

Engage people to enhance capacity

PM tells firefighters

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the Fire Service and Civil Defence to engage the common people in its operations.

"You should strengthen the disaster prevention system by raising public awareness and enhancing the capacity of the Fire Service and Civil Defence through greater involvement of the common people," she said.

The premier was addressing the opening ceremony of Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD) Week-2022, held at FSCD Training Complex in the capital's Mirpur-10 area through a virtual platform from the Gono Bhaban.

The week is being observed throughout the country aiming to create mass awareness to prevent fire incidents and other natural and manmade disasters.

Hasina asked the FSCD members to keep these goals in mind while observing the fire service week 2022.

She said everyone should get fire safety training to protect themselves during fire incidents.

"I think it is essential to impart training to all from their childhood..." she said.

Focusing on the actions implemented by her government to modernise the fire service, the PM said, "We have been able to take the institution, which was once neglected, to a dignified position now in line with the demand of time."

Sheikh Hasina said the government has improved the FSCD significantly in the last 14 years.

She said her government took different steps to make the firefighters as a time-befitting force and expand its services further.

"We have taken measures to transform the fire service into an institute so that it will have full capacity and can deliver the highest services," she said.

The PM said the implementation of her government's commitment to set up at least one fire station in each upazila is going to be completed.



Unfinished pillars of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project have been left like this for months in Basan area of Gazipur. The BRT project was supposed to be completed in 2016. Its current deadline expires next month. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Moscow under pressure

G20 voices unease over Ukraine war; Russian missiles strike Kyiv, two other cities

AGENCIES

Russia faced mounting diplomatic pressure yesterday to end its war in Ukraine, as G20 allies and critics alike rued the painful global impact of nearly nine months of conflict.

A draft communique obtained by AFP showed the world's 20 leading economies coming together to condemn the war's effects, but still divided on apportioning blame.

As the summit continues in Bali, two residential buildings in the Ukraine capital were hit by two Russian missiles yesterday, the mayor of Kyiv said, following reports that air raid sirens were sounding in all regions of the Ukraine.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov left the summit as the missiles hit the Ukrainian capital. Ukrainian cities of Lviv in

the west and Kharkiv in the east were also attacked by Russia yesterday, officials said.

The G20 summit has shown that even Russia's allies have limited patience with a conflict that has inflated food and energy prices worldwide and raised the spectre of nuclear war.

Risking diplomatic isolation, Russia was forced to agree that the "war in Ukraine" — which Moscow refuses to call a war — has "adversely impacted the global economy". It also agreed that "the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons" is "inadmissible", after months of President Vladimir Putin making such threats.

The embattled Russian leader has skipped the summit, staying at home to reckon with a string of embarrassing battlefield defeats and a grinding campaign that threatens the future of his regime.

Fardin killed in Chonpara

Rab claims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rab yesterday claimed that they got enough information to suspect that Buet student Fardin Noor Parash was killed in Chonpara slum area of Narayanganj by drug dealer Rayhan Mahmud and his gang.

"Analysing information collected through intelligence and CCTV footage, we suspect that Fardin was killed around Chonpara," Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of the legal and media wing of Rapid Action Battalion, told The Daily Star last night.

The Rab official said the motive would be clear once Rayhan and others



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CASE AGAINST ROZINA

Court decision on final report on Jan 15

STAR REPORT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed January 15 to decide whether it will accept the final report against Prothom Alo's senior journalist Rozina Islam in a case filed under the Official Secrets Act.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Muhammad Asaduzzaman Nur set the date.

Inspector Morshed Hossain Khan, investigation officer of the case, submitted the final report on July 4, praying for relieving Rozina of the charges.

No evidence was found against Rozina and the case was a matter of factual error, mentioned the report.

2 sent to jail for proxy appearance before court

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A Natore court yesterday sent two men to jail for making proxy appearance before it for their son and elder brother.

Judge Abu Saeed of Judicial Magistrate Court-4 sent Javed Ali, 55, and Mujahid, 25, to jail, said Court Inspector Rafiqul Islam.

Both of them were from the district's Baraigram upazila, he added.

The court also issued arrest warrants against Javed's son Tajjul, 25, and Mujahid's brother Zakaria, 35, said Shahiduzzaman, stenographer of the court.

37 juvenile offenders freed on condition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court yesterday granted conditional release to 37 juveniles who had criminal charges against them.

They were freed for six months on 10 conditions to correct themselves, said Nasrin Akter Mita, public prosecutor of the court.

Judge Mohammad Hasanuzzaman of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal passed the order.

The court also directed the social welfare department to monitor them and submit reports on their progress every two months.

AL advisory council meeting on Nov 19

STAR REPORT

The ruling Awami League will hold its advisory council meeting on November 19.

The meeting will start at 10:00am at the Gono Bhaban, read a press release.

AL President Sheikh Hasina, also the prime minister, will chair the meeting, added the release.

AL's General Secretary Obaidul Quader asked the party's advisory council members to be present at the meeting following proper health protocols.

When hospitals turn deadly

FROM PAGE 1 operation, or infections are transmitted through medical equipment.

In addition, six of them did not conduct any surveillance in their ICUs, or among infants, while the surveillance for tuberculosis and flu was also ignored.

It found that all 11 hospitals, except one, could only be ranked as "basic" or lower, on the World Health Organization's infection prevention and control assessment scale.

This means infection prevention and control is not sufficiently implemented in those hospitals and further improvement is required.

One 450-bed public hospital, which routinely houses up to 2,600 patients and has an annual turnover of 85,000 patients, was ranked as "inadequate" in terms of infection prevention and control, where "implementation is deficient and significant improvement is required".

The second lowest score was obtained by a private 580-bed tertiary hospital, which treats over 15,000 patients every year.

The study did not name the hospitals, but said they are all teaching hospitals with huge patient loads, where patients from district-

level hospitals also get referred to.

Overcrowding, a lack of beds, inadequate manpower, insufficient toilets, and non-existent wastewater treatment systems — all contribute to the crisis, found the study. Wastewater has been proven time and again to be a carrier of pathogens.

Only about a quarter of the hospitals assess the number of staffers needed to manage patient loads, while 45 percent of them did not maintain the government proposed healthcare worker-patient ratio.

"It was found that cleaners were left out of training for infection prevention and control," said lead author Harun.

The study also found that two-thirds of the hospitals did not maintain adequate spacing between patient beds.

Only six of the hospitals could maintain one patient per bed, found the study. It is observed that large hospitals cram multiple patients to a single bed or make bedding on the floor.

Four hospitals had no way to assess or respond when the bed capacity was exceeded. About half of the hospitals had no patients placed outside in the corridors, the study further read.

It also found that seven hospitals

did not have sufficient working toilets.

Four of the hospitals did not have functional waste collection containers, and five did not have medical waste pick-up or disposal facilities.

Only one had an incinerator.

Former BSMU professor Ahmed Abu Saleh recommended a concerted initiative to conduct surveillance for hospital-based infections.

"There needs to be a collective effort because BSMU is a referral hospital and ICU patients, for example, are admitted in private hospitals before being transferred here. I don't know what infections they are bringing from there."

Meanwhile, other healthcare workers were not receiving sufficient training in infection control, while the cleaners received almost none.

"The resilience of healthcare facilities in containing and treating diseases without propagating infectious threats will depend on enhancing infection prevention and control practices," concluded the study titled "Infection prevention and control in tertiary care hospitals of Bangladesh: results from WHO infection prevention and control assessment framework".

BNP 'has no plan to unseat government'

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"Otherwise, why has the government started arresting the opposition men when the rally is still a month away?" said a meeting source.

He said the BNP wants to stage a huge showdown, but not to unseat the government.

"It is true that the government is in a crisis on the economic front, but it still is organisationally strong. It is not possible to topple the government through a movement over such a short period of time," said a senior leader, preferring anonymity.

Miza Abbas, another standing committee member, said, "We want to hold a peaceful rally like the previous ones in other divisions."

Sources also said the party, in the meantime, is keeping the diplomats updated on all the developments regarding the rallies.

The party has already held a number of meetings with them.

PARTY ASKS DMP FOR PERMISSION

The BNP yesterday sought

the Dhaka Metropolitan Police's permission to hold their much-talked-about rally in front of the party's Nayapaltan office in the capital on December 10.

A party delegation met DMP Commissioner Khandker Golam Farque around 10:00am and urged him to ensure there was no chaos or anarchy by ruling party men centring the rally, Abdus Salam, convener of Dhaka South BNP, told The Daily Star.

They also requested the commissioner to ensure that there are no obstacles for party leaders and activists from joining the rally.

BNP leaders said AL men should not take to the street before the rally to create a fearful situation.

"We sought permission to hold the rally in front of the party's Nayapaltan headquarters. The DMP authorities also wanted to know whether we have an alternate option [for a venue]. We said we will let him know after discussing with the senior leaders," Salam said.

The commissioner said they will

inform the party leaders about the permission after that, he added.

"We requested the commissioner to inform us soon, so that we can start preparing."

As part of its ongoing movement, the BNP on September 27 announced a series of public rallies in 10 divisional cities to protest the price hikes of daily essentials and fuel, death of five party men in previous police action in Bhola, Narayanganj, Munshiganj and Jashore, and to demand the release of its Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The party has already completed its rallies in Chattogram, Mymensingh, Khulna, Rangpur, Barisal, and Faridpur braving various obstacles and transport strikes.

The movement will end with its Dhaka rally on December 10, coinciding with International Human Rights day.

Contacted, DMP commissioner said, "We are collecting intelligence information. After analysing those, we will consider it [giving permission for the rally]."

Hospitalised dengue patients near 50k

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"Due to unreported cases, we are not getting the accurate figure of dengue patients as well as deaths from the mosquito-borne disease," he said.

The documentation system in Bangladesh is very poor, which is the main reason for the unrecorded cases, he said.

ADGHS official said they collect data from 20 government and autonomous hospitals and 33 private hospitals in the capital and 72 district and divisional hospitals across the country.

According to the DGHS, the number of private hospitals, clinics, diagnostic centres and blood banks across the country are around 16,000, of which about 1,600 are in the capital.

Besides, there are 37 government medical college hospitals, 68 district hospitals and 495 upazila health complexes.

Mentioning the number would be 20 times higher than the official figure, entomologist Manzur A Chowdhury said according to a study

of the Lancet, a weekly peer-reviewed general medical journal, the dengue cases were around 20 times higher than the actual figure in 2019.

"Considering that study, we can say the total number of dengue patients might be nine to 10 lakh so far."

Apart from the patients hospitalised, many other patients are asymptomatic, which means that they do not know that they are infected with dengue virus, Manzur said.

"The authorities are claiming that the number of cases is still less than that in many other countries like Singapore. But the reality is that every dengue case in Singapore is reported," he said, adding that a comprehensive documentation system should be developed.

The dengue case this year has already reached its peak and now it will start to decline. But the authorities will have to take necessary steps to control Aedes mosquitoes, he said.

"If cases go unreported, the

authorities will give less attention and provide less resources. If people know the actual figure, they will be more careful," he said.

None of the city corporations follow the standard procedures to control Aedes mosquitoes, carrier of dengue virus, which is the main cause for failure to control dengue, he said.

Prof MA Faiz, former director general of DGHS, said any hospital, diagnostic centre or clinic can easily send information to the authorities through texts or phone or email them. "Our surveillance system is very poor."

Ekrumul Haque, deputy programme manager of malaria and AITD control programme at the DGHS, said they only get the information of admitted patients from a certain number of hospitals. They are working to get information from more hospitals.

"100 percent data collection is not possible for anyone for the diseases like dengue, but they are trying to record as many cases as they can."

Bangladesh abstains from vote against Russia at UN

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It was the lowest level of support of the five Ukraine-related resolutions adopted by the General Assembly since Russia's February 24 invasion. General Assembly resolutions are non-binding, but they carry political weight.

Bangladesh voted in favour of the previous resolution passed in October defending the territorial integrity of Ukraine as per the principles of the UN charter.

That came after Bangladesh in March demanded aid access and civilian protection in Ukraine and criticised Russia for creating a "dire" humanitarian situation with its invasion.

However, Bangladesh abstained from voting in March for another resolution that demanded Russia stop the aggression on Ukraine and immediately withdraw from the country.

Bangladesh's explanation of vote for the resolution on Monday could not be obtained.

But India, in its explanation of vote, questioned whether a reparation process would contribute towards efforts at resolving the conflict and cautioned against precedents being set through such resolutions.

In presenting the resolution, Ukrainian Ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya insisted that Russia must be held accountable for its violations of international law.

Russian war on his country, including bombings targeting residential buildings and infrastructure, the demolition of nearly half of the power grid and utilities, massive displacement, and atrocities such as murder, rape, torture and forced deportations.

"Seventy-seven years ago, the Soviet Union demanded and received reparations, calling it a moral right of a country that has suffered war and occupation. Today, Russia, who claims to be the successor of the 20th century's tyranny, is doing everything it can to avoid paying the price for its own war and occupation, trying to escape accountability for the crimes it is committing."

Russia also supported the creation of the UN Compensation Commission (UNCC), established in 1991 following Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait, Kyslytsya said.

"This proposal is not about Russia alone. It will work for the benefit of all those who are being threatened now or might be threatened later by use of force," Kyslytsya added.

Speaking before the vote, Russian Ambassador Vasily Nebenzya characterised the draft resolution as "a classic example" of a narrow group of states acting not on the basis of international law, but rather trying to consecrate something that is illegal.

He said countries backing the resolution were attempting to position the General Assembly as a judicial body, which it is not.

"These countries boast about how committed they are to the rule of law, but at the same time, they are flouting its very semblance," he added, speaking in Russian.

The proposed reparations mechanism will be created by a group of countries that will decide how it functions, Nebenzya said.

"The UN will play no role in this process because the proposed mechanism is suggested to be created outside of the UN, and no one has any plans to account to the General Assembly for its activity."

Furthermore, he had "no doubt" that the funding will come from frozen Russian assets, which total billions.

Western countries have long wanted to unfreeze these assets, he said, not to return them to their owner, or to spend them on helping Ukraine, "but rather so as to fund their own constantly growing weapons supplies to Kyiv, and covering the debts for the weapons already supplied."

In his nightly video address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said: "The reparations that Russia will have to pay... are now part of the international legal reality."

But Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Tuesday said Russia stands "categorically against" the proposal, adding that Moscow would do "everything possible" to stop the West from seizing its frozen international reserves or "plundering" them to pay for reparations to Ukraine.