

EU special envoy for human rights to arrive today

UNB, Dhaka

The European Union's Special Representative for Human Rights, Eamon Gilmore, is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka today to discuss issues of mutual interests, especially rights issues.



Eamon Gilmore

He will be visiting at the Bangladesh government's invitation.

During his six-day visit, Gilmore will hold meetings with government officials concerned over the Rohingya issue and will visit the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, according to the foreign ministry.

In Dhaka, he will hold a series of meetings with government officials and other stakeholders to discuss human rights issues.

He is likely to sit with Law Minister Anisul Huq, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam apart from his meeting with civil society members.

Jubo League to counter BNP's 'grand rally'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Countering the BNP's grand rally in the capital on Thursday, Jubo League, the youth wing of the ruling Awami League, will also stage a rally on the day.

The rally, which the youth front termed "March of Jubilant Youth", will be held at the south gate of Baitul Mukarram.

Jubo League said the rally is a way to protest the BNP-Jamaat's "murder, conspiracy, anarchy and violence" across the country.

Under the slogan "We young generation will vote, let's fight for votes", BNP's three youth student organisations – Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Jubo Dal, and Svecchhashebak Dal recently held youth rallies in six major cities including the capital Dhaka.

From a rally on Saturday, JI General Secretary Mainul Hossain Khan said the Jubo League would hold a rally on Monday.

However, today, the Jubo League central office informed the journalists that the rally will be held on Thursday.

According to the JI sources, they are planning to gather more than 100,000 activists.

MY DHAKA

A JAMDANI exposition in the city

RBR

Jamdani Festival of Wearable Art is an exhibition, especially curated by Chandra Shekhar Shaha, one of the pathfinders of modern crafting and textile design in Bangladesh.

The show presents a collection of sustainably-produced, handspun Jamdani saris featuring high thread counts with naturally dyed yarns, and each boasting some fine, vintage threadwork.

The exhibition is hosted at the Chitrashala, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, and will continue until July 29. The show is funded by Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) and implemented by Sheva Nari O Shishu Kallyan Kendra in collaboration with the National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB).

The highlights of the show are two saris, both over 150 years old -- the pieces are worn out and tainted yet the small border or fita paar of one is visible, as is the intricate paisley design on the border of the other.

Both saris have been loaned for display from Darshan Mekani Shah, owner of the Weavers Studio, Kolkata, India.

PHOTO: COURTESY



"There are fine details in the making of this special craft, like the quality of jamdani varies due to the variation of bamboo reed combs, which affects the fineness of the fabric, the sheerness of the buti or dot depends on the number of yarns used in the weft to weave the design. These make a difference in the quality of Jamdani. To keep the

interest in people going strong we need patrons to commission weavers with work orders at a fair price. We need to keep the spotlight on our star heritage weave -- the Jamdani sari," says Chandra Shekhar Shaha.

The retail booth of the PKSf at the exhibition is drawing a large number of customers. Apart from the fine saris, lamp shades and bags made from Jamdani fabric have added a new dimension to the diversification of the fabric.

The Jamdani weave went through a tragic fate and was almost at the doorstep of extinction. At that point, our designers and the craft council, along with some patrons, started working on reviving the exclusive garb by producing them in the villages on the banks of the Shitalakkhya river with considerable success.

My love for jamdani has no bounds, I am simply overjoyed by the names of the motifs. Panna hajar

when translated means thousand emeralds, fulwar or flower arranged in straight rows, tesra is a diagonal pattern, belwari, nayanbahar, toradar, hazartara or thousand stars; these colloquial terms are the names of most admired jamdani motifs.

The Jamdani, which is weaved on lightweight and soft texture muslin cotton cloth, is again being done on the highest 100 thread count, making it as fine as yester years; the higher the yarn count, the thinner the yarn. Usually for quality jamdani 200 to 250 counts of yarns are used.

Jamdani, a Geographical Indication (GI) product of Bangladesh, is once again a sought-after sari for women of this sub-continent.

I do not want to go into its history of fame in Mughals courts and with the nawabs of Bengal; instead, I want to plead to fashion connoisseurs to support local weavers and designers by buying Jamdanis as we must celebrate this unique craft of ours.

Driver

FROM PAGE 1

The Barishal-bound bus of Bashir Smriti Paribahan, which was carrying over 60 passengers against its capacity of 52, left Pirojpur's Bhandaria around 9:00am and fell into the roadside pond on the Barishal-Khulna highway around 10:00am.

Survivors and officials blamed the driver's carelessness for the accident.

The bus's fitness and road permit documents were, however, up to date.

A five-member probe body, headed by the additional district magistrate Mamun Shiblee, was formed to investigate the accident.

"We are continuing our investigation. A [probe body] member from Accident Research Institute of Buet, will reach the spot tomorrow [Monday]," he said.

Contacted, probe body chief Mamun Shiblee declined to make any further comment given that the matter was part of an ongoing investigation.

Trial on new test

FROM PAGE 1

"A similar study was carried out in China earlier using the same testing mechanism. This trial is a first in Bangladesh, and the results indicate that the test is effective here too," Wasif Ali Khan, the principal investigator and a scientist at icddr, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the successful trial is a critical milestone in liver cancer detection in the country and holds the potential to significantly reduce morbidity and mortality rates associated with liver cancer.

Liver cancer is a major global health concern and is often diagnosed at advanced stages, leading to significant challenges in treatment and causing low survival rates.

Prof Moshe Szyf, chairman of HKG Epitherapeutics Ltd and a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, presented the keynote at the event.

Tahmeed Ahmed, executive director of icddr, chaired the event and Prof Sharfuddin Ahmed, vice-chancellor of BSMU, spoke as the chief guest.

Banks' risky loans thrice as large

FROM PAGE 1

The first review of the programme will take place in October, when the IMF staff team will assess the programme's quantitative targets and progress of reform implementation and take a call on whether the next tranche of about \$476.27 million can be released.

Bangladesh is set to miss two of the six quantitative targets set for the first half of 2023, with one of them being a mandatory condition, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials with knowledge of the situation.

The government has failed to maintain minimum net international reserves (NIR) of \$24.46 billion at the end of June. This was a mandatory condition. The NIR was hovering around \$21 billion.

The minimum tax revenue target, another vital condition, will also be missed. The government needed to collect at least Tk 345,630 crore in tax revenue in fiscal 2022-23.

Last fiscal year, the National Board of Revenue collected Tk 325,272 crore. In the first nine months of the fiscal year, non-NBR tax collection was Tk 6,014 crore, which is just one-third of the year's target.

It is highly likely that non-NBR tax

collection in the last three months would be Tk 14,344 crore.

The rest of the quantitative targets like the floor on budget, social spending and development capital investment and the ceiling on reserve money were comfortably met.

The government is also poised to implement all six of the reform measures for June 2023, the finance ministry officials said. And three of the reform measures set for the year-end would be implemented ahead of schedule.

The reform measures for June include the adoption of an interest rate corridor system, reporting official reserve assets as per the IMF's BPM6 definition and introduction of a market-determined exchange rate.

The central bank was supposed to complete the pilot risk-based supervision action plan and publish banks' distressed assets in the annual financial stability report as well.

The finance ministry has also adopted tax revenue measures yielding an additional 0.5 percent of GDP in fiscal 2023-24's budget, the officials said.

The government was supposed to adopt a periodic formula-based price adjustment mechanism for petroleum products by the end of

the year and that would be rolled out before then.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics was supposed to publish quarterly GDP data by December and that would be done by September.

The finance ministry was supposed to submit to the parliament the Bank Companies (Amendment) Act 2020 and the Finance Companies Act 2020 drafted in line with best practices by September.

The Bank Companies (Amendment) Act 2020 has already been passed in the parliament.

Should a country fail to meet the conditions under an IMF programme, it must furnish explanations for coming up short. If the IMF staff mission deems the explanations reasonable, they can authorise the release of the next instalment.

The government would be blaming the prolonged Ukraine war for its failure to meet two key targets, the finance ministry officials said.

"Given that we would be implementing some of the reform measures ahead of schedule, we are hopeful that the IMF staff mission would be giving us a waiver," said one of the officials on the condition of anonymity to speak candidly on the issue.

guideline with three categories: A, B and C.

Nazmul said patients who are infected with dengue but are stable and have no complications belong to Category-A. They send them home.

Category-B and -C patients are admitted to the hospital, Nazmul said.

He said they don't have enough beds in the Intensive Care Unit or the High-Dependency Unit and that was why they were sending patients there only when they are in critical condition.

Road safety a pipe dream?

FROM PAGE 1

medium-sized vehicles.

Such a pattern raises questions: how did the drivers manage to operate vehicles they are not allowed to, and how did the buses manage to run without valid documents?

Experts and road safety campaigners have long been alleging that such vehicles and drivers have been on the roads because the system of monitoring, rules' enforcement, and issuance of papers is not working.

These vehicles continue to ply the roads by bribing a section of crooked law enforcers, BRTA officials, and politically connected people.

The worrying fact that the campaigners pointed out is that many transport owners and workers find it unnecessary to obtain valid documents from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) as they can easily run their vehicles by bribing officials.

According to BRTA data, around 5.64 lakh vehicles did not have renewed fitness certificates as of April 30.

Of them, 20,362 were buses, 11,245 minibuses, 61,339 trucks and 6,767 taxicabs.

This data speaks volume of the sheer negligence on the part of transport owners and operators about road safety.

Meanwhile, the authorities concerned also seem to have turned a blind eye and do not ensure proper enforcement of fitness checks for vehicles.

The BRTA also lacks adequate manpower and machines to deal with the issuance of fitness certificates.

Currently, there is only one automated vehicle inspection centre under the BRTA in the capital's Mirpur, but that too is not fully functional as the inspection of most vehicles, including private cars, is done manually.

Furthermore, the BRTA does not have enough inspectors to check

3 hurt in gas blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Three people, including a child, suffered burn injuries in a possible gas explosion inside their house in Narayanganj's Fatullah, said police.

They are receiving treatment at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, said Resident Surgeon Dr Tariqul Islam.

Alam, 35, Ramzan, 22 and Rifat, 12, are in critical condition with bronchial burn injuries. Alam had 72 percent burns on his body, Ramzan 58 percent, and Rifat had 28 percent burns.

According to the police, all three burn victims are house painters by profession and residents of Cumilla. They live in a rented tin-shed house in West Deobhog Bashmuli area where the explosion took place.

Fatullah Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Nure Azam said police visited the spot after receiving the news of the explosion.

He suspected that the explosion might have been caused by a faulty gas line riser inside the tin shed house, he said.

Police are investigating the matter, the OC added.

4 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least four people were killed and 11 others were injured in three separate road accidents yesterday.

In Natore, two people were killed and 10 injured in a collision between a bus and a truck on the Dhaka-Natore highway in Baraigram upazila in the early hours.

The identities of the deceased could not be known immediately and the injured were admitted to several hospitals, including Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, said Monir Hossain, sub-inspector of Jhalmolia Highway Police Station.

In Dhaka, a student of Martin Luther College, identified as 20-year-old Pulock Gomes, was killed and his friend was injured when a truck hit their motorcycle on Wapda Road under Hatirjheel Police Station around 3:30am.

His friend Nayan, 21, was receiving treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In Gazipur, a day labourer was killed after a bus run him over on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Sreepur upazila in the afternoon.

The deceased, Russell Mia, son of Renu Mia of Jahangirpur village in Nandail Upazila of Mymensingh, used to work at a scrap-metal shop as a day labourer.

Former UP member stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A former union parishad member was stabbed to death in Jamalpur's Madarganj upazila Saturday night.

The deceased, identified as 58-year-old Zahurul Haque, was a member of Ward 7 of Jorkhali union parishad.

Police have so far detained seven persons for interrogation.

Zahurul was returning home on his motorcycle when unidentified persons stabbed him near Jorkhali union parishad around 11:00pm, Mahbubul Haque, officer-in-charge (OC) of Madarganj Police Station.

He died on the spot. His body bore stab marks in the abdomen and back, he said.

Police sent the body to Jamalpur General Hospital morgue for autopsy.