

DHAKA

We want peace,
not war: PM

UNB, Ctg

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government has been taking Bangladesh forward, maintaining friendly relations with all.

"We want peace, not war. The Father of the Nation said 'friendship to all and malice towards none.' We have been following that [the main principle of Bangladesh's foreign policy] and taking the country forward on a development trajectory," she said.

The premier was addressing the President Parade-2022 of the 83rd BMA long course at Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) in Bhatiari.

The PM asked the fresh cadets to carry out their duty towards the country.

"Today you are going to be proud officers of the Bangladesh Army after the completion of a long training. I believe you will properly perform the sacred responsibility, which has been bestowed on you through oath to protect the motherland, and the independence and sovereignty of the country," she said.

Hasina thanked all members of the armed forces for

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PHOTO: PID



The Buriganga seems to have turned into a poster child of pollution and encroachment. In Kamrangirchar area, encroachers, mostly scrap-shop owners, have set up shops near the bank by dumping waste to increase the river's width, polluting the waterbody in the process. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SM Ali's
94th birth
anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 94th birth anniversary of Syed Mohammad Ali, founder editor/publisher of The Daily Star and a luminary in journalism of Bangladesh.

SM Ali made his way up from a cub reporter to one of the country's most brilliant editors in a career spanning 44 years. He also led the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) as its chairman.

Educated in Kolkata, Dhaka and London, he was one of the few Asian journalists who stood out in regional journalism.

Ali was born in a well-known family in Sylhet in

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WORLD CUP SCREENING AT DU
Celebration
or chaos?

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Reckless driving, sound pollution and overcrowding have become a common scene at Dhaka University these days, especially at night as a huge number of spectators come to watch the World Cup football live matches in front of three screens set up at Haji Muhammad Muhsin Hall field and TSC area.

According to eyewitness, people recklessly drive their bikes to showcase their celebrations during their team wins the match. Besides, a loud roar of vuvuzelas is heard immediately before and after the game.

"We are afraid as many outsiders are recklessly driving their vehicles as part of celebrations on the campus. Anyone could get hurt due to that. Besides overcrowding



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MD SAFWAN, a master's student at DU

is violating our safety as many people from outside come to the screening," said Md Safwan, a master's student of Dhaka University.

"The areas are left so filthy after the spectators leave the campus," he added.

This correspondent spoke to a biker who was driving as per whim on the campus late at night. He said his favourite team won the match, and he was celebrating.

"Sports is a part of education. It's expected that safety, entertainment and discipline will continue in parallel. If someone tries to take advantage, we will be strict and if necessary, we will inform law enforcement agencies," said Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani, who is in charge of looking after discipline on the campus.

The overlooked
plight of our soil

75pc of country's soil suffered nutrient depletion, reveals study

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Around 11.07 million hectares of land, which accounts for 75 percent of the country's geographical area, suffered soil nutrient depletion, found a recent study.

A study conducted by three scientists of the state-run Soil Resource Development Institute (SRDI) revealed the staggering picture of land degradation.

Out of 11.07 million hectares, 1.47 million hectares of land suffered severe soil nutrient depletion, implying that the land has lost 50 to 75 percent of its productivity. It will be very difficult to use the land for further cultivation.

The study was conducted by Ameer Md Zahid, Md Alaf Hossain and Neelima Akter Kohinoor, three principal scientific officers of SRDI.

Land degradation is defined as a change in one or more land or soil properties that result in a decline in its quality. Land degradation reduces agricultural productivity and damages the ecosystem, posing a direct threat to food security and the natural environment.

According to the study, soil organic matters -- that provide soil nutrient, bind soil particles and improves the water-holding capacity of the soil -- has depleted 78.7 percent of the country's landmass.

Acidification has affected 54.8 percent of land and 30 percent of the country's soil lost productivity due to arsenic contamination.

Around 11.5 percent of the land degraded due to hill erosion, 10 percent due to drought, 5.1 percent due to riverbank erosion, 4.3 percent due to soil sealing and 2.9 percent of degradation occurs due to sandy overwash.

Overall, the study reveals that from 2000 to 2020, 11.24 million hectares of land suffered moderate to very severe levels of degradation.

This implies that 76 percent of Bangladesh's land lost 10 to 75 percent of its productivity in the last 20 years.

The study further mentions that 27,000 hectares of land have been degraded (moderate to very severe degradation) every year since 2000.

One of the researchers, Ameer Md Zahid told The Daily Star, "From the severity and extent of land degradation within such a short duration, we can understand that manmade factors are accelerating this degradation at an abnormally high speed."

He stated that unplanned urbanisation and



PHOTO: COLLECTED

"From the severity and extent of land degradation within such a short duration, we can understand that manmade factors are accelerating this degradation at an abnormally high speed. Unplanned urbanisation and industrialisation, discharging industrial effluents into water bodies, unregulated mining and excessive application of chemical pesticides and fertilisers are some of these manmade factors."

AMEER MD ZAHID, principal scientific officer, SRDI

industrialisation, discharging industrial effluents into water bodies, unregulated mining and excessive application of chemical pesticides and fertilisers are some of these manmade factors.

Prof Mohammad Mofizur Rahman Jahangir of Bangladesh Agricultural University's soil science department, said, "In the 1960s, there was a scarcity of only one nutrient in our soil -- nitrogen. We handled the situation by applying urea. After 2010, it was found that almost all the nutrients in our soil have been decreasing at an alarming rate due to land degradation. This poses a serious threat to our food security."

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Biometric data
needed for
Umrah e-visa
HAAB says it may create
problem for elderly pilgrims

RASHIDUL HASAN

Pilgrims from Bangladesh and four other countries have to provide their biometric data, including "fingerprints", to the Saudi authorities to get Umrah e-visas.

The other countries are -- the UK, Tunisia, Kuwait and Malaysia -- Saudi media reported referring to an announcement by the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah.

Pilgrims will have to use the Saudi Visa Bio app that allows visa registration via fingerprints and selfie biometrics.

The new app delivers on a commitment made by the Saudi government late last year to allow biometrics enrolment through mobile devices so pilgrims to Makkah can avoid visiting visa centres in person, making the country one of the first in

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554 lives lost in
463 accidents
last month

Says Road Safety Foundation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 554 people died and 747 suffered injuries in 463 accidents across the country in November, Road Safety Foundation, a non-government organisation, said in a press release yesterday.

Among the deceased, 78 were women and 71 children, the press release said.

The foundation collected the data based on reports in nine national dailies, seven online news portals and electronic media.

A total of 229 people lost their lives in 194 motorbike accidents, which accounted for 41.33 percent of the total deaths. Besides, accidents claim the lives of 123 pedestrians and 79 drivers and helpers during this period.

At least five people died and two remained missing in three waterway accidents while 11 people lost their lives and four suffered injuries in eight train accidents.

One stop emergency
service launched at
Kurmitola hospital

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Directorate General of the Health Services (DGHS) will introduce "One Stop Emergency and Casualty" (OSEC) at Kurmitola General Hospital in Dhaka today with a view to providing necessary diagnostics and treatment support by keeping a patient at the bed.

As a result, patient will not need to move anywhere from bed for diagnosis or doctor's advice, health officials said.

"Any patient requiring emergency care, regardless of disease type will get round-the-clock diagnosis, treatment, and medicine at these emergency care unit free of cost," Dr Sheikh Daud Adnan, director (Hospitals and Clinics) at DGHS told The Daily Star yesterday.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque is expected to inaugurate the OSECs at an event at Kurmitola General Hospital as chief guest.

"We are already serving patients in our OSEC. Patients are receiving services at their bedside,"

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Dengue death toll 257

Total number of patients 58,619

1,463 still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients 56,899

410 more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: DGHS

PRAYER
TIMING
DECEMBER 5

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-15 12-45 3-45 5-19 7-00

JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-00 5-22 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A day labourer sits in front of a shop, waiting for work. Sometimes they wait for hours, and in other times, the day passes them by, and they return home empty-handed. This photo was taken at Banglabazar recently.

Taqsem's
appointment
challenged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a petition with the High Court challenging the legality of the appointment of Taqsem A Khan as managing director of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority.

Syed Sayedul Haque Suman submitted the petition as a public interest litigation saying that Taqsem has been appointed as MD of Dhaka Wasa through fraud practice as there is tempering in his marksheet of the recruitment viva voce exam.

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