

PM distributes Sheikh Kamal National Sports Awards

BSS, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina distributed Sheikh Kamal National Sports Council Award 2022 yesterday.

The premier joined the award ceremony in the capital's Osmani Memorial Auditorium virtually from her official residence Gono Bhaban. The awards were given to nine sports personalities and two organisations in seven categories.

On behalf of the PM, State Minister for Youth and Sports Md Zahid Ahsan Russel handed over the awards among the recipients.

The ceremony was organised on the occasion of the 73rd birth anniversary of freedom fighter Shaheed Sheikh Kamal, the eldest son of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Veteran sports organiser

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Indigenous students protest info ministry's circular

DU CORRESPONDENT

Protesting information ministry's circular prohibiting the term "indigenous", indigenous students demanded constitutional recognition and withdrawal of the directions of the ministry at a rally in front of Shahabagh's National Museum yesterday.

In a circular issued on July 19, the ministry asked the media to avoid using of the word "indigenous (adibashi)" in different programmes, discussions and talk-shows that will be aired on the occasion of International Indigenous Peoples' Day on August 9.

Speakers at the rally, which was arranged by Adivasi Chhatra-Jubo Organisation, urged the government to give constitutional recognition to the communities and demanded withdrawal of information ministry's directions immediately.

They said the government promised that they would give constitutional recognition if it came into power. "But it forgot its promise and is now trying to deprive us of our identity."

"We [indigenous people] gave blood for the independence of this country. We urge the government to give constitutional recognition to us immediately," they said.

The communities are neglected and oppressed in this country. "They have

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Rubble has now taken place of the library building. With demolition pretty much done, authorities will start construction following the new design any day now. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The end of an era

67-year-old public library building demolished for modernisation

HELEMUL ALAM

What many would call the end to an era, the 67-year-old Sufia Kamal National Public Library has been demolished as part of a modernisation project.

Md Abubakar Siddique, director general of the Department of Public Libraries, said it is necessary to renovate the old building as its capacity is limited. "Digitalisation of the library is another important aspect to maintain international standards. That way, readers will be able to read books online from both inside and outside of the library."

"We will keep all the modern facilities in the new buildings and build three conference halls," added the director general.

The Tk 524-crore project -- approved in May 2021 -- will be handled by the Public Works Department. The project is scheduled to be completed in June 2024.

Siddique said around 1.76 lakh books have



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Proposed design for the new library.

Although it is possible to increase the library's capacity by modernisation, we will lose its historical importance. These buildings need to be protected for the sake of sustainability and protection of our history and heritage.

ADIL MOHAMMAD KHAN
Executive Director
Institute for Planning and Development

been shifted to the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) building but many of them could not be kept there due to space constraints. "The new building will be able to accommodate around five lakh books. We have already started demolishing the old one."

However, the decision has garnered mixed reactions among experts and citizens.

Criticising the move, former general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners

Adil Mohammad Khan said the traditional importance of the public library is immense.

"Although it is possible to increase the library's capacity by modernisation, we will lose its historical importance. These buildings need to be protected for the sake of sustainability and protection of our history and heritage," said Adil, also executive director of Institute for Planning and Development.

The authority could take out new land and construct new public libraries instead of demolishing the old ones, he added.

However, Iqbal Habib, former joint secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, said structures with historical significance and buildings that had the involvement of eminent persons in their construction should be preserved. If the buildings in consideration do not fall under this category and renovation can increase their functional efficiency, then they should be renovated.

The library does not fall under this category, according to Iqbal Habib.

"The amount of land and position on which the old structure stood created way too many obstacles for it to be considered a good design. Hence, its renovation is necessary," said Habib, whose architecture firm also participated in the design competition for the new structure of the library.

"The government could conduct the renovation by keeping the original structure intact and using other spaces in the vicinity," said Suraiya Parveen, a Pallabi resident and former Dhaka University student.

According to the new design, the library complex will be divided into two separate nine-storey buildings. One will be facing the south, where the present library building is situated.

Meanwhile, a glass plaza will be built towards the north, adjacent to the museum complex, which will be used as the digital library, said another official of the Department of Public Libraries.

There will be a plaza level in between two buildings and a cafeteria on the western end of the plaza, said Siddique. Beneath the ground, three auditoriums, including the Shawkat Osman auditorium, will be reconstructed for arranging public events, he added.

The archetypal pyramid-shaped stairs in front of the national library will be replaced with long parallel stairs like the old establishment. The main complex will also accommodate a 10-storey residential building for the library staffers.

The foundation of Sufia Kamal National Public Library was laid in 1954 at the current

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'Bangladesh a role model in Covid vaccination'

In conversation with US deputy coordinator

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA



Bangladesh has become a role model for lower- and middle-income countries in administering Covid jabs to its population, said US Deputy Coordinator for the Global Covid-19 Response and Health Security Laura Stone.

In an interview with The Daily Star, she said Bangladesh should take a leading role in the key phases of the global pandemic.

"We think that Bangladesh has a very important voice and a model for an effective response," she said during her two-day visit to Bangladesh.

Laura said Bangladesh is a great example of a country that administered over 70 million vaccines that the US has donated.

"Our request to Bangladesh is to learn from this experience to become a global leader in health security," she noted.

Saying the pandemic is difficult to predict and the world is still experiencing the impact of Covid-19, the high official of the state department revealed that a global action plan was developed with partner countries to look at how to handle the crisis in the short and long terms.

She said the global action plan included mass vaccination, dealing with all the medical countermeasures related to Covid-19 smoothly and equitably around the world, addressing misinformation and disinformation gaps, supporting health care workers, expanding access to testing and treatment, and building sustainable and effective global health security architecture.

"We want to encourage Bangladesh to take a leadership role in this key phase of the global pandemic and also in the future through health reform and building health architecture," said Laura.

She opined that the world should take notes from the Covid-19 crisis to tackle future pandemics.

Saying the next pandemic can be very different from Covid-19, she added that all the countries should be prepared by prioritising their health sector by establishing new infrastructures and institutions.

When asked whether the US will give vaccines to Bangladeshi children, she said, "We have already delivered 1.5 million vaccines in this regard. We would be very open to donating more vaccines to

We want to encourage Bangladesh to take a leadership role in this key phase of the global pandemic and also in the future through health reform and building health architecture.

the people of Bangladesh through Covax."

When asked about vaccine discrimination, Laura said that there is no issue regarding the availability of vaccines.

"There are more factors other than the availability in countries that have poor vaccination rates," she claimed.

"Lack of trust in vaccines, hesitancy and apathy are to name a few."

Hoping that Bangladesh-US cooperation will continue in the coming days, the state department official said. "It's the 50th anniversary of US-Bangladesh relations and the relationship is incredibly diverse."

Bangladesh for enhanced ties with Timor-Leste

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and Timor-Leste, a Southeast Asian nation, have discussed ways to expand bilateral relations, with an enhanced cooperation in areas of trade and investment.

Foreign Minister Abdul Momen has met Timor-Leste's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Adalija Albertina Reis Magno on the sidelines of the Asean Regional Forum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and discussed issues of mutual interest.

Momen is now on a three-day visit to Cambodia to attend the 29th Asean Regional Forum.

Both the ministers expressed deep satisfaction at the excellent bilateral relations between the two countries and pledged to further strengthen the relations in depth and dimensions, said Bangladesh foreign ministry on Thursday.

During the meeting, the two ministers shared their views for mutual benefits and discussed the issues of Rohingya repatriation, Bangladesh peacekeeping force, poverty alleviation, mass education, women empowerment, agricultural research, fisheries, livestock and poultry industries, digitisation, youth development and student exchange programme.

Momen underscored the need for regular exchange of visits at the high political and official levels, as it is a crucial tool for strengthening existing relations between the two countries.

The meeting concluded to collaborate and share experience toward a more efficient partnership in the days ahead.



An array of alankanda flowers lie on the ground, brightening up the surrounding environment after a bleak period of rain at Mugda Medical College and Hospital premises. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Dengue death toll **14**Total number of patients **3,020****363** still undergoing treatmentNumber of recovered patients **2,643****40** more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: DGHS

PRAYER TIMING
AUGUST 6

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:20	12:45	5:00	6:47	8:15
JAMAAT 4:55	1:15	5:15	6:50	8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION