



The tricky bit about having a flower business is that you have to sell the day's lot by the day's end. When flowers remain unsold the next day and are in their dying spirits, garbage collectors take them to the dump. This garbage van full of dying marigolds, spotted near Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, was heading towards a dumping ground near DMCH for that very purpose.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Five judges, 17,500 cases

Appellate Division facing judge crisis again

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court is once again facing a shortage of judges, which means more time to dispose of cases, and in turn, a longer wait for justice.

One of its judges has died of Covid-19, another has gone into retirement, and a third judge has been on a long leave, which will last till his retirement.

At present, only five judges of the court, including Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, are dealing with more than 17,500 pending cases.

On July 9, 2009, then Bangladesh president raised the number of judges at the apex court from seven to 11, prior to disposing of some important cases, including those centring the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the fifth amendment to the constitution.

The situation might get even worse next year if new judges are not appointed soon. Because two judges – Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique and senior-most Justice Md Nuruzzaman – will retire on September 26 and July 1, respectively, next year.

The High Court Division of the SC has

also been facing a similar shortage of judges, even though 11 additional judges were appointed for it on July 31 this year, raising the number to 95.

To put the situation into perspective, more than 5.18 lakh cases are pending with the HC, and in June 2012, the number of judges was 101.

Among the 95 HC judges, three have

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been excluded from judicial functions for more than three years, as an inquiry centring them is pending. Three other judges are running the International Crimes Tribunal to deal with 1971 war-crimes related cases.

The crisis of judges at the Appellate and HC divisions has caused a huge backlog of

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Bangladesh, Japan to forge 'strategic ties'

Say foreign ministries of both countries ahead of PM Hasina's Japan visit

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and Japan expect to elevate bilateral relations to a "strategic partnership" during the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Japan, scheduled for November 29 to December 1.

She will visit the country at the invitation of Japanese Prime Minister of Japan Fumio Kishida, marking 50 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The issue was discussed when Arima Yutaka, Japan's assistant minister/director general of Southeast and Southwest Asian Affairs Department, called on Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen in Dhaka on Wednesday.

At the meeting, both sides expressed satisfaction at the ever-growing bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

At the meeting, both sides expressed satisfaction at the ever-growing bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, and particularly highlighted the visit of Hasina to Japan in May 2014, when she and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe elevated bilateral relations to the 'comprehensive partnership' level.

They also discussed the visit of then Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Bangladesh in September 2014, when the two countries forged a deeper economic partnership under BIG-B.

Under the BIG-B initiative, Japan is implementing some of the major projects, including the MRT line in Dhaka, the deep sea port at Matarbari, the third terminal of

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Pushed further into darkness

Number of floating sex workers rising due to poverty, lack of jobs



I got into sex work out of desperation very recently. My family thinks I have a night-shift job. They would be devastated to know what my real job is. But I had no other option to support my family.

HASNAHENA*

I do it as a part-time job when I'm badly in need of money. My neighbours already suspect that I'm involved in this work and avoid me completely. Last month, my landlord asked me to vacate the room.

KEYA*

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and NILIMA JAHAN

It was almost one o'clock at night. A woman in her 30s was screaming for help from inside an auto-rickshaw near Farmgate. The roads were almost empty, and the few people nearby were reluctant to check what was going on, as they feared that they might land in trouble.

However, when her screams got louder, people got more curious and went closer to see what was happening. And then, a man, who was with her, hurriedly got out of the auto-rickshaw and left the scene.

According to the woman, the man had forcibly taken her pictures, and she was pleading with him to delete them.

The auto-rickshaw driver told this correspondent that the man had rented the vehicle for two hours for Tk 600 and was roaming

around with the woman. They then stopped at Farmgate.

The woman, who calls herself Hasnahena*, said she got into sex work out of desperation very recently. "My family thinks I have a night-shift job. They would be devastated to know what my real job is. But I had no other option to support my family."

"What would I do if the man spreads my photos and my family eventually finds out? I will have no choice but to end my life," she said.

The Daily Star investigated 10 spots of the capital, including Farmgate, Karwan Bazar, Sangsad Bhaban area, Paltan, Shyamoli, Shewrapara, Mirpur-1, Mirpur-14, Gulistan and Kamalapur, and found that recently, the number of sex workers on the city streets has increased significantly.

Although there is no official data to back the claim, the correspondents interviewed 10 such workers who confirmed the

matter. The 10 were forced to choose this line of work because of rising living costs. The pandemic had especially taken a toll on their livelihood, as many lost their means of income.

The interviews revealed that almost every newcomer has a poverty-afflicted background. They lack proper education and do not have any marketable skills, which, in their words, forced them to enter the sex trade.

Twenty-five-year-old Keya*, for instance, has been working as a floating sex worker near Karwan Bazar area for the past six months, a few months after her husband divorced her and ousted her from the house.

Her family members did not take her back as she married someone of her choice and returned with a three-year-old daughter.

Initially, she sold leftover vegetables from trucks at Karwan

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'We will show what a public gathering is'

Says Quader, responding to Mirza Fakhrul

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP will be shown what a real public gathering looks like.

He said this while speaking at a press briefing at his official residence.

Responding to a statement of BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Quader said in some rallies, BNP was not able to gather even one lakh people despite targeting 10 lakh.

"Huge public gatherings were seen at the Awami League's ward and thana-level conferences in the city, which were also reported in the media," said the AL general secretary.



Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said there is a constitutional body – the Election Commission (EC) – in the country, and the polls will be held on time under the EC, while the government will only cooperate with the commission as is the norm in other democratic countries.

Replying to another statement of Fakhrul over the country's foreign reserve, Quader said the foreign reserve increased to USD 48 billion during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's tenure.

Due to the ongoing global crisis, the reserve came down to USD 36 billion from USD 48 billion, he said, adding that the whole world, including Bangladesh, has been facing this crisis.

Meanwhile, Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday said Bangladesh had become a "world champion in corruption" during BNP's tenure.

He made the remarks while exchanging views with journalists at his Minto Road official residence.

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100 held over mugging, drug peddling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers arrested at least 100 people over mugging and drug peddling from different areas in the capital during separate drives in the last two days.

Among them, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested 27 people for allegedly being members of a dope-and-snatch gang in the capital.

Separate teams of Rab-3 conducted the raids in the capital's Shahjahanpur, Motijheel, Paltan, Shahbagh and Kamalapur areas on Thursday night and managed to detain the criminals, said Rab-3 commanding officer Lt Col Arif Mohiuddin Ahmed.

Rab seized a sharp weapons, three boxes of ointment, two spray cans and seven phones, among other things, from their possession.

According to Rab, the arrestees used to roam around different bus

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'BNP can hold rallies as PM believes in democracy'

Says DSCC Mayor Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina believes in democracy, and that is why BNP is being able to hold rallies.

"BNP leaders claimed that Awami League shut down bus operation fearing its protest. The bus owners shut it because you [BNP] set buses on fire between 2013 and 2015 in the name of protest."

"If we want to foil the rallies, then we can foil the Barishal rally by just hinting the idea to my cousin. No one will be able to enter Barishal then. But Sheikh Hasina believes in democracy, that is why you are being able to hold rallies," said Taposh while addressing the triennial council of AL's Ramna and Shahbagh thana units and three other wards.

Referring to the remark of BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir on foreign currency reserves, he said, "Sheikh Hasina never looted anything, rather you [BNP leaders] did from 2001 to 2006, when the country was ranked the most corrupt for five consecutive times. You could not even produce one megawatt of electricity."

"The foreign currency reserve was 6.1 billion dollars till 2006. The Sheikh Hasina government took reserves to 48 billion dollars. First, learn to do the maths, understand economics, and then dream about coming to power. These rallies will not do it," added the mayor.

Speaking about choosing leadership of AL units

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Underneath the mosquito net is Shafiullah Nabi, a painter who has taken it upon himself to spread awareness about keeping homes clean to prevent dengue. In this course, he sat in front of Jatiya Press Club like this for an hour yesterday, to inform all passers-by. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN