

‘Dec, June or March? Be specific’  
Rizvi asks interim govt over polls date  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday said the interim government was creating uncertainty regarding the announcement of the national election date.

“There is a lot of confusion – December, June, or March? Different times, different statements. There are similarities here with some of Sheikh Hasina’s words. Why is this happening?” he questioned.

He made these remarks at an event at BNP’s central office in Naya Paltan yesterday morning.

Rizvi said the government must announce a clear and specific date to ensure a fair electoral process.

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A severe gridlock on the Dhaka-Tangail Highway at the Chandra intersection in Gazipur disrupts the journey of thousands leaving Dhaka to celebrate Eid with their loved ones. With overcrowded buses and scarce tickets, many are forced to walk to their destinations, while others risk climbing onto trucks for a ride home. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Mother, son die as truck hits bike in Kushtia  
Traffic surgent killed in Dinajpur road accident  
STAR REPORT

Three people were killed in road accidents in two districts yesterday and the day before, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Kushtia, a mother and her three-year-old son died after they were run over by a truck at Trimohoni Bypass Intersection yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Iti Khatun, 30, a resident of Courtpara in Kushtia, and her son Ahnaf Ibrahim, 3.

Locals said the incident occurred around 9:30am when a dump truck hit a motorcycle, leaving its passengers Etí and her son dead on the spot and her husband injured, said Joydeb, a sub-inspector of Chourhash Highway Police Station.

In Dinajpur, a traffic surgent was killed in a road accident on Dinajpur-Thakurgaon regional highway in Kaharol upazila on Thursday evening.

The deceased was identified as Abdul Karim 50, a traffic sergeant inspector in Dinajpur. He was from Syedpur in Nilphamari.

A case has been filed with Kaharol Police Station.

EID HOLIDAYS  
Dengue surge feared as millions leave Dhaka

HELEMUL ALAM

As millions have started to leave Dhaka ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations, experts have raised concerns over a potential spike in dengue cases unless preventive measures are taken timely.

With government officials and employees set to enjoy an extended holiday spanning from March 26 till April 5, entomologists fear that empty homes and unchecked water sources may become breeding grounds for Aedes mosquitoes.

Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, advised city dwellers to take necessary precautions before leaving their homes.

“Residents should cover toilet commodes, be mindful of plant tubs, and ensure that any containers storing water are properly sealed,” he said, warning that Aedes mosquitoes thrive in stagnant water.

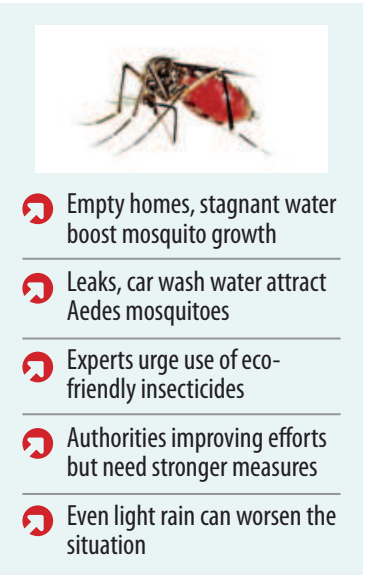
He also suggested turning buckets and containers upside down to prevent water accumulation. “We are seeing a high number of mosquitoes in basements where stagnant water can be found due to leaks of pipes or from car washing. Residents should use bleaching powder or salt in these areas to curb mosquito breeding,” he said.

Prof Bashar further advised homeowners to check their yards and rooftops for discarded containers that could collect rainwater.

He also urged people to inspect

their homes upon their return for potential breeding grounds and to open doors and windows to let mosquitoes out and flush toilet commodes, which can harbor Aedes larvae.

“If mosquitoes can breed during the vacation, they will become matured by the time residents return,” he warned. The



- Empty homes, stagnant water boost mosquito growth
- Leaks, car wash water attract Aedes mosquitoes
- Experts urge use of eco-friendly insecticides
- Authorities improving efforts but need stronger measures
- Even light rain can worsen the situation

risk increases significantly if there is rainfall during the holidays, he added.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman stressed the need for proactive measures. “Authorities should use BTI like insecticides to control Aedes mosquitoes as these are environmentally safe. However, their application remains

neglected,” he said.

BTI is a naturally occurring soil bacterium used as a microbial insecticide to control mosquito larvae and other insects.

Saifur warned that even a little rain could trigger a surge in dengue cases.

“The first generation of mosquitoes maturing after rain helps in population growth. If the authorities take immediate steps to apply BTI early, we can prevent their spread,” he said.

City corporations, which were uncoordinated last year, have shown better discipline this time, though on a small scale, he observed. He, however, stressed the need for local administration to stay vigilant and for mosquito control cells to be established nationwide.

“Pre-investigation is crucial to identify Aedes mosquito clusters. Once the first rains arrive, authorities must launch drives to destroy breeding sources and larvae. Early preventive measures are of utmost importance to keep the outbreak under control,” Saifur added.

Md Emdadul Hoque, deputy chief health officer of Dhaka North City Corporation, said preparations are already in place ahead of the upcoming dengue season.

“Besides regular drives, our mosquito control workers will continue anti-mosquito operations during the Eid vacation,” he said.

A Dhaka South City Corporation official echoed him.

280 arrested between March 20-26  
Says ISPR  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 280 people involved in criminal activities were arrested during a series of joint force operations nationwide between March 20 and March 26, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in an official statement yesterday.

The arrestees include listed criminals, extortionists, suspects in multiple cases, members of robbery gangs, hijackers, kidnappers, drug dealers, producers of adulterated food items, members of juvenile gangs, and individuals accused of being involved in a high-profile murder in July, according to the release.

The 280 arrestees have been handed over to the respective local police stations for further investigation and legal proceedings.

Bangladesh Army, in collaboration with different other law enforcement agencies, conducted the operations to maintain law and order situation.

Additionally, the law enforcers seized a total of 10 illegal firearms, 143 different types of ammunition, explosive materials like cocktail bombs, drugs, and various types of weapons used in terrorist activities were seized from the arrestees during the drives.

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‘Make TNZ pay our wages’  
RMG workers hold hunger protest

MD ABBAS and MASHFIQ MIZAN

Emotions ran high. Exhaustion was evident on their faces.

Yet, with clay pots symbolising empty plates in their households, garment workers from three factories under TNZ Group – Apparel Plus Eco Ltd, TNZ Apparels Ltd, and Apparel Art Ltd – took to Dhaka streets yesterday.

They staged a “Bhukha Michil” (hunger procession), demanding three months’ unpaid wages and Eid bonuses.

For five days, they had staged a sit-in at Shromo Bhaban (Department of Labour), but no government official had met them.

Desperate, the workers carried empty plates and placards bearing the message “Pay Our Wages,” urging international brands to intervene.

One placard read, “Dear Zara, make TNZ pay our wages.”

“Even a single jacket I make retails for more than my entire month’s salary, yet we’re not being paid for months,” said garment worker Rina Akter.

RMG workers protesting for rights is nothing new, but many had hoped things would be different this time.

However, a placard reading, “What do you mean by a new political settlement if we have to take to the streets for arrears as before?” summed up how those hopes quickly turned into frustration.

“We’ve had no sleep, food, or showers for days. Our families are waiting for us. If we receive our wages and bonuses, we can return home and celebrate Eid,” said Shefali Akhter, a worker at TNZ Group.

Rekha Akter Tinni and Md Shahin Alam echoed similar sentiments, saying they had exhausted their savings.

“If the factory does not pay our wages and Eid bonuses now, how will I return to my family? How will I face my children? What will I tell them if they ask for new clothes for Eid?” asked Tinni.

Many broke down in tears.

The hunger procession began at 4:00pm from Shromo Bhaban, moving through Paltan, circling Nightingale Junction, and returning.

Their slogans echoed through the streets

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We’ve had no sleep, food, or showers for days. Our families are waiting for us. If we receive our wages and bonuses, we can return home and celebrate Eid.

Shefali Akhter  
A worker at TNZ Group

Arrest warrant against former VC of JUST

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A Jashore court has issued an arrest warrant against three individuals, including former Vice-Chancellor of Jashore University of Science and Technology (JUST) Dr Abdus Sattar, in a graft case.

Senior Special Judge Sheikh Nazmul Alam issued the order after hearing the charge sheet filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on Thursday.

The other two accused are Abdur Rouf, deputy director (planning and development) of JUST, and Dr Kamal Uddin, former pro-VC of Islamic University.

Al Amin, the then deputy director of Jashore, filed the case against them on August 21, 2023, on charges of irregularities in recruitment and the embezzlement of Tk 61,31,732. Following an investigation, the ACC recently submitted the charge sheet to the court.

Swechchhasebak Dal leader caught with rice ‘meant for the poor’

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A leader of Swechchhasebak Dal was caught with 69 sacks of rice, reportedly meant for the poor under the Food-Friendly Programme at Begunbari Rajapukur village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila early yesterday.

He was allegedly attempting to smuggle them out of the union.

The detainee, Aminul Islam, 40, is from Begunbari Sarcarpara village. He is the president of Begunbari union unit of Jatiyatabadi Swechchhasebak Dal.

Quoting locals, Sub-inspector Sumon Roy of Thakurgaon Police Station said a group of villagers intercepted a tractor that Aminul was using to carry the sacks of rice around 2:00am.

However, Aminul’s accomplices, including Wadud Hasan, president of BNP’s Ward No. 9 unit, Nurul Amin, a secretary of the same unit, and Kamal Hossain, organising secretary of the union unit of Krishak Dal, managed to flee.

Meanwhile, Abdul Hamid, president of Thakurgaon upazila unit BNP, announced the expulsion of Aminul and Wadud through a Facebook post for violating organisational discipline.

Locals said incidents of rice theft meant for the poor are not new, but previous offenders faced no action due to their political influence.

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The slow death of DSCC’s homeopathy clinics

DIPAN NANDY

The walls of the dilapidated single-storey building are crumbling, with plaster peeling away. The floor has worn down, exposing bricks and sand beneath. A rusted signboard, corroded in several places, hangs above the entrance. Inside, a doctor continues to treat patients and dispense medicine despite the deteriorating conditions.

This is the state of the Farashganj Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary, one of the homeopathy clinics run by the Dhaka South City Corporation, located at Dalpatti Mor in Sutrapur.

A visitor is met with a collection of old furniture – an empty, dust-covered wooden showcase, four worn-out chairs, a table, a steel cabinet, and a single patient bench.

The cabinet holds DSCC-provided medicines and essential documents. Despite its dilapidated state, patients continue to visit the dispensary regularly.

“We once had a compounder and an assistant (aya), but now only a security guard remains. Once I retire, this clinic will close, as no new doctors will be



appointed,” Dr Farzana Begum, the clinic’s physician, told The Daily Star.

Farzana, who joined DSCC’s health department in 2005 and was assigned to this dispensary, said she had treated and prescribed medicines for over 500 patients in just the first two months of this year.

“There is no publicity for these

charitable homeopathy centres. If there were, more patients would visit,” she added.

Another DSCC homeopathy centre, Rokanpur Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary, has changed its original location and now operates from the third floor of the DIT Market in Lakshmibazar, Old Dhaka.



Finding this clinic amidst a cluster of coaching centres is a challenge in itself.

Two more charitable homeopathy clinics exist under DSCC – Katara Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary in Chawkbazar and Sat Shahid Homeopathy Charitable Dispensary in Lalbazar.

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