

PM to open Mirpur-Kalshi flyover today

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the 2.34km Mirpur-Kalshi flyover for vehicular movement at a function at Kalshi intersection adjoining Balur ground in the city at 10:00am today.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Tazul Islam, Dhaka North City Mayor Atiqul Islam, Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, Dhaka-16 lawmaker Md Elias Uddin Mollah, Local Government Division Secretary Muhammad Ibrahim are expected to join the inaugural ceremony, among others.

Under the Road Widening and Development from ECB Square to Mirpur and Construction of Flyover on Kalshi Circle Project, the 2,335-metre-long flyover has been built and a 3.70km stretch of road from the ECB Square to Kalshi has been widened.

On January 9, 2018, the project got

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WRONGDOINGS

Quader warns BCL activists of consequences

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said that Chhatra League activists involved in misdeeds will not be spared and stern action will be taken against them.

“Those who are carrying out misdeeds using the identity of Chhatra League, they are miscreants ... They have no rights to be in any organisation of the Awami League,” he said while addressing the “peace rally” organised by the Dhaka South AL in front of the party’s Gulistan office.

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A Prado illegally parked on a footpath leading to a footbridge in the capital’s Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday, hampering the movement of pedestrians. Such mindless acts go unpunished by the authorities concerned, while the people suffer.

TURKEY, SYRIA QUAKE

Death toll passes 46,000

Rescuers save 2 after 12 days; 345,000 apartments destroyed in Turkey

AGENCIES

More than 46,000 people have been killed in the earthquake that struck Turkey and Syria and the toll is expected to soar, with some 345,000 apartments in Turkey now known to have been destroyed, and many still missing.

As Turkey attempts to manage its worst modern disaster, concerns were growing over the victims of the tragedy in Syria, with the World Food Programme (WFP) pressuring authorities in the northwest to stop blocking access to the area as it seeks to help hundreds of thousands of people ravaged by earthquakes.

Twelve days after the quake hit, workers

from Kyrgyzstan tried to save a Syrian family of five from the rubble of a building in Antakya city in southern Turkey.

Three people, including a child, were rescued alive. The mother and father survived but the child died later of dehydration, the rescue team said. One older sister and a twin did not make it.

The head of Turkey’s Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), Yunus Sezer, said the search and rescue efforts will largely be terminated today night.

The death toll in Turkey stands at 40,642 from the quake while neighbouring Syria has reported more than 5,800 deaths, a toll that has not changed for days.

Speaking to Reuters on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, WFP Director David Beasley said the Syrian and Turkish governments had been cooperating very well, but that its operations were being hampered in northwestern Syria.

“Time is running out and we are running out of money. Our operation is about \$50 million a month for our earthquake response alone so unless Europe wants a new wave of refugees, we need to get the support we need,” Beasley added.

In Syria, already shattered by more than a decade of civil war, the bulk of fatalities has been in the northwest.

IMF watching economy like a hawk

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Employment and Training would have to send one report each, the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation three reports and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics two reports.

The reports inform on the status of the two quantitative performance criteria (QPCs), the four indicative targets (ITs) and the 13 structural benchmarks.

QPCs are specific, measurable targets that must be met, while the ITs are similar to QPCs in that those are quantitative indicators to assess progress in meeting a programme’s objectives.

The structural benchmarks are reform measures that often are non-quantifiable but are critical for achieving programme goals and are intended as markers to assess programme implementation.

Should the government fail to meet the periodic targets, the successive tranches of the loan would not be authorised.

“The best available data will be submitted, so that any subsequent data revisions will not lead to a breach of QPC or benchmarks,” the IMF said in the technical memorandum of understanding.

For Bangladesh, the QPCs are a floor on net international reserves (NIR) and a ceiling of 3.3 percent of GDP on the budget deficit.

The ITs are: ceiling on reserve money and floors on tax revenue, priority social spending that comprises all expenditures on education, health, and social safety nets and capital investment that comprises all Annual Development Programme (ADP) expenditures in the budget.

As per the QPC set for June and December, Bangladesh’s NIR cannot be below \$22.9 billion in March, \$24.5 billion in June, \$25.3 billion in September and \$26.8 billion in December.

For programme monitoring purposes, the NIR is defined as gross international reserves (GIR) minus reserve-related liabilities.

As per the lender’s balance of payments and investment position manual (BPM6), gross foreign reserves calculation does not include the various funds that the Bangladesh Bank has formed from the reserves as well as the loan guarantees provided for Biman, the currency swap with Sri Lanka, the loan to Payra Port Authority and the below-investment-grade securities.

For continuous monitoring of the QPC, BB would have to send daily reports of stock of GIR, detailed data on the composition of GIR including currency composition, stock of NIR, sales and purchases of foreign exchange by BB, exchange rate,

foreign exchange interbank market, among others.

Monthly reports on projections of daily individual oil-related payments by commercial banks, actual and six-month projections on short-term external financing and repayment, and actual and six-month projections on deferred payments for oil imports would inform on the status of the QPC.

The other QPC would be monitored by monthly reports on fiscal outturn including financing of the overall fiscal balance, breakdown of subsidies by main categories, recurrent and extraordinary expenditures, domestic financing and foreign financing.

BB would have to send daily reports of the stock of reserve money and its components to ensure it does not breach the ceiling set as an IT.

The NBR would have to send reports of its monthly collections by type of tax and subheadings as a monitoring mechanism for another IT.

For the other two ITs’ monitoring, the finance ministry would have to send a quarterly report on social spending and a monthly report on ADP expenditure.

The other reports pertain to the progress made on the SBs, inform on the health of the banking sector and keeping a close watch on BPC’s expenditure.

introducing “neobank”, a kind of digital banking operation where no branch is required as the service is rendered completely online.

In this banking model, the customers of the platform conduct all transactions by using apps and online modules.

In his illustrious career, Rouf was also the resident manager of two American pharmaceutical companies in Bangladesh.

Being in the management of Jamuna Oil Company, he contributed for 15 years to the market development of petroleum products in Bangladesh.

Rouf was the president of Bangladesh Basketball Association for four years. He was a member of the executive committee of Kurmitola Golf Club for over 20 years.

He was associated with many social and philanthropic activities throughout his life.

Women comprise over half of new voters

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to the pandemic. They took the chance this year, he added.

Humayun also pointed out that during the voter list update work, 22.09 lakh dead voters were removed.

EC enumerators went door-to-door from May to November last year to collect information. This was the last registration process for prospective voters before the next general election, scheduled to be held in late December this year or early January next year.

Releasing the Draft Voter List-2022 on January 15, EC Secretary Jahangir Alam told journalists that the final roll would be published on March 2 and the 12th parliamentary polls would be held using that list.

According to EC data, 57.74 lakh voters increased in the draft voter list since March 2, 2022. Of them, 30.80 lakh are females.

During the updating of the voter roll in 2021, at least 15.66 lakh new voters were added. Of them, 4.74 lakh were females.

A total of 19.18 lakh new voters, including 7.92 lakh females, got registered in 2020.

About the figures of fewer women registering in 2021 and 2020, EC

officials said women usually show reluctance to collect birth certificates by paying fees. Also, many unmarried Hindu women show unwillingness to get registered as voter with their parents’ addresses.

Besides, unmarried women, and those from poverty-stricken areas and with lower educational qualifications are less interested in becoming voters, the officials added.

Failures to produce parents’ national identity cards, long distance of voter registration centres from their homes and reluctance to take pictures on religious and social grounds were also among the reasons for the low number of women voters registering.

Mentioning these reasons, the EC in its May-10 order last year urged all elected women vice-chairmen of upazila and union parishads and municipalities to play an active role so that more female voters get enrolled.

The EC in another order asked all election officers in upazilas and districts to ensure that no women is left out.

Despite the progress made last year, EC data shows that the increase in the number of new female voters was still less than that of the male voters

between December 2018 national election and January 15, 2023. A total of 1.48 crore voters were added to the voter roll during this period. Of them 47.29 percent were females.

Some 1.22 crore voters were added between the parliamentary polls in January 2014 and December 2018. Of them, 47.45 percent were females.

A total of 1.09 crore voters were included in the voter list between December 2008 national polls and January 2014 polls. Of them, 42.23 percent were women.

Although 3.86 lakh more women registered than men this year, their share in the draft voter list remains lower than males.

On January 15, there were total 11.90 crore voters. Of them, 49.28 percent were females.

There were 49.56 percent female voters during the 2018 parliamentary polls. The figures were 49.84 and 50.87 during the 2014 and 2008 polls respectively.

Earlier, Election Commissioner Md Alamgir said more women moving to cities was among the key reasons for the drop in the number of female voters.

Unattended, two brothers die in housefire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two children were burned to death in a housefire in Bogura’s Dhunat yesterday.

The victims are Siam Hossain, 7, and his sibling Mostakim Morsalin, 5.

Their mother said she went to bring back her goats from grazing, leaving the children locked inside her home.

“We primarily suspect that the fire broke out because of a short circuit,” said Hamidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Fire Service and Civil Defence in Dhunat.

The villagers tried to douse the fire, but failed. The house was gutted. The bodies were recovered around 5:30pm, he added.

Man surrenders after killing wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A man surrendered himself to police on Friday night after killing his wife over marital discord.

Monwar Hossain, 33, of Dinajpur municipality area, was shown arrested in a murder case, said police.

The victim is Sumiya Akter, 27, of the district’s Birganj upazila.

Tanvirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Dinajpur Kotwali Police Station, said the couple locked into a marital leud early Friday.

Around 3:00am, Monwar strangled his wife. He surrendered himself at the police station around 11:00pm, the policeman added.

Police recovered the body and sent it to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Chinese national killed in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Chinese national was killed and three Bangladeshes were injured as a garbage truck hit a pickup van in Madaripur’s Shibchar yesterday.

The victim is Chang Bin, 31. He had been working as a surveyor of Padma Bridge Rail Link Project for the last three to four months and staying in Faridpur’s Bhanga camp, said Reazul Islam Rony, an interpreter of the project.

Chang along with three Bangladeshis went out on a pickup van for the project work. A garbage truck hit them near Arial Khan Bridge around 9:00am, he added.

He was immediately shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Other passengers of the pickup van were seriously injured.

Passing of a business icon

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after Asr prayers.

Rouf was laid to eternal rest at his ancestral village in Malkhanagar area of Munshiganj after a second namaz-e-janaza following Isha prayers last night.

People of different walks of life mourned the passing of the dynamic businessman who was blessed with extraordinary farsightedness.

Rouf graduated in business management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the US.

The prolific businessman founded over 50 firms in the last four decades. He invested in automobiles, petroleum, pharmaceuticals, real estate, IT, deep-sea fishing, telecommunications, electronics, food processing, banking, and insurance firms.

He started his career at a pharmaceutical company and began his own business in 1979.

Rangs Group and Sea Resources Group, formed under his dynamic leadership, are comprised of 35 companies. The phenomenal success of these companies vouch for his charismatic leadership.

His thoughts opened doors to economic development and introduced new dimensions to the country’s trade and industry.

Rouf spearheaded the formation of Bank Asia in 1999 by acquiring the Bangladesh operations of the Canadian Bank of Nova Scotia.

His extensive experience and dynamic leadership drove Bank Asia towards excellence and prosperity.

The bank now serves over 80 lakh account holders and has so far recruited over 5,500 agents.

He introduced Bank Asia’s pioneering agent banking in January 2014, a move that brought millions into the banking system.

Rouf was also a pioneer in