

DNCC opens control room for free dengue test

60 more hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) yesterday opened a control room to provide free dengue test to people.

The control room will also register complaints by residents.

The numbers of the control room are 01769100680, 01715238754, 01715456698, 01756209482, 01716398886 and 01735843693. Meanwhile, at least 60 dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals across the country in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the new cases, six are from outside Dhaka. With them, the total

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



While water remains always available for people, for the city's birds, it is something that needs to be searched for every day. And so, this feathered friend was spotted quenching its thirst at a creek in Suhrawardy Udyan amidst the heat yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

'Communal forces out to turn country into Afghanistan'

Say speakers at 50th anniversary event of Workers Party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will become another Afghanistan if communal forces are not repelled, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

Referring to the recent attacks on minority communities, they said pre-planned communal attacks are being carried out across the country.

"It seems that the country has become Afghanistan. The events that are taking place, these are not the characteristics of Bangladesh," said Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon.

He was talking at a discussion at the capital's Jatiya Press Club titled "Spirit of Liberation War and the recent communal situation in Bangladesh", commemorating Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam as part of the party's 50th founding anniversary.

Referring to attacks at different times, he said, "The reaction of Bangladeshis to Nupur Sharma's comment

“We want to dream of a state where people of all religions and ethnic communities will live together with equal rights.”

Sanjeeb Drong
GS of Bangladesh
Adivasi Forum

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Labour rights violation, 'red-tapism' major barriers

EU envoy on trade between Bangladesh and Europe

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Violation of labour rights and "red-tapism" in business are the two big factors that might hamper trade between Bangladesh and Europe, said EU Ambassador Charles Whiteley yesterday, stressing on the need to improve on these fronts.

"If you have good consumer faith, good labour standards, then you won't have NGOs in Europe questioning the labour standards in the source country," he said. Besides, investors also look for good climate environment when they decide to invest.

Whiteley made these observations at a programme titled "Meet the ambassador," which was hosted by Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Bangladesh at a city hotel.

He said a EU delegation during a dialogue in Bangladesh on business climate spoke of these

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Titas snapped 996km illegal lines in 2.5yrs

Says report; experts still skeptical, find steps inadequate

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Titas, the country's largest gas distribution company, has snapped illegal gas lines stretching for 996.81 kilometres in the last two and a half years, which is equal to 7.5 percent of its legal lines, according to a report.

Titas has distribution lines stretching for 13,238 kilometres. The data was revealed in the latest "Illegal Gas Connection Eviction Progress Report".

The report was presented on June 30 at a meeting of the energy division.


All the six gas distributors -- Titas, Bakhrabad, Karnaphuli, Jalalabad, Sundarban and Pashchimanchal -- presented their activities regarding the snapping of illegal connections.

According to the report, from January 2020 to June 2022, illegal lines running for 1,214 km were detected by Titas and Bakhrabad, and 1,169 km of them were cut off.

The latest progress report claimed the companies have only around 44 km of connections, 43 km belonging to Titas, left to remove. However, data on the actual length or number of illegal lines is unavailable, say experts.

The other four companies did not place figures of the length of illegal gas lines. However, they mentioned that they had found only 2,263 illegal connections and snapped all of them.

The number of snapped connections by the six distributors



AT A GLANCE

Titas has lines stretching for 13,238km

6 gas distributors found illegal lines running for 1,214km, snapped 1,169km

7,00,355 connections were snapped

Karnaphuli claimed it has no illegal connections

Energy division decided to ask for permanent magistrate for Titas

BERC FINDINGS

Gas worth Tk 2,300cr a year went missing from national grid in 2020-21 fiscal

Titas has highest system loss, 13.95pc in 2019-20, 12.96pc in 2020-21

“Officials and employees of those companies themselves are involved with the irregularities and corruption, but companies never publish their names nor take any action against them.”

PROF SHAMSUL ALAM
Senior Vice President of CAB

is more than 7,00,355.

However, experts said the number is not satisfactory, as the amount of stolen gas in the name of system loss is huge.

On average, 3,012 million cubic feet of gas was transmitted to the national gas grid -- from gas fields and imported liquefied natural gas -- in a day in 2020-21 fiscal, but the six companies distributed 2,785 million cubic feet per day (MMcfd).

"About 227 MMcfd [7.54 percent of total] of gas was missing from the database, which is equivalent to Tk 2,300 crore worth of gas for a year," stated the latest annual report of Bangladesh Energy

Regulatory Commission (BERC).

Titas has the highest system loss, 13.95 percent in 2019-20 and 12.96 percent in 2020-21. According to experts and BERC, illegal connections were major reasons behind the loss.

For ongoing 2021-22, BERC instructed distribution companies to reduce system loss to two percent.

Amidst the current gas crisis, illegal connections have become a burning issue. Prime minister's energy adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, and state minister for power, energy and mineral

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

15 remanded over death of Buet student

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed 15 people on a three-day remand

each in a case filed over the death of Buet student Tarequzzaman Sunny.

The accused are Shariful Hossain, Shakil Ahmed, Sezan Ahmed, Mohammad Rubel, Mohammad Sajib, Mohammad Nuruzzaman, Mohammad Nasir, Mohammad Maruf, Ashraful Alam, Jahangir Hossain Ripon, Mohammad Noman, Mohammad Jahid, ATM Shahriar Momin, Maruful Haque and Rokonzaman Jitu.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Kazi Ashrafuzzaman passed the order after investigation officer Shamsul Alam, also a sub-inspector of Kutubpur River Police Outpost under Dohar Police Station, produced them before the court with a seven-day remand prayer, said Additional Public Prosecutor Anwarul Kabir Babul.

In the remand prayer, the IO said at around 3:30pm on July 14 the accused tactfully called Sunny out of his house to visit Moinot Ghat of the Padma River and pushed him into the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Join polls, politics Quader urges BNP

BSS, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday urged BNP leaders to participate in the elections and politics.

Quader, also the Awami League general secretary, came up with the call at a discussion organised by Dhaka north and south city units of AL, marking the Imprisonment Day of Awami League (AL) President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, at the party's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Urging AL leaders and activists to be careful to counter the conspiracy of BNP and perpetrators of the then one-eleven political changeover, he said they are once again conspiring against the country with the help of foreigners.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Getting ready to oust AL govt, not to join polls Says Mirza Abbas

UNB, Dhaka

BNP senior leader Mirza Abbas yesterday said their party is preparing for ousting the Awami League government, not for joining the national election under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Speaking at a rally, the BNP leader also said their party will no longer let the government continue its misuse and repressive acts.

Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal organised the rally in front of Jatiya Press Club, protesting the killing of its Jashore unit leader Badiuzzaman Dhani.

Badiuzzaman Dhani (42), senior vice president of Jashore District Jubo Dal, was hacked to death by miscreants in Jashore town on July 12.

"We would like to make it clear that this is not an internal feud. Awami League has carried out this killing to scare BNP activists," he claimed.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Readjust edible oil prices

CAB urges govt

UNB, Dhaka

Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) has urged the government to readjust edible oil prices in the country following their continuous downward trend in the international market.

SM Nazer Hossain, vice-president of the CAB central committee, made the call through a statement yesterday.

In the statement, Nazer said Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission (BTTC) should readjust the prices of edible oil as the price of this daily essential is

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

WB approves \$500m credit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank has approved a \$500 million credit to help Bangladesh improve disaster preparedness against inland flooding in 14 flood-prone districts benefiting over 1.25 million people.

The Resilient Infrastructure for Adaptation and Vulnerability Reduction (RIVER) project will help Bangladesh reduce vulnerability to riverine and flash floods by constructing over 500 multipurpose flood shelters, access roads, and climate-resilient community infrastructure.

In normal times, the flood shelters will operate as primary schools and they will be equipped with solar energy systems, water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities that cater to the needs of women and vulnerable populations.

The project will also help strengthen the capacity of communities and government agencies to prepare and respond to floods and undertake behavioural change interventions, the World Bank said in a statement on Friday.

"The heart-wrenching flood situation in Sylhet region is a stark reminder of the increasing risks of climate change to development - more frequent, unpredictable and intense natural disasters," said Mercy Tembon, World Bank's country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan.

"Building on our five-decade long partnership of improving disaster risk management in the coastal region, this project will help Bangladesh improve

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Dhaka residents are witnessing the final moments of a relatively empty city, when roads are devoid of the usual gridlocks and tailbacks. As the holidays have come to an end, many are returning to the city to resume their busy, urban life. This photo was taken on Mirpur Road yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 17

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-15	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-15
JAMAAAT 4-50	1-15	5-15	6-58	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION