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## Hajj package this year is inhuman: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said this year's hajj package is inhuman as its cost is so high.

Those involved in fixing this costly hajj package will become sharers of the sin, said the HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Mohammad Ali while hearing a petition.

The petition challenged the government decision to fix Tk 6.83 lakh as the hajj package per pilgrim this year.

The bench asked the attorney general's office to get informed about the position of the religious affairs ministry regarding fixing of the hajj package and place the information before the bench today.

Advocate Ashraf-Uz-Zaman, also chief coordinator of Al-Quran Study Centre, filed the writ petition as a public interest litigation with the High Court, seeking its order for the government to reduce and re-fix the hajj expense.

Lawyer Gazi Md Mohsin appeared for the petitioner.



Rehana Begum looking for her sewing machine amidst the ruins of the devastating fire in Kunipara slum of Tejgaon Industrial Zone yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## 'We could not save anything'

Victims of Kunipara slum left shell-shocked, in despair

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Rehana Begum was desperately looking for her sewing machines amidst the ruins of the devastating fire that destroyed nearly 50 shanties in the Kunipara slum of Tejgaon Industrial Zone in the capital on Monday night.

Teary-eyed and with a large spoon in her hand, she kept turning over rubble hoping against hope that she would find the machines that were the source of her family's income.

"I have nothing left. My family's livelihood depended on the sewing machines," Rehana told this correspondent yesterday.

Rehana's two-room tin-shed house was also destroyed in the fire.

She saved for 14 years to buy five sewing machines, and just three years ago, bought a new electric one for Tk 10,000.

Using these machines, she and her family members stitched clothes and sold them.

Her husband, Rafiqul Islam, collects and sells old damaged goods, and their son is preparing to sit for the SSC examinations.

All the books inside their home were also destroyed in the fire. Also gone were all household items, clothes, and their savings.

"When we heard people shouting, we came out and saw that our home was on fire. We could not save anything," said Rehana.

There are around 500 homes in the area known as

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## Two injured in separate Dhaka blasts die

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two persons who were injured in two separate blast incidents in Dhaka passed away at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery yesterday.

Jahan Sarder Selim, 19, honours first-year student of Dohar Nawabganj College, who suffered burns in the Gulistan blast on March 7, died in the afternoon, said Samanta Lal Sen, chief coordinator of the burn institute.

He had 50 percent burns on his body, he added.

With him, at least 24 persons have been killed in the incident.

Meanwhile, Ayesha Akhter Asha, 26, who suffered 38 percent burnt injuries, in an explosion at a market on Mirpur Road near the capital's Science Lab intersection passed away at the institute around 8:30am.

The death toll now stands at 4.

Her respiratory tracts were also damaged, said Samanta Lal Sen.

On March 5, three people were killed and many others injured in the explosion at Shirin Mansion around 11:45pm. And many were injured and burned.

## SCBA election begins today

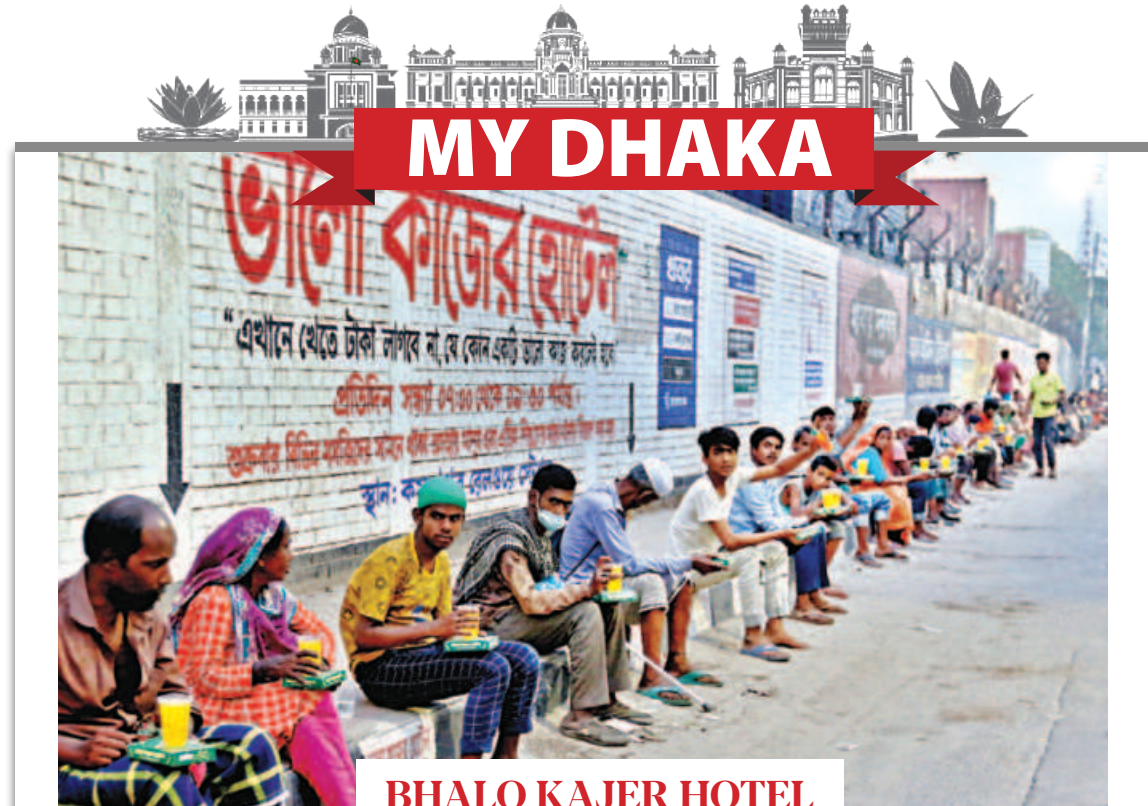
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day annual election to the 14-member executive committee, including president and secretary posts, of Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) begins today.

The voting will start around 10:00 am in SCBA building and continue till 5:00 pm with a one-hour break. SCBA's superintendent Md Rabiul Hasan told The Daily Star.

A total of 8,589 lawyers are set to cast their votes in the election, he said.

| PRAYER TIMING              |       | MARCH 15 |              |
|----------------------------|-------|----------|--------------|
| Fajr                       | Zohr  | Asr      | Maghrib Esha |
| AZAN 5:00                  | 12:45 | 4:30     | 6:14 7:45    |
| JAMAAT 5:35                | 1:15  | 4:45     | 6:18 8:15    |
| SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION |       |          |              |



## Where you get free meal for a good deed

RBR

Exactly between 1:30pm and 2:00pm, you will see a blue truck loaded with big pots of food, melamine plates, and water cans stop near a queue of homeless people standing by the footpaths of Karwan Bazar. The footpath for that lunchtime becomes the poor people's "Bhalo Kajer Hotel", an eatery that is running with the dictum that the poor and homeless would get a free meal in exchange for performing a good deed a day.

"Bhalo Kajer Hotel" started when Arifur Rahman and Sheahanur Rahman Asif of Kamalapur initiated the project under Youth for Bangladesh in December 2019. The hotel is now active in five different locations in Dhaka: Kamalapur, Bashabo, Korail Slum, Shatrasta Mor and Karwan Bazar.

Today, they are feeding around 1,100 hapless people. The menu is nothing fancy; they feed plain steamed rice with vegetables and eggs twice a week, and chicken biriyani twice a week, khichuri with eggs and vegetables thrice a week.

The good deed may be as simple as helping an old lady cross the road, clearing the road of sharp objects like nails and glass shards, taking someone to the hospital, or rescuing a dog or a cat... the list goes on of course.

"Many did not understand

the meaning or concept of doing good deeds, having lived their entire life on streets. Food is the reason, why beggars beg and thieves steal and lie, if we can ensure at least one meal then I feel that in their conscience they will do fewer wrongdoings," says Rubel Ahmed Hemel, senior volunteer of the project since the time of inception, adding that even if they fail to perform a good deed

their birthdays, anniversary and decide to spend the money to feed the poor. They either donate the amount they wanted to spend for the occasion or buy the grocery. Then some good souls give hefty funds like Tk 2,000 or Tk 5,000 to the project.

"Volunteer job is an emotional one, sometimes people also discontinue after a while, we depend completely



on that particular day, they will be fed with the promise that they would do two good deeds the next day.

They have 2,100 daily team members, who manage to come forward with funds. Every day they set aside Tk 10 for the project and at the end of the month, a sum of Tk 300 is given to the project team.

This is one way of managing funds, the other way is when team members who intend to commemorate their parents' death anniversary or celebrate

on funds from volunteers," says Ahmed, explaining that two-thirds of the amount comes from team members' groups while the rest is collected from philanthropists.

Every nook and cranny of Dhaka have stories waiting to be told. "My Dhaka" gives interested writers the platform to share experiences of city life. Only selected stories will make it to our print edition and digital platform. Send your Dhaka story (within 450 words) to raffat@thedailystar.net

## Raise voice, break silence

Speakers urge victims of gender-based violence at meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Victims of gender-based violence must break the silence and raise their voices against the offence, said speakers at a programme yesterday.

They also stressed the need for awareness among male members of families and strict enforcement of the law to ensure gender equality in the country.

The discussants made the remarks at a views exchange meeting titled "Gender Equality: Quality vs Quantity" organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) marking International Women's Day 2023.

Matt Cannell, deputy high commissioner and development director at the British High Commission, said, "Bangladesh is a young and vibrant country that has made progress on several complex issues, including gender equality. However, certain challenges still need to be addressed".

He urged the new generation to step forward and help overcome these challenges.

**“Child marriage and the lack of access to education for women are two major barriers to achieving gender equality. These issues should be addressed adequately. More investment is needed in children and women.”**

**MATT CANNELL**  
Deputy High Commissioner,  
British High Commission

"Child marriage and the lack of access to education for women are two major barriers to achieving gender equality. These issues should be addressed adequately. More investment is needed in children and women," added Cannell.

Maria Stridsman, deputy head of mission and head of development cooperation

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## Implement policy on the elderly

Says JS body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday recommended implementing the National Policy on Elderly Persons, saying that although this policy was formulated in 2013, it still has not been fully implemented.

The parliamentary standing committee on the social welfare ministry also suggested considering increasing the old-age allowance.

In a meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, the committee members discussed the implementation of the policy.

Officials of the ministry informed the committee that the Department of Social Services is conducting some activities to implement it.

Right now, the government is giving Tk 500 to 57.01 lakh elderly people every month under the social security programme. Hospitals for the elderly have also been established.

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## Why are we unsuccessful?

Nasrul Hamid asks officials about solar power generation on Dhaka rooftops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid yesterday asked officials of power-distribution companies why they haven't been able to implement the solar-installation projects on rooftops of Dhaka's buildings.

He said, "There are guidelines in this regard, then why were we unsuccessful? Later on, I asked to make changes to the guidelines. What is the progress?"

In 2018, the government initiated a move for "Net Metering Policy", under which rooftop solar power users would be able to sell their unconsumed electricity to the government, which is yet to be implemented.

Installing rooftop solar systems has been mandatory since 2014 for getting new domestic, industrial and commercial electricity connections from the grid.

The state minister made the remarks while addressing a workshop on "Multipurpose use of land for renewable energy projects in Bangladesh" as chief guest at the capital's Bidyut Bhaban.

He also criticised the rural electrification board officials for not implementing solar projects in industries in their areas. "You failed in this regard."

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**We have an airport in Dhaka that could be used for solar-power generation. We have two stadiums, many lakes, and rooftops of factories.**