, although both Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) and Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) have denied building it.

The wall was erected late Thursday night, Abdur Rahim, a local shopkeeper, told this correspondent. "Some workers came in on a truck with bricks, sand, and cement, built the wall, and left in a hurry," Rahim said.

The wall can be found erected over the formerly open drain at Mazar Gate area of Agrabad, taking up most of the pavement. This is forcing pedestrians to get down on the road and circumvent the wall, this correspondent found.

Contacted, CCC mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury said, "We did not build the wall there. However, we have requested CDA executive engineer (project) Md Mahfuzur Rahman to take protective measures in the area."

After coming to know of the wall, CCC objected to it. "We have sent a letter of objection to CDA for erecting the wall in a way that obstructs movement on the pavement. But now I hear that they [CDA] did not build the wall," said

the mayor.

Asked, CDA executive engineer Md Mahfuzur Rahman said, "We did not build the wall." However, he went on to applaud whoever built the wall.

Moreover, Mahfuzur drew on previous miscommunication between the two bodies and said, "If the CCC had coordinated with CDA [all along], people would not have died so tragically in the city."

But regardless of who built it, pedestrians said it is only increasing their suffering. Md Sohail, a local, told this correspondent, "We have to get down on the road to cross the spot. This is a risky undertaking as the road is one of the busiest in the city."

"The wall does not solve the problem, but creates a new one for citizens," said pedestrian Md Alamgir.

On September 27, Sadia fell into the ditch while returning home from a doctors' appointment. Fire service personnel found her body about four-and-a-half hours later, around a hundred feet from the spot.

On August 25, elderly vegetable trader Saleh Ahmed went missing after falling into the Chashma canal while crossing the road in Muradpur area. The quick succession of the accidents have caused an uproar among residents of the port city.



Sadia

No more games over polls: Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said their party together with people will no longer allow any game to be played in the name of a national election in Bangladesh.

"You [govt] have constituted a subservient Election Commission which carries out your orders. You're planning to hold such an election where voters won't go to polling stations and you'll cast the votes through EVMs. People won't allow such an election anymore," he said.

Speaking at a discussion programme, the BNP leader said their party definitely wants a genuine election to get the responsibility of running the state with the love of people.

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Zero confidence in EC: GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People's confidence in the Election Commission has become zero at present. Those who were in state power have used the Election Commission for their party's interests, said Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday.

GM Quader, also deputy leader of the opposition in parliament, said the current system of government cannot be called democratic in any way.

He made the remarks at a meeting at the Jatiya Party chairman's Banani office in the capital.

GM Quader in his speech said depoliticisation is going on in the country and as a result, the parties are not being able to survive.

If this continues, the people of the



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Offenders identified, but go unpunished

Says minister over stones thrown at trains; seeks media cooperation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the 110 incidents of stone throwing on running trains this year that left 29 people injured -- some of them with damages to their limbs -- no perpetrators have been punished.

Railway authorities claimed that they were able to identify the offenders in some cases but could not punish them as they were either minor or vagabond or mentally unstable.

Stone throwing on running trains is an offence under Bangladesh Railway Act-1890, for which an accused may face up to life sentence or Tk 10,000 fine.

One may even face death penalty under the Penal Code

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We have been able to identify some attackers and detain them but later found that they were either minors or vagabonds or mentally unstable.

EXPLOSION AT CTG COURT

JMB's 'Boma Mizan' gets death, another life term

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday sentenced Mizan alias "Boma Mizan", a top explosives expert and a JMB leader, to death and another militant to life term imprisonment in a case filed over the killing of two people, including a police constable, in a bomb attack on Chattogram court premises on November 29, 2005.

Ctg JMB's divisional commander Javed Iqbal, who was given life term, was also fined Tk 2 lakh, in default of which he will have to serve two more years in jail, said Advocate Monoranjan Das, public prosecutor.

The court also relieved JMB chief Abdur Rahman, Bangla Bhai and Ataur Rahman Sani from the charges as they were

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Ahead of the International Day for Disaster Reduction on October 13, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief hosted a fire drill at Dhaka Medical College Hospital premises yesterday, supported by the Fire Service and Civil Defense Department.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Amend existing anti-trafficking act

Demand recruiting agencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different recruiting agencies yesterday demanded that cases should not be lodged against them under the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act-2012. They send workers abroad maintaining government rules and regulations, they claimed.

They alleged that law enforcement agencies have been "harassing" them by lodging cases and arresting them under the anti-trafficking act, although they get due permission from the expatriates' welfare ministry, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, and relevant Bangladesh missions while sending workers abroad.

Forming a human chain under the banner "In protest against harassment of recruiting agency owners under anti-human trafficking law" in front of the Expatriates' Welfare Ministry in the capital's Eskatol, they alleged that many of them had been facing unjust trafficking charges and prison time.

The protestors urged the government to bring required changes to the prevention and suppression of human trafficking act-2012 to resolve their problems.

They warned that if the government fail to meet their demand, they will launch tougher agitation programmes in the future.

They also announced a fresh demonstration to be held on Sunday in front of Jatiya Press Club.

The human chain was organised by "victims of anti-human trafficking act" and regular recruiting agency owners.

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