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'Tough for this JS to represent nation'

Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition GM Quader yesterday in parliament, discerned that the 12th Jatiya Sangsad will not be able to perform its duties perfectly.

"The parliament's 75 percent of MPs are from the ruling party, while 21 percent are independents. They [independents] can also be regarded as the ruling party. Only 3-4 percent are from the opposition. It will be tough to represent the whole nation in this parliament," he said.

GM Quader said this while participating in an unscheduled discussion to thank the newly elected Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury.

Quader, also chairman of Jatiyo Party, called upon the Speaker to maintain impartiality while discharging her duties in the House.

He said parliament will take decisions in favour of the people, as that was the purpose of creating parliament.

He made some demands, including giving the opposition the opportunity to raise their voice so that the parliament can run effectively.

Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui new BGB DG

BSS, Dhaka

Major General Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui has been appointed as the new director general of Border Guard Bangladesh.

He will be replacing outgoing Major General AKM Nazmul Hasan.

A gazette notification, signed by Abdullah Arif Mohammad, deputy secretary of the Public Administration ministry, was issued in this regard yesterday.



Household waste dumped indiscriminately on the northern side of Tangail-Mymensingh highway in the district town's Rabna area. With no landfill set-up in Tangail municipality, the authorities have been discarding and burning trash on roadsides, canal banks, and other open places for decades, polluting the area's ecosystem and exacerbating health risks for locals.

PHOTO: STAR

Waste management a far cry in Tangail

11 municipality authorities dumping garbage on roadside, near forest

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

At the very entrances of Tangail district town - on Tangail-Mymensingh highway in north, Tangail-Aricha highway in south, and Dhaka-Tangail highway in east - await heaps of garbage dumped by municipality authorities after collecting from households.

A putrid stench dissipates from it, adding to the nuisance for people living in the vicinity or passing by the roads.

For over 250 tonnes of household garbage produced daily by around one million residents of 11 municipalities under Tangail district, the authorities have no dumping grounds to dispose of the waste, while installing a modern waste management system remains a far cry.

As such, the residents and the municipality authorities have long been dumping waste on roadsides, drains, waterbodies, and even forest areas, polluting the environment, threatening public health, and causing civic inconveniences.

What is more unfortunate is that the



municipality authorities have hardly taken any initiative to improve their waste management system.

According to the Local Government (Municipalities) Act, 2009, waste management is the third responsibility of municipalities, alongside ensuring public health and protecting the environment.

Instead of ensuring it, the municipalities in Tangail are violating environmental laws and jeopardising public health by dumping garbage openly.

Indiscriminate dumping of garbage in the

open is against the environment protection law, according to Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association.

In Tangail Municipality, about four lakh people live in an area of 29.43 square kilometres, producing around 70 tonnes of garbage daily.

According to municipal office sources, waste is collected from 10 wards completely and from three wards partially, while no waste is collected from five wards.

The collected garbage is dumped on the side of important roads. Sometimes those are incinerated openly, producing harmful smoke that pollutes the environment.

"The dumped wastes often contaminate waterbodies after being washed away by rain, while causing waterlogging on roads," said Selim Miah of Kagmari area.

"They are filling up open ditches with garbage, including medical waste, hampering drainage system as well as endangering public well being," said Atoar Hossain of Aatpukur area.

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Double blow for port city residents

Rent of pre-paid meter doubled amid gas crisis

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

Sunil Barua, a resident of Askar Dighir Par area of Chattogram city, recharged Tk 1,000 to his pre-paid gas meter on Sunday.

To his surprise, instead of usual 50 units of gas for the amount, he received 44 units worth Tk 800 while Tk 200 was deducted as meter rent.

"The rent got hiked all of a sudden. I didn't know about it. We are already struggling amid price hikes of essentials amid high inflation. And now, they doubled the pre-paid gas meter rent," he said.

"We have been suffering from gas crisis for three months. Instead of solving the problems, they went on to hike pre-paid meter rent. It's outrageous!" said Shahena Akter, a resident of Jamal Khan area.

The Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited, which receives gas from the national grid and then supplies to port city, doubled the pre-paid meter rent in January without prior announcement.

We have been suffering from gas crisis for three months. Instead of solving the problems, they went on to hike pre-paid meter rent. It's outrageous!

Shahena Akter
Resident of Jamal Khan area

Of the around 5,95,000 residential clients of KGDCL at present, pre-paid meters are availed by 62,000 since the inception of the service in the city in 2017, said Engr Nahid Alam, deputy general manager (IT and pre-paid metering division) at KGDCL.

A new project has begun from January 16 to bring one lakh new clients under pre-paid meter service, he said.

The pre-paid meter rent was initially Tk 60 per month, before it was increased to Tk 100 in July 2022, he added.

Just one and half years later, the rent jumped to Tk 200.

"It wasn't our decision. We are simply implementing a directive by the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources to the country's six gas marketing companies under Petrobangla to charge same rent for pre-paid meters," said Anupam Dutta, deputy general manager (marketing) at KGDCL.

To implement the directive, the KGDCL authorities fixed the rent at Tk 200 like the five other companies. Earlier, different companies under Petrobangla were charging different rents, he added.

Asked why the decision was implemented without any prior notice, he said a notice was hanged at KGDCL office in this regard.

Five women honoured as Joyeeta in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Women Affairs and Dhaka divisional administration yesterday recognised five women as "Joyeeta" - meaning victorious woman in Bangla - for their outstanding achievements and societal contributions.

The winners, selected from Dhaka division, are - Nazma Masud, recognised for her economic empowerment; Bipasha Hossain, for achievements in education and employment; Zohora Akhter, for her role as a proud mother; Gita Rani Roy, for her resilience in overcoming repression, and Maya Rani Dev Bhowmik, for her remarkable contributions to societal progress.

The awardees will move to the national

level where they will compete with Joyeetas of other divisions.

Simeen Hussain Rimi, state minister for the Women and Children Affairs and presidium member of Awami League, handed over the crests at a programme at Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium in the capital.

"Women should strive for greater economic independence and autonomy in decision-making," she said.

Attending as special guest, Nazma Mobarek, secretary at Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, said, "Joyeeta means indomitable spirit and I believe every woman is a Joyeeta. Their empowerment is driving Bangladesh towards greater gender equality every year."



Five women were honoured as Joyeeta, a Bangla word for victorious woman, for their feats and contributions to society yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Ma, will I be able to walk again?

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Lying on a bed at National Institute of Neuro Sciences and Hospital, Leon keeps asking his mother - Ma, will I be able to walk again?

About six years ago, Leon Roy, a resident of Thakurgaon town, lost his mobility following an accident.

The then ten-year-old boy had fallen from a tree branch while trying to unite a baby parakeet, who had fallen off its nest, with its mother.

Placing the bird on his palm, Leon carefully tried to climb up the tree, for the sake of the anxious mother parakeet. However, he lost his balance and fell on a concrete wall, hitting his head.

The fall left Leon unconscious while the bird died in his palms.

He was rushed to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, where he opened his eyes three weeks later.

Since the incident in May 2018, Leon has undergone seven head surgeries, with the latest one being this Sunday.

"My son has had three surgeries this month. The physicians are hopeful and so am I. They said he might fully recover but in phases. But the procedures are expensive," said Leon's mother Muktarani.

"My husband had abandoned us when Leon was just a year old. My mother took a job at a restaurant kitchen while I started



Leon with his mother at the hospital.

PHOTO: STAR

tailoring work to survive," she added.

Leon's treatment expenses kept mounting through the years. While locals stepped forward and offered help, his family's financial condition remained uncertain.

Despite consideration from the hospital authorities, Leon's family had to spend Tk 1

lakh on his treatment, Tk 85,000 of which was loaned for a 15 percent monthly interest.

"I want to see my son back on his feet and fulfil his dream of becoming a police officer. But a big challenge awaits us after he returns... that is, paying off the loan with interest with my meagre income," said Muktarani.