



Loadshedding means lights out for chandelier business as shopkeepers have to run their light shops without having any lights lit. This photo was taken in Nawabpur yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BNP-Jamaat movement offers no solution: Inu

BSS, Dhaka

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Jasod) President Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday said BNP-Jamaat's movement to oust the government has no plan to solve people's crises.

"Independent Bangladesh has witnessed much progress in 50 years, but there are several risks and crises. Conspiracies are still present to thwart the constitution's continuity."

Inu, also chairman of parliamentary standing committee on information and broadcasting ministry, was addressing a representatives' meeting of his party's Rajshahi divisional unit at Shaheed Titu auditorium in Bogura, said a press release.

He underscored the need for preventing BNP-Jamaat's plot.

Jasod GS Shirin Akhter addressed the meeting as special guest, with president of Jasod's Bogura district unit AKM Rezaul Karim Tansen in chair.

Shirin underscored the need to take Bangladesh forward to build a non-communal nation.

"Since its inception in 1972, Jasod is on the track of socialism. Jasod has been standing beside labourers, peasants and working-class people, and it will do so in future too."

Mental healthcare grossly neglected

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

Pabna Mental Hospital, once considered the most reliable mental-health facility in the country, has seen its service crumble in recent decades.

For years, admitted patients have been missing the quality care expected of the 500-bed state-run hospital, which would include nutritious meals, prescribed medications, and specialised treatments.

Family members of former patients have claimed that the overall standard of medical care is not good enough to ensure that patients fully recover.

In early September, the then hospital's acting director Dr Roton Kumar Roy issued an office order to stop admitting new patients, citing a supply shortage of food, medicine, and other necessities.

However, the order was withdrawn a day later, after the health directorate assured that it would provide the necessary support.

This turn of events led The Daily Star to launch an investigation, which revealed a number of factors for why the institution has been struggling over the years.

These include the presence of an unscrupulous contractor syndicate that is responsible for food and medicine supply; the lack of specialist doctors; and the pervasive interference of brokers.

INADEQUATE MEALS, MEDICATION
While hospital sources claim that the facility follows a diet plan and serves meat, vegetables, and other food items accordingly, former inmates and their families are not satisfied.

On condition of anonymity, family members of two former patients spoke to The Daily Star, raising allegations over the food quality.

Manik (not his actual name), an ex-patient hailing from Bagerhat, spent three months at the hospital last year.

According to his brother, Manik was a man of healthy build, but when he was released



from the hospital, he returned home sickly thin.

"Every day, it was the same dishes cooked with pangas fish and broiler chicken. Although it tasted horrible, Manik had to eat, otherwise he would starve," he said.

Another former patient, Roton (not his actual name), had been admitted to the hospital twice but could not fully recover.

His wife said, "My husband often complained about the food, so I used to seek permission from the ward doctor to send him food from outside."

According to the diet plan, each patient is supposed to get three meals and one evening snack per day.

During a visit to the hospital, this correspondent found that a large amount of food had to be dumped every day as most patients could not eat it.

Speaking on the matter, Dr Shafquat Waheed, the newly appointed director, said



the food budget is inadequate for quality meals.

"It is very difficult to provide quality meals four times a day with the allotted Tk 125 per day for each patient. The lack of funds results in the same meals being served over and over again, and a lot of food going to waste every day."

Meanwhile, complaints also surfaced about the hospital not providing patients with the prescribed medications it is supposed to.

Manik's brother said, "On top of the poor-quality food, my brother also did not get all the prescribed medicine due to a supply shortage."

Regarding this, Dr Shafquat claimed that

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The bridge that opened doors

Eighth Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge boosting economy of southwestern region

PORIMOL PALMA, back from Pirojpur

Mahmud Hasan Jewel could never think of doing business or getting a job in Pirojpur Sadar before the bridge over the Kocha river was built.

"We had to wait for two to three hours to cross the river by ferry. And I had no idea whether ferries would be available after midnight. Now, I can return home from Pirojpur Sadar in 10 minutes using the bridge," said Jewel, a resident of Pirojpur's Kawkhali.

He is one of the four partners who started Chandrabindu Party Palace and Resort Centre near the toll plaza of Bangamata Begum Fazilatun Nesa Mujib Eighth Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge, which was opened to the public on September 4.

Jewel said anticipating business opportunities, he and three of his friends set up the restaurant on 40 decimals of land, investing a total of Tk 15 lakh.

The restaurant opened in early July, when daily sales were worth Tk 7,000. After the bridge opened, the establishment started making around Tk 17,000 worth of



PHOTO: COURTESY

We had to wait for two to three hours to cross the river by ferry. And I had no idea whether ferries would be available after midnight. Now, I can return home from Pirojpur Sadar in 10 minutes using the bridge.

MAHMUD HASAN JEWEL
Resident of Pirojpur's Kawkhali

sales a day.

"I believe sales will go up even further, as more restaurants are being built nearby."

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POST-PANDEMIC BLUES

Univ students struggling to find ground

Aachol Foundation's survey paints grim picture

| KEY FACTORS | |
|---|---|
| Session jams | |
| Difficulties in study | |
| Depression over results | |
| Unusual curriculum | |
| STUDY AT A GLANCE | |
| 75.85pc suffering from mental health issues | 77.01pc having trouble finishing syllabus |
| 46.45pc students lost interest in studying | 73.84pc suffer from lack of confidence |
| 80.79pc feel depressed | 76.06pc in distress about career |

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two third of university students have been facing mental health issues due to overwhelming academic pressure in the post-pandemic world.

Aachol Foundation disclosed the information in a virtual press conference yesterday, based on a survey, titled "Impact of Academic Pressure on University Students and Their Suicidal Tendencies".

Abdul Wahab, researcher of Aachol Foundation and assistant professor of North South University, presented the results of the survey.

The survey conducted among 1,640 students,

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WAR OF WORDS

Ousting govt only option to end misrule: Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

Stating that an unbearable situation has been prevailing in the country, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said ousting the current government is the only option to overcome misrule and protect the country and its people.

Fakhru made the remarks while speaking at a discussion at Dhaka Reporters' unity (DRU) organised by Jatiyatabadi Ulema Dal, marking its 43rd founding anniversary.

Referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's call to the opposition parties to join the next polls, Fakhru said no election will be held in Bangladesh until a non-party neutral government is installed.

"We are trying to talk to all the political parties and bring them under the same umbrella. The first thing that needs to be done is to force the prime minister to resign by handing

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Electoral system doesn't work as per whim: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said the constitution and electoral system don't function as per whim of individuals as the electoral system has been set up following the practices of different democratic countries.

Quader said this in a statement protesting BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir's "misleading and politically motivated remarks".

He said autocrats Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad amended the constitution to give constitutional legitimacy to the power seized by them for personal interests. Those amendments to the constitution were declared illegal by the country's highest court, now there is no scope to go back to that.

"Now those who are giving anti-constitutional statements want to see an undemocratic and unselected government system," Quader added.

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For little Imam, his father has the best job in the world. Solaiman, who sells toys in Dhaka, shifted to the capital from Noakhali last year, leaving his wife and four children back home. The family came to Dhaka to visit him recently. Yesterday, Imam let his father go to work in one condition: that he too would accompany him. And it did not take Imam to get busy with the toys as soon as Solaiman spread those out on the ground in front of Central Shaheed Minar. In between selling the toys, the father too joined in the fun.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN