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## NID Reg Bill passed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Identity Registration Bill, 2023 was passed in Parliament yesterday amid objection by the opposition MPs. The bill is aimed at transferring the national identity registration operation from the Election Commission to the Security Services Division, Ministry of Home Affairs. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan placed the bill which was passed by voice vote. The EC currently conducts the national identity registration operation and has issued national identity cards against citizens aged 18 or above, since 2007, as per the National Identity Registration Act, 2010. The opposition MPs taking part in the discussion on the bill complained that this decision of the government will increase the suffering of the common people as the police have not yet become people-friendly.



A rickshaw puller covers his nose as he passes through a gust of dust on the old Dhaka-Narayanganj Road in the capital's Shyampur. Dhaka's air quality regularly ranks among the world's worst, due to traffic, construction, and industrial pollution. The photo was taken yesterday.

## 91pc Bangladeshis prefer democracy

Says a global survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For 91 percent Bangladeshis, it is important to live in a democratically governed country, found a survey by Open Society Foundation, a New York-based private funder of independent groups working for justice, democratic governance, and human rights. Also, 63 percent believe the rise of China on the global stage will have a positive impact on the economy of Bangladesh, while 14 percent believe otherwise. The survey report titled "Open Society Barometer: Can Democracy Deliver?" was released on Monday, with responses from 36,000 people over a representative group of 30 countries around the world. According to the findings of the study conducted between May and July this year, younger people hold the least faith in democracy. Just 57 percent of respondents from the age group of 18-35 think democracy is preferable to any other form of government, compared to 71 percent of older respondents. But 86 percent of global respondents said they want to live in a democracy, while only 20 percent believe that authoritarian countries can deliver "what citizens want". Besides, 72 percent of the respondents across the globe, including 88 percent from Bangladesh, believe that human rights have been a "force for good" in the world, and 71 percent agree that "human rights reflect values that I believe in". In Bangladesh, 18 percent of the respondents said they struggled to feed themselves and their families every day in the past year, while 15 percent experienced it every week and 11 percent every month.

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How bankrupt a political party can be to harbour jealousy towards development projects under the Awami League Government that have significantly improved people's lives?

OBAIDUL QUADER  
Awami League general secretary on BNP



## Govt okays Tk 24,000cr purchase proposals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday approved 14 proposals to purchase various essentials, including wheat, soybean oil, fertilisers and green energy, worth about Tk 24,000 crore. The cabinet committee on purchase during a meeting chaired by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal approved the proposals. As per one proposal, the government will import 3 lakh tonnes of wheat from Russia under a government to government (G2G) agreement for about Tk 1,033 crore, at Tk 34.43 per kg. A food ministry official said the imported wheat will cost \$313 per tonne this time whereas it was \$430 per tonne a year ago. The committee yesterday approved three proposals for the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) including purchase of 3.30 crore litres of soybean oil from Malaysia.

The soybean oil will be imported from Brizo Marine SDN BHD by local agent Sena Edible Oil Industries Dhaka at a total cost of Tk 433.62 crore, at Tk 155.93 per litre. The committee also approved three proposals to buy 420 megawatts of electricity produced by different solar and wind power plants in the country. At yesterday's meeting, the purchase committee also approved import of 1,00,000 tonnes of muriate of potash (MOP) fertiliser from Canada at \$323 per tonne. Besides, a total of 70,000 tonnes of Di ammonium Phosphate (DAP) at \$526 per tonne and Triple Superphosphate (TSP) at \$389.75 per tonne will be purchased from Morocco. The committee also approved three proposals for runway improvement at Jashore, Syedpur and Rajshahi airports, to appoint consultant for Hatirjheel-Demra four-lane highway project, and for an infrastructure development project of Bangladesh Power Development Board.

Besides, Bashundhara Multi Food Products Ltd will purchase 50 lakh litres of soybean oil for TCB from local market for Tk 79.92 crore, at Tk 159.85 per litre. Also, 6,000 tonnes of lentils will be purchased for TCB from local market for Tk 58.11 crore,

at Tk 96.85 per kg. The committee also approved three proposals to buy 420 megawatts of electricity produced by different solar and wind power plants in the country. At yesterday's meeting, the purchase committee also approved import of 1,00,000 tonnes of muriate of potash (MOP) fertiliser from Canada at \$323 per tonne. Besides, a total of 70,000 tonnes of Di ammonium Phosphate (DAP) at \$526 per tonne and Triple Superphosphate (TSP) at \$389.75 per tonne will be purchased from Morocco. The committee also approved three proposals for runway improvement at Jashore, Syedpur and Rajshahi airports, to appoint consultant for Hatirjheel-Demra four-lane highway project, and for an infrastructure development project of Bangladesh Power Development Board.

## DENGUE OUTBREAK 15 dead, 2,944 hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 more people died from dengue in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday as the country grapples with a record outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease. At least 2,944 dengue patients were hospitalised in the 24-hour period, according to data from the Directorate General of Health Services. Dengue has so far claimed at least 767 lives this year and nearly 157,172 were infected, making this the deadliest year since the first recorded epidemic in 2000. According to DGHS data, 9,988 dengue patients were undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country. Hospitals, especially in Dhaka, are struggling to accommodate the large number of patients suffering high fever, joint pain, and vomiting, health officials said. There is no vaccine or drug that specifically treats dengue, which is common in South Asia during the June-to-September monsoon season.

## SIM REG SCAM Selling personal info for Tk 2000 DB arrests 8

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The cyber and special crime division of the police's detective branch (DB) has arrested eight people for selling fingerprints and personal information of SIM card users. The DB said they used to sell the information of an individual at Tk 1500-2000 through a Facebook page named "Digital Service Pro". The scheme involved a group of sales representatives (SR) and customer care officers associated with two SIM card operators who were complicit in the criminal activities, said Junaed Alam Sharkey, additional deputy commissioner of the cyber and special crime division of DB Police, sharing more details. They obtained fingerprints from unsuspecting individuals during SIM card replacements or new purchases, he added. When an individual visited the SR for sim registration, they were initially asked to clean their hands by rubbing them against a rubber surface. Once this was done, the SR used a "glue gun" to preserve the individual's fingerprint, he said. Simultaneously, customer care officers stationed in their respective offices were tasked with gathering personal details on Mobile

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## CONSERVING FORESTS Involve indigenous groups: JS body

UNB, Dhaka

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change yesterday recommended involving the indigenous community in conserving forests and biodiversity and combating climate change through utilizing their valuable experience and knowledge. The 40th meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee was held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan with its chairman Saber Hossain Chowdhury in the chair. At the meeting, detailed discussions were also held on the damages of biodiversity in the Sundarbans, report on the ecosystem of the haor, air pollution, illegal sand extraction, illegal establishments on St. Martin's island, according to a press release. The committee also stressed the importance of implementing researcher Sirajul Hossain's report on the loss of biodiversity in the Sundarbans and the ecosystem of haors. In a bid to protect reserved forest areas, the meeting urged all concerned to adopt more stringent measures to stop illegal sand extraction. Directives were also given to take necessary precautions against environmental polluters, particularly within various types of hotels, motels, resorts, and other establishments on St. Martin's Island. Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Md Shahab Uddin, Deputy Ministers Habibun Nahar, Tanvir Shakil Joy, Md Rezaul Karim Bablu and Khodeja Nasrin Akhter Hossain, among others, attended the meeting.



Loose part of a barricades, set around an area claimed for a beautification project on Dholaipar intersection, is risky and may lead to accidents. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## EXPRESSWAY Make sure it serves purpose: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urban planning experts have urged the government to take measures to ensure the Dhaka Elevated Expressway serves its intended purpose and benefits the public. They recommended proper planning, integrating public transport, digital toll collection, analyzing road capacity, and improving traffic management of the expressway. The observations came during a virtual discussion on "Planning Review of Dhaka Elevated Expressway", organised by the Institute for Planning and Development (IPD) yesterday. IPD advisor Prof Akter Mahmud said building infrastructure cannot reduce traffic jams in the capital. "Public interest must be prioritised in such projects instead of business

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