

5 women to receive ‘Begum Rokeya Padak’

UNB, Dhaka

Women and Children Affairs Ministry yesterday announced the names of five notable women as Begum Rokeya Padak awardees for this year for their contribution to various fields.

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Fazilatun Nessa Indira announced the names at a press conference at Secretariat.

The five awardees are -- first woman vice chancellor of Buet Prof Khaleda Ekram (posthumous) for women education; Dr Halida Hanum Akhter of Rangpur for establishing women's rights; Kamrunnesa Ashraf Dina of Netrakona for her contributions in socio-economic development of women (posthumous); Nishat Mazumder of Lakshmipur and Ronita Bala of Thakurgaon for rural development.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hand over the award at an event at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka at 10:00am on December 9.



Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina along with local AL leaders pays tribute at the mausoleum of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara in Gopalganj yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

‘Development interrelated with justice, freedom’

Speakers tell conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should ensure freedom and justice by offering good governance, rule of law, and institutionalisation for sustainable development, speakers said at an event.

They were speaking at the inauguration of Annual BIDS Conference on Development, organised by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies at a Dhaka hotel yesterday.

“Development is interrelated with justice and freedom. If you want development, you need to ensure freedom and justice, as their absence hinders development,” said SR Osmani, a professor of development economics at University of Ulster, UK.

Lack of freedom and justice leads to credit discrimination, leaving poor people without adequate funds amid social instability, he said in his keynote speech, adding that the private sector holds back their investment in this situation, which ultimately deters development.

“If freedom and justice are ensured, then private sector will make the development. Sadly, most governments do the opposite,” he added.

Planning Minister MA Mannan, however, said some countries have developed significantly despite having autocratic governments.

“Some people say if a government continues in power, then it may become autocratic, and autocracy is deterring to the development,” he said while talking as chief guest.

“Is it really true? Then how did Malaysia and Singapore develop?”

“Some economists are saying that China's economy will not be able to continue its high growth. Is it going that way?”

“In Bangladesh, our government is trying to ensure

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Lack of freedom and justice leads to credit discrimination, leaving poor people without adequate funds amid social instability.

SR OSMANI
Professor of dev economics

Gold worth Tk 4.4cr seized at Dhaka airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs intelligence officials yesterday detained a man and seized 49 gold bars weighing nearly 5.7 kg at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka.

Detainee Fazle Rabbi arrived in Dhaka on a flight of US Bangla Airlines that landed at the airport around 4:30am, says a press release signed by Mizanur Rahman, deputy director of Customs Intelligence and Investigation Department (CID).

The officials carried out a drive inside the aircraft and interrogated Rabbi. On his discourse, they recovered 48 gold bars concealed under two seats, wrapped with scotch tape, he said.

Another gold bar was recovered after searching his body.

The market value of the gold bars is around Tk 4.4 crore.

‘Michaung’ weakens, winter looms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grey clouds crowding the sky. The sun yet to shine. Gloominess all around, seemingly reminding of monsoon. This weather is the impact of Cyclone Michaung, which is gradually losing its strength and turning into a depression over northeast Telangana of India.

However, the clouds are expected to clear out by Sunday, making way for the winter to arrive.

According to Dr Abul Kalam Mallik of Bangladesh Meteorological Department, all areas except Chattogram and Sylhet may become dry with partly cloudy skies after 10:00am today.

The temperature across the country is expected to drop 3-4 degrees Celsius after a few days, said meteorologist Bazlur Rashid.

While Dhaka's temperature was higher than expected at 23-degree Celsius on Wednesday night, continuous light to moderate rain made it difficult for city dwellers yesterday.

Sabakat Sabri Samir, a student of Kurmitola BAF Shaheen College, had to change several modes of transport on his way to college. “Despite taking a bus, my son got drenched as the window glass was broken. I would not have sent him to college today but had no choice as he had exams,” said Samir's father Shaheen Mollah.

Ashna Fabyana, a resident of Indira Road, said she had to hire a CNG-run three-wheeler to go to college at Farmgate as she was unable to find rickshaws.

Today, light to moderate rain or thundershowers, accompanied by temporary gusty winds, is likely to occur at a few places in Chattogram and Sylhet, and in one or two places in Mymensingh and Dhaka.

WASA WATER ATM BOOTHS

No longer a low-cost solution to drinking water

DIPAN NANDY

Water prices at Dhaka Wasa's water ATM booths have doubled recently, much to the dismay of residents.

They expressed concerns, saying the price hike is unjustifiable in the current economic scenario, as it now costs 80 paisa per litre instead of 40.

Fauzia Islam of Narinda area said the increased price has made it challenging for middle-class families like hers to afford the essential resource.

Due to the higher cost, those with low incomes, such as Hasnain Imtiaz of Paltan culvert road, have reduced their water use from 15 to 10 litres per day.

Daily water sales have also reduced significantly, by 15 percent, since the price was doubled on August 1, as many consumers have been compelled to reconsider their water consumption habits and have opted to use water at home after boiling for purification.

HM Akash, operator of Doyaganj 2 Water ATM Booth, said sales have dropped significantly since the price hike.

A similar situation was observed at booths in Gandaria, Bijoyanagar, and Azimpur areas.

Dhaka Wasa, in partnership with US-based company Drinkwell, has been providing safe drinking water to residents through water ATM booths at a subsidised price since 2017.

A total of 243 operational water ATM booths are currently serving over 4 lakh registered



customers in the capital. The service initially targeted low-income residents but now caters to all.

The project will run till 2026 and has plans to install 500 water ATM booths in Dhaka, with additional booths in Chattogram and Rajshahi cities.

While Dhaka Wasa supplies water to households through pipelines, many residents tend to avoid drinking it over concerns about its safety due to leaks and contamination.

Rameshwar Das, director of the Water ATM Booth Project, said the price adjustment aims to reduce

subsidies and prevent water waste.

Despite Drinkwell covering the installation costs and operational expenses, Dhaka Wasa has faced challenges in maintaining the booths, leading to the need for a price increase, he added.

“The consumer numbers dipped in the first two months following the price hike. The regular customers, however, have returned since October. Hopefully all consumers will eventually resume availing the service,” said Md Saddam Hossain Rony, assistant manager (operations and coordination) of Drinkwell.

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AGRAHAYAN 23, 1430 BS

The Daily Star

10TH ROUND OF BLOCKADE

15 vehicles torched in two days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least four vehicles were set on fire in the country yesterday, on last day of the 10th round of 48-hour blockade enforced by BNP and its allies.

A total of 15 vehicles came under arson attacks in the two days of the 10th round of blockade.

Despite the blockade, Dhaka's traffic remained almost normal. Public transports were seen packed with passengers, with traffic congestions forming at busy intersections, despite daylight rain.

Also, more long-distance buses operated from different terminals in the capital yesterday, compared to the day before.

Two vehicles were set alight in the capital -- a Taranga Paribahan bus at Shahbagh around 1:35pm, and a Gazipur Paribahan bus in Motijheel around 9:30am yesterday, said police.

Also, a staff bus of Jahan Footwear was torched in Cumilla EPZ area around 4:00am, and a truck loaded with rice was torched in Dinaipur's Birganj upazila early yesterday.

Two persons were held in connection with the Dinaipur arson incident, said Birganj OC Mozibar Rahman.

Meanwhile, BNP senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday claimed that more than 415 party men were arrested in 19 cases in the last 24 hours.

The cases showed 2,045 named and many other unnamed as accused, he said.

With the latest arrests, over 20,275 BNP men have been arrested in 571 cases since October 28, according to party sources.

Rizvi alleged that the imprisoned BNP men are being brutally tortured to switch party and make false confessions.

Terming the government as “voter-less and anti-

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NOMINATION REJECTION

155 more aspirants appeal to EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Challenging the returning officers' decisions to reject their nomination papers, 155 more aspirants filed appeals to the EC yesterday.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, 42 and 141 aspirants filed appeals to the EC on the first two days of the appeal window. So far, 338 appeals have been filed to the EC.

Appeals can be filed till December 9 at the EC Bhaban. The appeal hearings will take place from December 10-15.

A total of 2,716 aspirants filed their nomination papers and of those 731 were rejected by the ROs after scrutiny.



Dengue claims two more lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two 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 537 dengue patients were hospitalised in the 24-hour period, according to DGHS.

Dengue has so far claimed at least 1,643 lives this year and nearly 316,160 were infected, making this the deadliest year since the first recorded epidemic in 2000.

According to DGHS, 2,571 dengue patients were undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country.

A total of 311,946 patients have so far been released from hospitals across the country this year.



A man struggles to keep a hold of his umbrella which goes inside out with the wind as the biker accelerates amid winter rain on Saat Masjid road yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON