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Chattogram prepares to welcome PM

ARUN BIKASH DEY,
Chattogram

A visible enthusiasm has been prevailing among the leaders and activists of the Awami League and its associated organisations as the party President Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to address a rally on Polo Ground in Chattogram tomorrow.

A 3,520sqft boat-shaped stage has been prepared for the rally. The artists were doing their last-minute work yesterday before they hand the stage over to the security forces.

The Chattogram City Corporation has been conducting beautification works. Footpaths across the city were being cleaned and painted, flyovers being decorated with colourful lights, and battered roads being repaired.

Posters and banners have been put up in different areas, including

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A potter making crockeries out of clay in Munshiganj's Sirajdikhan area. The potters and their family members in the upazila's Madan Akhra Palbari area remain extremely busy in the winter as the demand for clay items skyrockets. Each of these clay plates and pots is sold between Tk 11 and Tk 22. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

POLLUTION CONTROL WB to contribute \$250m loan to project for big cities

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has taken an initiative to set up four new vehicle inspection centres (VICs) to control emissions.

It will be implemented as a component of the Bangladesh Environmental Sustainability and Transformation (BEST) project in which the World Bank will contribute \$250m in loans.

The WB approved the fund yesterday.

Currently, there is only one VIC operated by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) in the capital's Mirpur.

Pollution is most visible in the air, rivers and waste disposal sites of the major cities in Bangladesh, reads the project appraisal report of the WB released last month.

The Bangladesh Bank, BRTA, Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority and the Department of Environment will implement different components of the project expected to close on December 31, 2028.

The project will pilot new financing mechanisms to promote green investments in targeted sectors, and establish a Green Credit Guarantee Scheme to incentivise the financial sector to support green investments to reduce air pollution, said the report.

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Living in the shadow of uncertainty

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

"Who will look after our child after our demise? Who will be their friends and family when we are not there?"

These questions constantly haunt parents of children with disabilities. They feel that our society is still not inclusive enough to ensure rights of persons with disabilities.

Muhammad Adnan and Arifa Adnan have a daughter with autism. When Maisha, their only daughter, was diagnosed with autism at the age of around six, they felt the sky had fallen on their heads.

"We decided not to take any more children and to dedicate our entire life to ensure a safe future for our daughter. We must ensure that she gets a good education and she has enough property when we are not around to protect her from this hostile society," the father said.

Arifa said, "In many countries, children like her are often included in the mainstream schools and

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INT'L DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TODAY



A classroom in Uganda with the Ugandan Sign language alphabet drawn on the wall.

PHOTO: UNICEF/UGANDA/BARBEYRAC

✓ The World Report on Disability published in 2011 found there are around 16 million people with disabilities in Bangladesh whereas the number of persons with disabilities identified by the Bangladesh government is around 2.9 million

✓ A recent BBS survey found around 46 percent of the identified persons with disabilities have received government allowance at least once in their lifetime



The cornerstone of this cooperation must be the active participation of persons with disabilities in their full diversity, and their full inclusion in all decision-making processes.

UN Secretary-General, António Guterres

✓ According to Situation Analysis on Children with Disabilities conducted by Unicef in 2014, only 11 percent of children with disabilities can receive any form of education in Bangladesh whereas primary school enrolment is almost 100 percent

✓ According to the BBS survey only 27 percent people with disability can participate in any economic activity

CHT PEACE ACCORD

25 years on, legal tangles still unsolved

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Though 25 years have passed since the signing of the historic Chattogram Hill Tracts Peace Accord, some legal complexities involving the issues of CHT Regional Council still remain unresolved at the apex court.

However, the High Court Division of the Supreme Court on November 21 this year settled a legal question over the transfer and disposal of civil appeal cases in the three hill districts.

The High Court in a verdict on that day ruled that the civil appeal cases, which are pending with the offices of the Chattogram divisional commissioner and additional divisional commissioner, cannot be transferred to the courts of judges concerned of the three hill districts for hearings and disposals.

The HC also ordered the district judges of three hill districts -- Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban -- to immediately return the civil appeal cases and other civil proceedings received by them from the office of the Chattogram divisional commissioner, to the divisional commissioner if those were not disposed of yet.

"However, the appeal cases which

have already been disposed of by the district judges and additional district judges concerned in the aforesaid three hill districts shall be treated as passed and closed matters and the same cannot be challenged on the ground of jurisdiction of the district judges and additional district judges concerned," the special HC bench of Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice SM Kuddus Zaman observed in the verdict.

The CHT Regional Council has been functioning under the leadership of PCJSS Chairman Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, popularly known as Santu Larma, since its formation in 1999 after the signing of the peace accord between Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) and the Bangladesh government on December 2, 1997.

Two appeals were filed with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court 11 years back challenging a HC verdict that declared the CHT Regional Council illegal and unconstitutional.

But the Appellate Division could not settle the issues regarding the legality of CHT Regional Council because the parties concerned with the case have not apparently taken

any extensive move for hearing on the appeals.

However, the apex court may soon hold hearing on two review petitions filed challenging its judgement delivered on November 22, 2016, declaring the CHT Regulation-1900 constitutionally valid and effective.

The CHT Regulation-1900 was issued by the then British colonisers in order to protect the diverse culture and its indigenous inhabitants from immigrants. This regulation came into force on May 1, 1900, giving special status to the CHT.

Following two writ petitions filed by two private companies, Rangamati Food Products Ltd and Wagachara Estate Ltd, the HC several years ago declared the CHT Regulation-1900 a "dead law".

In response to an appeal filed by the state challenging the HC verdicts, the Appellate Division on November 22, 2016, declared the CHT Regulation-1900 constitutionally valid and effective.

Barrister Imran A Siddiq, a lawyer for the two companies, told The Daily Star on November 25 this year that the contents of the review petitions and the appeals filed in

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New York seeks 'bloodthirsty' rodent czar



AFF, New York

If you are "somewhat bloodthirsty" and willing to consider "wholesale slaughter" of vermin then you might be the ideal candidate to become New York City's new rat czar.

Mayor Eric Adams's administration on Wednesday posted the job listing for Director of Rodent Mitigation, a position that pays between \$120,000 and \$170,000 a year.

"Do you have what it takes to do the impossible?" asks the ad, which seeks someone with a "virulent vehemence for vermin" and a "general aura of badassery."

A bachelor's degree is a must, as is experience in urban planning, project management or government, and proficiency in spreadsheets.

But above all the successful candidate must possess "the drive, determination and killer instinct needed to fight the real enemy -- New York City's relentless rat population."

Rats are one of the more unappealing aspects of life in America's largest metropolis, often seen scurrying between subway tracks and sniffing

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India approves world's first intra-nasal Covid vaccine

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

The world's first intra-nasal Covid vaccine developed by India has got approval from the country's Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation for restricted use.

The vaccine will be used as booster doses for people aged 18 and above only in emergency situations.

The vaccine, which successfully passed clinical trials, has been developed by Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL), reports our New Delhi correspondent.

The intra-nasal vaccine was evaluated in Phases I, II and III clinical trials with successful results, the Indian health ministry said in a statement on Thursday, adding the phase-III trials of the intra-nasal vaccine were conducted on 3,100 people for safety and immunogenicity.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A group of people with visual impairments forms a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday demanding an increase in allowance, equal opportunity in getting government jobs, and assistance during recruitment tests. They joined the event under the banner of "Chakuri Prottyashi Drishti Protibondhi Graduates' Parishad" ahead of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities today.