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We maintain friendly ties with all: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh has been maintaining a friendly relationship equally with all, focusing on improving the people's socio-economic condition.

Stressing that Bangladesh has been moving forward following the "Friendship to all, malice towards none" policy, which was incorporated by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the foreign policy, the PM said, "We've a very good relationship with every country. Since we're following the policy the Father of the Nation had

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN AND SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM
Motorbikers wait at the closed City Filling Station on Satrasta in the capital for refuelling yesterday. (Inset) Oil tankers pictured inside the Jamuna Oil Depot in Fatullah, Naranganj. Thousands of people suffered yesterday as a faction of petrol pump owners and workers in the fuel distribution went on strike.

Fuel strike postponed till Sept 30

16-hour supply disruption makes people suffer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fuel strike, that caused immense public suffering, was postponed yesterday till September 30.

The 16-hour strike was called by a faction of the Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners' Association (BPPOA).

Syed Sajjadul Karim Kabul, president of the faction, announced the postponement of the strike in a press conference after a meeting with Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation officials.

"As the talks went well, we postponed the nationwide strike," said Kabul, adding the government assured them that their demands would be met by September 30.

The strike was called with a three-point demand -- fixing the sales commission for pump owners at 7.5 percent per litre, setting the tank lorry economic life to 50 years, and issuing a gazette notification recognising the pump owners as "commission agents".

Before the announcement, the energy division yesterday issued a gazette notification recognising pump owners as agents of BPC.

Meanwhile, the strike caught people off guard. Long queues of vehicles were seen at fuel pumps across the country.

In the capital, most fuel stations were open in the morning and people could get fuel. But many of the stations ran dry as the day progressed.

Mohammad Nazmul Haque, president of another faction of BPPOA, said the situation arose because strikers were preventing fuel trucks from leaving the fuel depots across the country.

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Jails have 34,337 more prisoners than capacity

Home boss tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Against the capacity of accommodating 42,866 prisoners, 77,203 inmates are staying at 68 jails across the country, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal at Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

Replying to a query of ruling AL MP M Abdul Latif from Chattogram-11, he said among them, 40,937 are men and 1,929 are women.

Kamal said all the jails except for Jashore, Sylhet, Dinajpur, Feni, Pirojpur, and Madaripur have more prisoners than their capacity. He said expansion of Mymensingh, Cumilla, Khulna, Narsingdi, and Jamalpur prisons is in progress. Once the work is completed, they will accommodate 5,000 more prisoners.

Childhood lost in dandy addiction

Hardware shops, shoemakers sell them the adhesive glue, claim street children

DIPAN NANDY and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

It was around 10:30am on Sunday.

A ten-year-old kid was seen standing in front of the Jahir Raihan Cultural Complex in Sutrapur, clutching a worn-out polythene bag in his hands.

When the correspondent asked what was in his hand, the boy casually replied, "I am having Dandy."

"I feel better when I have this, it takes my hunger away. I do not have any family, I live alone," the boy added.

He says that he collects dandy from two primary sources -- hardware shops and shoemakers.

"I frequently visit various hardware shops in the Sutrapur vicinity, and buy a small pot of glue for Tk 70 to Tk 80, although

its actual price is Tk 60," he said.

"A single glue pot can be sniffled three times for three to four hours each time," he said.



Glue-sniffing has emerged as a prevalent and alarming practice among street children.

Commonly referred to as "dandy," the adhesive glue used by shoe repairers contains toluene, a sweet-smelling and intoxicating hydrocarbon. Abandoned by family and looked down upon by society, these children, mainly

aged between 10-16, usually consume dandy to satisfy their hunger and get temporary relief from harsh realities of their life.

Upon information from Arman, these correspondents visited a number of hardware shop owners in the Sutrapur about the sale of these glue pots.

"We do not sell dandies to street children. Because we know they are addicted," Ismail, a salesman at Mukti Traders, one of the hardware shops in the area, told this newspaper.

However, Russell (pseudonym), a salesman at Khaja Traders, admitted, "When our owner isn't around, we sell glue pots to street children for some extra income."

"Not only us, but other shops also do the same," he added.

Contacted, Rashed Hasan, the

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Navy Chief Nazmul Hassan promoted to Admiral

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Naval Staff M Nazmul Hassan has been promoted to the rank of Admiral.

The navy chief was conferred the new rank in the presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday, said a press release.

He was adorned with the new rank badge by Lt Gen Ataul Hakim Sarwar Hasan, acting chief of army staff, and Air Chief Marshal Shaikh Abdul Hannan.

PM's Security Affairs Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique; PM's Principal Secretary M Tofazzel Hossain Miah; Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division Lt Gen Waker-Uz Zaman; and Senior Secretary of Defence Ministry Golam Md Hashibul Alam were present on the occasion.

It's for govt's own interest Say Ganatantra Mancha leaders on CSA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The people of Bangladesh will fight for their civic rights like 1971 to bring down the current government, said leaders of Ganatantra Mancha yesterday.

The government is trying to curb people's rights by implementing acts like the Cyber Security Act 2023, they said at a discussion titled "Cyber Security Act: A New Tool to Suppress Freedom of Speech" at the Jatiya Press Club.

Addressing the programme, Nagorik Oikyo President Mahmudur Rahman Manna expressed concern over the lack of specific definitions within the law, which leaves scopes for misinterpretation and misuse.

"Law enforcement agencies will define it at their will, which could be very dangerous," he said.

Hasnat Kaiyum, chief coordinator of Rastra Sangskar Andolon, pointed out the sacrifices made by millions of Bangladeshis during the 1971 Liberation War, and voiced opposition to the current government's actions.

"The current government is curbing our freedom of expression through the implementation of such laws [CSA]. This must not continue, and we will fight against it..."

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Japan to consider increasing aid to Rohingyas

National Diet delegation set to visit Cox's Bazar camps

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japan will consider increasing its humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh, a prominent Japanese lawmaker said yesterday.

"We are planning to visit Cox's Bazar tomorrow. We would like to see the situation and provide some humanitarian assistance based on the actual needs there," said Nakanishi Yusuke, director of the committee on general affairs, House of Councillors at the National Diet.

A three-member delegation of Japanese parliamentarians headed by Nakanishi is currently visiting Bangladesh.

Nakanishi told this while talking with reporters after a meeting with Planning Minister MA Mannan at his office in the capital.

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Iwama Kiminori, among others, accompanied the Japanese delegation.

Planning Minister Mannan said he has urged Japan to extend its support for the safe and dignified repatriation of the Rohingyas to Myanmar.

Both Japan and Myanmar are good friends of Bangladesh, he said.

Meanwhile, responding to a query on reported dissatisfaction of Japanese businesspersons in Bangladesh, Nakanishi said they are planning to have a

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Maisha, a resident of the capital's Mirpur-11, is battling dengue for the last 11 days. The a five-year-old is currently being treated at Shishu Hospital. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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BR workers' demo halt train services for 5hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Temporary workers of Bangladesh Railway yesterday staged a sit-in at Malibagh level crossing in Dhaka, demanding job regularisation.

The protest led to a halt in train services between Dhaka and the rest of the country for more than five hours, starting at 10:00am at Malibagh.

The services resumed after police intervened and dispersed the protesting workers by charging batons around 2:15pm.

Superintendent of Dhaka Railway Police, Anwar Hossain, confirmed that seven individuals were detained during the operation.

"We have long been petitioning with the authorities concerned for their permanent job status. However, despite engaging with Director General and Secretary of Bangladesh Railways, the issue remains