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# Stop destroying nature, plant trees instead

Urges Yunus at an event marking World Environment Day

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday urged all to avoid destroying nature and stop the production and use of single-use plastic products and come together to plant trees and create a beautiful environment for the generations to come.

“Plastic is poison. Not just for people, but for everything in this world. We are not taking it seriously because it’s happening slowly and gradually. Let’s solve it. Let’s save us from this poison,” he said.

Yunus made the remarks at the Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre while speaking as the chief guest at an event marking the “World Environment Day”, which was on June 5.

The chief adviser said protecting the environment should be a citizen-led movement.

“It’s my environment. I must protect it. There is no alternative to it,” Yunus said, highlighting the importance of awareness at an individual level.

He said there should be a drive to stop tree cutting

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Vendors occupy not just the footpath, a large portion of the street between the BRTA office and Mirpur-10 roundabout, leaving little room for pedestrians and vehicles to pass. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# Govt declares 3 new days for nat’l observance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government yesterday declared August 5 as “July Mass Uprising Day” to commemorate the student-led protests that toppled the Sheikh Hasina regime that day last year.

➤ July 16 - Shaheed Abu Sayed Day

➤ August 5 - July Mass Uprising Day

➤ August 8 - New Bangladesh Day

It also declared August 8 as “New Bangladesh Day”, marking the formation of the interim government led by Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus, and July 16 as “Shaheed Abu Sayed Day” in memory of Abu Sayed, a student of Rangpur’s Begum Rokeya University who

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## Help us bring drugs, graft under control

Home adviser urges the public

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two things the interim government could not bring under control are drugs and corruption, Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said at a press briefing yesterday.

“I have never claimed that we brought narcotics under control... We need your [the public’s] help to tackle both,” he told reporters at the Secretariat, ahead of today’s International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Calling for tougher action against affluent groups linked to the drug trade, Jahangir said, “Some upper-class individuals are heavily involved. If anyone is found complicit, they will face the law, regardless of their status.”

He stressed that arresting small-time peddlers was not enough. “We must go after the godfathers behind these

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## INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

# Drug smuggling via air, land routes on the rise

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Drug trafficking via airports and border areas in Bangladesh has seen a surge over the last couple of years, with Phensedyl and cannabis dominating the local narcotics trade.

Cocaine smuggling, especially via air routes, has gone up alarmingly in recent times as international syndicates are increasingly using the country as a transit point. The drug is not smuggled in for local consumption; rather, it is rerouted to multiple destinations across Europe and North America, said officials at the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC).

Last year, law enforcers seized 130kg of cocaine, up from 13kg in 2023, shows the Annual Drug Report 2024.

This grim picture emerges as Bangladesh, like other countries around the world, observes the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking today.

Many listed drug dealers are active especially in border areas and major cities. They are recruiting petty criminals, labourers, and rickshaw-pullers to transport narcotics, according to DNC officials.

Traffickers smuggle in Phensedyl, cannabis and also heroin through border areas in Kushtia, Chuadanga, Jashore, Satkhira, Panchagarh, and

Dinajpur, indicating a shift in local drug trade that was dominated by Yaba from Myanmar for about two decades since 2005.

According to DNC officials, the supply and use of Yaba have been in decline over the last couple of years.

The DNC report shows that Phensedyl, heroin and cannabis are now dominating the local drug trade, partly due to unavailability of Yaba and other synthetic drugs in certain regions.

Last year, 2.28 crore Yaba pills were seized, down from 4.29 crore in 2023. The seizure of crystal meth also dropped to 110kg from 186kg.

Affirming the shift in drug trade, Mohammad Badruddin, additional director (intelligence) at the DNC, said, “The consignments are coming from India. We are aware of it. Several consignments, including that of heroin, were seized recently.”

Khorshid Alam, deputy director (intelligence) at the DNC, also echoed him, saying the number of trafficking hotspots has gone up in recent times.

In 2024, law enforcers seized 5.72 lakh bottles of Phensedyl against 4.82 lakh bottles in 2023. The seizure of cannabis also rose to 1.14 lakh kgs

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## JULY UPRISING

# Students lock KMP gate over freeing accused SI

## Block road for hrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Students and locals locked the main gate of the Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) headquarters for hours yesterday, protesting the release of Sub-Inspector Sukanta Das from police custody.

According to the protesters, locals caught SI Sukanta on Tuesday and handed him over to police “for brutally assaulting students and civilians during the July uprising in Khulna”.

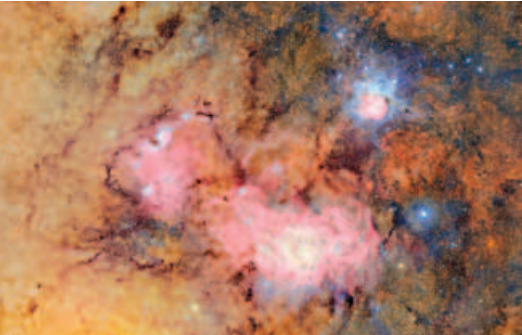
The protesters claimed that he was released the same night without being arrested even though he is accused in several cases.

The protest called by the Students Against Discrimination began around 2:00pm. The demonstrators blocked the road and burnt tyres in front of the KMP headquarters, cutting off the Rupsha area from the city.

They also called for the resignation of the KMP commissioner.

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# Stunning shots of millions of galaxies released



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The first dazzling images have been released from the National Science Foundation and Department of Energy’s Vera C Rubin Observatory, capturing the night sky “like never before.”

The snapshots reveal the stunning result of more than 10 hours of test observations, snapping the mysterious wonder of the cosmos. They include millions of stars and galaxies and thousands of asteroids in hues of ruby, sapphire, and gold inlaid against the inky blackness of our known universe.

Several thousand light years away from Earth, the Trifid and Lagoon nebulas – vast clouds of gas and dust – exist. We see them here in flamingo pink.

The newly released pictures preview the observatory’s upcoming 10-year scientific mission to help humans better understand our place on the pale blue dot known as Earth.

“NSF-DOE Rubin Observatory will capture more information about our Universe than all optical telescopes throughout history combined,” Brian Stone, who is performing the duties of the National Science Foundation director, said in a statement.

# Woman ‘raped’ in train toilet

Police detain outsourced railway employee

STAR REPORT

A female passenger was allegedly raped inside a toilet of the Rangpur Express train at Dhaka’s Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday.

Railway Police detained the suspect, Saiful Islam, 28, a public address announcer of the train, after the victim lodged a verbal complaint against him with the train officials, said Farhat Ahmed, superintendent of Syedpur Railway Police.

Motaher Ali, divisional signal and telecommunication engineer of Bangladesh Railway’s Lalmonirhat Division, said Saiful has been working as an outsourced employee since February last year.

After learning about the incident through social media, Bangladesh Railway wrote to Rajat Enterprise, through which Saiful was hired, requesting legal action against him, Motaher told The Daily Star last night.

The incident reportedly took place between 8:45am and 9:15am when the train was stationed at the platform, he said.

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A man hands a bicycle to another across a broken stretch of the road from Pakuria Uttarpara to City Bypass in Rajshahi’s Paba, where large portions have collapsed. Locals say the contractor took no measures to protect the road during the construction of a wall beside it. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN

# HSC, equivalent exams begin today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinations begins today, with 12,51,111 students scheduled to sit for the tests under different education boards.

Of them, about 10.55 lakh students are registered with the nine general education boards, around 86,000 with the Madrasa Education Board (Alim), and over 1.09 lakh with the technical education board.

The written examinations will run until August 10, while practical exams are scheduled from August 11 to 21. This year, the exams will be held at 2,797 centres nationwide.

Compared to last year, the number of examinees has fallen by 81,882.

To ensure fair and peaceful conduct of the exams, the Ministry of Education has directed all coaching centres across the country to remain closed until August 15.

Amid rising Covid-19 and dengue cases, the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee has issued health guidelines for all examination centres.

According to Prof Khandoker Ehsanul Kabir, chairman of the Dhaka Education

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