

OCA MEETING

Army chief leaves for Thailand

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed left for Bangkok, Thailand yesterday to join the 42nd general meeting of Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) scheduled to be held on July 8.

The army chief will represent Bangladesh at the meeting as the president of Bangladesh Olympic Association, said an ISPR release.

Representatives from 45 national Olympic committees from different Asian nations will take part in the meeting.

He will also cast his ballot at the OCA executive committee election and exchange views with other guests at the meeting.

The army chief is scheduled to return home on July 11.



PHOTO: TITU DAS

THE FIRST DIVE... Four-year-old Zayed taking his first swimming lesson from his father in a pond in Jhalakathi's Nolchhiti area. The boy flaps through the waves while being supported by two plastic containers beneath his arms, celebrating his accomplishment with a smile.

2 arrested for raping speech impaired girl

STAR REPORT

Police arrested two teenagers in a case filed for allegedly raping a speech impaired girl in Jhalakathi's Rajapur upazila early yesterday.

The boys, one 16 and another 17, were arrested after the victim's father filed a rape case against them with Rajapur Police Station last night, said Pulok Chandra Roy, officer-in-charge of the police station.

According to the case statement, the 20-year-old victim was going to her elder sister's house alone in Gazir Haat area from her house on Thursday afternoon.

On her way, the accused forcibly took the girl inside a banana orchard and raped her, it added.

Bangladesh elected member of FAO Council for 2nd time

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has been unanimously elected a Member of the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for the second consecutive term from the Asia Region for three years from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2027.

The election took place on July 6 at the 43rd Session of the Conference of the FAO held in Rome. Around 194 member states participated in the election.

Being a member at the FAO Council, Bangladesh with other members will lead the organisation at both policy and executive levels in deciding and advising on matters pertaining to the implementation of programme and budget, monitoring of activities under the new results-based framework and monitoring of the implementation of governance decisions for three years.

Bangladesh embassy in Rome yesterday said it remained pro-actively engaged to obtain support in favour of the country.

The ongoing 43rd Session of the FAO Conference is being held on a hybrid modality at the FAO Headquarters, Rome. Bangladesh was earlier elected as a member at the Council in its 42nd session for the term July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2024.

Empowering women BNP must

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In 2021, 2,000 women completed the two-year programme and subsequently participated in a year-long market linkage pilot initiative in 2022, she said.

"We offer asset transfers, technical and soft skill training, financial literacy, savings, and linkage to the government's social safety net, all of which are delivered through hands-on coaching," she further explained.

CHANGING LIVES IN UKHIYA

Around 16.6 percent of Cox's Bazar's population lives below the poverty line, according to the World Bank and 2016 poverty maps.

Women in Ukhiya are facing serious challenges, as they even have to struggle to ensure two meals a day. However, the reality is now different,

as people like Josna and Anjuman are now bringing about positive reformations.

"I received a cow and its food from the project. With time, I increased the number of cows, as they were assets. I sold three cattle for Tk 2.12 lakh, making around 90,000 as profits," shared Anjuman who now looks to ensure education for her children.

A recent Brac survey on market linkage intervention revealed a 3 percent increase in profits, a 13 percent reduction in production costs, and a 63 percent increase in the selling ratio of their products compared to individual efforts.

"We now want to scale up this initiative across the entire nation within the next couple of years," said Upoma.

holding any dialogue on caretaker government issue.

Hasan said the next general elections will be held as per the constitution of Bangladesh and the incumbent government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will act as the poll-time government.

BNP must accept the reality, he added.

He said BNP's demand for a caretaker government didn't get any support from home and international arena. BNP will have to come in the polls by accepting the reality, the information minister continued.

Replying to another query over the upcoming visit of a delegation of European Union (EU) at the invitation of the Election Commission, he said this visit is very important and it proves that the EC is working independently.

LABOUR LEADER'S DEATH

HRW calls for fair probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Human Rights Watch (HRW) has urged Bangladesh authorities to ensure an independent and transparent investigation into the murder of RMG union leader Shahidul Islam.

The Bangladesh government is yet to act comprehensively to end continuing violations of garment workers' rights, including anti-union tactics by managers and assaults on union organisers, HRW said in a statement issued on Thursday.

The authorities should undertake an independent investigation into Islam's murder with technical assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that it is timely, independent, and complies with international investigation and fair trial standards, it said.

"Ensuring justice and compensation for Shahidul Islam's death will be a huge test for Bangladesh as the world watches," said Claudio Francavilla, senior EU advocate at HRW.

"A labor leader's murder is a disturbing setback for workers' freedoms to organize and to seek the support of union leaders to solve labor disputes," he added.

Shahidul, 50, president of Gazipur unit of Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation, was beaten to death right after he left a meeting at a factory where he had been negotiating to get its workers their arrears on June 25.



Shahidul Islam

Veggies too costly

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sold at Tk 130. A week before the Eid, its price began to crawl up. During the Eid vacation, its price went above Tk 600 per kg. Yesterday, it was sold at Tk 300 per kilo at Karwan Bazar. On Wednesday, the price was Tk 400 per kilo.

Fearing a drive by the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection, traders reduced green chili price within a day, said retailer Mosharraf.

"During monsoon, price of vegetables rises as low-lying areas get inundated. This creates a shortage in market," said Md Selim, a retailer in Karwan Bazar.

Md Sabuj of Bikrampur Banijaloy said the price of potato increased by Tk 2 per kg in the wholesale market. They are selling potatoes at Tk 33-36 per kg to retailers. It was sold at Tk 31-34 before Eid.

"The supply from farmers

and other sources depleted much earlier this year. As a result, we have been buying potatoes from cold storage for the last month at a high price," he said.

The imported onion is being damaged quickly and the wholesalers have increased its price by Tk 10 to Tk 42-45 per kg, said Sajib Sheikh, proprietor of Matribandar.

The price of coarse rice dropped by Tk 5 per kg to Tk 50 in one month. On June 6, the retail price of per kg coarse rice was Tk 55. The price of flour dropped by 2.73 to 4.93 percent, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

A Department of Agriculture official said there is a supply shortage due to the Eid vacation and vegetable prices may drop soon. He also said potatoes are released slowly from the cold storages, resulting in price hike.

The wind of change

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Goni said more than 300,000 kilowatt units of electricity was received from this power plant last June.

A total of 22 wind turbines will be installed under this project and 60MW of electricity will be produced from this plant.

A maximum of 3 megawatts of electricity can be obtained from one turbine at a certain wind speed, he said.

He also said when all the 22 turbines are commissioned in December, the rest of the electricity will be supplied to the national grid after meeting the town's demand.

US-DK Green Energy (BD), a private firm, is implementing the project at a cost of \$116.51 million, said project manager Mukit Alam Khan.

Mukit said the height of a tower is 90 metres, while each of the blades is 60 metres long.

"We need an average

wind speed of 5.5 metres per second [m/s] to generate power since we are using modern technology. And for running the turbines at full capacity, we need a minimum 10 m/s wind speed," Mukit said, adding that they were getting even 15 m/s wind speed in the project area.

He said Wuling Power Corporation Ltd, a subsidiary of China's State Power Investment Corporation Limited, is funding the project.

Imtiaz Ahmed Faridi, deputy director of Independent Power Producer Cell-3 of Bangladesh Power Development Board, told The Daily Star that the cost per kilowatt hour of electricity will be \$0.12, and the company will supply the electricity for 20 years according to the contract.

On March 31 in 2022, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid laid the foundation stone of the project.

Plastic waste chokes Khulna drains

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drains. I have only seen a cleaner stepping into them with a few hand tools," he said.

Meanwhile, Sohorab Ali of ward-6 complained of inadequate dustbins in the area.

"There are no bins on the 1.5km road connecting Kabirbattala and Karikarpara. All the trash here is dumped in

the drains, ignoring civic responsibility. The ward councillor lives on this road, but I have never seen him take any measures to stop this. The situation is the same near the diabetic hospital in Nurnagar area," he said.

Babul Hawlader, member secretary of Khulna Civil Society, said, "The re-elected mayor and newly-elected

ward councillors should visit each ward and raise awareness among locals. They should take charge and devote themselves to solving this long-standing problem."

Contacted, Abdul Aziz, chief conservancy officer of KCC, said the city corporation makes sure that the drains are regularly cleaned to prevent mosquito breeding.

Passengers suffer as train service suspended

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the pandemic, the railway authorities cancelled the train service.

According to the BR, more than 4,000 commuters used this route every day. Besides, many traders used freight carriages of the trains to bring vegetables from Chandanish to the city.

There are 12 stations under the route and train used to be the preferred mode of transport for lower income people of the area.

Jamshedul Islam, a

businessman, said, "Our income has reduced as we have to take vegetables on truck instead of train."

Mohammed Nizam, master of Patiya Railway Station, told The Daily Star, "It was a profitable route for the railway and low-income people are suffering as the train service has been closed for years."

Kamal Uddin, general secretary of Train Passengers Welfare Council of this route, said they spoke to the railway authorities in this regard

several times but to no avail.

According to the traffic office, the railway has added the engines and coaches of the trains -- which used to ply Chattogram-Dohazari route earlier -- to other trains currently running on different routes.

It is not possible to run trains on this route due to the vulnerable Kalurghat Bridge, shortage of engines and coaches, said Tarek Bin Imran, divisional traffic officer (DTO) of the railway in Chattogram.

"The continuous process is sometimes disrupted due to manpower shortages. The city corporation has already started a Tk 52.57 crore project in Dumuria's Solua area, where 375 tonnes of waste will be recycled on a daily basis."

At the same time, he said, people should change their mindset stop dumping waste into the drains.

Dengue spike rings

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m a n a g e m e n t , entomologist Prof Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University urged initiating drives in areas where dengue infection rate is dominant.

"Killing adult mosquitoes is essential in those areas where they are most likely to be carrying the virus. Each of us should take the responsibility of checking for stagnant water sources around their residences, especially open spaces and yards, at least once every week to keep those from becoming Aedes breeding grounds," he said.

Hospitalisation is necessary when infected for the second time, as these patients are more vulnerable, he added.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, advised residents to keep windows and doors shut in the morning and evening, as Aedes mosquitoes are normally active during these periods.

"People should get tested as soon as they show early symptoms of the disease, which include fever, severe stomach ache, nausea, difficulty breathing, and blood in nose, gums, vomit or stool. Repellents may prove to be beneficial."

He said it also needs to be looked at that the new migrant workers in Malaysia are getting their promised jobs.

Apart from Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, the other top destinations in June were Oman (8,566 workers), the United Arab Emirates (6,414), Kuwait (4,279), Singapore (4,020), and Qatar (3,154), shows BMET data.

This year till June, Bangladesh has sent 6.17 lakh migrant workers abroad for employment, it shows.

He said the newly-procured heavy weight engines cannot ply through the vulnerable bridge.

According to the railway engineering department, BR has recently signed an agreement with a contractor to renovate Kalurghat Bridge by September 30 at a cost of Tk 43 crore.

"Train service will resume on this route after the ongoing renovation work of Kalurghat Bridge is complete," the DTO added.

complications and cancer, and pregnant women have to be taken under special supervision," he added.

According to National University entomologist GM Saifur Rahman, the mosquito population tends to grow steadily over time.

"Untimely rains and extended monsoons contribute to the year-round transmission of the disease. Moreover, 70-80 percent of dengue patients are asymptomatic (producing or showing no symptoms), and

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HM NAZMUL AHSAN
Associate professor at
Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical
College Hospital

their infection can only be detected via Serosurveillance.

Serosurveillance is a blood test that checks for the presence of antibodies against a particular disease.

"Laboratory-based active surveillance systems are required for this process. However, we don't have any such facilities. Effective insecticides, surveillance systems, and control measures are essential to combating dengue," he added.

Police to work under

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They are engaged in maintaining law and order," he said.

Logistic support in the police increased and the law and order situation also improved due to the use of technology, the IGP added.

Sylhet Range DIG Shah Mizan Shafiur Rahman,

Deputy Commissioner Dider E-Alam Mohammed Maksud Chowdhury, Superintendent of Police Mohammad Ehsan Shah and Sadar Police Station Officer-in-charge Ikhtiar Uddin Chodhury, among others, were present at the event.

Labour migration to Malaysia gets

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Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), said a new male Bangladeshi migrant worker can earn more in Malaysia compared to the wage he would get in Saudi Arabia.

Secondly, Bangladesh migrant workers find more or less favourable food habits and weather conditions in Malaysia compared to Saudi Arabia, he said.

"Overall, considering various factors including better earning opportunities and weather conditions, people are interested in

migrating to Malaysia for employment," he added.

According to the Malaysian government's new salary structure, a Bangladeshi migrant worker there can earn at least 1,500 Malaysian ringgit or Tk 34,958 (1 ringgit equivalent to Tk 23.30) a month.

On the other hand, fresh Bangladeshi migrant workers in Saudi Arabia can be hired at a monthly wage of 800 Saudi Riyal or Tk 23,165 (1 SAR equals to Tk 28.95), according to employment approval paper issued by the expatriates'

welfare ministry.

Syed Saiful Haque, chairman of Warbe Development Foundation, said while more workers heading to Malaysia is encouraging, the government through its mission needs to ensure better protection of migrant workers there.

It should be looked at so that they don't turn undocumented in Malaysia, he said, adding that in the past, numerous migrant workers in the Southeast Asian country faced irregular status and could get regularised through

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