

Support centre for migrant workers underway: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken initiative to build a "support centre" for migrant workers, said expatriates' welfare minister Imran Ahmad at a programme yesterday.

"We are arranging all the support we can provide to those coming from and going abroad," he said. About three acres of land near Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport have been arranged for the centre, said the minister.

The government is hopeful to inaugurate it by December, he added.

The minister made the announcement while addressing a ceremony marking the inaugural of an allowance scheme for migrant workers' differently-abled children at the capital's Probashi Kalyan Bhaban, organised by Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB).

The initiative has been taken marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Addressing the ceremony as chief guest, Imran Ahmad said they have also taken steps to build a medical centre for affordable healthcare service for migrant workers.

He urged the ministry officials to take initiative to treat the differently-abled children of the migrant workers.

The expatriates' welfare ministry spent about Tk 332 crore from the wage earners' welfare fund last year for the welfare of migrant workers and their family members, according to the minister.

Addressing the event as special guest, Ahmed Munir Saleheen, secretary, expatriates' welfare ministry, said the government has remained by the side of migrant workers under all circumstances.

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Right down the middle of this busy road at the capital's Fakirerpool, a couple of manholes are missing their covers. This is heavily disrupting vehicular movement, as they have to make their way around the holes in order to avoid accident. Finding no other way, some locals have stuck whatever they can -- sticks, bags, and even containers -- into the manholes to alert commuters of their location. This photo was taken recently.



SM Ali's 28th death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Yesterday marked the 28th death anniversary of Syed Mohammad Ali, founder editor-publisher of The Daily Star and a luminary in journalism of Bangladesh.

SM Ali made his way up from a cub reporter to one of the country's most brilliant editors in a career spanning 44 years. He also led the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) as its chairman.

Educated in Kolkata, Dhaka and London, he was one of the few Asian journalists who stood out in regional journalism.

Ali was born in a well-known family in Sylhet.

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MAYHEM AT PUJA MANDAPS

BNP key patron of communal forces

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP is the "number one" patron of communal forces.

"BNP is the father of communalism and all wrongdoings in the country," he told during a scholarship giving and study material distributing ceremony marking the 58th birthday of Sheikh Russel at Dhaka University Laboratory School and College.

AL's relief and social welfare sub-committee arranged the event.

Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said wrongdoers don't have any party, their only identity is that they are miscreants. He urged all to remain alert as the communal forces are mounting up ahead of the next general elections and they will carry out subversive activities whenever they get any scope.

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Govt trying to implicate us in Cumilla incident

Alleges Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday alleged that the government is trying to implicate them in the incident of "demeaning the Holy Quran" in Cumilla.

"Not only this time, rather whenever any incident takes place, the government tries to implicate BNP over those. But it's the ruling Awami League who is involved in those," said party's secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

Fakhrul was speaking at a press conference at the party's Nayapalton headquarters in the capital. He also accused the ruling party for the recent attacks on Hindu community in Cumilla and other parts of the country.

Fakhrul said it has become AL's



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Home minister should step down

Says Zafrullah over Chandpur incident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury yesterday said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal should resign from his post for the incident at Habiganj of Chandpur on October 13 that cost lives of four persons.

Zafrullah made the comment while visiting family members of the four victims of the clash between police and the mob.

He said the home minister had casually said that he arranged security in all the temples, but no one actually followed his direction. If there was security in place as per his directions, no one would have died. "Though it is not his fault, I'm advising the home minister to step down from



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'A very well planned attack'

Says Workers Party of Bangladesh; HRFB demands punishment for perpetrators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The continuous attacks on religious minorities in the country are taking place in a "very well planned" manner, ruling alliance partner Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB) said yesterday.

In a statement, the WPB politburo also raised questions about the "nonchalant" stance of police to resist the recent attacks on Hindu communities and their temples during Durga Puja festivities.

The party also extended support to Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad's hunger strike and mass congregation, slated for October 23.

The party also said the recent attacks cannot be described as an isolated incident, saying it is tough to clean the virus if there is "virus in the antidote."

The party said there should be steps to identify the perpetrators behind the attacks

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Sheikh Russel Day today

BSS, Dhaka

The first ever "Sheikh Russel Day" will be observed in the country today, marking the 58th birthday of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's youngest son Sheikh Russel.

Russel, also the youngest brother of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was born on October 18 in 1964 at the historic Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi 32 in the city.

But he was brutally killed along with most of his family members, including his father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on August 15, 1975 when he was a student of class four at University Laboratory School.

The Cabinet Division this year declared October 18 as Sheikh Russel Day.

To mark the day, government bodies, ruling Awami League and its associate bodies, and different socio-cultural organisations have taken various programmes.

The ICT Division will place wreaths at Sheikh Russel's grave and portraits, launch "Sheikh Russel Gold Medal", hold quiz competition and organise laptop distribution and discussions, to observe the day.

On the day, 10 people, including children with special

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On September 19, Chattogram Zoo's very own Joya gave birth to two tiger cubs. They were brought out in front of the media for the first time on Saturday. With the cuddlesome duo, the number of tigers at the zoo now stands at 12. Over the years, it has seen the birth of 13 cubs, of whom 10 are alive.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

201 more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 201 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new cases, a total of 3,205 people were diagnosed during the running month out of a total 21,402 infected. Of the total infected, 2,982 are from outside Dhaka.

At least 7,841 were diagnosed in September, 7,698 in August, 2,286 were hospitalised in July, 272 in June and 43 were infected in May and rest are from January to April.



Death toll 83

14 died in Oct so far

23 in Sept, 34 in Aug, 12 in July

201 more hospitalised yesterday

Total infected

21,402

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1 killed, 2 hurt in Ctg gas explosion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A youth was killed and two others sustained burn injuries in a gas explosion at a house in Chattogram city yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Omar Faruk (21), son of Bodiul Alam, according to the police.

The injured -- Forkan and Kalam, both masons by profession -- were admitted to the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit at Chattogram Medical College Hospital, they said.

The explosion occurred in the house at the Hazi Kashem Colony of Baluchara in the Bayezid area at around 11am, said Arafatul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

According to eyewitnesses and police, Faruk was walking by the house when a wall collapsed on him due to the explosion.

"My brother used to live in the city's Chawkbazar. He came here to visit my father. The accident occurred in the morning when he walked out of the house," said Arju Akhter, his younger sister, to The Daily Star.

Shahjahan, a witness, said they rushed to the spot hearing a loud bang and saw the spot on fire. Faruk was found under the debris.

"Later, we called fire service personnel," he said, adding that Forkan and Kalam were inside the house at the time.

The explosion occurred on the ground floor of the two-

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Robbery gang targeting expats busted, 3 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives arrested three members of a robbery gang, which targets and robs expatriate Bangladeshis outside the Dhaka airport following their arrival to the country.

A team of detectives arrested them from the Hatirjheel area on Saturday night, said AKM Hafiz Akhter, additional commissioner (detectives) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, during a press briefing yesterday.

The arrestees are -- Masudul Haque alias Apel, Amir Hossain Hawlader and Md Shamim.

DB officials also recovered five passports, two NID cards, two ATM cards, one iPad, a work permit card, a BMET card, an office ID, knives and Tk 55,000 from their possession.

Hafiz said the gang members target expatriates waiting alone outside the airport. They would hold them hostage with the help of their weapons.

In other instances, they used sedatives

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Action borne out of frustration

As authorities evade responsibility, locals come together to repair Khulna road

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

For 10 years, the MA Bari Link Road, adjacent to Sonadanga bus stand in Khulna city, has remained completely un navigable.

There's a lot of reasons behind the sorry state of the bypass road, only a little more than two kilometres away from the Joybanga mor.

Deprived of more than a decades' renovation, its bricks and stones have come off, while innumerable potholes keep the road -- and adjacent trees and buildings -- engulfed with dust during dry seasons and muddy in monsoon.

But it all comes down to the city authorities' sheer indifference, and lack of foresight and responsibility, locals said.

Even though vehicles cannot travel on the road, circumstances compel around 2,000-3,000 residents and traders of the area to traverse it, risking accidents. Even though it does not have a footpath, it houses at least 300 business establishments on both sides.

"Local traders and pedestrians have to plough through knee-deep mud every time it rains a little," said Sumon Ahmed, director of Takbir Motors, situated on the road.

"We're faced with huge losses year-round. Customers don't want to come here for obvious reasons," he said.

Buses heading to 18 districts -- including Dhaka, Barishal, Bagerhat and Satkhira -- from Sonadanga bus terminal used to go through the bypass road. But with the decrepit condition of the road, none has plied on it for at least two years, said Zakir Hossain Biplob, secretary of Khulna Motor Workers' Union.

But after sitting through all these years' of misery, affected locals and traders have had enough. Last week, they took matters into their own hands -- they decided to band together and initiate repair works by themselves.

With around 30 workers, the repair work started on Wednesday.

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Locals have been urging the authorities to fix the MA Bari Link Road near Sonadanga Bus Stand in Khulna for 10 years but to no avail. However, they have decided not to depend on the authorities anymore and started repairing the road on their own. This photo was taken recently. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN