

STARTING IT WITH COLOURS... Flowers are quite the essential elements for any celebration. To meet the demand of people from all walks of life across the city, flower sellers in Shahbagh are passing busy times, like this young vendor carrying the bright marigolds.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



It's a floral affair!

Flower sellers passing busy times on New Year

DIPAN NANDY

The grass is graced by dew at dawn. Leaves are falling from the tree. Calendars are no longer holding up. A change of guard is right around the corner. So is the New Year, 2022.

But the New Year can be mechanistic too. For our fast-paced world, a change in the calendar comes with a lot of professional implications. And so for many, this is the time for new plans, new resolutions.

But amid all these calculations, a simple look around can bring some solace. The dry season brings with it flowers everywhere one looks, from the tub at the balcony to the lone plant in the abandoned garden.

The florists at the capital's Shahbagh and Baily Road are also at it with their roses and sunflowers.

Just a couple of days ago, a walk down the Ramna Park would show you the early blossoms of this season's flowers. There were aromatic roses. Chrysanthemums. Finally, the yellow marigold is welcoming spring properly.

All these flowers are inviting over butterflies. Their fluttering all around is only adding to the feeling in the air.

Those who don't grow their own flowers are rushing to flower shops to buy fresh ones for their loved ones. Talking to this correspondent, florists said business has been picking since the last few days, even before the New Year has actually arrived.

Roses are one of the main attractions of winter. Although they bloom all year round, there's something special about them in winter. And how can one talk about roses without mentioning Savar's Birulia, the rose village. Specialising in rose farming, this is the season when the entire village sees an outpour of orders.

Traders at Shahbagh said as flowers rot fast, they're not sold in advance. But despite this, they're seeing a huge number of orders ahead of the New Year.

Visiting the spot on Wednesday, this correspondent found the florists there smiling after a long time. This smile went missing during the lockdown of the last two

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

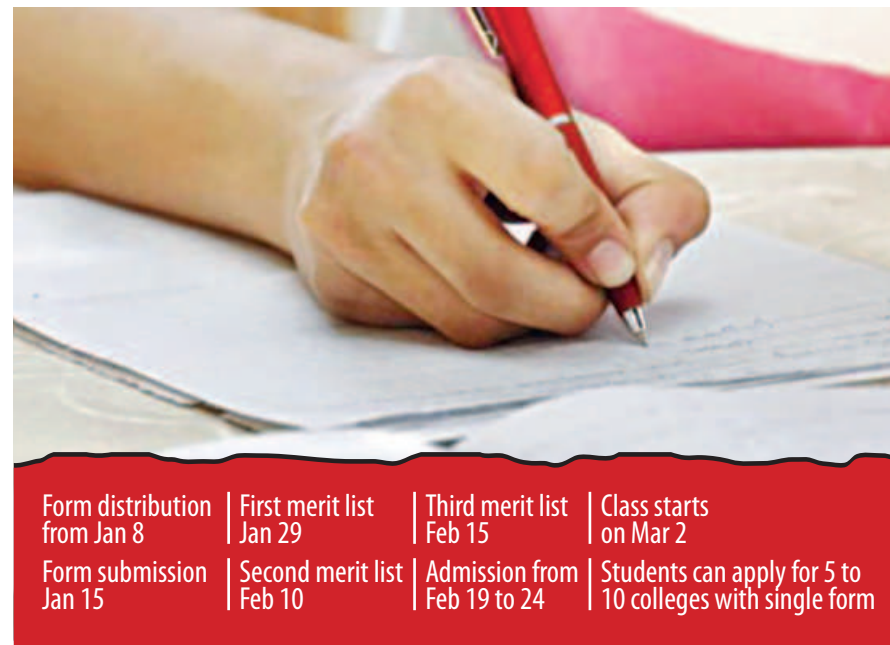
	Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5-30	12-45	4-00	5-30	7-00
Jamaat	6-05	1-15	4-15	5-35	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

PRAYER TIMING JAN 1



COLLEGE ENROLMENT to start on Jan 8



Form distribution from Jan 8	First merit list Jan 29	Third merit list Feb 15	Class starts on Mar 2
Form submission Jan 15	Second merit list Feb 10	Admission from Feb 19 to 24	Students can apply for 5 to 10 colleges with single form

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Online enrolment to Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent courses for the academic session 2021-2022 is scheduled to begin from January 8.

Admission forms can be collected and submitted by January 15. Students are required to complete the admission procedure by February 24, and classes will begin on March 2, said Dhaka Education Board Chairman Prof Nehal Ahmed.

"We have finalised the guideline about the enrolment. If the Covid-19 situation worsens and in-person classes stop, academic activities will continue online," he said.

The first merit list will be published on January 29, the second one on February 10 and the third one on February 15.

According to the admission guidelines, each

student can apply to five to 10 colleges with a single form. Admission details will be uploaded to a website.

The admission guideline said that colleges under monthly pay order benefit in Dhaka will be allowed to take admission and session charges up to Tk 5,000, while metropolitan colleges can take fees up to Tk 3,000. Colleges from districts are allowed to collect Tk 2,000 as fees from each student.

Colleges that are not under monthly pay order benefit in Dhaka will be allowed to take Tk 7,500 as admission and session charge. Such colleges from other metropolitan cities can take Tk 5000 as the fees, and colleges in districts can take Tk 3,000 from each student.

A tougher competition awaits admission aspirants for renowned colleges, but there will be no crisis of seats, according to Prof Nehal.

Looking back at 2021's noteworthy judgements

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Several important cases, which went on for years, were disposed of in Dhaka's lower courts in 2021, amid the pandemic.

Judgments for murder cases of bloggers Faisal Arefin Dipan and Avijit Roy, LGBT rights activists Xulhaz Mannan and Mahbub Rabbi Tonoy, and Buet student Abrar Fahad were much-talked about.

The graft case of former chief justice SK Sinha was also in the public eye.

On February 10, Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal sentenced eight members of banned militant group Ansar al-Islam to death for killing Faisal Arefin Dipan.

Dipan, publisher of Jagriti Prokashani, was stabbed to death at his Shahbagh office on October 31, 2015.

The same tribunal on February 16 sentenced five members of Ansar al-Islam to death and another to life in jail for killing Avijit Roy.

On February 26, 2015, assailants attacked US-based Bangladeshi blogger Avijit Roy and his wife Rafida Ahmed Bonya with sharp weapons near TSC on Dhaka University campus, when the couple was walking out of Ekushey Bui Mela.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

JP'S 36TH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY

On mission to recover its image

RASHIDUL HASAN

Jatiya Party is celebrating its 36th founding anniversary today. Amid this celebration, however, it is planning to recover from an image crisis, as according to party leaders, it failed to act as the main opposition in parliament.

Founded in 1986 by late military ruler HM Ershad, the party has been acting as the main opposition in parliament since the 2014 parliamentary election.

But even after eight years of playing this role, JP leaders say they could not act as an opposition in and outside parliament, while people consider it to be an "ally" of the government.

Amid this crisis, JP's top leaders said restoring the party's image, and thus, restoring people's trust in the party will be its main challenge this year.

"We will work for the sake of the people in the days to come. We won't work for Awami League or BNP. Our politics will be people-centric," Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader told The Daily Star yesterday.

Recently, JP's new secretary general said the party leaders are praising the government so much that people consider them to be allies of Awami League.

Asked about the image crisis, GM Quader said people bear this idea as Jatiya Party had done politics together with Awami League under the same platform for a long time, and the ruling party came to power several times with support of JP.

"Jatiya Party had also participated in the different national elections under the electoral alliance with Awami League. That's why people have the wrong idea about us," GM Quader commented.

He claimed that Jatiya Party is doing everything it should be doing as the opposition party in and outside the parliament.



DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

Include media, civil society while amending law: TIB

UNB, Dhaka

Welcoming the law minister's remarks about amending Digital Security Act (DSA), Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday demanded incorporating representatives from media and civil society in the committee formed to review and amend the law.

Although Law Minister Anisul Huq was late to admit that the act was misused, TIB is cautiously welcoming his statement, said a press release.

TIB demanded inclusion of the mentioned representatives to review whether the law is conflicting with human rights. The graft watchdog said not only journalists, but common people should also not be arrested immediately after cases are filed under DSA.

Referring to media reports, TIB said the law minister admitted to the misuse and abuse of DSA and mentioned the government's initiative to ensure its best use by following global practices.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said the government's good sense was illustrated by the minister's statement, which mentioned reviewing sections that undermine freedom of expression and dissent.

From the beginning of DSA's enactment, the media and civil society objected to several sections of the act.

We will work for the sake of the people in the days to come. We won't work for Awami League or BNP. Our politics will be people-centric.

GM QUADER



President Abdul Hamid administers the oath of office to Hasan Foez Siddique as the 23rd chief justice yesterday, a day after signing of the appointment. The president administered the oath at 4:00pm at Bangabhaban.

PHOTO: PID

BNP not successful as political party: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP did not have any success as a political party in the last several years, rather they have failed to wage any movement.

BNP has been rejected by people during the polls, and its only "achievement" is failing to wage any movement, said Quader, also general secretary of Awami League, while addressing a press briefing held at his official residence.

Rejecting BNP secretary-general Mirza Fakhru Islam's statement, Quader said nothing will happen through their initiatives, as people now know BNP for its "injudicious" politics.