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Pedestrians jaywalk across the streets amid oncoming traffic in the Banglamotor area. Despite zebra crossings and foot-over bridges being readily available, people still choose to cross the street illegally even with the risk of accidents taking place. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

ACCESSING PUBLIC SERVICES Barriers persist for minorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Minority communities in Bangladesh continue to face significant barriers in accessing public services, with rural people facing the biggest challenges, according to a study released yesterday.

While the situation has improved a bit in urban areas like Dhaka and Chattogram, challenges still persist in healthcare access, particularly for transgender individuals and people with disabilities, said the study.

In terms of disability care, healthcare facilities lack basic accessibility features, and medical staff remain largely untrained, the study also found.

The study was conducted across nine districts by Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB) with support from ActionAid Bangladesh and BRAC University's Centre for Peace and Justice.

The findings of the study were presented at a seminar organised at Aloki in the capital's Tejgaon yesterday.

Speaking at the event, Sharmeen Murshid, adviser to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Ministry of Social Welfare, said, "Till now there was no monitoring system or quality evaluation process in the ministries for government projects. Even small organisations prepare progress reports, but this was not the case for the government in the last 16 years."

"We got to know about the waste of a lot of money on such projects. Also, there is no information on whether the allocated money reaches the people for whom it is allocated," she added.

The government will work to respond quickly to stop

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

CA may join COP29 in Azerbaijan in Nov

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The non-resident ambassador of Azerbaijan to Bangladesh, Elchin Huseynli, met with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed a range of issues, including the upcoming COP-29 summit in Baku, energy cooperation, trade, and a proposed air services agreement between the two nations.

Prof Yunus is expected to attend the COP-29 summit in November in Azerbaijan's capital, where over 32,000 participants will gather to focus on climate finance and other critical global issues.

Ambassador Huseynli highlighted Azerbaijan's interest in deepening trade ties, stating that Baku is actively seeking "new opportunities" to expand business relations.

Govt limits tourism in St Martin's

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary Apurba Jahangir has said that the advisory council has decided to impose some restrictions on tourist visits to Saint Martin's Island for four months, starting in November.

Speaking at a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy yesterday, he stated that this decision is part of the government's efforts to ensure an eco-friendly environment on the island.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Set up commission to address violence against children

Urges MJF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has called for the establishment of a commission for children's affairs to tackle the alarming rise in violence against children, particularly sexual violence.

The appeal was made in a press release issued yesterday, following the brutal rape of a 9-year-old girl, who is currently fighting for her life at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In a statement signed by Executive Director Shaheen Anam, MJF expressed grave concern over the continued attacks on girl children and urged authorities to take immediate and decisive action.

Citing recent media reports, the organisation highlighted that between September and October, 12 girls, aged between 7 and 12, were raped or gang-raped.

This adds to the 521 cases of violence against children recorded between January and September 2024, according to data from Ain o Salish Kendra.

MJF's statement emphasised the urgency of protecting girl children, condemning the lack of coordination and effective measures to prevent such horrific acts.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Rice prices surge in kitchen markets



SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Prices of nearly all varieties of rice have surged in the capital's kitchen markets over the past week, with traders attributing the hike to a rise in paddy prices and reduced supply from rice mills.

Traders said rice prices have increased by Tk 50 to Tk 150 per 50-kg sack.

However, visiting four major rice wholesale markets in the capital -- Karwan Bazar, Kachukhet, Mirpur II, and Mohammadpur Krishi Market -- this correspondent saw a substantial stock of rice.

Retailers are blaming the increase on rising wholesale prices, while wholesalers claim it has risen at the mill level.

"The BR-28 and BR-29 varieties of rice have seen the sharpest price hike in the past week, with prices increasing by around Tk 100 to 150 per 50-kg sack," said Raju Ahmed, a staff member at M/S Anis Enterprise in Mohammadpur Krishi Market, yesterday afternoon.

"Today (Tuesday), we are selling a 50-kg sack of BR-28 and BR-29 varieties at Tk 3,000 to Tk 3,100, compared to Tk 2,850 to Tk 2,950 one week ago," he added.

Shahidul Islam, manager of M/S Anu Enterprise at the same market, said demand for these two types of rice is gradually increasing as middle-class families prefer them. However, the stock of these varieties is

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



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