

Fire breaks out at Dhaka court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out on the ground floor of a Dhaka court yesterday afternoon. The fire originated around 1:15pm at the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Old Dhaka, witnesses said. A total of six firefighting units managed to bring the blaze under control around 2:15pm, said an official of Fire Service and Civil Defence control room. Meanwhile, another fire broke out at a garment factory in Dhaka's Shyampur area yesterday morning. It took five firefighting units around an hour to douse the blaze, which started around 11:15am, said Khaleda Yeasmin, duty officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence headquarters. The cause of both fires could not be known yet.

NAGAR PARIBAHAN

Two new bus routes to be launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Nagar Paribahan will introduce buses on two new routes – 24 and 25 – after coordinating with Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development (Line-6), said Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday. Route-24 connects Ghatarchar to Abdullahpur via Bosila, Mohammadpur, Shishu Mela, Agargaon, Mirpur, Kalshi flyover, and Airport Road. Route-25 stretches from Ghatarchar to Abdullahpur via Bosila, Mohammadpur, Asadgate, Manik Mia Avenue, Bijoy Sarani, Jahangir Gate, Shaheen School, Mohakhali, Banani-Kakoli and Airport Road. “Metro rail has already been launched. So, we have decided to operate bus services on the two new routes in coordination with the MRT service,” said the mayor. The DSCC mayor, also president of the Bus Route Rationalisation Committee, made the comments while exchanging views with media personnel after the 26th meeting of the committee at Nagar Bhaban. Dhaka Nagar Paribahan buses will not be permitted to travel on routes that are not covered by this service, the DSCC boss said. Regarding violation of this rule by a bus company called Trans Silva, the mayor said, “We'll give them 15 days' time. If they fail to provide services following the rules properly, we will terminate the contract with them.” Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqul Islam said some 50 buses will run initially on the aforementioned two routes.

‘Dhaka airport’s 3rd terminal to open in Oct’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sixty percent of construction work of the third terminal at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka has so far been completed, and it will open in October this year, said State Minister for Civil Aviation M Mahbub Ali yesterday. “The spectacular terminal building is now visible. Currently, the interior decoration and installation of various types of equipment are going on,” he said. The state minister was addressing a press conference after inspecting the passenger services and various activities of the existing Terminal 1 and 2 at Dhaka airport and progress of the third terminal.

PRAYER
TIMING
FEBRUARY 8

Fazr

Zohr

Asr

Maghrib

Esha

AZAN 5:30

12:45

4:15

5:52

7:15

JAMAAT 6:05

1:15

4:30

5:56

7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Due to mindless pollution and encroachment, the Kalyanpur Khal is merely a narrow stream with dark coloured water. Illegal gas and waterlines have been pulled over the river to facilitate the nearby slums as a result of which, the canal has been further pushed to obliteration. This photo was taken in the capital's Agargaon yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ADOLESCENT HEALTH Implementation will fall short: study

NILIMA JAHAN

To achieve the health rights of 3.6 crore adolescents in Bangladesh, the government developed the National Strategy for Adolescent Health and the National Plan of Action to implement it. However, a new study found that the implementation will fall short of addressing the diverse health needs of adolescents. As per the study conducted by Aparajeyo Bangladesh – with financial support from Plan International Bangladesh – the implementation cost of the plan, which was formulated and approved in 2018, is estimated to be around Tk 2,812.7 crore, which is only 0.9 percent of the total health budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Of the seven implementing ministries, the health ministry is supposed to get the lion's share (94.3 percent) of the allocation, whereas the social welfare ministry will get only 0.01 percent, according to the plan. The Ministry of Women and Child Affairs will be given 4.29 percent, the education ministry 1.21 percent, the information ministry 0.01 percent, the disaster management ministry 0.19 percent, and the law ministry will be provided 0.04 percent of the total allocation. What is more surprising is that as per the requirements, 80 percent of the budget is allocated for only three categories of activities – including training (32 percent), workshops, seminars and conferences (30 percent), and advertising and publicity (18 percent) – which is inadequate to address the health rights of a large number of adolescents, the study stated. The study also revealed that only 5 percent of the allocation has been kept for vaccination and other medical needs. The study, titled “Annual Analysis of Budget Allocated for the National Plan of Action of the National Strategy for Adolescent Health 2017-2030”, also revealed that the implementation of the budget is a significant challenge. An equal amount of the allocation is being disbursed every fiscal year. In the last fiscal year, only over one-third of the total disbursed allocation remained unspent.

For example, it was revealed that the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP) had to deal with adolescent-friendly health services, reproductive health medication, sanitary pads, website maintenance, newsletter publishing, training for service providers, and workshops for adolescents from 2017 to 2023. However, it was unable to effectively implement these initiatives. More specifically, DGFP was able to achieve only

ISSUES	
	Inadequate budget allocation
	Failure in spending, implementation
	Lack of human resources
RECOMMENDATIONS	
	Disbursement of entire allocation
	Dedicated tracking mechanism
	Deployment of skilled human resources

31.8 percent of its goal of distributing sanitary pads despite using 69 percent of the allotted time. The study also found that the dearth of adequate human resources is a critical constraint towards the achievement of the targets set by the plan, and the adolescent-friendly health corners in all regions are yet to be functional. The study recommended that the plan requires official disbursement of the entire allocation at the soonest for smooth and timely implementation, and a dedicated tracking mechanism is also needed in this regard.

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BCL infighting leaves 12 hurt

DU CORRESPONDENT

At least 12 leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) were injured during a clash between two factions at Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall of Dhaka University on Monday night. The clash initially started between the followers of BCL President Saddam Hossain and DU BCL General Secretary Tanbir Hasan Shaikat. Later, the followers of BCL General Secretary Sheikh Wali Asif Enan and DU BCL President Mazharul Kabir Shayan joined forces with Saddam's followers to attack Shaikat's followers. Nine of the 12 injured do politics under Shaikat, according to sources. Of them, four are undergoing treatment at DU's medical centre. The clash ensued over occupying four rooms in the hall, said BCL insiders. Shaikat said, “We will find out who created such a situation in the dorm. We will take organisational action against them.” Saddam said, “All of us do politics under the banner of BCL, we don't have any separate followers. We will take stern action against those who think otherwise.” “We formed a six-member probe committee to investigate the incident. Then we will take action as per the university rules,” said Prof Shah Md Masum, provost of Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall.

Raise awareness to get rid of sound pollution

Speakers urge at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming sound pollution a silent killer, speakers at a seminar underscored the need for a concerted effort to create awareness in every sphere of life to mitigate the perennial menace. The suggestion came up in a stakeholder meeting titled “Project to Control Sound Pollution Through Inclusive and Coordinated Way”, organised by Department of Environment (DoE) at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium yesterday. EQMS Consulting Limited and Centre for Atmospheric Pollution Studies of Stamford University cooperated with DoE to organise the programme. The meeting's chief guest, lawmaker Khodeza Nasreen, member of the standing committee on the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, stated that they must work to mitigate sound pollution in the same way they work to deal with climate change. She referred to noise pollution as a “silent killer”, claiming that it affects all citizens. It was encouraging to see that private organisations were stepping up to help solve the problem alongside the government, she added. “We have to work at upazila, district and national levels to raise awareness about sound pollution. We can use digital technology to identify sources of sound pollution. I will talk about it in the national parliament”, she said.

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‘A quarter spreading propaganda about textbooks’

Dipu Moni claims at JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dipu Moni told parliament yesterday that a vested quarter is spreading misinformation and propaganda about textbooks to create confusion ahead of the election. “Their purpose is to incite people against the government by misusing religion and creating instability and anarchy,” she said. The minister said this while participating in a discussion on a thanksgiving motion on the President's speech in Parliament. Terming most of the propaganda about textbooks false, she said Awami League has never done anything against the Quran and the Sunnah. Dipu Moni said these are being spread purposely through photoshopping the pictures of various books and editing the text. “Also, non-curriculum books are being spread by referring to these books as the current syllabus,” she said. “Offensive, nasty statements are being made about book authors, ministers and academics. They are being threatened,” she added. The education minister informed that two committees have been formed regarding the errors in the textbooks. “Any errors in the book are being and will be corrected,” she said. The education minister also said the intention of those who are criticising the books is not to correct mistakes. “If their intentions were honest, they would have suggested correcting mistakes through constructive criticism.” Meanwhile, Jatiya Party MP Kazi Firoz Rashid said there is extreme corruption in the financial sector. “Bank money is being freely looted and is siphoned abroad. Corruption is taking a totalitarian form in today's society,” he said. Firoz also said the President has no scope to address these issues.

Readers rushing in for the classics

DIPAN NANDY

From the information centre, the announcer said Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's “Adarsha Hindu Hotel”, has been published by Abosor Prokashoni. Even after 73 years of his death, Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's book is being published. This goes to show that no matter what, classic literature books are always in demand. Over 100 publishing houses have brought in Bangla literature classics at their stalls in this year's Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, which are always popular among book lovers. Sadia Tanjin bought Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's “Shrikanta” from Abosor Prokashoni. She said, “There are many reasons to choose classic books over a thousand new books. The literary language of classic writers is catchy and creative. I don't come across such style among modern books.” Noor E-Muntaquim Alamgir, proprietor of Abosor, said, “After 60 years of the death of a writer, there is no copyright to his or her book. Anyone can print them if they want. In this case, the publishers think

that the quality of the book becomes important. I urge everyone to print the books of classic literature with care.” “Even now, people's adoration for Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay, Manik Bandyopadhyay and Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay's books is remarkable,” he said. Publishing house Oitijhya has published Jibanananda Das, Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay and Manik Bandyopadhyay's whole works. The publication has also published four novels by Jibanananda Das – “Vibha”, “Malayadan”, “Kalyani” and “Jalpaihati”. A few years ago, Oitijhya published Rabindra-Rachanabali in 30 volumes. “People have a special attraction towards these books,” said Amjad Hossain Kajal, manager of the publication. Apart from this, books of late authors are available in the stalls of more than 100 publications, including Barnayan, Kakoli, Books Fair, Salauddin Book House, Bishwa Sahitya Bhaban, Jatiya Sahitya Prakashan, Student Wage and Bishwa Sahitya Kendra. TASK FORCE SHUTS DOWN TWO



With a stack of Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's books piled high, a woman and her friend look through the preface of classical Bangla literature books at a stall yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

PUBLICATIONS, ALERTS 12

The task force of Amar Ekushey Boi Mela has recommended the closure of Rabeya Book House and two other publishers for selling pirated

books at the fair. Later, the book fair committee closed two stalls of the latter publishers, the names of which the authorities are yet to disclose. Meanwhile, the task force also

warned 12 other publications not to sell books outside the book fair policy yesterday. The task force chairman and

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