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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.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

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



ARREST OF EMPLOYEES OF MOBILE SERVICE OPERATORS

They used to steal, sell data to scammers

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The Detective Branch (DB) of police has arrested eight people of a racket for stealing personal information, including fingerprints, of SIM card users and selling them to scammers and various groups to be used for criminal purposes.

The racket, comprising sales representatives (SR) and customer care officials affiliated with two SIM card operators, used to make data packages of individuals combining the fingerprints, personal information and the status of Mobile Financial Service (MFS) of their SIM card.

They used to sell this package of information to MSF fraudsters and criminal groups at Tk 1,500 to Tk 2,000 each, using a Facebook page named "Digital Service Pro", Junaed Alam Sharker, additional

deputy commissioner of the cyber and special crime division of DB police, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said police uncovered this cybercrime following an investigation launched to detect some unusual online activities.



The probe led to the arrest of the racket, he added.

According to DB, the data thieves, to execute their scheme, adopted a unique technique.

When a customer visited the SR for a new SIM card or SIM replacement or services, they were asked to clean their fingers on a soft silicon-like object.

Police said by doing this, the service seekers inadvertently

left their fingerprints there. Then the SR applied "glue guns" to preserve the individual's fingerprint on that surface.

Police said the customer care officers were responsible for gathering personal details, including MFS information, National ID (NID) number, and address of the person whose fingerprint the SR collected.

This data, including all personal information and fingerprints, was then put on social media platforms as a bundle for sale.

According to DB, the racket used to activate new SIMs using these information and sell those to various criminal groups, helping them hide their identity.

They, according to DB, would also make a package on MSF-activated SIMs and sell those to groups who scam people by calling or online.

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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.

Tk 24,000cr purchase proposals gets cabinet nod

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.

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

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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 recommended involving the indigenous community in conserving forests, biodiversity, and combating climate change, by utilizing their valuable experience and knowledge.

The 40th meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee took place at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban with Chairman Saber Hossain Chowdhury presiding.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on various topics, including damages to biodiversity in the Sundarbans, a report on the haor ecosystem, air pollution, and illegal sand extraction. Additionally, concerns were raised about illegal establishments on St Martin's Island, said a press release.

The committee underscored the importance of implementing researcher Sirajul Hossain's report on biodiversity loss in the Sundarbans and the haor ecosystem.

In an effort to protect reserved forest areas, the meeting called for stronger measures to curb illegal sand extraction.

Directives were also issued to take necessary precautions against environmental polluters, especially within different types of hotels, motels, resorts, and other establishments on St Martin's Island.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Minister Md Shahab Uddin, Deputy Minister Habibun Nahar, and secretaries from the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.



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

Interest of youths in politics has declined: Haas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi youths' interest in politics has significantly declined, said US Ambassador Peter D Haas yesterday.

He attributed this decline to factors such as political violence on university campuses, nepotism, corruption, a lack of confidence in political leadership, a culture that restricts them from casting their votes in elections, and limited freedom of speech.

The US envoy made these remarks while inaugurating a campaign "Amio Jitte Chai" at a city hotel.

Approximately 200 young representatives from across the country participated in the National Youth Conference, where the campaign was launched.

Recalling the crucial roles played by youths in the 1952 Language Movement and the 1971 Liberation

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