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'Play till 32 and then do whatever you want to'



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IN FOCUS: Bagh Bidhoba



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US-China ties on 'surer footing' after talks: Yellen



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Kuakata beach: 75,000 trees lost to erosion every year

TACKLING OPPOSITION MOVEMENT

Police looking to revive old cases

AL to continue counter programmes

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

As the BNP and 35 other like-minded parties are set to launch a one-point movement to oust the government, the Police Headquarters is collecting data on all the cases against opposition activists and leaders.

The headquarters is gathering information about those who faced charges of arson, killing of police members, crimes against humanity, and other serious crimes in 2013 and later.

The initiative is aimed at speeding up the pending cases against opposition leaders and activists.

BNP's one-point movement will also be met by ruling Awami League's programmes on the streets, apparently to counteract the effects of BNP's demonstrations.

The AL also decided to hold rallies for students and youths in eight divisional cities in what seems to be an obvious response to BNP's youth rallies.

Beyond these programmes, the ruling party is not much bothered about the opposition's demonstrations, insiders say.

The leadership is focused on reorganising the party and preparing for the national polls slated for January.

Besides, the AL leaders have no doubt that the law enforcers will play their role if the opposition wants to create instability.

On July 12, the BNP will formally announce its one-point movement for resignation of the government and election under a caretaker administration.

Meanwhile, the Jamaat has also been trying to motivate its rank and file. On June 10, it held a rally after a decade in the capital and demanded restoration of the polls-time caretaker government. The party, which does not have a registration with the Election Commission, held several subsequent programmes including a rally in Dhaka last Friday in protest of the defamation of the holy Quran in Sweden.

Jamaat sources say they will demonstrate in the coming days for release of their party chief Shaliquur Rahman and other leaders from prisons and demand a caretaker government before the election.

At large gatherings that the party hopes to organise in all divisional cities,

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There is hardly any space left at Mugda Medical College Hospital amid the deluge of dengue patients. This photo of people being treated on the floor of the 500-bed facility was taken yesterday afternoon when over 400 dengue patients were admitted there.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

EU team holds talks with foreign envoys in Dhaka

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A six-member Election Exploratory Mission from the European Union yesterday began its two-week work to assess the overall situation surrounding the next general election in Bangladesh.

The mission, which arrived in Dhaka on Saturday, held meetings with the EU ambassadors and some other Western diplomats, including those from the US and the UK, according to a European ambassador who attended a meeting.

"It was a good meeting. The mission wanted to know about the present situation in Bangladesh surrounding the next election," he said.

The EU mission wanted to hear from all EU envoys in Dhaka and those from Canada, Norway and Switzerland how they see the current domestic political landscape, the envoy of a EU member country told The Daily Star.

"There was a broad consensus around the table to emphasise the importance of them [envoys] recommending the deployment of a full-fledged observer mission later this year, notwithstanding

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Power projects rarely completed on time

Finds IMED research paper

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Most of the projects in the power sector are not completed on time, with some seeing as much as 300 percent cost overruns, said a recent report of the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).

The delays in project implementation and lack of proper planning and manpower with technical knowledge have made the sector a hugely subsidised one, said the government project monitoring body.

"It would have been possible to reduce the burden (loss and subsidy) if proper feasibility studies were conducted and if there was proper planning to ensure the energy for the power plants before taking on the projects," the research report said.

Subsequently, the report suggested not taking on any power plant projects before ensuring the energy supply.

The report reviewed the progress of 67 ongoing projects of the power division, which is being implemented by the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB), Power Grid Company of Bangladesh, Desco, DPDC, NESCO, WZPDC, NWPGL, Sreda, EGCB,

Power Cell, Rural Electrification Board, RPCL and so on since 2013.

Among the projects, 32 projects are being implemented for six to 10 years, with six of their progress being between 90 percent to 99 percent.

At least 12 projects are implemented for over seven years and four of their progress

WHAT IMED'S RESEARCH FOUND

- Power plant projects don't have any plan of energy supply
- Lack of coordination between the agencies of this sector
- Engineers caught up in clerical work

is less than 30 percent. Of the four projects, two are related to pre-paid meter installations under PDB and DPDC in Dhaka, Mymensingh and Cumilla areas, and two are related to transmission and distribution networks under PGCBL and DPDC.

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BUSINESS

Tax collection target missed for 11th year

For the 11th consecutive year, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) has missed its tax target in the face of a slowing collection amid economic slowdown.

The NBR logged Tk 325,272 crore in overall receipts in 2022-23, falling short of Tk 44,728 crore from its target for the fiscal year, according to its provisional data.

The receipts also fell short of the target set by the International Monetary Fund as a part of its \$4.7 billion loan for the country.

STORY ON B1

Dengue now in 57 districts

Says health minister, yesterday saw highest number of single-day deaths, hospital admission this season

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dengue has spread to 57 districts, said Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday as the country recorded its highest number of deaths and hospital admissions this year from the mosquito-borne disease.

In the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, six dengue patients died, while 832 new patients were hospitalised, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

With the latest count, the fatalities from the disease rose to 72 and the number of hospitalised patients hit 12,954. And 2,750 patients were undergoing treatment in hospitals as of yesterday morning, with 1,967 of them being in 53 Dhaka hospitals.

On July 4, five people died from the disease and on Saturday, 820 patients were admitted to hospitals.

Of all dengue cases, 60 percent are in Dhaka, Maleque said while talking to journalists at his residence in Manikganj yesterday.

This year, the number of dengue cases is higher than last year, but it is yet to hit its peak as August-September is the prime time for dengue outbreaks.

Last year, 281 people died from the disease and 62,382 others were hospitalised. Hospitalisations from the disease started in May and peaked in October.

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POLLS, RIGHTS

Momen writes to 12 members of US Congress

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has written to 12 US Congress members regarding their letters on free and fair elections in Bangladesh and "human rights abuses" by the Bangladesh government.

The Bangladesh ambassador in the US is also trying to get appointments of the Congress members to discuss their letters.

Foreign ministry officials told this to the parliamentary standing committee on the ministry at its meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan yesterday.

In separate letters to the Congress members, the foreign minister has presented various facts dismissing their allegations of human rights abuse issues in Bangladesh.

The ministry informed the parliamentary watchdog that six Congress members of the Democratic Party, including William

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Bangladesh Water Development Board's beautification of the banks of the Bhairab in Jashore has come under criticism for narrowing down the river. Local activists say the river's width has almost halved because of illegal encroachment, land grabbing and projects like this.

LEAK OF CITIZENS' INFO Govt website didn't have minimum security

State minister for ICT says technical flaws led to data breach

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leak of sensitive personal information of millions of citizens from a government website was due to the weakness of the site, State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak said yesterday.

The data of as many as five crore citizens was exposed online from the Office of the Registrar General, Birth and Death Registration (BDRIS) website, this newspaper reported on Saturday.

Palak said, "The portal from which the information was made public did not have minimum security. Despite being warned, the officials of the department concerned did not take it into account. The state has suffered a great loss due to their negligence."

The leaked data, including names, birth dates, and National Identification (NID) numbers, was "easily accessible through a simple Google search".

"We have yet to find evidence that cybercriminals have taken any data. What we found was that there was a technical weakness in the government website. As a result, the information was very easy to see," the minister added.

Palak was speaking at the inauguration of the Bangabandhu International Cyber Security Awareness Award programme at the BCC Auditorium of ICT Tower in the capital's Agargaon yesterday.

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