



With a call to invest more in renewable energy, a group of activists held a human chain in front of the National Museum yesterday. They also held a mime show to portray the devastating effects of plastic pollution. At the event, the activists launched "Don't gas Asia Campaign" to press home their demand.

PHOTO: STAR

Low-grade electrical equipment a major threat

Speakers tell dialogue on fire incidents, prevention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Electrical hitch, cigarettes, and electric or gas stoves were the major causes of fire incidents in Bangladesh, said speakers at a dialogue yesterday.

Referring to the fire service data of 2022, General Secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) Shaikh Muhammad Mehedi Ahsan said, "Around 38.48 percent of fire incidents occurred from the electrical hitch, 16.08 percent from cigarettes, 13.98 percent from stoves (electric and gas), 3.30 percent from gas distribution pipelines, 2.02 percent from heat ashes or fuel, and 9.17 percent for other reasons."

Mehedi, who presented the keynote paper in the dialogue, said the causes of 16.97 percent of fire incidents remained unidentified in the fire service statistics.

The dialogue, titled "Cases of Repeated Fire Incidents: Preventive Activities", was organised by Urban Development Journalists Forum, Bangladesh (UDJFB). BIP has given a six-point proposal for reducing fire incidents and their aftermath, which includes a detailed survey of all Dhaka buildings and creating a digital database of those, protecting overall natural balance in Dhaka, professional certification for technicians, proper implementation of building construction

and land use codes, ensuring occupancy certificate after constructing buildings and increasing organisational capacity.

Prof Md Raju Ahmed of Dhaka University's Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering said, "Although most of the electric equipment available in Bangladesh maintained good quality, many people bought low-quality products

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Detailed survey of all Dhaka buildings
- Protecting natural balance
- Professional certification for technicians
- Proper implementation of construction, land use codes

for saving money. Substandard equipment cannot take the load properly. Eventually, it leads to fire incidents."

Lt Col Mohammad Tajul Islam Chowdhury, director (operations and maintenance) of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said it is a common phenomenon that people in Bangladesh always hanker after buying cheap products.

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Korea to support Bangladesh's mega projects

Says Ambassador Lee Jan-keun in conversation with Star

PORIMOL PALMA

South Korea, like Bangladesh, was a poverty-afflicted country in the 1960s. Through its democratic governance, innovation and hard work of the people, it has now become a highly developed nation and supports other countries.

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Major electronic companies, like Samsung or LG, are locally assembling their products under partnerships with local companies. This brings about many benefits to the Bangladeshi economy – job creation and knowledge transfer. I think there will be a time when Korean IT companies will invest here.

Bangladesh is one of them. This year, the two countries are celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relations. Ambassador Lee Jan-keun shared the details of the journey together with The Daily Star.

DS: You came to Bangladesh at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in July 2020, when South Korea made global headlines in providing healthcare. There were talks of a vaccine institute being established in Bangladesh. Where did it lose its way?

Lee: Any crisis creates opportunities. It was true for us too. I was happy that South Korea provided \$150 million in soft loans to Bangladesh to help address the pandemic. I remember the discussion on setting up a vaccine institute and Bangladesh accessing International Vaccine Institute (IVI), headquartered in Korea. Later, Bangladesh accessed the IVI, which helped developing countries secure vaccines and conduct research and development. I'm sure, IVI can help Bangladesh in vaccine-related initiatives.

DS: Bangladesh and Korea's bilateral

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AL must not come to power again: Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Alamgir yesterday alleged that the government has been working against independence and it should not be allowed to come to power again in any way.

He said this while speaking at a programme at Dhaka Reporters' Unity, Bhashani Onusari Parishad organised the event marking former minister Sunil Kumar Gupto's death anniversary.

Fakhru came up with the remarks a day after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said arson terrorist BNP-Jamaat alliance, the killers, the anti-liberation forces and war criminals must not come to power again in this land (Bangladesh).

The PM said this on Tuesday while speaking at a civic reception accorded to her at Ritz Carlton hotel in Washington.

The BNP leader also criticised the government for its stance not to repeal the Digital Security Act. "When all are demanding cancellation of the law you are boasting that it would not be cancelled."

"Why it should not be cancelled? You are using this (Digital Security Act) as an weapon which you don't want to lose," he added.

He said the country will have no existence if the anti-liberation, anti-democracy force comes to power again. "For this reason we have started a simultaneous movement with all the political parties who love the country."

Narrow-minded people shouldn't do politics: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said those who are narrow-minded should not do politics.

The minister said this while inaugurating the peace procession (Shanti Shova jatra) and harmony festival (Sampriti Uthshab) organised in front of the National Museum marking Buddha Purnima.

Noting that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is currently out of the country, the AL general secretary said her foreign visit is not to complain, but to help the country reach a unique height.

"Those who are narrow minded say that Sheikh Hasina's foreign tour has not achieved anything," he reiterated.

Quader also called for the building of a bridge of harmony rather than creating a dissension of politics.

Pointing to BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Alamgir, Quader said he has lost his honour through such politics.

Quader said during the current global crisis, Japan has given 30 billion yen or Tk 25 thousand crore, only for budget support.

"Isn't that an achievement? Whereas, the World Bank walked away from constructing the Padma Bridge after slandering us," he said.

The World Bank today admitted their mistake, Quader said, adding that by inviting Hasina, the World Bank also gave about Tk 25 thousand crore in budgetary support for Bangladesh.

"Is it not an achievement?" he asked.

Khaleda back home after 5-day hospital stay

STAR REPORT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia returned to her residence yesterday after a five-day stay in hospital.

AZM Zahid Hossain, Khaleda's personal physician, said the medical board of the former premier scrutinised all the test results and decided to continue her treatment at home.

The BNP chief was taken to Evercare Hospital on Apr 29 for medical tests and was later admitted.

The 77-year-old former prime minister has been suffering from various ailments, including liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes, and kidney, lung, heart, and eye problems.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Since her conditional release in 2020, the BNP chief has been receiving treatment at the hospital under a medical board headed by cardiologist Prof Shahabuddin Talukder.

She visited the same hospital for health check-ups on February 27. Khaleda received treatment at the hospital six times since she was infected with coronavirus in April 2021. In November 2021, Khaleda Zia was diagnosed with liver cirrhosis.

On June 10 last year, the BNP chief suffered a heart attack due to a 95 percent block in her left artery and a stent was placed there by removing the blockage at the same hospital the following day.

Doctors also found two more blocks in her blood vessels, but they could not remove those due to her health complications.

DU Arts, Law, Social Sciences unit entry test tomorrow

DU CORRESPONDENT

The admission test of Dhaka University for undergraduate programmes under the arts, law and social sciences unit for the 2022-23 academic session will be held tomorrow.

According to the DU authorities, 42 aspirants will vie for a seat as already 1,22,848 candidates have applied for the 2,934 seats. The exam will begin at 11:00am and end at 12:30pm.

Admission seekers will be allowed to enter their respective centres till 10:30am.

The entrance test will be held in Dhaka and seven divisional cities. In the 100-mark question, examinees will have to face a set of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) for 60 marks and a written part worth 40 marks.

The examinees cannot use any electronic device, including calculators, during the test, as per instructions.

In a press release yesterday, the DU authorities urged the guardians of the examinees to use only the Mohsin Hall field, Suhrawardy Udyan and Central Library of the University for parking cars on the test day.

The next entrance test for the science unit is on May 12 and the business studies unit on May 13.

The admission test started with the examination of the Faculty of Fine Arts on April 29.

The admission test was held at the university's Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Social Sciences buildings. A total of 7,097 students vied for 130 seats.



Members of the Buddhist community bring out a procession yesterday on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, the largest religious festival of the Buddhist community. Bangladesh Bouddha Kristi Prachar Sangha organised the event. The photo was taken in Basabo area. PHOTO: STAR

Buddha Purnima celebrated

STAR REPORT

Buddha Purnima, the biggest religious festival of the Buddhist community, was celebrated in the country yesterday.

Buddha Purnima marks Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment and his death.

On this day in 563 BC, Buddha was born as Siddhartha Gautama in Kapilabastu at the foothill of the Himalayas.

He attained supreme enlightenment at the age of 35 and finally departed into "nirvana" at the age of 80 in 483 BC.

The day was a public holiday.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages greeting the Buddhist community on the occasion.

The prime minister urged all to work to further strengthen the practice and bond of harmony in Bangladesh in future.