

## 'Materialise your election manifestoes'

**Oikya Parishad urges govt; threatens to start hunger strike**

DU CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday threatened to go on a hunger strike unto death if the government fails to fulfil its election manifestos, which include establishing a commission for the protection of minorities.

They asked the government to fulfil its pledges by June.

They made the demands at a rally, followed by a torch procession in front of the Shahbag National Museum yesterday afternoon. As many as 300 people participated in the rally.

Before the national election in 2018, the Awami League made several pledges, including

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Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad organised a torch procession yesterday at Shahbagh, demanding the implementation of Awami League's election manifestos that included the protection of minorities. Leaders of the organisation also mentioned that they will observe a hunger strike unto death if the demands are not met within June.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Bangladesh almost self-sufficient in cardiac care: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the country's health sector has witnessed significant progress despite various limitations over the last 14 years.



"Bangladesh is now almost self-sufficient in cardiac care. Bangladesh has the capacity to treat 95 to 98 percent of cardiovascular diseases as skilled manpower, modern technology and equipment are available here in the country," she said.

The premier said this in a video message aired during the third International Scientific Conference arranged by Bangladesh Cardiovascular Research Foundation (BCRF) in the city.

She also opened the two-day conference being held at a city hotel.

Sheikh Hasina said healthcare has now become much more accessible and reached the doorsteps of common people.

"As the country's cardiologists and doctors provide better medical services to the patients in the country, the people of the country are benefiting and thus [the country's] foreign currency is being saved," she said.

She said work is underway to set up a full-fledged paediatric cardiac unit in Dhaka for better treatment of paediatric cardiac patients in the country. "Plans have

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## No trace of man taken away 5 days ago

**Plainclothes men, claiming to be from DB picked him up in Badda, says family**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 38-year-old man, who was allegedly picked up by plainclothes men introducing themselves as detectives five days ago, is yet to be traced.

The missing person -- Rokonzaman Roxy -- is an employee of Edu Abroad Limited, an education consultancy firm in Badda's Shahjadpur.

Roxy's father Liakat Ali Sarkar filed a GD with Badda Police Station on Wednesday.

Roxy was taken by five plainclothes men in a black microbus from Merul Badda on Monday. Liakat quoted locals as saying, "When locals asked the plainclothes men, they introduced themselves as members of the Detective Branch."

Liakat went to the DB office for the next two days, but they didn't admit to detaining Roxy, he said.

Badda Police Sub-inspector Abdul Haque Abbasi said as the place of occurrence falls under Rampura Police Station, they are now investigating the GD.

Rampura Police Station Officer-in-Charge Rafiqul Islam said they could not find him yet.

## Man stabbed to death in Panthapath

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man died after being stabbed in Panthapath area early yesterday.

The deceased is Md Faruk, 26, a rickshaw-van puller who lived in a slum in Karwan Bazar.

Shah Alam, inspector (investigation) of Tejaon Police Station, said Faruk suffered critical injuries after he was stabbed in the thigh around 12:30am.

He was rushed to DMCH where doctors declared him dead around 2:30am, hospital sources said.

The inspector said they carried out raids and detained some people, suspecting their involvement in the murder.

"We suspect involvement of a mugging gang..."



Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5-15	12-45	4-30	6-05	7-30
JAMAAT 5-50	1-15	4-45	6-10	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# Officially closed, but not to officials

How govt officials are allowed entry when Ramna Park is closed to public for certain hours



SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The iconic Ramna Park in the capital is closed to the public for certain hours of the day, but apparently, there are opportunities for some government officials and those who pay the right price to enjoy the greenery during those hours.

According to a notice stuck to the gate of the park -- which is managed by the Public Works Department (PWD) --, it is open to the public from 6:00am to 11:00am and then opens again at 2:30pm before closing for the day at 7:30pm.

However, during a recent visit, this correspondent found families and individuals inside the park cycling, walking and enjoying their time in nature during hours when the park was supposed to be closed to the public.

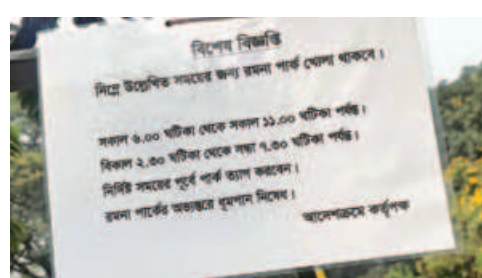
This correspondent stood outside the gates during the 11:00am-2:30pm closure and saw at least 20 government officials, mainly from PWD, showing their ID cards to Ansar members at the gate to gain entry.

In conversation with one of the Ansar members stationed at the gate, this correspondent was assured that he too could

enter for a while in return for some money.

In 2020, the Ramna Park authorities set these time slots for entry to the park.

"What about us common people? Are we not entitled to enjoy the fresh air and greenery in the park?" said Didar Hossain, a shopkeeper in the area.



"I had heard about people being able to enter the park by paying the Ansar members at the gate, so I decided to give it a try. I offered Tk 200 to one of them, and he let me in without any questions," said Farzana, a student at a private university.

Shakib Ahmed, another private university student, said, "This park is not a commodity

that can be sold to the highest bidder. It belongs to the people, and everyone should have equal access to it."

Shamsul Islam, deputy assistant engineer at PWD, who is in charge of the park, said the time limit for entering the park is the same for all visitors.

But PWD and other government officials manage to enter the park through Ansar members, the PWD official said.

Meanwhile, an Ansar member posted at the Shishu Park end of Ramna said, "Government officials are permitted to enter the park through special arrangements as the park belongs to PWD."

Abidul Hasan Shimul, Thana Ansar and VDP officer under Ramna, said strict action is taken against Ansar members if they are found guilty of allowing entry to the park in exchange for money.

Meanwhile, Prof Adil Mohammed Khan of urban and regional planning at Jahangirnagar University lamented the discriminatory policies that restrict public access to the park.

He called on the authorities to withdraw restrictions and open up the park for everyone.

## BGB to observe Martyrs' Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) will observe Martyrs' Day today with due solemnity to commemorate those killed in the February 25-26 carnage at Pikhana headquarters of then Bangladesh Rifles (now BGB) in 2009.

A total of 74 people, including 57 army officers, were killed in the carnage.

Marking the day, BGB will organise Quran-khwa, as well as doa and milad mahfil in mosques at the headquarters, and all other units and border outposts, said a BGB press release yesterday.

Representatives of the president and prime minister, the home minister, chiefs of three armed forces, and BGB director general, among others, will place wreaths at the memorial of the martyrs at Banani military graveyard around 9:00am, the release added.

All BGB members will wear black badges, and BGB flag will be hoisted at half-mast at BGB installations.

## Militants don't issue warning before attack

Says CTTC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit yesterday said there is no precedence of carrying out any attack by terrorist groups in Bangladesh through issuing a letter in advance to perpetrate an attack.

Asked whether they think militant group Ansar al Islam may send the letter to the Bangla Academy director general threatening to bomb the Amar Ekushey Book Fair, CTTC Chief Md Asaduzzaman said, "Issuing letter before any attack is not in the modus operandi of any militant group."

"We are looking into the matter seriously. We

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## AMAR EKUSHEY BOI MELA Poetries most-published, novels most sold

DIPAN NANDY

Every year, thousands of poetry books are published at Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, and this year was no exception. According to Bangla Academy data, more poetry books were published this year than other genres of literature, including stories and novels.

However, novels outshine poetries and all other genres in terms of popularity and sale.

The first 24 days of the fair have seen the publication of 2,965 new books till yesterday. Of them, 925 were poetry books, and 424 were novels.

But Farid Ahmed, publisher of Somoy Prokashon, said the readers are always more attracted to novels than other literary forms. He claims that translations and novels sell better at the book fair. This is a global phenomenon, not just in Bangladesh, he added.

While visiting the book fair yesterday, this correspondent met Mainul Hasan who came to the fair from Kafrul with his wife and two children. He bought novels, essays and children's books. Regarding poetry books, he said, "I don't understand poetry, I don't even know the poets of this era."

But that doesn't mean there are no readers looking out for poetry books at the fair.

One such visitor is Fahmida Zaman from Paribagh. "Poetry is food for the mind. This time, along with other books, I have bought some poetry books," she said. She collected the poems of Helal Hafiz, Mahadev

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

As part of its "15th NDF BD National Debate Carnival 2023", the National Debate Federation Bangladesh brought out a colourful procession in Dhaka University area yesterday. More than 2,000 debaters from different schools, colleges, madrasas, medical colleges, and universities across the country are participating in the competition. The two-day event is being held at Shishu Academy. This year's edition honored Education Minister Dipu Moni, former debater of Dhaka Medical College, with the "Lifetime Achievement" award.

