

## Hiccups couldn't dampen the joy

Students receive new textbooks, but not everyone gets full set

DIPAN NANDY

Millions of school students are starting their new year with the refreshing scent of new textbooks, as authorities all across the nation began distributing the books yesterday.

Primary and secondary students went to their schools braving the morning chill to get their hands on the new textbooks for free.

But the textbook festival, held for distribution at educational institutions, faced hiccups, as many students did not get their full set of books yesterday, the first day of the academic year, thanks to the high price of paper and delays in placing work orders.

Gourab Sarkar, a fifth-grader at Banianagar Government Primary School, visited the Dhaka University playground to join the textbook festival organised by the Directorate of Primary Education. After getting the new books, he was elated.

"I'm really happy to get the new books. I got the chance to see some of my friends, which is great," he said.

Md Yameen, his classmate, had a broad smile. "I'm so happy! I don't have words to express my feelings."

But Gourab and Yameen did not get their full set of textbooks.

Many students of Dhaka and elsewhere in the country complained that they did not get all of their books.

In addition to the paper crisis, several companies that won the tender for printing primary textbooks did not sign a contract with the NCTB, and this has contributed to the delay in distributing all the books, said National

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Some were dancing with joy, some were turning the pages of the books with a smile -- as millions of school students started their new year with the refreshing scent of new textbooks yesterday. Although many are yet to get their full set of books due to production delays, it wasn't enough to dampen the celebrations of the school-goers. This photo was taken from different schools in Chattogram, Sylhet and Barishal.



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN, SHEIKH NASIR, TITU DAS

## President Abdul Hamid turns 80

BSS, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid turned 80 yesterday.

The Head of State

was born on January 1, 1944 in Kamalpur village of Mithamoin upazila of Kishoreganj district.

Chinese President Xi Jinping greeted President Hamid on his 80th birthday.

In a message, he wished President Hamid a sound health and success in days to come.



# Highest dengue deaths last year

Experts call for immediate steps so country doesn't face similar situation this year



The ideal temperature for dengue transmission remained throughout last year in Bangladesh. Moreover, for Aedes mosquitoes to breed, stagnant water in the open was also available.

KABIRUL BASHAR  
Entomologist of Jahangirnagar University

### IN NUMBERS

- 281, the highest ever, died of dengue last year
- 62,382 patients were admitted to hospitals
- 27 died, 5,024 were hospitalised in Dec alone
- 41 new cases recorded yesterday

Last year, the temperature fell a bit late, and this contributed to the situation in December. The population of Aedes mosquitoes comes down when the temperature is 15 or 16 degrees Celsius or less.

GM SAIFUR RAHMAN  
Entomologist of National University

HELEMUL ALAM

At least 281 people succumbed to dengue last year, while 62,382 patients were hospitalised, the highest deaths and second-highest cases ever recorded in the country.

Among the patients, at least 27 died and 5,024 were hospitalised in December. Such unusually high numbers have never been recorded during this season since the first outbreak in 2000.

Meanwhile, at least 41 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday

morning.

Changing temperature patterns, lack of proper initiatives by authorities concerned, and residents not destroying Aedes-mosquito breeding spots are the main reasons for so many cases in December, said experts.

They urged the authorities to take steps right from January so that the country does not face such a situation this year.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), 1,01,354 people, the highest ever, were hospitalised and 179 died in

2019.

Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist of Jahangirnagar University, said some changes have been witnessed in the urbanisation pattern, like the construction of high-rises. This is one of the major contributors to the high number of cases even in December.

He said the ideal temperature for dengue transmission remained throughout last year in Bangladesh. Moreover, for Aedes mosquitoes to breed, stagnant water in the open was also available.

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## National polls to be held on time, properly

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the next parliamentary election will be held properly and on time under the constitution of the republic.

"Bangladesh is a democratic country. Election is a usual matter in democratic countries. The present government's tenure is five years. We hope that all political parties will participate in the next election, which will be held after the end of the tenure of this government," he said.

The minister said this while exchanging New Year's greetings with officials, staff members and newsmen at his ministry office in Secretariat.

"Democracy of Bangladesh has been flourished during the regimes of Shekh Hasina led governments. If any one obstructs the people's right to vote, appropriate legal action will be taken against him or her. Creating anarchy will not be allowed in any manner. Law enforcers will take action under the law," he said.

"We prioritise the development for people and our target is to build Bangladesh as a smart country by 2041," the law minister said.

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## Stolen infant returned to mother

DB rescues the 26-day-old boy after 11 days



The rescued infant on his mother's lap at the DB office on Minto Road yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 26-day-old baby boy, who was stolen from a Kafrul house on December 20, has been safely reunited with his mother after nearly two weeks. A team of detectives rescued the baby from Mirpur area last night and handed him over to his parents, Saiful Islam, an additional deputy commissioner of DB's Mirpur zone, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We traced the baby's location analysing footages of around 100 CCTV cameras. Sensing presence of the law enforcers, the thief left the baby abandoned in Mirpur area and fled away," Saiful, who led the drive, added.

Mohammad Harun Or Rashid, chief of Detective Branch of police, said a man stole the baby as his mother went outside to buy milk on December 20. "The family was devastated. We started investigation after they filed a case with Kafrul Police Station in this regard," he said.

"We got the photos of the man who took the baby from the CCTV footage. We are hopeful to arrest him soon," he said.

## HOMAGE TO KHANDKER MAHBUB HOSSAIN

# CJ suspends judicial functions partially

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique has suspended half of the judicial functions of the Supreme Court's Appellate and High Court Divisions for today in honour of eminent jurist Khandker Mahbub Hossain.

The Appellate Division's judicial functions will continue till 11:00am and the HC Division's judicial functions will run till 1:15pm today.

The chief justice announced the decision after attending a namaz-e-janaza for Advocate Khandker Mahbub Hossain, also a former president of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), on the Supreme Court premises yesterday.

Judges of the Appellate and HC Divisions; Attorney General AM Amin Uddin, Bangladesh Bar Council's Vice Chairman M Yusuf Hossain Humayun; former Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar; SCBA Secretary Md Abdun Nur Dulal; former SCBA presidents Zainul Abedin and AJ Mohammad Ali also attended the janaza.

Advocate Khandker Mahbub Hossain, also a vice-chairman of the BNP, breathed his last at 10:40pm on Saturday at the Evercare Hospital. He will be buried at Azimpur graveyard in Dhaka after Zuhr prayers today, Advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir, junior of Khandker Mahbub, told The Daily Star.



## Fallen sky lanterns halt metro rail services

Operations resume after 2 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities yesterday suspended the operations of metro rail for two hours "on safety ground" as huge number of doused sky lanterns fell on the overhead electricity lines during yesterday night's New Year celebrations.

The service resumed at 10:10am, said an official of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd, the operating agency of metro rail.

DMTCL Managing Director MAN Siddique said huge number of doused sky lanterns fell on the electricity lines. So, they have kept the operations suspended since morning.

Although the sky lanterns did not cause any damage to the electricity lines, they have to remove those to avoid any possible accident, he said at 9:30am.

## Hope BNP will return to positive politics

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Welcoming the English New Year 2023, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday greeted the countrymen on behalf of the ruling party.

Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, was speaking to officials of the Roads and Highway Division officials at Setu Bhaban in Dhaka.

He also expressed hope that the BNP will come out of their inherent negative

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This boy sells chips and nuts to passengers as soon as vehicles stop at signals or in traffic jams. There's a great deal of risk attached to this job. As seen in this picture, the boy was stuck in between two moving buses, inches away from a tragedy. A 14-year-old vendor named Rakib was crushed under a moving bus just last year. This photo was taken recently from Dhaka's Shahbagh intersection.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN