

# Ensure none can use religion to mislead people

PM tells Alem and Olama; inaugurates model mosques, Islamic cultural centres

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon Alem and Olama (Islamic scholars) to instil humanitarian values among people and guide them against terrorism, militancy and drug abuse.

“These are destroying families and the society as well,” she said while virtually inaugurating 50 more model mosques across the country from her official residence Gono Bhaban.

She also requested all, particularly the children, not to get involved in militancy, saying, “Militancy is dishonouring Islam instead of dignifying it.”

Hasina urged the guardians and teachers of educational institutions to be cautious as children and youths are being targeted by militants.

The prime minister said through the model mosques and Islamic cultural centres, people would get the true knowledge on Islamic values and culture.

This will help them not to be misled in the name of religion, alongside contributing immensely to stop terrorism, militancy and repression on women, she added.



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Due to rallies of both ruling and opposition parties, Dhaka commuters had to wait for long hours on roads yesterday. The photo was taken in Paribagh area in the afternoon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Contradictory to citizens’ right to privacy Says coalition of 20 rights orgs on ‘lawful surveillance’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government’s initiative to introduce an Integrated Lawful Surveillance System will run the risk of abuse and violate the citizens’ constitutional right to privacy, said Human Rights Forum Bangladesh – a coalition of 20 human rights organisations – in a press statement yesterday.

On January 12, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan told the national parliament that the government has taken the initiative to introduce lawful surveillance.

“Even though national security is shown as the reason to take initiatives like these, they are later abused to violate the citizens’ right to freedom of expression, privacy, and freedom of assembly,” read the statement.

“This happens because

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## Knock down illegal truck stand from Turag land: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to demolish or evict the illegal structures including a truck stand from the bank of Turag river at Harirampur Mouza in the capital’s Gabtoli area in two weeks.

The BIWTA chairman and deputy commissioner of Dhaka have been asked to submit a report to the HC after complying with the order in four weeks.

At the same time, the HC issued a rule asking the government to explain why their inaction to demolish or evict the illegal structures should not be declared illegal.

The bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Mohammad Ali delivered the order and issued rule following a petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh. It submitted the petition following a photo of illegal structures published on The Daily Star on November 24 last year with a caption.

“After a portion of the Turag was illegally filled by sand, a loading dock was built on it. Even though the BIWTA erected border pillars for such activities to stop, encroachers have been carrying on exploiting the river,” Senior lawyer Manzill Murshid appeared for the petitioner.

# To revolutionise sanitation in towns

Tk 2,211cr-project may be placed at Ecneec today

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The government plans to take up a large-scale sanitation and waste-management project, which will focus on 25 municipalities to ensure a safe, sustainable, and inclusive sanitation system.

Under the Tk 2,211-crore project, the authorities will mainly install 12,312 household and 1,350 community toilets in the 25 towns covering all eight divisions, according to the Planning Commission’s documents.

The initiative also aims to improve public health and quality of life by developing robust waste management and environmental protection systems.

“If the proposed project is implemented, about 32.6 lakh people in 25 municipalities of the districts will come under safe sanitation,” read the documents.

Around 70 percent of the municipalities’ residents will be covered under the waste (solid and sewage) management facility. Additionally, the coverage of managed sanitation will increase from 13.4 percent to 70 percent, they mentioned.

Besides, through this initiative, about 25,000 direct and indirect jobs and business opportunities will be generated for the people, the documents stated.

However, experts said implementation following proper policy guidelines will be the main

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

- 12,312 household, 1,350 community toilets to be installed in 25 towns
- 70pc municipality residents to be brought under waste-management facility
- Of Tk 2,211cr, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to provide Tk 1,882cr, while Tk 329cr will come from govt
- Scheduled to be completed by June 2027

Sanitation and waste-management systems in local municipalities are still quite poor. This initiative will be very impactful if it is implemented following policy guidelines.

ADIL MOHAMMED KHAN  
Executive director of Institute for Planning and Development

challenge in this regard.

The project is expected to procure 31,496 sewage containers and install 27 sludge-drying systems and 30 solid-waste management plants, the documents state.

It will also focus on the sewerage system, as the authorities will build 347 km of various types of reinforced cement concrete (RCC) drains, 30 production wells, and a 100-kilometre pipeline.

Other purchases will include 100 de-sludging trucks and 50 dump trucks, 270 solid-waste collection vans, 810 hand trolleys, and 25 excavators.

Instead of city-corporation areas, the initiative has been taken for 25 municipalities corresponding to 25 districts in eight divisions.

Of them, Dinaipur, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Panchagarh, and Thakurgaon are the six districts in the Rangpur division. The four districts in the Dhaka division are Gopalganj, Madaripur, Rajbari, and Tangail.

In the Khulna division, the four districts are Chuadanga, Jhenidah, Meherpur and Satkhira.

Besides, three are in Rajshahi and Chattogram divisions; two in Sylhet and Mymensingh; and one in Barishal.

“The Inclusive Sanitation Project in 25 Cities of Bangladesh” may be placed today at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) for approval.

The Local Government Division has taken up the initiative, and the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) is the implementing agency.

Of the Tk 2,211 crore, Asian

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## Max 10yrs’ jail for leaking PSC exam questions

Bill passed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Public Service Commission (PSC) Bill-2023 was passed in parliament yesterday, incorporating punishment for involvement in any irregularities in PSC examination.

State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain placed the bill, which was passed by voice vote.

According to the new law, the maximum punishment for involvement in leaking question paper of any PSC examination will be 10 years in jail, financial penalty or both.

The bill will replace the Bangladesh Public Service Commission Ordinance, 1977, in line with a judgment of the High Court over the laws of military regimes.

The maximum punishment for adopting unfair means in examination and engagement in answer sheet forgery would be two years in jail, financial penalty or both.

The penalty is the same for helping any examinee to take any unfair means in the exam hall, tampering with any answer sheet and for pretending to be examinees.

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# Decentralise healthcare Speakers tell seminar, urge govt to increase budget allocation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh’s current per capita health expenditure is 2.5 percent of the GDP, the lowest in South Asia, and the public has to bear a large share of that expenditure due to low government spending on the health sector.

That is why it is necessary to increase the budget for the sector in a planned way, said speakers at an event yesterday.

At present, one-third of the local demand can be met with supply of free medicines and other non-perishable medical supplies at government healthcare facilities, they said.

One out of three primary healthcare seekers in rural areas, who do not go to government facilities, could be served at government facilities if vacant posts are filled there, they added.

They made these comments at the “Meeting on Health Budget” at Cirdap International Conference Centre in Dhaka.

The Bangladesh Health Watch, Brac James P Grant School of Public Health, Brac University and Unnayan Shamannay jointly organised the event.

Atiur Rahman, chairperson of Unnayan Shamannay, said currently the national budget allocates a little more than 5 percent for health.

With an additional allocation of 2 to 3 percent

If the quality of healthcare available in big cities including Dhaka is available in other parts of the country, it is possible to reduce the pressure for people to spend out of their pocket.

PROF M ABU EUSUF  
Development studies department at DU

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## Initiate social movement against communalism Speakers tell event

DU CORRESPONDENT

A social and political movement has to be initiated against anti-communal activities in the country, speakers said at a discussion at Dhaka University yesterday.

Titled, “The importance of communal harmony and ideology of Liberation War”, the event was organised by the Centre for South Asian Studies.

Speaking as the chief guest, DU Vice Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman highlighted the importance of communal harmony in the context of geo-politics and mentioned the significance of religious harmony in South Asian countries.

Senior journalist Mohsin Habib presented the keynote at the discussion.

Besides, Ekushey Padak awardee journalist Ajay Dasgupta, Dhaka

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# A library that welcomes no reader

Inaugurated last year, Azimpur Nagar Pathaghar hasn’t been open to public till date

DIPAN NANDY

A modern building, covered in panes of black glass, stands at the capital’s Azimpur intersection. But what’s more fascinating than the distinct architecture is the fact that big nameplates on the building read “public toilet”.

People who pass it every day are bewildered thinking why a public toilet would look this grand.

The truth is the three-storey building isn’t a public toilet at all. It’s a library of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) called “Azimpur Nagar Pathaghar”. DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh inaugurated the library on March 2 last year.

But almost a year since inauguration, authorities have still not opened the library to the public.

The structure has been built spending crores of taka, said sources at DSCC. There is a public toilet on the ground floor, which is open for use, and the plan was to have a library on the first floor and a coffee shop on the rooftop.

While visiting the building yesterday, this correspondent saw a big padlock



Inaugurated in March 2 last year, this fancy-looking library, constructed by DSCC, remains closed till date. Only the public toilet on the ground floor is open for use.

hanging from the main gate of the library room on the first floor.

The staffer in charge of the public toilet said the library doors haven’t been opened even for a day since inauguration.

The administration has only installed another nameplate stating

the library’s existence but for all intents and purposes, the establishment has not materialised yet. There are no books in sight.

Local councillor Hasibur Rahman Manik is in charge of the library. He said the establishment has been inaugurated but is still not operational



PHOTO: STAR

## 13 hospitalised with dengue in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 13 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new ones, the total number of dengue cases rose to 412, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Three dengue patients have died this year so far. Meanwhile, a total of 297 patients have been released from hospitals. Some 112 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment.

The total number of deaths in dengue was 281 last year while the total number of cases was 62,382.

Meanwhile, experts continue to urge the authorities concerned to conduct extensive drives identifying clusters of Aedes mosquitoes since the beginning of the lean period.

