

No daycare for children with special needs

TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA

Every day, Fatima Islam fights a silent war to protect her 12-year-old daughter, Nisha, who has autism spectrum disorder (ASD), from a society that is yet to fully embrace children with special needs.

Fatima shared the pain of dealing with judgmental neighbours who often make hurtful comments, while their children bully Nisha.

Nisha is a student of Society for the Welfare of the Intellectually Disabled (SWID), Bangladesh.

"I completed post-graduation and wanted to join a job. But I could not since I have to take care of my daughter all day and there is no daycare facility for children like her," Fatima said.

Masuma Farzana, a mother from Khilgaon, echoed the same.

Every day, from morning till noon, she anxiously awaits outside the

classroom of her only son Adnan, 23.

Adnan also suffers from ASD and was admitted to SWID Bangladesh when he was 12. He is currently pursuing vocational training at the institute. "It takes time for my son to understand lessons and conversations. I am his only friend," said Masuma, who had to give up her business to look after Adnan.

Parveen Sultana, a mother from Lalmatia, is also facing similar struggles as Nehar, her 18-year-old daughter, is suffering from down syndrome. "Since Nehar was born, I have only been focusing on her care," said Parveen.

Stressing the lack of specialised child care facilities, many others like Fatima, Parveen and Masuma shared similar experiences.

According to them, their children need constant care and attention, which is stressful, tiring and often leads to fatigue and a loss of patience.

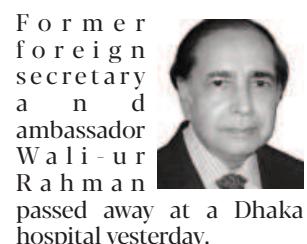
At present, there are 63 daycare

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

At present, there are 63 daycare centres operational under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. However, none of those offer facilities for children with disabilities and special needs.

Wali-ur Rahman passes away

BSS, Dhaka



Former foreign secretary and ambassador Wali-ur Rahman passed away at a Dhaka hospital yesterday.

He was 80.

He died of cardiac arrest around 10:30am at LabAid Hospital, said family sources.

Rahman was the executive director of Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs and chairman of the Bangladesh Heritage Foundation.

He is widely acclaimed for his role in 1971 and after Bangladesh's independence. He left the Pakistan foreign service in 1971 and joined the then-Mujibnagar government,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

'Form special tribunal to ensure energy justice'

Speakers demand repeal of 'indemnity act'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Consumer Association of Bangladesh (CAB) yesterday demanded that authorities concerned repeal the Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provisions) Act 2010.

The law is an "indemnity act" as the deals done under it are questionable, they alleged.

The association also demanded the re-empowerment of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission to ensure energy justice," said CAB vice president Prof M Shamsul Alam.

They made the remarks at a discussion titled "We Want Justice in Energy Transition" at Jatiya Press Club.

"The law was initially enacted for only two years in 2010, at a time when the country needed electricity badly. But it is still effective as they repeatedly extended the act," said CAB president Md Gulam Rahman.

"This indemnity act was introduced so that nobody could challenge the deals made in this sector. It should be cancelled."

"The BERC should be reinstated. If

the BERC acts properly, irregularities reduce, which is why the government made this organisation inactive," said Prof MM Akash of Dhaka University's economics department.

"In the last couple of years, the government conducted huge irregularities in the energy sector using this special provision. We urge the upcoming government to form a special tribunal to ensure energy justice," said CAB vice president Prof M Shamsul Alam.

Geologist Prof Badrul Imam said, "Despite significant natural gas potential in local gas fields and the Bay of Bengal, we neglect our local energy resources, relying instead on expensive LNG and coal imports."

In the keynote paper, journalist Arifuzzaman Tuhin said if the energy transition process continues in the same way as the fossil fuel-based power plants were established, it will lead to a hazardous situation in future.

"The solar power plants are also given to the same companies who are giants in fossil fuel-based power generation

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

COX'S BAZAR RAIL STATION

A modern marvel awaits travellers

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

The recently constructed Cox's Bazar rail station aims to attract more tourists to the country's renowned destination, the Cox's Bazar sea beach.

Designed to be a tourist attraction in its own right, the station is set to enhance the charm of the beach city. With thousands of daily visitors, the station has quickly become a hub of recreation for both locals and tourists.

Following the inauguration on November 11 by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the "Cox's Bazar Express" is set to be operational from December 1,



according to Md Tajul Islam, the station master of Cox's Bazar Rail Station.

The inaugural train is scheduled to depart from Cox's Bazar at 12:40pm,



and all tickets for the first three days in both directions have already been sold, he added.

UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE

Nestled on a 29-acre expanse in Chanderpara, under the Jhilongha union in Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila, stands the station, located six kilometres from the district town.

The six-storey building, covering 1.87 lakh square feet, captivates visitors with its unique exterior, shaped like an oyster shell.

The canopy serves a dual purpose --

not only enhancing the station's aesthetic appeal but also effectively cooling the building, ensuring proper air circulation, and welcoming ample natural light, according to the project engineers.

Adding to the visual allure, a variety of coloured lights grace the front of the building, providing an artistic perspective to the station's entrance.

Travelers arriving at Cox's Bazar by

AVAILABLE SERVICES

Next to the main entrance, a guide board directs visitors to various services on different floors of the station.

On the first level, one will find ticket counters, arrival and VIP lounges, ATM booths, a pharmacy, post office, railway service office, children's care centre, information booth, and luggage lockers.

The second level offers a departure lounge, locker room, prayer space, shops, and a cafe.

Levels 3 to 6 house a shopping mall and food court, a five-star overnight stay option with dining, office spaces and restaurants, and a multipurpose hall, respectively.

Travelers arriving at Cox's Bazar by

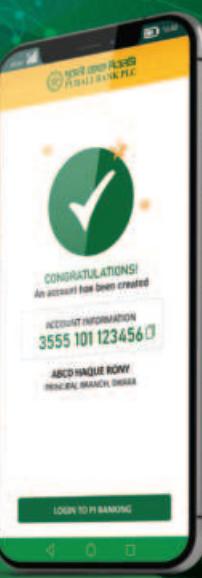
SEE PAGE 4 COL 6





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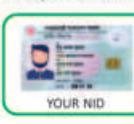
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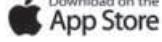
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MPs won't have to resign to run as independents: EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sitting MPs will not have to resign if they take part in the upcoming national elections as independent candidate, the EC said yesterday.

These MPs will also not need to submit signatures of one percent voters of their constituency, in line with the Representation of the People Order-1972, an EC press statement said.

The statement came as several media reported that Election Commissioner Rashida Sultana yesterday, at a programme in Rajshahi, said MPs have to resign if they want to run as independent candidates. It says so in the law, she had said.

However, yesterday's statement said MPs elected with party tickets will not have to resign from their positions.

54 public reps resign to contest polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 54 local government representatives, including zilla and upazila parishad chairmen, have resigned from their respective posts to participate in the upcoming national election slated for January 7.

According to the Local Government Division, 50 upazila parishad chairmen, three chairmen and one member of zilla parishad submitted their resignation letters which were accepted by the division.

The trend of resignation started after Awami League decided to field alternative candidates from among its leaders to make the election participatory.

As many as 14 elected local representatives resigned in Chattogram so far, the highest.

At least 10 upazila parishad chairmen left their posts in Dhaka division. In other divisions, seven chairmen each from Mymensingh and Rajshahi, four from Rangpur, five from Khulna, two from Sylhet and one from Barishal resigned from the post of upazila chairman.

Two zilla parishad chairmen in Rangpur, Mohammad Zafar Ali in Kurigram and Mohammad Motiul Rahman of Lalmonirhat district, resigned from the post of zilla parishad chairman.

In Sylhet division, chairman of Habiganj zilla parishad Dr Mohammad Mushfiq Hossen Chowdhury resigned.

Many of the representatives have already collected nomination papers from the offices of returning officers.

On Sunday, AL President Sheikh Hasina, during a meeting with AL nomination seekers, said alternative candidates should be kept to prevent unopposed candidates from winning.