



PM leaves for New York to attend UNGA

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka for New York last morning to attend the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the PM and her entourage departed from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 10:10am.

The flight is scheduled to land at John F Kennedy International Airport in New York at 10:50pm local time after a four-hour stopover at Heathrow Airport in London.

Bangladesh Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Muhammad Abdul Muhith and Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Muhammad Imran will receive the prime minister at the airport.

During her stay in New York from September 17-22, the premier will attend the first day of the high-level General Debate of the 78th UNGA session at the General Assembly Hall of the UN Headquarters on September 19. She will address it on September 22 between 1:00pm to 2:00pm local time.

Hasina has also been invited to join a dinner hosted by US President Joe Biden on September 19.

On the sidelines of the UNGA session, she will also attend a number of high-level side events, including Rohingya and climate change, sustainable development goals (SDGs), universal health, and finance alongside taking part in several bilateral and courtesy meetings.

She is expected to deliver a keynote speech at a high-level conference titled "Thought for Food - Collaborating for Food Supply Chain Innovation to Accelerate the SDGs," organised by the UNIDO and Deloitte at Rockefeller Center, New York, on September 18.

She will also address another conference titled "SDG Summit Leaders' Dialogue 4 (strengthening integrated policies and public institutions for achieving the SDGs) at the Trusteeship Council Chamber on the same day.

In the evening, the PM is likely to attend a high-level private dinner to mark the UN's 2023 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Summit hosted by Gordon Brown, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Global Education and WHO Ambassador for Global Health Financing and Sarah Brown Executive Chair of the Global Business Coalition for Education at Lexington Venue, New York.

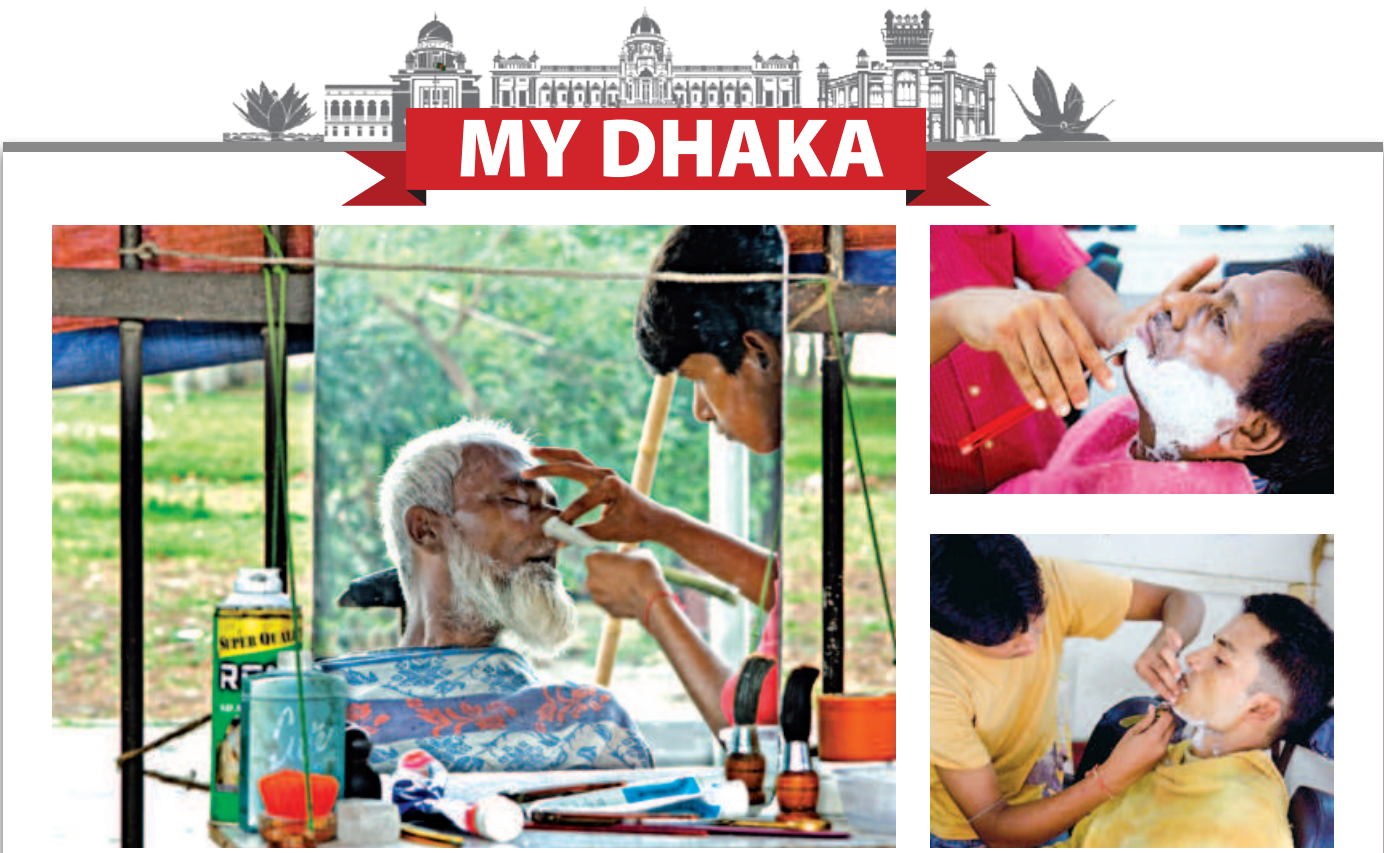


PHOTO: LS ARCHIVE/ SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

Barbershop tales

AAQIB HASIB

On a Friday afternoon, you sit there in one of the most comfortable chairs you have ever sat on. Your eyes are closed as you relax after a long week of school or work, with the only noise in the background being a 30-year-old Bollywood film and the relentless snip-snip-snap, almost like ASMR.

As the kids would say, the vibes are immaculate.

The scene I am describing is that of a quintessential, local barbershop. Not the fancy high-end ones that charge you Tk 500 to give you a light trim but the old-school neighbourhood one, where you can get a haircut or a shave for just Tk 100.

These barbershops are institutions that hold culture and history, shaping the lives of men and boys.

As a child, I remember being rather hesitant to visit these salons. My young mind hated having to sit still for 30 minutes to an hour, as back then I always felt I could make better use of that time by playing video games or watching TV.

However, as I grew older, I learned to value this age-old ritual. See, that one hour of sitting in that ridiculously



comfortable chair while someone takes care of my hair almost feels like an act of meditation. It gave me the opportunity to let all the thoughts in my head play out and process until it was fully organised.

For almost 20 years, I went to the same barbershop in Mohammadpur, sometimes once a month, other times once every two months.

My barber, Riaz mama, always knew what cut would suit me best and kept my trim on point. I only switched barbershops once they closed, but those countless hours spent at my local one, listening to Bollywood hits or watching everyone trash talk over a cricket match are core memories to me.

With my barbershop gone, I bounced around between different barbers for a couple of years.

I even ventured into the fancier shops and while the haircuts were great, I struggled to find the same connection I had with my old salon.

One correlation I discovered was that more upscale a barbershop the

more it lacked that homely feeling one would get at their neighbourhood counterpart.

The services were the same, albeit pricier, but it only felt like a detached transaction. There was no classic banter between the barbers, no cricket or Bollywood playing like white noise and definitely no Riaz mama.

Last year, a friend took me to this new barbershop called Dallas Salon. After stepping foot in Dallas, I have not gone to another barbershop since.

It almost felt like my ratatouille moment, where I had a flashback to five-year-old me stepping inside my childhood salon.

After speaking with the person cutting my hair, I learned that Dallas had been around for 15 years. Over this decade and a half, they have preserved that quintessential barbershop culture that many of us have grown up loving.

For so many of us who have grown up with the classic neighbourhood barbershop, we do not simply go there for a haircut or a shave.

Rather, it has become a meditative and relaxing ritual.

Though childhood nostalgia comes with memories of mostly old friends and moments, the times spent in these barbershops are often overlooked for what they contribute to our lives.

With Dhaka rapidly growing, these institutions may soon all be replaced by corporate, high-end salons. But we can hope they receive the appreciation they deserve while they are still around.

Potato price

FROM PAGE 1

Mostafa Azad Chowdhury, president of the Bangladesh Cold Storage Association.

Three days later, the Directorate of National Consumers' Rights Protection instructed the potato traders to sell at Tk 26 to 27 per kg from September 17.

The traders say that they will incur huge losses if they sell at the price instructed by the DNCRP.

"For this reason, many businesspeople have stopped selling potatoes – they are observing the situation," Chowdhury added.

Price control does not go with the concept of a free market economy, said Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh.

"The government should create a formal supply chain. Then many problems will be solved and consumers will also benefit," he said, adding that the government's current steps are doomed to failure.

About 13,000

FROM PAGE 1

Upon successful registration, the beneficiaries will be able to pay instalments at a bank branch or through the mobile financial service platform, online bank transfer or a bank card.

Primarily, Sonali Bank has been selected to receive money from subscribers. Later, more banks will be included for this purpose, officials said.

Under the Surokha scheme, people can deposit Tk 1,000, Tk 2,000, Tk 3,000 or Tk 5,000 in monthly instalments.

The monthly instalment fee under the Somota scheme is Tk 1,000 whereas under the Prohash scheme, the monthly fee is Tk 5,000, Tk 7,500 or Tk 10,000.

For the Progoti scheme, monthly instalment options are Tk 2,000, Tk 3,000 and Tk 5,000.

As per the rules, anyone paying monthly instalment fees for 10 consecutive years is eligible to receive the monthly pension.

BNP to go all out to unseat

FROM PAGE 1

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir is likely to announce the programmes at a press conference today.

Sources said the party will announce public rallies and road marches from Tuesday, which will continue till October 3.

The BNP has already decided

BNP's programmes

- » Sept 19 – Rallies in Keraniganj, Tongi
- » Sept 21 – Road march from Bhairab Bazar to Sylhet
- » Sept 22 – Rally by pro-BNP professional bodies in Dhaka
- » Sept 23 – Rallies in Jatrabari, Uttara
- » Road march from Barishal to Patuakhali
- » Sept 25 – Rallies in Nayabazar, Amin Bazar
- » Sept 26 – Road march in Khulna division
- » Sept 27 – Rallies in Gabtoli, Narayanganj's Fatullah
- » Sept 29 – Women's rally in Dhaka
- » Sept 30 – Krishak-Sramik rally in Dhaka
- » Oct 1 – Road march from Mymensingh to Kishoreganj
- » Oct 3 – Road march from Cumilla to Chattogram

in principle to hold road marches in Sylhet, Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram regions.

Three front and associate bodies of the party have already held road marches over the last two days in some northern districts where Fakhrul announced they won't quit road marches until the government is deposed.

"Through these programmes, we want to complete the mass campaign aimed at making people aware about

our programmes to ensure their participation," he said.

After October 3, the party will announce fresh programmes mainly for Dhaka city and its periphery, which will continue until the announcement of the election schedule.

The BNP started its one-point movement on July 12, and has since been holding various programmes, including sit-ins at the entry points of Dhaka on July 29.

Party leaders said they want to hold peaceful programmes. But if the government does not pay heed to their demand, they will go for tougher programmes from October.

"From now on, we will hold nonstop programmes. There will be no pause in our movement till our goal is achieved," said BNP Standing Committee Member Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku.

Govt finally okays

FROM PAGE 1

The imported eggs are expected to reach the market within a week after opening a Letter of Credit (LC), which should happen in a couple of days, the ministry official said.

According to the commerce ministry, the country requires four crore eggs a day.

Notably, chicken eggs were sold for 26 rupees (Tk 34.29) per four pieces in Kolkata yesterday, or Tk 8.5 per piece.

On September 14, the government fixed the price of eggs at Tk 12 per piece at the retail level amid a price hike of the essential protein source.

While making the announcement, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said the government also decided to import eggs if the price on the local market does not come down.

The price cap on eggs barely made an impact on the runaway prices, as shopkeepers in the capital have not complied with the order.

At different kitchen markets across the capital, only a few shops were selling an egg for Tk 12, while most were demanding Tk 13.50.

EC, AL already in election mode

FROM PAGE 1

Amendments to an electoral law have also been made.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) Ahsan Habib Khan said, "We are making preparations to hold a free, fair, acceptable and participatory election in line with our roadmap announced in September last year."

Political parties are presumably making their own plans and policies for their preparations, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Election Commissioner Anisur Rahman at a programme in Kishoreganj yesterday said the schedule for the polls would be announced in November.

"The participation of all parties in the election does not depend on us. Parties are to decide individually if they want to take part in the polls. But we will create a conducive atmosphere for elections," he said.

The current parliament expires on January 29. According to the constitution, the national election must be held anytime during the final 90 days of the parliament's tenure. The 90-day countdown starts on November 1.

EC'S PREPARATIONS

The EC has approved 66 local observers to monitor the polls and invited more organisations to observe the elections. It is also at the final stage of changing the policy for approving international observers and journalists.

The procurement of election materials like transparent ballot boxes, seals for the ballot boxes, stamp pads, indelible ink markers, official seals, and marking seals will be completed between this month and November, EC officials said.

THE AL CAMPAIGNING

The ruling party's manifesto will highlight the government achievements. It will organise concerts in every district town to publicise the achievements.

Teams are being formed to run social media campaigns highlighting the achievements and "misrule during the BNP-Jamaat alliance".

The promise of a "Smart

Bangladesh" by 2041 will also be prominent in its manifesto.

The AL has conducted several surveys to find suitable candidates and another survey is going on. It wants to make sure no disgruntled AL leader runs against the party nominees. The AL plans to field independent candidates so that the election appears participatory even if the BNP shuns it.

AL's top leaders are in talks with like-minded political parties to bring them under its fold and with other parties to get them to take part in the polls and make the election look participatory.

It has also had preliminary talks with allies over the share of seats in parliament.

"After the PM returns from the US, she will start campaigning across the country," said an AL praesidium member.

Hasina will inaugurate a number of mega projects before November to impress the voters.

An AL insider said, "An election-time government with a small number of cabinet members will likely be formed in the first half of November."

THE JP GETTING READY

The JP is asking its probable nominees to get ready for the election, according to sources.

It is looking for the best candidates in areas where there are not many supporters of the party. It believes that without a good number of MPs in parliament, the party will become weak, said a JP leader.

"We want to make the party vibrant through holding local councils," JP Chairman GM Quader told this newspaper.

"We will try our best to field candidates in all 300 constituencies," he added.

President of AL ally Workers Party of Bangladesh Rashed Khan Menon yesterday said, "We are collecting names of probable candidates from the districts." He said they were in discussion with AL over seat-sharing but no final decision has been made.

Two children drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Two children drowned in a pond in Cumilla's Chandina upazila yesterday afternoon.

The victims are Afnan, 7, son of Abdullah Al Noman Shiblu, and Adnan, 8, son of Shariar Sumon, of Mohonpur village in Batagachi union.

They were cousins, said Shahabuddin Khan, officer in charge of Chandina Police Station.

Quoting locals, the OC said the incident took place around 2:00pm when the two cousins went to take a bath in a pond after returning home from school. When they did not come home, locals searched for them and found their bodies floating in a pond.

Recovering the bodies, the families rushed them to Cumilla Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared them dead.

The OC said the bodies were handed over to the families without an autopsy.

19kg gold seized in Panchagarh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Border Guard Bangladesh on Sunday recovered 19 gold bars, each weighing around a kilogramme, while they were being smuggled to India through the border at Haribhasha Prodhanpara village in Panchagarh Sadar upazila.

Md Juwel, 32, of the upazila's Modhupur village, was detained at that time.

Acting on a tip-off, BGB men from Ghagra border outpost intercepted Juwel's motorbike in the morning near Haribhasha border pillar 755/4-S and recovered the gold bars worth about Tk 15.12 crore from his possession.

Tk 24,690 in cash and a cell phone were also seized from his possession.

Contacted, Lt Col Md Asaduzzaman Hakim, commander of BGB-56 (Nilphamari), said Juwel was handed over to police.

He added that the gold bars would be handed over to customs officials after completing the necessary formalities.

Man sentenced to death for rape, murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A Narayanganj court yesterday sentenced a man to death in a case filed over the killing of a 9-year-old girl after rape in Rugganj upazila two years ago.

Judge Nazmul Haque Shyamal of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal announced the verdict in presence of the convict, Md Mosharaf Mia, 45, of the upazila.

The court also sentenced the convict to five years imprisonment for hiding the girl's body after the murder, said Public Prosecutor Rakibuddin Ahmed.

On October 22, 2021, Mosharaf abducted the girl and raped her at an isolated place near her home before murdering her and subsequently hiding her body, according to the case statement.

A day later, a case was filed when her body was recovered.

On March 29, 2022, police filed a chargesheet against Mosharaf.

The court gave the verdict after hearing the testimony of 11 witnesses, PP added.