



'Lead by example, be changemakers'

PM to students of Qatar University

UNB, Doha

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the students of Qatar University to lead by example and be the changemakers as she offered the future leaders seven pieces of advice, gleaned from her own experiences.

"I would like to share a few suggestions for future leaders from my life's experience and struggles. First: Represent a value; second: remain focused on your vision; third: make concrete plans to realise your vision; fourth: lead by example and be the change-maker; fifth: trust your people and team; sixth: invoke your maternal spirit; and seventh: embrace the new and the future," she said while delivering a speech before the students of Qatar University at its Research Complex auditorium in Doha.

The theme of the event, "A Session with Prime Minister of Bangladesh", was "Bangladesh: A Development Model: Learning from Sheikh Hasina."

"In 2015, Bangladesh became a lower middle-income country, and we envision it becoming an upper-middle-income country by 2031 and a high-income one by 2041. Meanwhile, we have been qualified to graduate to a developing country by 2026 from the LDC category," she said.

"We have made impressive gains in food security, free and affordable housing, community healthcare, compulsory primary education, women's empowerment, financial inclusion, digital services, access to electricity, disaster preparedness, and climate adaptation," said the PM.

The premier said today's Bangladesh is a changed Bangladesh. "It is dubbed as a role model for development. Our hard-earned development in the country is not a miracle. It is the collective work of our men and women," she said.

Hasina reached Doha on Monday on a three-day official visit to attend the Qatar Economic Forum 2023 at the invitation of Qatar Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

I love foliage plants; their rich, plush colour makes my heart swell with love. Lush ferns, creepers like ivy, and lance leaf caladiums, to name a few are my favourites. When the fronds of a Boston fern are opening, I think it is the best example of life coming alive. When the leaves of the bird's nest fern spread, or when the spiderettes dangle down from the mother plant like spiders on a web, the pleasure is unmatched to many.



Offerings of the city's COUNTLESS NURSERIES



RBR

Foliage plants that are grown for the leaves only and not flowers, are easy to maintain – a little sunlight, a little filtered shade, and they stand tall. Moreover, the shapes and colours of the leaves interest me to no bound, they are so wide ranging and variegated that the leaves play the part of the flowers instead.

Recently, Dhaka is bustling with nurseries accommodating all sorts of plant lovers, which was not the case even a few years ago. We have these pockets of verdant spaces enough to shift our focus from the otherwise dreary, and dusty outdoors.

When you cross 100 feet near Natun Bazar you have a few of the best-rated nurseries in town. Agargaon, the footpaths opposite Dhaka High Court, Uttara Third phase, and even pavements in Gulshan have small but well-manicured nurseries.

Brimming to the full with multi-coloured lilies and zinnia blooms, fuchsia bougainvillea, the nursery attracts visitors regularly. Some come for the sake of taking a selfie amid the colourful blooms, some for seasonal flowers, and some connoisseurs to add more variety to their speck of green at home.

I believe that just to offset the

outdoors, our indoors are full of luxuriant plants. We have balcony gardens, rooftops, small window sill gardens, and even container gardening is a thing in more or less everyone's house. This makes our homes look livelier and more colourful, a welcome change from the dull outside.

There is an inner gardener or farmer in all of us, as a result, nursery hopping in Dhaka has become a fun sport and gardening, a favourite hobby.

To fill your gardening enthusiasm, get some perennials, shrubs, and ferns, or easy-to-maintain flowering plants for the sunny spot in your home. Adding lush greens to your interiors makes them look lively and rich. An easy trick for you would be to buy big soup cups from any vases vending ceramics, adds a few sprigs of variegated pothos to it, add water and a few stones to hold the stems in place.



Nurturing pothos in water is the easiest way to start adding greens to your home space. ZZ plants, Swiss cheese plants or monstera, and lucky bamboo are all easy-to-maintain indoor plants.

So, the next time when you go walking, look for these in nurseries and live your interiors. Dhaka nurseries have a lot to offer.

Cabinet forms body to probe Sultana's death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet Division has formed a high-powered probe committee to investigate the death of Sultana Jasmine, a land office employee in Naogaon, who died in Rab custody.

Cabinet Secretary (Coordination and Reforms) Mahmudul Hossain Khan was made coordinator of the committee.

"I have received in a letter in this regard. The committee has been asked to submit a probe report within 15 days of receiving the letter," Mahmudul Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday.

Other members of the committee will include an additional secretary of the public administration ministry and an additional secretary of the home ministry.

Besides, a senior district and sessions judge, a chief judicial magistrate, a civil surgeon, an additional district magistrate, and an additional superintendent of police, all from Naogaon, will also be members of the committee.

On April 5, the High Court directed the cabinet secretary to form the committee to investigate the detention of Sultana, her death, and other relevant issues.

Sultana, an employee of a union-level land office in Naogaon, died in the custody of Rab-5 after suffering brain haemorrhaging.

HC stays defamation case against Inqilab editor, reporter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed for six months the trial proceedings of a defamation case against Daily Inqilab Editor AMM Bahauddin and Special Correspondent Sayeed Ahmed Khan.

Noman Group, a textile and readymade garment manufacturing company, filed the case with a Dhaka court on November 21, 2022.

The bench of Justice Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah and Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman issued the order and rule following a petition filed by AMM Bahauddin and Sayeed Ahmed Khan challenging the trial proceedings of the case.

The HC bench also issued a rule asking the authorities of Noman Group and the state to explain why the proceedings of the defamation case should not be scrapped.

Over 100 structures on Laukathi river bank demolished

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 100 illegal structures were evicted from the Laukathi river bank in Patuakhali town yesterday noon.

A mobile court, led by Patuakhali Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Saifur Rahman, conducted the eviction drive in assistance with local police.

In January 2021, the district administration had cleared more than 300 illegal structures in the same area. However, within a few days after the drive, hundreds of structures were gradually built there.

Not much help on the way for the poor

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for this will take the total cost for the programme to Tk 1,711.4 crore.

Besides, the Tk 850 monthly allowance for poor people with disabilities will not change, but the number of beneficiaries will reach 24.15 lakh, due to the inclusion of 50,000 new names.

Currently, around 1 lakh students with disabilities get stipends, and this number will also rise.

However, allocations for OMS (open market sale), VGD (vulnerable group feeding), and the other programmes that help the poor buy food will not rise from the current Tk 19,000 crore.

Employment generation programmes will get Tk 24,600 crore, a Tk 5,000 crore bump.

The government spent almost 25 percent of this year's social safety allocation to provide retired

government employees and their families with pension. The International Monetary Fund has been urging the government not to count this as social safety net expenses.

Social safety net programme is meant only for the poor, it said.

However, finance ministry officials say when they provide the IMF with data on social safety net programmes, they will exclude the funds spent for pension.

According to a 2021 World Bank report titled Bangladesh Social Protection Public Expenditure Review, "The inclusion and exclusion errors [in social safety net programmes] need to be addressed to improve social protection's impact on poverty. Another way of looking at the incidence of a programme is to see how many of the poor are excluded and how many non-poor

are included but should not."

Citing BBS data, the report said the eligibility criteria were not met by 26.6 percent of the beneficiaries of allowance for the elderly and 38.4 percent of those in employment generation programmes.

Contacted, Planning Minister MA Mannan said the government had almost overcome this challenge.

"People are now more conscious. Our target now is to increase the number of beneficiaries instead of increasing the benefits," he said.

Finance ministry officials said the allocation for social safety net programmes would not be increased significantly because of pressing needs in areas like interest payment and subsidy.

They added that Bangladesh's allocation for the sector is not small when compared to those of other Asian countries.

Nepali climber reclaims Everest record with 28th summit

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepali guide Kami Rita Sherpa yesterday reached the top of Mount Everest for a record 28th time, just a day after his competitor tied with his previous record.

"Kami Rita Sherpa made a second summit of Everest this morning. It is his 28th time," Thaneshwor Guragain of his expedition organiser Seven Summit Treks told AFP.

Only a day before, Pasang Dawa Sherpa, 46, had equalised the record set by Kami Rita Sherpa last week with his 27th summit of the 8,849-metre (29,032-foot) mountain.

ACC IO endorses

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engineers – Kashem and Shahid – have sometimes been appointed as consultants, advisers, directors and deputy managing directors.

When the issue came to the fore, the ACC appointed a deputy director to enquire into the allegation last year.

After the probe, the investigation officer sought opinion from the ACC's legal wing that said Wasa's MD and the board had violated the respective act and service rules.

They have committed crimes as per the section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947.

Appointed illegally, Shahid and Kashem misappropriated about Tk 1.98 crore which they got as salary, the legal wing said, adding that the two have committed punishable offence.

Contacted, ACC Commissioner Mozammel Haque Khan said it appears that there were irregularities in the appointment. "After examination, the final decision will be made."

The Daily Star tried to reach Taqsem for comments but failed.

Spokeswoman for ex-Pak PM's party quits

AFP, Islamabad

A high-ranking spokeswoman for former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan quit their party yesterday after days of repeated arrests and release that followed deadly protests over Khan's detention.

Khan was detained two weeks ago on graft charges, sparking days of street violence, before the Supreme Court declared his arrest illegal and freed him.

Rights monitors have since accused Islamabad of a crackdown on the former international cricket

star's popular Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party as it campaigns for snap polls.

PTI senior vice-president Shireen Mazar said she had been subjected to "12 days of arrest, release, abduction and release".

"I have decided that I am leaving active politics. From today onwards I am not a part of PTI or any political party," she told reporters.

"All I can say is that I am not feeling well," she said, appearing dejected in a brief news conference where she cited health and family issues for her resignation.

BNP activists, police clash

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and torched a BRTC bus in front of Popular Diagnostic Centre, said police.

Talking to The Daily Star, Ashraf Hossain, deputy commissioner (Ramna division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said BNP activists hurled brick chunks at police.

He said eight-10 police personnel were injured in the incident, adding that police charged truncheons and fired teargas shells to disperse the BNP men.

Police also detained 38 BNP men in this connection, said DC Ashraf.

In a statement, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said without any provocation, police attacked the road march programme, injuring over 100 party leaders and activists.

In Gabtoli area, the programme created a huge tailbacks, halting traffic movement for over two hours from Aminbazar to Technical area, said commuters.

The BNP had earlier announced yesterday's road march programmes in Dhaka and nine other cities to press home its 10-point demand, including resignation of the government and holding the next general election under a non-party

caretaker government.

Police also foiled BNP's road march programme in Rajshahi's Malopara area, said party leaders.

They locked the city BNP office at Malopara, said Ershad Ali Esha, convener of Rajshahi city unit BNP.

However, the BNP leaders claimed that they held the programmes briefly in Boalia, Motihar, Rajpara, Shah Makhdom, Kasiadanga and Chandrima in the city.

Shafiqul Haque Milon, relief and rehabilitation affairs assistant secretary of BNP's national executive committee, claimed that at least 80 BNP leaders and activists were detained in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

Contacted, Rofiqul Alam, an additional deputy commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, dismissed the allegation of locking the BNP office.

He said the BNP sought permission for holding the programme, but police did not permit it.

Meanwhile, two groups of BNP men clashed over taking position at the road march programme in Narayanganj city, injuring 20 activists.

[Our Rajshahi correspondent contributed to this report.]

Blue-collar voters may hold the key

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resident of ward 55, said, "Everyone seems to be a supporter of 'boat' [AL's electoral symbol], but it's hard to know what is in their minds."

Locals said if the atmosphere remains good on election day, the turnout will be good and in that case, it would be a key deciding factor.

They said the better the turnout, the more acceptable the results will be.

Jalal Uddin said if the turnout is good, it will give Zaida the upper hand.

WORKERS' VOTES A KEY FACTOR There are about 2,000 garment factories in Gazipur city and two industrial zones of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) in Tongi and Konabari. Apart from these, there are various types of factories, including beverages, textiles, composites, shoes, and

appliances, in Tongi, Board Bazar, Bhogra, Konabari, and Kashimpur.

Even though most of the workers hail from the north, many have become voters in Gazipur.

A significant percentage of the 11,79,486 voters are blue-collar and the candidates believe that they will be key to victory.

Locals said almost half the voters are undecided and most of them are blue-collar.

Many garment and other factory owners have said they would keep their factories closed on election day so that the workers could cast their votes.

Salahuddin Chowdhury, chairman of a BGMEA Steering committee, told The Daily Star, "The result will go in favour of the candidate who will get the workers' votes."

He said they instructed factory

owners to keep their units closed on election day. "We asked them to make special arrangements for the workers to vote if they decide to keep their factories open," he added.

Talking to this newspaper, Zahangir alleged that the supporters and polling agents of his mother were being threatened. "Many of our activists were detained at night and kept in Savar, Ashulia, Narayanganj and surrounding districts. They have been shown arrested in various cases, including drugs. It's very sad."

"The city is preparing for a free and fair polls. I am urging everyone to play a neutral role, otherwise the polls will turn into a joke. We don't want that. The residents of Gazipur, people of the country and our friendly countries are expecting a fair election in Gazipur," added Zahangir.