

'France visit was fruitful'

Hasina tells outgoing French envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said she was happy with the discussions and outcomes of her recent visit to France, and hopes to maintain this momentum in the coming years.

Hasina said this when outgoing French Ambassador Jean-Marie Schuh met her at her official residence, Gono Bhaban.

The PM's press secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

She thanked the French president for inviting her to visit Paris in November and lauded the ambassador for his productive tenure in Bangladesh.

The PM greeted the outgoing ambassador on his appointment as France's

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Creating waste-dumping spots on roads is a common practice across the country, despite its environmental impact. With the increasing dust at the onset of winter and the subsequent drop in air quality, people often burn the waste, which only makes it worse for the environment. The photo was taken yesterday from Dhaka University area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Bus rationalisation finally coming to reality

Govt to inaugurate Ghatarchar-Kanchpur service under one authority on Dec 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is finally going to inaugurate the bus service from Ghatarchar-Kanchpur under one authority from December 26, after missing three earlier deadlines.

The service "Dhaka Nagar Paribahan" will start its journey with 50 buses -- 20 brand-new and 30 old BRTC double-decker buses, all coloured green -- as part of the government's bus route rationalisation initiative, said Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday.

After the rationalisation committee's 20th meeting, Taposh said they are going to inaugurate the service with 50 buses, but in the next two months, a total of 100 buses will run on the route, of which 10 will be BRTC buses.

Bus fare from Ghatarchar to Kanchpur via Motijheel and Signboard has been fixed at Tk 2.15 per square kilometre, and e-ticketing system will facilitate the service, said Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqul Islam.

No bus will be allowed to pick up or drop passengers anywhere aside from

- 50 buses will initially run on route
- In next 2 months, 100 buses to ply Ghatarchar-Kanchpur
- Bus fare set at Tk 2.15 per sq km
- Buses to pick up, drop passengers at designated points
- DTCA prepared draft guideline to run the buses
- Buses to run under management committee comprising bus owners
- 40 passenger stoppages, 16 bus-bays to be installed on route

designated places, he said.

"We will not allow any other buses on the route. There is a list of 1,646 unregistered buses running in the city, and we will resume our joint drive against them from tomorrow," said Taposh.

He said those buses will be dumped in DSCC's Matuail dumping site.

Earlier, the committee decided to run

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'Unlicensed practitioners will face punishment'

Draft of Unani and Ayurvedic Medical Education Act approved in principle

STAR REPORT

The Cabinet has approved the draft of Unani and Ayurvedic Medical Education Act, 2021 in principle yesterday, with a provision of maximum one year's imprisonment or pecuniary punishment of Tk 1 lakh for practising unani or ayurvedic medicine without registration.

The draft law was prepared to replace a law of the military regime, titled "The Bangladesh Unani and Ayurvedic Practitioners Ordinance, 1983", in line with the higher court's order.

According to the draft law, there will be a board of directors, which will place its annual report before the government. There will also be a council to oversee academic affairs, said Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam while briefing reporters at the secretariat after a

meeting, reports UNB and BSS.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting, joining it virtually from her official residence Gono Bhaban.

None can use their degrees, diplomas or certificates unless they are recognised by any law or conferred by the authorised body, institutions or proper authorities, read the draft.

If anyone breaks the provision, they shall be punished with a maximum of one year's imprisonment or Tk 1 lakh as fine or both.

Besides, the Cabinet in principle approved the draft of Bangladesh Medical Education Accreditation Act, 2021, to bring health education under an independent accreditation.

Anwarul Islam said, according

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'Then who gave me this information?'

NHRC chief unaware of councillor Ekramul murder's legal situation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three years after the murder of Councillor Ekramul Haque in Teknaf, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) chairperson Nasima Begum was found unaware of the incident's legal situation.

Yesterday, while speaking at a press conference at the commission's office in the capital's Karwan Bazar, Nasima said NHRC has withdrawn from the issue after a case was filed over it. But when media workers informed her that no case has been filed, she turned over to her cohorts and asked, "Then who gave me this information?", as the questioners relayed to her that what she was told is wrong.

The press meet was organised to brief the media about the commission's activities of the last two years.

It was during this period that seven former and incumbent officials of Rapid Action Battalion were sanctioned by the US over allegations of violating human rights, that too on December 10, on Human Rights Day.

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The blood that was spilled after the war

Today is tragic Moulvibazar Martyrs' Day

MINTU DESHWARA

By December 20, the war was well and truly over. After nine long months of blood, sweat and tears, the freedom fighters snatched the victory flag. This was their time to return home, meet their beloved ones, and rest on their own pillows.

But like they say, no war is ever truly over all at once.

Four days after the surrender of the Pakistani army, freedom fighters started joining transit camps with arms, ammunitions, mines and other explosives, from where they would finally get to go home.

Moulvibazar Government High School in the district town served as one such transit camp. "We unloaded a truck-load of explosives recovered from the Pakistanis at Moulvibazar Court Road," said Bedananda Bhattacharjee, an explosives expert during the war. "I took them to the school by bus. We kept them at a makeshift storage room at the school, inside boxes, stacked on top of each other."

"After unpacking everything, we had some time in our hands. That's when an astrologer came visiting. A few of us huddled around him to show our hands. We were all in a jovial mood," he recounted.

But this is when tragedy struck. To this day it remains a mystery exactly what happened, as there is no one left to tell the tale, but Bedananda said they suspect one of the boxes at the bottom of the pile crumbled under pressure and went off, triggering a series of explosions.

As the walls of the school started falling, as its tin-roof was blown away, the entire town was put on alert. The whole of the school area was covered in dust and smoke. The number of freedom fighters who perished was made worse as so many of them had gathered to see the astrologer.

Residents of the town were frightened beyond imagination. Here they were thinking the war was over, but the sight and sound of the explosion made them fear



The freedom fighters who perished from the fatal incident were buried at the south-eastern corner of their camp at Moulvibazar Government High School with due honour. Now known as the Central Shaheed Minar, it now has two monuments, with a plaque featuring names of the 25 identified martyrs.

PHOTO: STAR

higher, but several bodies got burnt beyond recognition."

From dreaming of returning home soon, the deceased freedom fighters made their way to a burial ground at the south-eastern corner of the school play ground. A martyrs' memorial was later built in front of it, which is today known as the Central Shaheed Minar of the district, said Misbahur Rahman, chairperson of the district council.

Another monument was later built beside it, with a plaque featuring names of the 25 identified martyrs of the tragic incident.

"To this day, the tragedy of December 20 is remembered as Moulvibazar's Shaheed Day," he said.

This year, different government, non-government, socio-cultural and political organisations have taken up day-long programmes to mark the day.

But despite its significance to the district, the incident is rather overlooked. "There is no research on this issue from the government. There is nothing for future generations to look into," researcher-writer Misbahur Rahman told The Daily Star.



The weekend witnessed an increased pressure of trucks at private depots of Chattogram city's Patenga area. As port activities go down during holidays, long lines of these trucks were seen parked on both sides of the Outer Ring Road. This photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Two more die from dengue

UNB, Dhaka

Two more people died from dengue, while 50 new patients were hospitalised with fever in 24 hours till yesterday morning, health authorities said.

With the latest deaths, fatalities from dengue rose to 103 in the country so far this year, according to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

It said 93 people died in Dhaka division alone, four in Mymensingh, two each in Chattogram and Khulna, and one each in Rajshahi and Barisal divisions.

Eighteen patients are undergoing treatment at hospitals in Dhaka, while the remaining 32 cases have been reported from outside the division.

Some 155 patients who were diagnosed with dengue are receiving treatment in the country as of yesterday.

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Mother dies in road crash, two children injured

Auto-rickshaw driver killed; 2 die in Dinajpur accident

STAR REPORT

Two people died in a fatal road accident in the capital's Banasree Staff Quarter Road yesterday morning.

Fatema Akhter (40) and CNG auto-rickshaw driver Swapan (30) died after a bus of Wasim Paribahan collided head-on with their vehicle around 11:30am, said Sub-inspector Abdur Rahman of Khilgaon Police Station, quoting witnesses.

The official said the collision occurred as the three-wheeler was coming from the opposite direction.

Critically injured from the impact, Swapan and Fatema, along with her sons Shakibul Alam Rabbi (15) and Raisul Alam Shakir (12), were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital by locals. Later, Fatema and Swapan were declared dead by on-duty doctors.

Injured Shakibul and Raisul study in a madrasa in Cumilla. They are currently undergoing treatment at two hospitals, Fatema's sister Amena Begum said.

Farukul Alam, officer-in-charge of the police station, said they have seized the

bus and detained its driver Billal Hossain. Though the driver claimed to have a driving licence, but could not produce it immediately.

Amena said her sister Fatema, wife of Dubai expatriate Shah Alam, had gone to visit their maternal aunt's home in Sanarpur of Siddirganj with her two sons from their Cumilla home two days ago.

The accident occurred as the family were on their way to her house at the capital's Dakshin Khan, Amena said.

In another accident in Dinajpur, two people died after a speeding bus hit a rickshaw-van in Birampur upazila yesterday, police said.

The deceased are driver of the rickshaw-van Saidur Rahman (45) and fish trader Jahrul Islam (38). Both hailed from Noyapara village of the district's Phulbari upazila, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

The collision took place on Dinajpur-Gobindaganj regional road at Tatakpur village around 7:00am, said Sumon Kumar Mohanta, officer-in-charge of Birampur Police Station. It left the duo dead on the spot.



"Shahbagh Against Oppression" held a demo in front of the National Museum yesterday, seeking justice for Monoranjan Hajong, who was hit by a private car on December 3. "Are all equal in the eye of law, or are some more equal than others?" asked speakers at the demo, mentioning police's refusal to accept Monoranjan's daughter Mahua's case over the incident for 12 days.

PHOTO: STAR