

NATIONAL POLLS

Plan to materialise neutral govt to be unveiled soon

Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday said it will reveal how a neutral government, once it is installed, will oversee the next parliamentary election when the time comes.

Furthermore, the party will soon unveil its strategy to mount pressure on the government for an election under a non-partisan, interim government.

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, the party's secretary general, made the remark while addressing a press conference at party chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office.

BNP announced to hold public rallies in 10 divisional cities from October 8, to continue the ongoing movement.

Besides, the party will organise two mourning rallies in all divisional cities and district towns on October 6 and 10, respectively, for five leaders of BNP and its associate bodies, who were killed during the movement.

After holding 14 rallies in the capital, BNP's standing committee worked out the fresh programmes at a committee meeting on Monday night.

Fakhrul said the meeting also decided to hold divisional rallies to protest the killings and filing of cases against party leaders and activists, and demand the release of Khaleda Zia. As per the schedules, it will organise a rally on October 8 in Chattogram, October 15 in Mymensingh, October 22 in Khulna, October 29 in Rangpur, November 5 in Barisal, November 12 in Faridpur, November 19 in Sylhet, November 26 in Cumilla, December 3 in Rajshahi

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Locals removed parts of an iron fence, set up by DSCC to prevent people from dumping household wastes into Hazaribagh canal. Although authorities often face the music regarding environment pollution, it's about time the residents hold up their end of the bargain in saving rivers and canals around them. This photo was taken at Hazaribagh area recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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More hajj agencies under radar

Saudi govt accuses 5 of irregularities

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Saudi government has raised allegations of various irregularities against five more Bangladeshi hajj agencies.

Earlier, the Saudi ministry of hajj and umrah raised allegations of different anomalies, including misconduct with pilgrims and involvement in "digital crimes", against six agencies, said sources at Bangladesh's religious affairs ministry.

On Monday, the Saudi ministry informed Bangladesh's hajj office in Saudi Arabia about the latest allegations, said the ministry.

In response to the allegations, the ministry has asked the respective agencies to send their replies to the Saudi authorities.

The five agencies are Al Hasan Tours and Travels,

61pc processed foods have unhealthy amounts of salt: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around two-thirds of the packaged food that was tested contains unhealthy levels of salt, finds a study.

The research was conducted by National Heart Foundation of Bangladesh (NHFB) and supported by the USA-based organisation Resolve to Save Lives.

NHFB researchers tested 14 types of processed food of 105 brands.

Considering 750 mg of salt per 100 g of food as the safe limit, the researchers found that around 61 percent of processed food has salt above the safe limit, while 34 percent have double the safe amount of salt.

Dr Ahmad Khirul Abrar, NHFB research coordinator, presented the study's findings at an event in Dhaka's Cirdap auditorium yesterday.

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PRAYER TIMING

SEPTEMBER 29

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:35	12:45	4:15	6:00	7:30
JAMMAT 5:10	1:15	4:35	6:05	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

C-SECTION DELIVERIES

Eightfold increase in 14 years

NILIMA JAHAN

The rate of caesarian deliveries has increased almost eight-fold in Bangladesh. In 2004, the rate stood at four percent. However, a recent analysis revealed that the rate was found to be 33 percent in 2017-18.

World Health Organization's recommendations suggest the rate should not cross 15 percent of the total birth deliveries.

Dr Md Abdur Razzaque Sarker, research fellow, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), presented the analysis, titled "Massive boom of Caesarian delivery (C-section) in Bangladesh: A household level analysis (2004-2018)", at a seminar organised by BIDS at its conference centre yesterday.

He analysed the data from the five most recent Bangladesh Demographic and Health Surveys (BDHS) from 2004 and 2018.

Bangladesh exceeds the standards set by its neighbours as well, in this regard. The rate of caesarian delivery was found to be 22 percent in India (2019-2021), 22 percent in Pakistan (2017-2018), 16 percent in Nepal (2016) and 17 percent in Myanmar (2015-16).

Although C-sections are a regular occurrence among Bangladeshi urban mothers (12 percent in 2004 and 44 percent in

2017-18), rural mothers have also been increasingly availing this service.

In 2004, only two percent of rural women gave birth through C-sections, which jumped to 29

The percentage is higher in private and NGO-based facilities, at 83.70 and 43.90 percent respectively, compared to public facilities.

A total of 27,328 ever-married women aged 15 to 49 years, who had a live birth in the two years preceding the survey were included in the study.

The interviewed women reported malpresentation, failure to progress in labour, convenience, avoiding labour pain, pre-eclampsia, prolapsed cord, diabetes and a few other factors, for which they choose to go for the caesarian section.

Dr Razzaque also analysed the overall out-of-pocket cost for C-section delivery, which was found to be Tk 20,000 in Bangladesh.

"The average out-of-pocket cost of C-section delivery was highest in private facilities (Tk 21,506) than public facilities (Tk 13,622), while about Tk 16,860 was needed for those who received the services from NGO facilities," he said.

Mothers with obesity were almost three times more likely to have a C-section than those women of normal weight.

On the other hand, mothers who had optimal antenatal care visits (4 and above) were 6.91 times

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REASONS
Failure to progress in labour
Avoiding labour pain
Pre-eclampsia
Prolapsed cord, diabetes
RECOMMENDATIONS
Training traditional birth attendants
Inclusion of midwives in referral chains
Effective national monitoring measures
Creating awareness among mothers

percent in 2017-18. The annual increase of the rate stood at 21 percent with rural mothers, while for urban mothers, it stood at 10 percent.

'Dhaka not a city of garbage anymore'

Says Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday said garbage management has significantly improved in the capital since he took over.

"Previously, 90 percent of garbage used to lie in open places, but we (DSCC) brought it down to 30 percent in the last two years," the DSCC mayor claimed while inaugurating a secondary transfer station in Khilgaon.

He said only 24 STS were constructed in the last 50 years, while they constructed 35 of those in the last two years. He said Dhaka is not a city of garbage now, thanks to DSCC.

Every day around 6,000 tonnes of garbage is generated in Dhaka, and 70 percent of it is collected by the city corporations. The rest is recycled and dumped randomly into canals, ditches or drains.

Presently, the city corporations collect household wastes and then store them in temporary containers, where there are no secondary transfer stations, before transporting them to the Aminbazar and Matuail landfills.

'Walk in the spirit of CHT accord' CHT Commission urges govt to protect indigenous people in Lama

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chattogram Hill Tracts Commission has expressed grave concern as the indigenous Jumma people of Bandarban continue to be attacked while facing false lawsuits.

The commission came up with the concern in a statement sent to the media yesterday signed by its co-chair Sultana Kamal, Elsa Stamatopoulou and Myrna Cunningham Kain.

The statement said despite efforts from various organisations and networks to ensure safety and justice for local indigenous people, the influential Lama Rubber Industry continues to intimidate and attack them.

The statement also said Rangdhajan Tripura, convener of Bhumi Raksha Sangam Committee, was injured after attackers hired by the rubber industry launched an attack on the community on July 30, 2020.

"On September 1, they (rubber industry men) allegedly looted 25 maunds of pumpkins from the gardens of the Mro community. The industry authorities filed three false cases against

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BOAT CAPSIZE

One more body recovered, death toll now 69

STAR REPORT

The death toll from Sunday's boat capsized in Panchagarh is now 69 after one more body was recovered yesterday.

The toll may increase further as three people were still missing, Dipankar Roy, the district's additional deputy commissioner, told our Thakurgaon correspondent. The boat capsized in the Karatoa river not far from Awalia ghat in Marea union around 2:15pm on Sunday.

Of the deceased, 30 are women, 21 are children and 18 are men, according to the statistics available at the control room. Yesterday, fire fighters with the help of locals recovered body of Himalay Chandra Roy (26) from near the spot where the accident occurred.

Give them the wage they deserve

Speakers demand on behalf of fishers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must quickly determine the wages of fishers in line with the seafood sector's global valuation and stop predatory loans in the fisheries industry, said discussants at a programme yesterday.

In Bangladesh, there is rampant sexual harassment and wage discrimination based on gender. A man gets Tk 800 for a day's work, whereas a woman gets just Tk 350. On top of that, the labour law does not cover workers in the fisheries industry, they said.

They made the demand at a report-launching event and dialogue titled "Plight of Fisherfolk and Workers in the Seafood Sector in South Asia".

Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha (BNPS), Textile Garments Workers Federation, INCIDIN Bangladesh, Jonouddog, and South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) jointly organised the programme at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Addressing the event, marine



RECOMMENDATIONS

Determine wages in line with seafood sector's global valuation

Stop predatory loans in fisheries industry

Make fishers economically self-reliant

Resolve workforce crisis in district fisheries offices

Ensure adequate life-saving, direction-finding equipment for boats

Help women fishers, workers set up enterprises

researcher Mohammad Shahid Ullah said fishers need to take predatory loans, locally known as "Dadon loans", before the fishing season to sustain their families and survive in the lean season. Fishers have to repay the loan from the money they get from their catch, which is quite unpredictable.

Reshma Shakya, advocacy, communication and monitoring officer at SAAPE, said the majority of workers are temporary and thus have no job security. Furthermore, workers are denied the government-declared minimum wage.

Advocate Moloy Bhoomik said indiscriminate fishing is deteriorating the fish stock. This in turn is endangering the livelihood and working environment of coastal fishers.

Razequzzaman Ratan, assistant general secretary of Socialist Party of Bangladesh, said the highest worker-death rate in the country is in the fisheries sector.

"Fishing trawlers do not have life-jackets, adequate buoys, or direction

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The highest worker-death rate in the country is in the fisheries sector. Fishing trawlers do not have life-jackets, adequate buoys, or direction finding equipment.

RAZEQUZZAMAN RATAN
Assistant general secretary, Socialist Party of Bangladesh