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Washington to work closely with Dhaka

US envoy tells Yunus

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Washington will closely work with the interim government, especially regarding health, education, labour, governance, and the Rohingya issues, said US Embassy Charge D'Affaires in Dhaka Helen LaFave.

She made the remarks while paying a courtesy call to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka.

"The US government is happy to congratulate the chief adviser and is looking forward to working closely together," according to a statement of the US charge d'affaires.

She said Washington will support the interim government of Bangladesh and strengthen ties with Dhaka on a range of issues.

The US embassy in Dhaka will resume its consular service this week to expedite visa processing, she said, adding that thousands of Bangladeshi students now study in US universities.

The US has started resettling Rohingya to the US, and Helen LaFave hoped the process would be expedited.

The US is the largest contributor to the Rohingya humanitarian responses,

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With the Feni Sadar Hospital at full capacity, children with diarrhoea being treated under the open sky on the hospital premises yesterday. The number of cases of water-borne diseases in Feni has risen sharply over the last few days as floodwaters have started receding. Story on back page.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Stop the DAP implementation Demands IAB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Institute of Architects Bangladesh yesterday called on the government to halt the implementation of the Detailed Area Plan (DAP) for 2022-2035, prepared by Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk), citing violations of laws, lack of transparency, and potential environmental harm.

At a press briefing held at the Jatiya Press Club, the IAB alleged that the DAP threatens water bodies, floodplains, and agricultural land, while also fostering corruption in the design approval process.

"The implementation of the DAP has been ongoing for a year, but due to existing disparities and ambiguities in the plan, a certain Rajuk circle's dominance during the approval of new building designs has escalated," said Prof Muhammad Ali Naqi, vice president of IAB, while reading out a written statement.

Naqi said the plan has led to increased harassment of landowners and the public, resulting in delays, confusion, and corruption.

He called for the immediate suspension of the DAP's implementation and necessary reforms through active stakeholder engagement to address legal and other inconsistencies.

The IAB reported that they have contacted Rajuk regarding the suspension and reform of the DAP, to which Rajuk responded that the matter would be placed before the chief adviser.

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Sex workers under attack

Video of man mercilessly beating women goes viral; rights activists condemn assault

NILIMA JAHAN

Shahida, a 50-year-old former sex worker who now works as a field officer for Ahsania Mission's HIV prevention and treatment project, was brutally attacked on August 29. The incident took place in the Shyamoli area of the capital.

"After distributing condoms to the floating sex workers, I was standing in front of a mobile recharge point when a man wearing a blue t-shirt and mask suddenly approached me with a green pipe and began beating me," Shahida said.

"He assumed I was soliciting clients, but I told him I'm a service holder and showed him my ID, asking him to stop," she added. "But he didn't listen and kept beating me, asking why I was talking to the sex workers."

The man struck her nine times before running off to attack other sex workers waiting for clients nearby.

Despite people being present, no one intervened to help.

The entire incident was filmed, and the man posted the video on his Facebook account.

While the debate on whether this profession should exist is a separate issue, it is important to recognise that, as citizens of the country, sex workers are entitled to protection, which the state must ensure.

FAUZIA MOSLEM
President of Mahila Parishad

The attacker, identified as HM Rasel Sultan, alias Dokani Rasel, was seen in the video running to beat another

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MUNIA KILLING HC agrees to revive case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday agreed to hold a hearing of an appeal against a lower court order that accepted a probe report on clearing all the accused including Bashundhara Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir of charges in a case filed for rape and murder of college student Mosarat Jahan Munia in 2021.

The HC bench of Justice Shahidul Karim and Justice Md Atabullah passed the order after a primary hearing on the appeal filed by Munia's elder sister Nusrat Jahan Tania.

The case filed for the rape and murder of Munia has been revived following the HC order, Nusrat's lawyer Sarwar Hossain told The Daily Star. He said the HC will later hold a hearing on the appeal and pass necessary directives.

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Metro may soon operate on Fridays

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Metro rail authority has started taking preparation to operate trains on Fridays soon, said MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd.

"We have to change the software and do some other work to start operations on Friday. Our team has started the preparation," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked from when trains may start operating on Fridays, he said, "Give us some time. We will be able to give the timeframe within a few days."

Discussions have been held with the adviser concerned in this regard, sources said.

Manju freed hours after detention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives released Anwar Hossain Manju, former lawmaker and chairman of Jatiya Party (Manju), hours after detaining him from the capital's Dhanmondi area yesterday.

"Manju was released from Detective Branch [DB] custody around 8:00pm," Rubel Howlader, the party's joint secretary, told The Daily Star around 10:00pm.

A DB team had detained Manju around 3:30pm for questioning. However, the specific reason for the interrogation remains unclear.

Rabiul Hossain Bhuiyan, joint commissioner

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INDIAN VISA CENTRES Limited slots opened for urgent visas

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Visa Application Centres (IVACs) in Dhaka, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Sylhet, and Khulna have begun offering limited appointment slots for Bangladeshi nationals requiring urgent medical and student visas.

In addition to medical and student visas, these IVAC centres are also providing limited slots for urgent cases where Bangladeshi students and workers need to travel to third countries and already have visa appointments with foreign embassies in India.

GRAFT CASE

Charges against ex-addl IGP accepted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted the charges brought against former additional inspector general of police (IGP) M Shamsuddoha Khandaker and his wife Ferdowsi Sultana Khandaker in two cases filed over amassing wealth worth Tk 30.35 crore and concealing a wealth statement of Tk 36.91 crore.

According to the Anti-Corruption Commission's probe, the couple laundered Tk 62.34 crore.

The court has set October 30 for a hearing on the charge framing.

Nagorik Oikya, Gono Odhikar get EC registration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday granted registration to two parties, Nagorik Oikya and Gono Odhikar Parishad, bringing the total number of registered parties to 47.

Nagorik Oikya, led by Mahmudur Rahman Manna and formed in 2012, will use the electoral symbol "kettle".

Gono Odhikar Parishad, founded by 2018 quota reform movement activists under the leadership of Nurul Haque Nur, will have the symbol "truck".

EC Secretary Shafiul Azim confirmed to The Daily Star that the party met all the necessary criteria for registration.

EC Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath also confirmed the registration of Nagorik Oikya.

Nur said the previous commission had withheld their registration based on reports from the then-government's intelligence agency. "Last time, the commission gave various excuses for not registering us. After the fall of the fascist government, everything is being reformed," he said during a press conference at the EC.

Meanwhile, a faction of Gono Odhikar Parishad, led by Reza Kibria, protested by blocking the EC secretary office for over an hour, demanding their party's registration.

Shafiul Azim responded, saying, "Some unruly individuals entered his office. There is a process for granting party registration, and we are adhering to it."

In May 2022, 93 parties applied for registration, with 12, including Gono Odhikar Parishad and Nagorik Oikya, being shortlisted.

However, ahead of the 12th parliamentary polls, the EC registered two of the 12 parties, excluding Gono Odhikar Parishad and Nagorik Oikya.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

A rickshaw-puller rides through the streets amid downpour that drenched the capital from morning until afternoon yesterday. Without a raincoat, he likely spent the rest of the day in wet clothes. This photo was taken in the Karwan Bazar area.

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QUICK RENTAL LAW HC questions constitutionality of two sections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the constitutionality of two sections of the quick rental law, which protect rental and quick rental power plants from legal challenges and give the energy minister sole authority to approve electricity purchase plans.

In a rule, the HC asked the authorities concerned of the government to explain why sections 9 and 6(2) of the Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provisions) Act 2010 should not be declared unconstitutional.

Section 9 states that no question about any action done or deemed to be done, and any order or direction given under this law, cannot be raised before any court.

Section 6 (2) says that any planning or proposal related to the buying or investment decisions has to be approved by the energy minister and sent to the cabinet committee for approval after communicating and bargaining with one or more institutions following section 7 of the act.

The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice AKM Rabiul Hassan issued the rule following a writ petition filed