



Homecoming day of Sheikh Hasina today

BSS, Dhaka

Today is the 44th homecoming day of Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

On May 17 in 1981, she returned to the country after a long exile.

Boarding on an aircraft of the Indian Airlines, Hasina reached the then Kurmitola Airport in Dhaka from the Indian capital of New Delhi via Kolkata at 4:30pm on the day.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally killed along with most of his family members

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A man tries to squeeze through an open space in this partially damaged guard rail to go to the other side. Despite there being a spot in the background where one can safely cross the road, many opt to such risky methods just to save some time. The photo was taken in front of Azimpur Maternity Hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Despite surplus, cattle smuggling on ahead of Eid

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

There's hardly a month left to celebrate Eid-ul Azha.

The government has already assured that the number of sacrificial animals will be 20 lakh more than the demand. Despite this, cattle smuggling continues unabated through the bordering districts.

The borders along Myanmar are no different, despite the ongoing conflict in the neighbouring country.

Dozens of cattle have entered through Fultali, Lambasia, Bear Khaiya, and Chakdala of Bandarban's Naikhongchhari and Cox's Bazar's Ramu recently, said locals.

Nurul Afsar, chairman of the Naikhongchhari Sadar Union, told The Daily Star, "Cattle are regularly being smuggled from Myanmar to Bangladesh."

"On May 12, a Bangladeshi youth Abul Kalam, 28, was killed while smuggling cattle. Since then, smuggling has stopped [for a while]," Afsar added.

The next day, Amzed Ali, 30, was shot at the Putkhali



Our Bandarban correspondent saw this truck full of cattle from Myanmar entering Chattogram city around 9:00pm last night.

PHOTO: STAR

border in Benapole while smuggling cattle into Bangladesh from India.

On April 27, the Sylhet Metropolitan Police seized 18 Indian cows along with three pickups. Three cattle traders -- Jasim Uddin, 35, Rohish Mia, 39, and Sadek Mia, 42 -- were arrested.

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College classes start from July 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following the completion of the college admissions process on July 25, classes for grade XI students will begin on July 30, according to a notification issued by Dhaka Education Board.

The online application process for college admission will start on May 26 and continue until June 11, it said.

The admission process will be conducted in three phases. After the first phase begins, the authorities will scrutinise the applications from June 12-13 and publish the results on June 23, the notification said.

The second phase will run from June 30 to July 2, and the third phase from July 9-10. Final admissions will be completed between July 15 and July 25.

Applicants can select a minimum of five and a maximum of ten colleges for admission. Students will have to pay a fee of Tk 150 for applying online, according to the guidelines.

Save rivers to save country

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The rivers should be freed from encroachment and pollution by implementing existing laws, said speakers at an event yesterday.

They said this at a dialogue on the "Role of Media in Stopping River Pollution," organised by Waterkeepers Bangladesh in collaboration with USAID and Counterpart International Bangladesh at Jatiya Press Club.

Addressing the event, former chairman of the National River Conservation Commission, Mujibur Rahman Howlader, said, "Today, when we go to save the Padma, Meghna, and Jamuna, we face threats... It's time to discuss why river laws aren't being enforced. Rivers are public property. It's up to all of us to protect them."

Sharif Jamil, coordinator of Waterkeepers Bangladesh, said the rivers of Dhaka are losing their existence.

"Grabbers are regularly occupying all the rivers... Pollution should be brought under control by installing ETPs at factories that pollute rivers. If we can't protect the country's rivers, we cannot save the country," he added.

Gloria Jharna Sarkar, a former lawmaker for women's reserved seats, said while the government is allocating funds for the river, local public representatives are not fulfilling their responsibilities.

Former lawmaker Shamim Haider Patwary said protecting the river has now become a pressing need. He urged media workers to increase in-depth reporting so that the grabbers can be identified.

Pinaki Roy, chief reporter at The Daily Star, mentioned that Tk 4,000 crore has been allocated for river protection, but the majority of these funds have been used for constructing landing stations and walkways.

Nutrition budget underutilised

Speakers call for coordinated efforts among ministries, down-to-up approach in national action plan



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh does not have a dedicated nutrition budget. On top of that, ministries don't utilise the full funds allocated to them for nutrition related activities, said speakers at an event yesterday.

A recent assessment of government investment in nutrition-related interventions across seven ministries revealed poor utilisation rates.

For example, the education ministry and LGRD ministry could use only 49 percent of the allocation, while the health ministry and the food ministry utilised 62 and 66 percent of their allocations, respectively, according to the National Plan of Action for Nutrition (NPAN) 2016-2025.

Prepared by South Asian Network on Economic Modeling, the findings

of the study, titled "Assessment of Government Investment in Nutrition-related Interventions of Selected Ministries," were presented at an event yesterday.

The event, titled "Study Sharing & Policy Discussion on Assessing Public Expenditure in NPAN-2, 8th five-year plan," was jointly organised by Joint Action for Nutrition Outcome and The Daily Star, supported by CARE Bangladesh.

Dhaka University Professor and Research Director of SANEM, Sayema Haque Bidisha, shared that among the seven projects aligned with the nutritional action plan in the health and family planning ministry, four have been completed, leaving 29 percent of the budget unspent.

Similarly, out of 21 nutrition related projects in the food ministry, 12 are completed, one is ongoing, and eight have shown no progress.

The study also highlighted that Bangladesh's per capita nutrition expenditure was US \$18 in 2016-17, significantly lower than Bhutan's US \$29 for the same period.

As per the study, key obstacles to implementing NPAN2 include inadequate budget allocation, socio-cultural complexities, and a lack of flexible planning and execution.

To address nutritional concerns effectively, the study recommended adopting a "3M" strategy -- multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder, and multi-level.

Md Shahidul Alam, director general of Food Planning and Monitoring Unit of food ministry, emphasised the need for increased investment in nutrition.

Mentioning that there is no alternative to awareness about nutrition, he said, "National Dietary

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COURT CORNER

SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

Probe submission deadline extended for 110th time

COURT CORRESPONDENT



A Dhaka court yesterday extended till June 30 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 110th extension of the deadline for probe report submission.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mahbubul Haque passed the order as Investigation Officer Khondoker Md Shafiqul Alam, also an additional superintendent of police at Rab, failed to submit the report, said a court police.

On April 2, the same court asked Rab to submit the investigation report by yesterday.

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.

Nousher Ali Roman, Runi's brother, filed a case with Sher-e-Bangla Police Station the following day.

Salim Prodhan can't contest upazila polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday imposed a fine of Tk 10,000 on alleged casino kingpin Salim Prodhan for wasting its time with a petition to run for chairman in the next Rupganj upazila parishad elections in Narayanganj, despite being convicted in an embezzlement case.

The court further maintained its stay on a High Court directive to the Election Commission, asking it to allot him an election symbol and allow his participation in the polls scheduled for Monday.

An eight-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, passed the order while hearing two petitions filed by the EC and Prodhan's opponent Habibur Rahman, challenging the HC order.

Following this order, Prodhan cannot participate in the Rupganj upazila polls, said Habibur's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan.

GRAMEEN KALYAN TAX EVASION

Rehearing of two petitions starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday started rehearing of two writ petitions that challenged National Board of Revenue orders over reassessment of around Tk 600 crore as income tax from Grameen Kalyan for different tax years.

Grameen Kalyan is a nonprofitable and charitable organisation founded by Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus.

The bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar and Justice SM Maniruzzaman adjourned the hearing and set July 16 and 25 for further hearing on the matters.

Looking out for strays

Dhaka's young people unite to ensure animal rights

AAQIB HASIB

Since a very young age, Anika Islam has been an avid animal lover.

Eventually, around 2017, she actively began rescuing and protecting animals in her area -- particularly stray cats and dogs.

"These poor animals cannot talk. They cannot communicate with us. If they are feeling discomfort or pain, they cannot tell us. So, of course we should do our best to help them," says Anika.

Since the inception of her journey as an animal rescuer, Anika has found support in online communities, particularly Facebook groups, where she could ask questions or reach out to like-minded individuals.

Seeing the benefit of working in tandem with other animal lovers, Anika began her own Messenger group with those interested.

This group of 15 friends would go on to feed and rescue countless animals in their respective neighbourhoods. They also collaborated with other organisations to spay and neuter dogs in their areas.

Whenever they receive information about



an animal being abused, they try to raise awareness about animal rights and even help turn many people into animal lovers.

However, members of this group were left shaken to their core when a stray dog was mercilessly beaten to death by guards on the premises of a footwear factory in Gazipur in early March this year.

Video footage of the incident went viral on social media.

The Animal Welfare Act 2019 states that

anyone found guilty of abusing or hurting an animal can be sentenced to two years of prison or fined Tk 50,000 or both. Despite this law, animal cruelty continues unabated in the country.

Allegedly, when Anika and numerous others tried to seek justice for the inhumane killing of the dog in Gazipur, they found very few legal solutions. Regardless of the law, the implementation and awareness surrounding the act seems almost non-existent.

Desperate to find some justice, Anika along with her friends and numerous others formed a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club on Friday morning.

Around 25 of them gathered there, equipped with placards and signs. They also handed out leaflets containing the most vital parts of the Animal Welfare Act 2019.

Hazara Synthea Shaoleen, an animal rescuer who attended the protest, said, "We wanted to raise awareness about the issue of animal rights, because not many people know there are laws that protect animals in our country."

Seeing the passion with which Anika and her friends were going about trying to get justice for stray animals that are unjustly killed, Barrister Sheikh Robaiyat Islam also joined their efforts.

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