

Need dedicated hospital for children in all divisions: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for establishing dedicated hospital for the children in every division of the country to provide better healthcare for them.

The premier said this while inaugurating the operation of community vision centres set up in 45 upazila health complexes under third phase in 15 districts through a video conference.

She joined the inaugural ceremony, held at National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital in the capital, from her official residence Gono Bhavan.

Hasina said steps should be taken in every divisional medical university or district hospitals for providing better healthcare to children. In this regard, she mentioned that the government has waived taxes from child medicare items and incubator.

She said her government established medical universities in Sylhet, Rajshahi and Chattogram, and it has plans to establish medical universities in all divisions gradually. She said the government has expanded the facilities so that medical colleges and health services could be established through private initiatives. She said the government has reduced taxes on medical equipment or hospital building materials so that medical hospitals can be established in private sector.

Talking about modernisation and expansion of Dhaka



Timber traders have illegally occupied a side of the road alongside Mohammadpur Beribadh with logs, significantly narrowing the walkway. As a result, pedestrians are forced to walk on the road due to this menace. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Biman 787 'vandalised'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

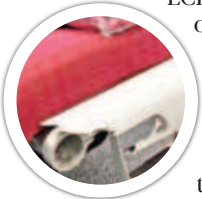
A Biman Boeing 787 on the Dhaka-Toronto-Dhaka route had a seat broken in several places.

A Facebook post that went viral showed that both the armrests of a seat were in tatters, the panels under it broken, and the LCD ripped out. Biman, however, is yet to confirm whether it happened there.

The aircraft left Dhaka early Sunday and the matter was reported to Dhaka yesterday.

Biman's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Shahul Azim said they have asked Biman officials in Toronto to send everything they have on the incident.

"We are trying to identify who sat there and what the passenger's nationality was. Action will be taken according to the law," he added.



1,000 illegal money exchangers in operation: CID 14 including AL leader held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 1,000 illegal money exchangers are operating in Bangladesh, transacting several hundred crore takas daily by manipulating the foreign currency market. Most of the money is being laundered abroad.

"There are 235 licensed money exchangers in Bangladesh. According to Bangladesh Bank's intelligence unit, over 1,000 illegal money exchangers are operating in Bangladesh currently," Additional IGP Mohammad Ali Mia of the Criminal Investigation Department said during a press briefing yesterday.

Besides, registered money exchanges are also exchanging currencies through hundi without permission, he added.

Mohammad Ali also mentioned that there are many floating traders in various areas of the capital, including Motijheel, Gulshan, Uttara and near the Dhaka Airport.

He revealed the information after arresting 14 persons and seizing Tk 2 crore, including foreign currencies of 19 countries worth Tk 1.11 crore, from several illegal money exchange houses in Dhaka.

The arrestees are Abu Talha alias Taharat Islam Toha, 32, Asadul Sheikh, 32, Hasan Molla, 19, Abdul Quddus, 24, Hasnat A Chowdhury, 46, Shamsul Huda Chowdhury Ripon, 40, Suman Mia, 30, Tapan Kumar Das, 45, Abdul Quddus, 32, Kamruzzaman Russell, 37, Moniruzzaman, 40, Newaz Biswas, Abul Hasnat, 40, and Shahjahan Sarkar, 45.

Among them, Hasnat is a joint secretary of Narail's Naragati Awami League, and arrestee Shamsul Huda is his brother. Five cases were filed against the arrestees with Uttara West, Gulshan, Airport and Adabar police stations.

"The arrestees admitted that they illegally trade foreign currency worth about Tk 70-75 lakh daily," said the CID boss. However, the exact total amount could not be confirmed due to most of the money being laundered.

The raids were conducted at Ashkona, Mohammadpur, Gulshan, AB Market and Amir Market in Uttara.

Meanwhile, legal action has also been taken against three money exchangers -- Gulshan's JMCH Pvt Ltd, Mohammadpur's Alam & Brothers, and Ashkona's Taimur Money Exchange.

DONALD LU'S VISIT AND US SANCTION ON RAB

US didn't impose more sanctions as rights situation improved: Anisul



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the US has not imposed more sanction against the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) as their activities and human rights situation in Bangladesh have improved significantly.

"I have talked to US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Donald Lu, who recently visited Dhaka. We discussed about the human rights situation in Bangladesh. He (Lu) said the Human Rights Watch (HRW) never writes good about anybody, but they (HRW) wrote in their report that the human rights situation has improved in Bangladesh after the sanction was imposed on Rab".

"He (Lu) said the US perhaps would have imposed more sanction on Rab, but they did not do so as the Rab has done many good works. He also said the US understands that Rab is needed in Bangladesh. As the human rights situation has significantly improved in Bangladesh, they did not impose sanction anymore," the minister said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Awami League's lies became clear after US embassy's statement: Fakhrul



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday said the government lied about the lifting of US sanctions on Rab, which became clear through the recent statement of the US embassy in Dhaka.

"The government lied about it, and this has been proven through the statement of the US embassy in Dhaka," said Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party.

He made the remark at a press conference at the party chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office.

Clarifying matters over Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan's comments, the US embassy on Tuesday said US Assistant Secretary Donald Lu, during his visit to Dhaka, did not indicate a time-frame for lifting the sanctions on Rab.

Talking to reporters at the secretariat on Monday, the home minister said the US sanctions on Rab would be lifted soon, as Lu had expressed his satisfaction over the force's recent activities.

Asked whether BNP tried to hold a meeting

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Reunited, finally Elderly man who couldn't remember details about family meets loved ones

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elderly man who returned from Saudi Arabia on Friday night was reunited with his family yesterday after Brac took a step to help him.

Abul Kashem, who hails from Chattogram's Halishahar, went to the Middle Eastern country about 25 years ago, Brac Migration Programme said in a statement.

Kashem finally met his family yesterday afternoon. After landing at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Kashem could not remember the names of his family members and his home address, even though he seemed physically well, said Brac Migration Programme Head Shariful Hasan in the statement.



However, he was speaking in a local Chattogram dialect, so it was initially assumed that he could be from that region. He seemed to be in his 60s, Shariful said.

As per immigration police's information, Kashem returned home with a "travel pass" and did not have any passport, he added.

Law enforcers at the airport handed Kashem to Brac on Saturday, as the non-government organisation provides different support services to returnee and outbound migrant workers at the airport, reads the statement.

Shariful said over the past few days, Brac employees in Chattogram ran a campaign by putting up posters that had Kashem's photo, seeking details of his family.

Later, with support from local government

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Dengue claims 2 more lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more dengue patients died and 14 were hospitalised in the 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new ones, the official death toll from dengue fever rose to five this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the new patients, eight were admitted to hospitals in Dhaka while six across the country.

A total of 80 dengue patients are now receiving treatment at hospitals.

So far, the DGHS has recorded 438 dengue cases and 353 recoveries.

The country recorded 281 dengue deaths in 2022 -- the highest after 179 deaths recorded in 2019.

'Adarsha' barred from book fair Publisher not allotted stall for printing works by 'anti-government' authors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangla Academy has not allotted any stall for publishing house Adarsha in the upcoming book fair. The governing body of the fair published the allocation list on January 12, where Adarsha's name was absent.

According to Bangla Academy sources, Adarsha published three controversial books and a section of writers and publishers have submitted written complaints regarding them to the Academy.

One of the books -- "Bangaleer Mediocrity-r Shandhane" -- is written by Faham Abdus Salam -- the husband of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir's eldest daughter Shamaruh Mirza.

The other two books are "Oprotiroddho Unnayaner Obhabonko Kothamala" by Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb and "Unnayan Bivram" by Zia Hasan.

Sources also mentioned that the three authors are known as "anti government" faces on social media.

AKM Muzahidul Islam, member secretary of the book fair committee, told The Daily Star, "Adarsha was supposed to get a four-unit stall. This year, they applied for a pavilion, which we were also willing to allocate. However, objections regarding some of their books were raised and we found that they conflict with our policy."

"There are various statements against the government, Bangabandhu and Chhatra League in those books," he explained.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



School hours are a nightmare for Dhanmondi commuters amid the many educational institutions situated in the area. During this time, private cars, rickshaws, and CNG-auto rickshaws remain stranded in long queues and move at a snail's pace. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

PRAYER
TIMING

JANUARY 19

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:15	5:40	7:00
JAMAAT 6:05	1:15	4:30	5:44	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION