



Awami League leaders and activists gather at the party office on Bangabandhu Avenue in Gulistan as part of their "peace rally" yesterday. Meanwhile, the opposition BNP's office in Nayapaltn remains locked and guarded by police. The 12th general election will be held on January 7, the Election Commission announced on Wednesday amid escalating tension between the major political parties over the polls-time government.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Eight more die of dengue

UNB, Dhaka

Eight more deaths were reported from dengue in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising fatalities from the mosquito borne disease to 1,528 this year.

During the period, 1,429 more patients were hospitalised with viral fever, according to the DGHS.

A total of 5,558 dengue patients, including 1,457 in the capital, are now receiving treatment at hospitals across the country.

So far, the DGHS has recorded 2,98,094 dengue cases and 2,91,008 recoveries this year.

September has so far been the deadliest month for the dengue outbreak this year with 396 fatalities and 79,598 cases, according to DGHS data.



Bhasani's 47th death anniv today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The 47th death anniversary of Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, a legendary political leader in the sub-continent, will be observed today.

Born in 1880 at Dhangara village in Sirajganj, Bhasani dedicated his entire life towards establishing the rights of the oppressed and downtrodden.

Bhasani passed away on this day in 1976. He was buried at Santosh in Tangail.

Different socio-political organisations will mark the day with elaborate programmes across the country. They will place wreaths at his grave at Santosh.

Maulana Bhasani Parishad, and Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University will also organise various programmes, including placing a wreath at the grave of Bhashani, special

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72pc youths feel unsafe to express opinions

Says BYLC survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A study has revealed that 55 percent of its respondents believe Bangladesh is not a peaceful country, while 57 percent say the state of justice has deteriorated in the country over the last five years.

The findings were revealed in the "Youth Matters Survey 2023", conducted by Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) in collaboration with Brac University's Center for Peace and Justice (CPJ), which surveyed 5,609 participants aged 16-35 via Facebook.

The study's lead researcher, Hossain Mohammed Omar Khayum, presented the report at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

Khayum said 88.8 percent of youths identified corruption as one of the major challenges for the country's development. Simultaneously, 67.3 percent pointed to unemployment, while 50.5 percent noted inflation and economic crisis as major challenges.

It also revealed that 68.6 percent believe the current education system does not adequately equip them with necessary skills to secure employment or establish businesses.

Executive Director of BYLC, Tahsinah Ahmed, said to improve the situation, youths asked for more training in leadership, communication, and soft skills.

Around 58 percent of youths also expressed the need for improvement in the teachers' quality.

Additionally, 61.8 percent of respondents said their physical and mental health was negatively impacted by price hikes, while 40 percent were affected by job insecurity.

SURVEY AT A GLANCE

Bangladesh not a peaceful country 55.3pc

State of justice has deteriorated in last 5yrs 57.3pc

Corruption a major challenge 88.8pc

Life impacted by climate change 73.4pc

Physical, mental health affected by price hikes 61.8pc

Interest in casting vote 72pc

Planning to settle abroad 42.4pc

Some 73.4 percent of youths opined that they have faced negative impacts of climate change over the years.

Besides, 71.5 percent of respondents said they feel unsafe when expressing their opinions on public platforms like social media. Despite concerns, 72 percent

expressed interest in participating in general elections.

The study showcased that, due to these challenges, 42.4 percent of young people plan to move abroad.

However, Tahsinah voiced optimism saying, "Despite all these challenges, we have a ray of hope as around 57 percent of youths still remain optimistic about Bangladesh's future."

"We are also overwhelmed with the 85.5 percent who wish to return to the country if the situation is resolved," she added.

BYLC's founder and executive chairperson Ejaj Ahmad said, "We should not see the youth as future leaders, but as current leaders."

"To ensure meaningful youth participation, we should not only incorporate their viewpoints into our national policies but also provide space for them to exercise leadership at local and national levels, including politics, business, and civil sectors," he added.

The study was conducted in all eight divisions and covered eight different topics – livelihood, health, education, climate change, democratic institutions and governance, peace and justice, migration, information, and perception.

BYLC conducts a survey every five years, especially before national elections, to provide Bangladeshi youths with the space to voice their aspirations and concerns about the country's present state and future.

YUNUS CASE Prosecution completes arguments

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday completed their arguments in a labour law violation case filed against Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and three top officials of Grameen Telecom.

Sheikh Merina Sultana, chairman of the Third Labour Court of Dhaka, then set November 20 for hearing arguments from the defence, Khaja Tanvir Ahmed, a defence lawyer, told The Daily Star.

Prof Yunus, also chairman of Grameen Telecom, and its top officials – Ashrafal Hassan, Nurjahan Begum and Mohammad Shahjahan – appeared before the court yesterday.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of four prosecution witnesses in the case.

On June 6, it framed charges against the accused, including Prof Yunus.

On September 9, 2021, Labour Inspector (general) SM Arifuzzaman of the Inspection for Factories and Establishments Department filed the case with the Third Labour Court of Dhaka.



SAGAR-RUNI MURDER Rab gets 105th extension for probe report submission

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended till December 19 the deadline for submitting the probe report of a case filed over the murders of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi in February 2012.

This is the 105th extension of the deadline for probe report submission.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Shafuddin passed the order after Rab Additional Superintendent of Police Khondoker Md Shafiqul Alam, also the case's investigation officer, failed to submit the report, court sources said.



Earlier, the same court asked Rab to submit the probe report by yesterday.

Earlier, two separate courts expressed dissatisfaction over the probe and the investigators' failure to unearth the motive behind the murders and arrest the culprits.

Sagar, news editor at private TV channel Maasranga, and his wife Runi, senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed in the early hours of February 11, 2012, in their rented flat in the capital's West Razabazar.

Their only son Mahir Sarowar Megh, then 5, was home at that time. Nousher Ali Roman, Runi's brother, filed a case with Sher-e-Bangla Police Station the following day.

Focus on urban poor Speakers urge govt at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most of the government's social safety net programmes and allowances are for underprivileged people living in rural areas and they do not cover pavement dwellers living in urban areas, said a study by All-Party Parliamentary Groups yesterday.

The APPGs recently conducted a study to identify policy recommendations for political parties and the government to address critical needs of urban underprivileged people living on pavements and in undeveloped slums.

Speakers also said the political parties should include the issues faced by these urban poor people in their election manifestos.

Shishir Shil, secretary general of APPGs, presented the study at a roundtable held at the office of Bangla daily Samakal in the capital.

Samakal organised the roundtable in association with APPGs and Concern Worldwide Bangladesh.

"Urban pavement dwellers are the poorest of the urban poor, with their human, socio-cultural, political, and economic rights severely compromised," the study noted.

According to the study, these groups lack access to proper housing, have limited and irregular access to health and education opportunities, sanitation, and other basic amenities, and often earn less than US\$1 per day.

"Besides, they often do not have NID cards or birth registration, so they cannot admit their children to schools. Besides, social safety net programmes aimed at supporting the poor do not cover them," the study added.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- NID cards for floating population
- Shelters and homes
- Creating database for them
- Day-care centres for children
- Technical, vocational training
- Primary healthcare facilities

Emphasising the need for land ownership in Dhaka, Shamsul Huda, executive director of ALRD, said there is a lack of land ceiling for urban citizens, leading to serious discrimination and injustice compared to the ceiling process for rural residents.

Referring to an ALRD study, Huda mentioned that 30-35 percent of city residents are slum dwellers, yet the state remains unaware of their situation.

He emphasised that these individuals are not a burden, rather they are assets of the state.

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Police protection not sufficient Say owners, staffers for not operating long-route buses

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Bus owners have refrained from operating long-route buses due to insufficient security measures on highways amid the ongoing blockade and hartal called by BNP and other parties.

Passengers have also been discouraged from going on long distance journeys for the same reason, which is why long-route buses are not being operated despite assurances from law enforcement agencies, said bus owners and staffers.

Mosharaf Hossain Joy, a driver of Diganta Paribahan on the Dhaka-Satkhira route, said, "We were promised escort services by law enforcers for long route buses, but we have yet to receive such services."

"Police only provide security upon complaint, and even then, it is limited to certain police stations or outpost jurisdictions, not for the entire journey," he said.

"Without adequate security, passengers fear potential arson



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Devoid of passengers, Gabtoli bus terminal wears a deserted look.

attacks, for which we haven't been able to attract sufficient passengers for our journeys," he added.

Joy only operates buses when passenger numbers are sufficient, especially on Fridays and Saturdays.

The Daily Star visited Gabtoli and Sayedabad bus terminals over the last week and spoke

to dozens of bus drivers and staffers, and they echoed the same.

Md Siam, a counterman of Tungipara Express on Dhaka-Gopalganj-Khulna route, said usually 50 buses leave Dhaka between 5:00am and noon daily.

"But only eight buses left today [yesterday], due to a

shortage of passengers. The passengers are not coming in fear of arson and lack of security," he claimed.

Faruk Hossain, a driver of Janani Paribahan on Dhaka-Chuadanga route, said, "Sometimes, we find police patrols on highways, but these are not adequate," he said.

An owner of a bus company that has over two dozen buses, requesting anonymity, said, "Passengers don't have confidence in existing security measures, so they are avoiding long-route travel."

"We are trying to improve security measures by holding talks with the authorities," he added.

Contacted, Anwar Hossain, deputy inspector general (operation) of the police headquarters, refuted the allegations of bus owners and staff. "We are providing adequate security measures and escort by coordinating with the highway police and district police units. Still, we will look into the allegations," he added.