

Celebration of literature draws to close

DIPAN NANDY

After today, the fairgrounds will once again fall silent. While political gatherings may hum within the premises, the sound of flipping book pages will be absent.

Although the air may be filled with the fragrance of seasonal flowers, the sweet scent of new books will linger no more.

The day that brings sadness to book lovers has arrived once again – today marks the end of the Ekushey Boi Mela.

Despite calls for an extension, the organising institution, Bangla Academy, has dismissed the idea.

Sarkar Amin, member secretary of the book fair management committee, stated, “Considering Ramadan and other surrounding factors, there has been no discussion about extending the fair. All activities will conclude within the scheduled time.”

The book fair gates opened yesterday at 3:00pm. In the final moments, the venue was bustling with buyers and visitors. Those who had been unable to attend earlier due to busy schedules came with their families.

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Law enforcers intensify drives

1,657 held countrywide in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers have intensified drives countrywide amid a surge in crimes.

A total of 1,657 people – including muggers and robbers – were arrested in the last 24 hours till yesterday afternoon, according to the Police Headquarters.

Joint forces arrested 743 individuals during the same period as part of “Operation Devil Hunt”.

With these latest arrests, the total number of people arrested since the operation started on February 8 has risen to 11,313.

Additionally, 914 others, who were either accused or wanted in previous cases, were also arrested in the last 24 hours.

The government launched the operation on February 8 to restore law and order.

An analysis of reports from several districts by this newspaper found that many of the arrestees in the operation are members of the Awami League and its affiliated organisations, facing charges in cases filed after the fall of the Hasina-led government on August 5.

Despite “Operation Devil Hunt,” crimes like mugging and robbery persist. To enhance security, the Law

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UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi at a meeting with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PTD

Urgent decision needed to utilise coal reserves

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the rise in use of coal for power generation, experts at a seminar yesterday stressed the need for an immediate decision on whether Bangladesh will utilise its own coal reserves.

The country has an estimated 834 million tonnes of mineable coal across five coalfields, most of which would require open-pit mining. Delaying a decision could lead to the shutdown of the country's lone coal-fired power plant, Barapukuria, within a few years, they warned.

The Hydrocarbon Unit (HCU) organised the seminar, titled “The Prospects and Ways to Overcome Challenges of Coal Wealth in Bangladesh”, at Bidyut Bhaban in Dhaka.

Presenting the keynote paper, Arup Kumar Biswas, director (Exploration and Production) at HCU, said Bangladesh has more than 8,000MW of coal-based power plants, most of which depend on imported coal.

“The quality of local coal is superior, with a higher calorific value, meaning 26-30 percent less coal is required to generate the same amount of electricity compared to imported coal,” he said.

According to his presentation, the Barapukuria mine has already produced 14.94 million tonnes of



Country has 834 million tonnes of mineable coal across 5 fields

Local coal has higher calorific value, requiring less for power generation

Concerns raised over environmental, social impacts of mining

High cost of locally mined coal attributed to corruption in contract process

Govt plans to develop a roadmap for coal extraction

coal, with an additional 4 million tonnes expected by 2029 through underground mining. After that, open-pit mining will be necessary in the mine's southern and northern parts.

The Phulbari coalfield, where all environmental and social impact studies have already been conducted, would be the easiest to mine. Production could begin within 2-3 years, while other fields would require 8-10 years following government approval.

Mushfiqur Rahman, technical director at Institute Orgenergostroy Bangladesh, a construction firm involved in the Rooppur nuclear power plant, said mining methods depend on a field's geological structure and available technology.

“Phulbari can only be mined through open-pit extraction. Underground mining here is not feasible. We must focus on minimising groundwater contamination and other hazards,” said Mushfiqur.

He added, “If a project isn't

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Make int'l meet on Rohingya a success

Yunus tells UNHCR chief

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday called for making the upcoming international conference on the Rohingya crisis a big success to bring back focus on the decades-long humanitarian tragedy and mobilise more support for the long-persecuted Myanmar minority.

He made the call when Filippo Grandi, head of UN High Commissioner for the Refugees, called on him at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka, according to the press wing of the Chief Adviser's Office.

“Let's make it a big success. Let's hope something concrete comes out of it,” Yunus said.

“Let's put this issue on the map. The UN conference is a great way to put it back on the table,” Grandi said, referring to the Rohingya crisis.

“We are happy to work with you,” he said, hoping that the visit of the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in mid-March would create a new momentum for the issue.

Earlier, Grandi, who is on a five-day visit to Bangladesh, called on Touhid Hossain, adviser to the foreign ministry, at the latter's office. He also had a meeting with Home Adviser Jahangir Alam.

The advisers highlighted the important role of UNHCR and international community in resolving the Rohingya crisis. They urged the UNHCR to seek alternative funding sources from donor agencies and development partners.

JULY UPRISING

Martyrs' families to get priority in govt jobs

Shafiqul Alam says it won't continue for generations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eligible family member of victims killed during the mass uprising will get priorities in getting government and semi-government jobs.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said this at a press conference at Foreign Service Academy yesterday.

He also said this job benefit is not a quota system. “It will not continue for generation after generation,” he said.

Deputy Press Secretary of CA Azad Majumder said the July victims and families of the martyrs will get allowance from March.

The martyred families will get Tk 30 lakh – Tk 10 lakh will be provided in this fiscal year and Tk 20 lakh in the next fiscal – in the form of savings certificates.

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