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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে ‘ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার’ পূবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

China wants strong, stable, democratic Bangladesh: Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

China wants to see a strong, stable and democratic Bangladesh, said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

“They always want to see stability in Bangladesh. They want to see a strong and prosperous Bangladesh and a democratic environment in the country,” he said after a meeting with a delegation from the Communist Party of China (CPC) at a hotel in the capital.

Fakhrul said it was a meeting between the two parties – BNP and CPC – as they have a longstanding relationship.



In response to a question, Fakhrul said elections are Bangladesh's internal matter and that China usually does not interfere in any country's internal affairs.

He, however, said they briefed the Chinese delegation about the country's election and political situation.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen said, “We discussed cooperation between our two parties and also discussed that the Communist Party of China and BNP will work together to enhance cooperation between the two countries.”

He also reiterated that elections are Bangladesh's internal matter and that the people of Bangladesh will make the decision on it.

Drops of water, waves of suffering

The daily struggle of women in Rangamati's hills

MD ABBAS, back from Rangamati

In the quiet village of Bottola, nestled in the hills of Rangamati's Naniarchar upazila, each day begins early.

As the sun rises, the village wakes up, and women like Mollika Chakma set out on their daily journey to fetch water – a task they have carried out for years, despite the pain and challenges it brings.

Stepping out of the house with an empty kolshi (pitcher), 38-year-old Mollika begins her daily walk – for water, her family, and survival.

Like many women from nearby hamlets – Toroni Para, Dharmasrom Para, and Shikolpara – she walks nearly two kilometres to fetch water from a shrinking kua (well-like water source).

“I've been doing this since 2010.

The pain never goes away – my lower back, knees, and hands hurt all the time. Sometimes we even squabble with neighbours because the kua is drying up,” Mollika says.

Hundreds of women across Rangamati's remote hills have a similar story.

Water is collected three times a day – at dawn, midday, and late afternoon. During the dry season, many wait up to three hours, often returning home with empty kolshis.

Juleka Chakma, 50, has been carrying water since she was eight. “My knees and back feel like they're breaking. I have to take painkillers regularly,” she shares.



A woman pours water into her pitcher from a shrinking kua (water source like a well) in Bottola, a small village nestled in the hills of Rangamati's Naniarchar upazila. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

For others, the pain becomes overwhelming. “It gets worse during full moon days. Sometimes I faint from the pain,” says Monika Chakma, who suffers from chronic back issues.

Beyond the physical strain, the emotional burdens run deep.

“If I come home late, my husband yells and accuses me of wasting time. Sometimes, he even hits me,” confides a woman from Shikolpara, requesting anonymity.

The dangers grow after dark.

“We've been bitten by snakes, attacked by wild animals, and slipped on the rocky trails,” says Ripona Chakma.

“During the monsoon, the paths become dangerously slippery. But what choice do we have?” she asks.

In Paschim Dewanpara of Sabekon union, the crisis is even worse. Villagers must cross rivers by boat to collect water.

Despite battling diabetes and heart disease, 47-year-old Champa Chakma still makes the journey. “My body can't

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Reform disability policies for dev, empowerment**Demand rights groups at press conference**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday criticised the Ministry of Social Welfare for its failure to support the empowerment and development of persons with disabilities, accusing it of being more of an obstacle than an aid.

They argued that the ministry has failed to recognise the rights of persons with disabilities as fundamental human rights, continuing instead to treat them through a charity-based approach.

The speakers also called for a major shift in attitude, proposing that the ministry be

If mindsets, methods, planning, and implementation remain the same, no positive outcomes will follow. Structural and procedural transformation is crucial.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, TIB Executive Director

renamed the Ministry of Social Development and Empowerment to reflect a more rights-based approach to disability issues.

The press conference, titled “Legal Rights, Protection, and Prevention of Neglect, Deprivation, and Human Rights Violations Against Persons with Disabilities,” was organised by Disability Rights Watch (DRW) in collaboration with Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) at the Midas Centre in the capital's Dhanmondi.

Khandaker Jahurul Alam, member secretary

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



‘Anti-Hegemony Muslim Unity Platform’ held a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

18,000MW power production planned for summer**Load shedding to stay tolerable, says energy adviser**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Load shedding during the summer days will be kept at a tolerable level, Power and Energy Adviser Fouzul Kabir Khan said yesterday.

“I won't say there will be no power outage during the summer, but the load shedding will remain within a tolerable level. And there will be no difference between urban and rural areas,” he said at a seminar, titled “Energy Crisis: Way Forward,” organised by the Forum for Energy Reporters Bangladesh (FERB) at Bidyut Bhaban in the capital.

He said plans are in place to produce

18,000 megawatts (MW) during peak demand in summer, up from the current 16,000 MW. Additional demand will be met through coal and LNG imports.

Kabir added that when the interim government took charge, the power sector was in a disastrous state. “We have paid most overdue and late payments to companies.”

The overdue bill, originally around US \$3.2 billion, has been reduced to US \$600 million and is expected to hit zero by the end of the fiscal year in June, he added.

To clear the payments, the government cut allocations from unnecessary projects.

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**Muslim unity platform holds a solidarity assembly**

STAR REPORT

The “Anti-Hegemony Muslim Unity Platform” yesterday held a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka to express solidarity with oppressed Muslim communities in Palestine, India, and Myanmar's Arakan region.

The event featured speeches from key organisers and spokespersons, including Muhammad Mizanur Rahman, Syed Muhammad Hasan Al-Azhari, Syed Saiful Islam Bari, Shafik Al-Mujaddedi, and Imran Hussain Tushar, according to press release.

Abul Kashem Muhammad Fazlul Haque, vice-principal of Dhaka Quaderia Taiyabiya Alia (Kamil) Madrasa, read out a declaration at the rally.

“The core spirit of the July uprising was to stand against the oppressor and to play a vocal role against domination,” the declaration said.

The platform pledged to rebuild the future of Bangladesh while “remembering and embodying the spirit of the July uprising.”

It also called for the formation of global public opinion in support of oppressed Muslims in Palestine, India, and Arakan (Rakhine), demanding “direct intervention from the UN and the recognition of Palestine as an independent state,” and calling for the repeal of the “unconstitutional Waqf Bill passed in the Indian Lok Sabha.”

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