



Dhaka South City Corporation is dredging the Old Buriganga channel to make the waterbody navigable. As part of it, the bank of the river will also be freed from all illegal structures. This photo was taken in Kamrangirchar yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES Increase budget allocation for them

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The allocation of social safety net for persons with disabilities is only 2.5 percent of the total budget for social safety net programmes and 0.42 percent of the total national budget.

Budget allocation and the number of beneficiaries on education for students with disabilities remains unchanged for the last 4 consecutive years.

A person with a disability is entitled to receive a monthly allowance of only Tk 850.

It has been estimated by BBS that almost five million people in Bangladesh have at least one form of disability. However, only 3,57,000 are getting this trifling amount of monthly allowance currently.

These findings were shared yesterday at a virtual conference titled "Disability Inclusive National Budget 2023-24: Perspective of Post Covid Effect and Global Economic Recession", organised by Access Bangladesh Foundation and The Daily Star.

Disability rights activists, researchers, civil society members, academicians and persons with disabilities participated in

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Disburse allocation through rights-based approach
- Govt incentive for orgs working for persons with disabilities
- Accessible buildings, classrooms for them
- Inclusive education, development
- Monthly allowance for support persons, caregivers

this virtual conference.

Albert Mollah, co-founder and executive director of Access Bangladesh Foundation, during his keynote presentation, said, "The allocations for persons with disabilities in the national budget are insignificant. There is some progress in this budget such as the disability allowance has been increased from Tk 750 to Tk 850 and the number of allowance recipients has somewhat increased."

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Shifting towards skilled migration

Expatriates' minister tells discussion marking International Migrants Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country is so far dependant on low-skilled workers in terms of migration but the situation is changing gradually, Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad said yesterday.

"We are shifting towards skills [of the migrant workforce]. Realising and accepting this at the earliest will yield benefit for the nation," he said.

He was addressing a discussion on the occasion of International Migrants Day organised by the expatriates' welfare ministry in the capital's Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

Addressing as chief guest, Imran Ahmad said his ministry is working to open new labour markets in different countries, stressing workers will need to gather a new set of skills to enter those markets.

He said the ministry and its different departments have digitised several of their services to reduce the hassle of migrant workers.

He also said different receiving countries have their own digital platform to recruit foreign workers whereas a similar platform of its own will help Bangladesh to address migration management and reduce the cost effectively.

Anisul Islam Mahmud, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on

expatriates' welfare ministry, said remittance sent by migrant workers is a primary economic pillar of the country.

"Besides, the labour migration sector has significantly been contributing to addressing the country's unemployment situation. The country can get

The labour migration sector has significantly been contributing to addressing the country's unemployment situation. The country can get even more remittance if proper steps are taken by the government to encourage migrant workers to send their hard-earned money home through authorised channels.

ANISUL ISLAM MAHMUD
Chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on expatriates' welfare ministry

even more remittance if proper steps are taken by the government to encourage migrant workers to send their hard-earned money home through authorised channels," he added.

At the programme, the ministry recognised 67 Non-

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'Renounce dual stance on climate change'

Speakers urge developed countries at roundtable



PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers have called upon the developed countries to renounce their dual stances on climate change and reduce the emissions at sources to save vulnerable countries.

"Developed countries talk about adaptation and resilience and at the same time they are contributing more when it comes to carbon emission, said Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Underscoring the need for reducing carbon footprints at individual levels, he said youths should be aware of their lifestyles to reduce emissions.

He said this at a roundtable discussion, titled "Saving Mother Nature, Saving Us - The Role of Youth in Leading Conservation and Climate Resilience", organised jointly by

The Daily Star and USAID in the capital's Daily Star Centre.

"We [seniors] have created the climate change. Now we are passing our responsibilities to the youth to clean our mess. This cannot be the right approach," Chowdhury said.

Addressing youths, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), said, "We are leaving a world to you where there will be flyovers and major constructions but it will not be a good place to live." People have no right to destroy the Sundarbans and Sal forests as they cannot create other forests like these by only planting trees, she said.

Pointing out that recycling also harms the climate, Rizwana suggested that youth give importance to the reduction of plastic usage over recycling.

Ainun Nishat, professor emeritus of Brac University

and water resource and climate change specialist, said the youth have to simultaneously play the role of activists and advocates when it comes to climate change.

"Without activism, nothing would have been possible. The authority only listens to people when they raise their voices," he said.

Physician and media personality Abdun Nur Tushar said although the population explosion is responsible for the hazardous environment, not much importance is given when it comes to reducing the population.

"We have created an environment detrimental to the environment. Growth is an element that is largely responsible for climate change. We have to rethink eco-friendly and make necessary behavioural changes to reduce pollution," he said.

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Need more BRTC buses in Dhaka

Commuters tell public hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commuters in a public hearing yesterday called for increasing the number of buses under the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) on different routes of Dhaka.

BRTC authorities said they have been working on controlling vehicles without fitness on the road. They made these remarks in a public hearing programme held at BRTC training institute at Tejgaon.

In a welcome speech, acting chairman of BRTC Col Md Jahid Hossain said, "We have been trying to deploy more buses aiming to reduce the suffering of commuters."

"Buses will be carrying the passengers from and to the metro rail stations so that commuters can avail the high-capacity public rail transport," he added.

The BRTC chairman also said they are working on installing CCTV cameras on all possible vehicles. They will also bring all city-service buses under an e-ticketing system, aiming to reduce the hassle of passengers and improve overall services.

Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri said, "Though the government did not increase funds for BRTC, they have started counting profits recently."

BRTA chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder also said they took initiatives to ease the process of driving license. Citizens now can complete the entire process from home, except appearing for the mandatory driving test, he added.

Officials of BRTA and BRTC also spoke on arranging more training for drivers, making the public transport women friendly, along with providing better traveling experience for commuters.

More than a hundred stakeholders — commuters, students, teachers and other job holders attended the programme.



Mother, child die after falling from building

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mother and her child died after falling from the roof of a five-storey building in the capital's Demra yesterday.

The deceased are Halima Begum (25) and her one-and-a-half-year-old child Sadman. Police detained Halima's husband Shahinur Rahman for interrogation.

The incident took place around 6:00am at West Sanarpar. The deceased's brother Abu Sayeed alleged it was a pre-planned murder.

He said Shahinur married his sister three years back without informing her that he had a wife and child. Halima came to know about it six months after giving birth to her son Sadman, he added.

Sayeed said Halima had filed a complaint against her husband over torture with Demra Police Station three months back.

Demra Police Station OC Shafiqul Islam said they are investigating the incident.



WINTER IS HERE... Moderate fog accompanied with early morning chills for the past few days have announced the arrival of winter in the capital. This photo was taken in the Palashi intersection yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

NAYAPALTAN OFFICE VANDALISM BNP demands neutral probe

UNB, Dhaka

BNP has claimed that valuables worth over Tk 50.5 lakh were damaged in police attack at its Nayapaltan central office on December 7 and demanded a neutral investigation into it.

BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain said this at a press briefing yesterday at the party chairperson's Gulshan office.

He said looting of laptops, computers, documents, cash from BNP's Nayapaltan office was actually an incident of robbery.

"According to witnesses, after police action at BNP's central office, ruling party's miscreants vandalised properties and took part in looting with support of the law enforcers on December 7," said Mosharrar. "We condemn and protest the incident and demand a neutral probe," he added.



Dengue death toll 271

Total number of patients 61,408

676 still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients 60,461

145 more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: DGHS

PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 19

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5:20 12:45 3:45 5:22 7:00

JAMAAT 5:55 1:15 4:00 5:25 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION