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Raise awareness,
follow traffic laws

Says BRTA chief ahead of
National Road Safety Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority has emphasised on raising awareness and following traffic laws to ensure road safety, as the country prepares to observe National Road Safety Day on October 22.

“At least 12 to 15 people are getting killed every day... We have to ensure road safety and to do so we all have to follow traffic laws,” said BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder.

The comments came during a press briefing at the BRTA headquarters, ahead of National Road Safety Day.

Mazumder said everybody -- transport owners, workers and road users -- have to be aware and follow traffic rules, otherwise it would not be possible to ensure road safety.

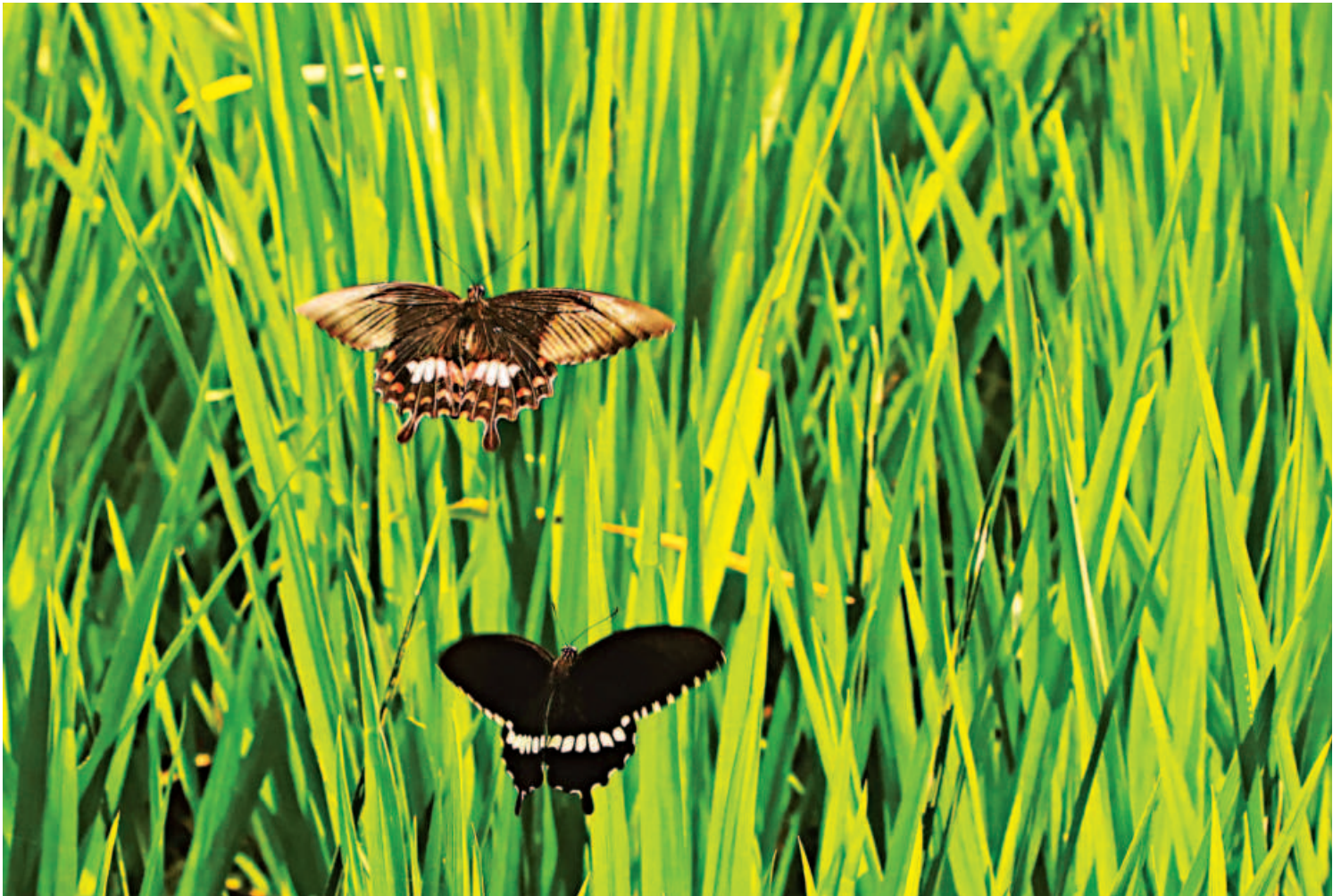
“If we want to enforce traffic rules strictly, only in Dhaka city, it will require 100 magistrates. But we only have five to six magistrates... so, ensuring road safety is not possible unless we can create a social movement,” he said.

Besides, mobile courts are taking action against fitness defaulter vehicles.

The BRTA chairman also said they have chalked out a series of programmes -- including rallies, processions and campaigns -- to create awareness.

If we want to enforce traffic rules strictly, only in Dhaka city, it will require 100 magistrates. But we only have five to six magistrates...

Nur Mohammad Mazumder
BRTA Chairman



Two Common Mormons glide along the wind amid the swaying emerald paddy leaves. The photo was taken yesterday in Gazipur's Dhirasram area.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

SM Ali's
30th death
anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Yesterday marked the 30th death anniversary of Syed Mohammad Ali, founder editor-publisher of The Daily Star and a luminary in journalism of Bangladesh.



SM Ali made his way up from a cub reporter to one of the country's most brilliant editors in a career spanning 44 years. He also led the Press Institute of Bangladesh as its chairman.

Educated in Kolkata, Dhaka and London, he was one of the few Asian journalists who stood out in regional journalism.

Ali was born in a well-known family in Sylhet, in 1928.

He was the eldest son of the late Syed Mustafa Ali, an official of the Assam Civil Service, and nephew





Just to point out that the UN is not in the business of observing elections unless it receives a mandate.

STÉPHANE DUJARRIC
Spokesman for
UN secretary-general

PRAYER
TIMING
OCTOBER 18

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:50	12:45	4:00	5:38	7:15
JAMAAT 5:25	1:15	4:15	5:41	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Tk 536cr climate fund
stuck in bank

JS body expresses concern to environment ministry

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary body yesterday expressed deep concern over the stuck Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund, which was deposited with the then Farmers Bank, now known as Padma Bank Limited.

The parliamentary standing committee on Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ministry asked the officials concerned to take necessary measures to recover Tk 536 crore, which was kept in the bank as FDR.

Awami League MP and chief of the parliamentary watchdog Saber Hossain Chowdhury presided over the meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The Bangladesh Climate Change Trust was due to receive Tk 536 crore in 2016, along with the accumulated interest, but received just Tk 74 crore after around seven years, said sources.

The trust, which operates under

the environment ministry, made the fixed deposit in 2015 for one year, so the money was due in 2016, said the trust's officials.

Including the nine percent

The Bangladesh Climate Change Trust was due to receive Tk 536 crore in 2016, along with the accumulated interest, but received just Tk 74 crore after around seven years.

interest, the total due now stands at around Tk 827 crore, sources said.

The wait to retrieve the investment will get even longer as Farmers Bank, now Padma Bank,

Sheikh Russel
Day today

BSS, Dhaka

Sheikh Russel Day will be observed in the country today, marking the 60th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's youngest son Sheikh Russel.

Russel, also the youngest brother of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was born on October 18 in 1964 at the historic Bangabandhu Bhaban in Dhanmondi 32.

He was brutally killed along with most of his family members, including his father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on August 15, 1975, when he was a student of class four at University Laboratory School.



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‘Govt trying to
stage farcical polls’
Says Left Democratic Alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Left Democratic Alliance yesterday said the incumbent government is trying to stage a drama of farcical elections but they would resist it.

Leaders of the alliance also said the Election Commission led by CEC Kazi Habibur Awal is not neutral and will not be able to conduct the 12th parliamentary elections in a free and fair manner.

LDA organised a programme to besiege the EC in the capital's Agargaon yesterday, demanding the establishment of a polls-time caretaker government and the resignation of the EC.

The activists of the left-leaning parties gathered in front of IDB Bhaban from 11:00am and held a rally there. After completing the rally, the alliance faced police blockade when they marched towards the EC Office in Agargaon around 12:15pm.

“If the government tries to hold another farcical election like the 2014 and 2018 polls, we will resist the election schedule and wage stern movement against it,” said Ikbal Kabir Jahid, coordinator of the alliance.

“The election will not be free and fair with an election commission that is obedient to the government,” said Bazlur Rashid Firoj, general secretary of Socialist Party of Bangladesh.

Ruhin Hossain Prince, general secretary, Communist Party of Bangladesh, asked the government to resign, dissolve the parliament, and sit for a dialogue.

‘Make sure
minorities
can vote
freely’

Citizens' platform
urges EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sampriti Bangladesh, a citizens' platform, yesterday urged the Election Commission to ensure that religious minorities can cast their votes freely in the upcoming national elections.

Leaders of the platform also called upon the EC to take steps so that anti-liberation forces cannot take part in the polls.

They placed their demands in writing to the EC during a discussion with the election commissioners at the EC office.

Actor Pijush Bandyopadhyay, convener of the platform, told reporters after the meeting that Bangladesh no longer wants to witness post-polls violence like it happened after the 2001 elections.

EC secretary Jahangir Alam said the commission will take necessary steps to this end.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

To shelter themselves from the afternoon rain yesterday, bikers park their motorbikes under a footbridge, blocking over half of the busy New Airport Road in the capital's Banani. This made it difficult for large vehicles, especially buses, to pass, leading to a tailback along the route.

Eye test for drivers
shows grim picture

243 out of 446 have vision problems

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 76 percent of 446 drivers, who recently went for eye tests over three days, were found to have various eye problems, raising serious question about road safety.

Out of 446 drivers, 243 were found to have vision problems, while 96 had other eye-related issues.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, in association with several other organisations, carried out the tests earlier this month, in preparation for the upcoming National Road Safety Day on October 22.

Besides, 393 drivers went through other tests, where 381 were found to have problems such as high blood pressure and blood sugar.

BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder revealed the information at a press conference at BRTA's headquarters held in the capital's Banani yesterday.

Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri inaugurated the campaign on October 11 at BRTA training centre in Nikunja.

On that day, 289 drivers underwent eyesight tests, where 164 were found to have vision problems, while 67 suffered from other issues.

On October 12, 112 drivers were tested at BRTA's Diabari circle office, where 48 were found to have vision problems, while 22 had other issues.

Eyes of 45 drivers were tested at Sayedabad Bus Terminal on October 14, where 31 were found having vision problems and seven others had other issues.

Asked about the tests, BRTA chairman said if these problems were found during the field test of drivers, they would not have been given driving licences. Besides, they are also planning to launch lab test for the drivers before issuing driving licences, he said.