

3 Bangladeshis to compete in Japan's SpoGomi World Cup



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three young Bangladeshis will represent the country at the 2nd SpoGomi World Cup in Japan this October.

The participants – Md Imran Hossain, Md Jubair Sheikh, and Md Tansir, all students of Daffodil International University – competed as Team Eco Fighters and secured victory in the Bangladesh qualifiers held yesterday in Dhaka.

Originating in Japan, SpoGomi is a team-based competition where participants collect litter from designated areas within a set time and sort it into categories. Teams earn points based on the type and weight of collected waste.

The contest aims to promote environmental awareness and public engagement in waste management in a fun and competitive manner.

The Bangladesh qualifier took place at the Sandhya Malati ground of the Rajuk Uttara Apartment Project in Uttara Sector 18.

Seventy teams competed, with Team Eco Fighters scoring the highest. Each team had one hour to collect waste and 20 minutes to sort it.

Different categories carried different point values. Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Administrator Mohammad Azaz highlighted the importance of civic responsibility in keeping the city clean.

“We want to advance the city's cleanliness through community participation. Without awareness and cooperation from all walks of life, it is impossible to keep the city clean,” he said.

He also criticised unauthorised markets occupying sidewalks, making waste management more difficult. “We clean the city's garbage all night, but by noon it becomes dirty again due to citizens' negligence. Without public awareness and active participation, the city cannot remain clean,” he added.

Janmashtami

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before concluding at Bahadur Shah Park in Old Dhaka. Earlier in the morning, the Mahanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee organised a Gita Yajna at the Dhakeshwari National Temple, seeking peace and prosperity for the country and the nation. It was conducted by Shankar Math and Mission from Sitakunda, Chattogram.

Additionally, the

International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) undertook a four-day programme marking Janmashtami. The activities included recitation of the Srimad Bhagavatam Gita, devotional songs and kirtan, bhog arati, distribution of maha prasad, discussion meetings, cultural programmes, and religious drama and kirtan mela.

Stop pushing unnecessary tests

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“Look into the matter seriously,” he said.

Prescribing unnecessary medical tests is another complaint, he said, citing the case of his house help who was prescribed 14 tests by a Dhaka hospital.

Aggrieved by the sheer number of tests prescribed, the house help went to his hometown, Mymensingh, for treatment by a doctor he knew and was cured without any tests.

“Stop this torture. It's fine if you charge the rich more, but please end the practice of prescribing 14 or 15 tests for poor patients.”

Another complaint is about compelling patients to buy medicine from a particular company, he said.

“In any part of the world, do doctors set aside specific times in hospitals or clinics for pharmaceutical company representatives? Is there any country where this happens? Are you agents of pharmaceutical companies? Are the doctors of major hospitals in this

country intermediaries for pharmaceutical companies? Where are you placing yourselves?”

Wrong test results and low salaries of service providers are the other complaints, he said, while urging more investment in manpower to improve the quality of services.

People would not need to go to India or Bangkok for treatment if they received proper care here, he added.

People receive treatment from both government and private medical facilities, so the standards of these two types of facilities should not differ, Rahman said.

Similarly, the quality of education in government and private medical colleges cannot be different as both produce doctors.

The government will establish a Health Facilities Accreditation Council to ensure quality, he said.

The practice of undue profit must be stopped, he said, adding that healthcare providers should limit themselves to justifiable

profits.

Talking about the low salaries of service providers, he said that doctors at most medical facilities earn less than Tk 30,000 monthly while nurses receive about Tk 12,000.

“In which country in the world do people work for such low wages, except Cuba, where the government provides everything? This has reached a shameful level.”

Subsequently, he urged healthcare providers to establish a salary structure keeping their social dignity in mind.

The government wants a salary board for health service providers and sought the owners' support in this regard.

He also termed the annual renewal of licences for private medical facilities as irrational.

The government is working to review the process, he said, adding that the authorities must ensure proper inspections within the fixed period.

Cruel toll of ambulance syndicate

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While Abu Taher remains absconding, the name of Jahangir Hossain, the driver of the sole government ambulance at Shariatpur General Hospital, is not in the case. When contacted, Jahangir denied involvement, claiming he heard of the death through social media.

The case also names Md Billal, and Abdul Hai, along with five to six unidentified suspects.

Hai, president of the Ambulance Owners' Welfare Association, denied involvement with the syndicate. He said the baby had breathing problems from birth and that a verbal altercation occurred between drivers and the family. “Eventually, the baby died in the ambulance. Life and death are in the hands of Allah,” he said.

Civil Surgeon Dr Mohammad Rehan Uddin acknowledged the allegations against his driver and promised an investigation committee. “If proven guilty, departmental action will be taken. Legal action will follow in coordination with police and administration,” he said.

Shariatpur General

Hospital Superintendent Dr Habibur Rahman reiterated that the fare for a trip to Dhaka is fixed at Tk 4,000 and anyone charging higher will face disciplinary measures.

But syndicate-controlled ambulances charge Tk 6,000-8,000, adding extra “toll fees” of Tk 3,000-4,000, despite exemptions at highways and places like the Padma Bridge, said Jafrul Hasan, who has recently taken his kidney patient mother to Dhaka.

If families try to hire ambulances from other districts at lower costs, those vehicles are detained, sometimes even with patients inside, he said.

Shariatpur has around 45 ambulances, one government and the rest private. Victims, ambulance drivers, and locals told The Daily Star that the syndicate extorts commissions of Tk 2,000-3,000 from ambulances leaving Shariatpur hospitals. Drivers from outside are paid only part of the fare, while the syndicate pockets the rest.

Since the tragedy, ambulance services at Shariatpur Sadar Hospital have dwindled sharply, with only one or two vehicles

operating, leaving families in urgent need exposed and vulnerable.

The harrowing chain of events began when Nur Hossain's wife was admitted to New Metro Diagnostic Center and Clinic with labour pain on Thursday.

After a failed natural delivery, she underwent a caesarean section at 3:00pm. The baby was first taken to Fatema Medical before being referred to Shariatpur Sadar Hospital, where doctors advised urgent transfer to Dhaka.

By 6:45pm, the family had secured a Dhaka-bound ambulance for Tk 5,000. But as hope seemed within reach, around a dozen people intercepted the vehicle, seized the keys, and demanded the child be taken in a local ambulance instead.

For half an hour, the family pleaded, protested, and prayed. By 7:15pm, the baby had died.

“Had I known my child would die over a Tk 2,000 dispute, I would have paid the higher fare. I demand justice and strict punishment for the perpetrators,” Nur Hossain said, his grief raw and unfiltered.

RU students still face poor food

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been initiated while two halls, which were under construction from the previous administration, have been completed.

Officials claim that seat allocation is now entirely merit-based. However, several students allege that political influence still affects some cases.

Tisa Khatun, a third-year botany student living in July 36 Hall (Bangamata Fazilatunnesa Hall), has spent more than a year in the hall's overcrowded Gono Room.

“There is no ventilation, no personal space, and I have been sharing a bed with another student for more than a year,” she said.

Others, however, note some improvement. Saida Akhter, a resident of Khaleda Zia Hall, said, “Although the lack of residential facilities creates problems, the process of seat allocation has become fairer since August 5. Seats are now given accordingly and in a transparent way.”

Shariful Islam, a resident of Amir Ali Hall, also praised the “end of seat trading” and the inclusion of poor students in the allocation process.

An RU professor, requesting anonymity, alleged that some teachers run private boarding houses in nearby areas such as Kajla, Binodpur, and Meherchondi. “If the university becomes fully residential, it will hurt their business. That's why genuine initiatives for full residential accommodation are rare,” the professor claimed.

Prof Zamirul Islam,

convener of the provost council, rejected the allegations. He said since August 5, all seats have been allocated through a transparent, score-based system with quotas properly applied.

DINING

If seat allocation shows mixed progress, dining remains the most glaring problem. Students complain that food quality has not improved despite repeated promises.

In some halls, dining services have been outsourced to private caterers in addition to canteen facilities, but residents insist the meals are unhygienic, monotonous, and lack nutrition. Female dormitories are particularly affected as they have no canteen, forcing students to depend entirely on hall dining.

“There were temporary improvements in food standards when the provost directly supervised the dining, but they lasted only a few days. Potatoes are in every dish, three times a day. The food is the same every day, and even hall shops don't stock basic items,” said Ashoka Jaima of Khaleda Zia Hall.

Dining managers point to soaring prices as a major obstacle. “A week ago, daily groceries cost Tk 8,000 to Tk 10,000. Now the same items cost Tk 10,000 to Tk 15,000. But meal rates are fixed at Tk 30 for lunch and Tk 22 for dinner. There are no subsidies, so it is very hard to maintain quality,” said Shoppo Ali, dining manager of Sher-e-Bangla Hall.

Private eateries near RU

also reveal how campus politics once dictated student life. Manik Hossain Babu, who runs a hotel near Ziaur Rahman Hall, said, “During the Awami League period, Chhatra League leaders ate at my hotel without paying. Around Tk 8.5 lakh is still due. I even filed a case. But now, the situation is different. Students pay their bills regularly.”

Prof Zamirul admitted that dining was “not excellent” but claimed it has improved compared to earlier years. He said the university provides indirect support through subsidies on electricity and infrastructure. He also blamed past irregularities on politically backed students who ate for free – a practice he claimed has “almost disappeared”.

People united

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Jubo Dal at BNP's Nayapaltna central office to mark the 81st birthday of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

“I would like to request all democratic forces and political parties to bring the same kind of unity that we showed during the anti-fascist democratic struggle. Let us remain united, engage in discussions and work together so that we can hold the election fairly and peacefully and thus make the path of democratic transition smoother,” he said.

The BNP leader said their party, together with the entire nation, is awaiting a credible election to restore democracy for which many have sacrificed.

Implementation timeline

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Prof Ali Riaz, vice-president of the consensus commission, confirmed to The Daily Star that the commission had sent the integrated final draft to the parties, adding that they had been asked to send their feedback on language and wording by August 20.

“The content will remain unchanged,” he added.

About the charter having no specific deadline for the parties, he said the two-year deadline was mentioned in the preliminary draft to initiate discussions. “It wasn't anything concrete.”

Asked why the draft does not specify the immediately implementable recommendations, he said the interim government will identify those and act accordingly.

A member of the commission, preferring anonymity, also said the timeline was initially mentioned to initiate discussions on implementation. “We are now discussing the legal bindings of the charter. Once that's established, we expect a timeline will naturally emerge.”

The draft outlines 84 issues on which political parties reached consensus during two rounds of discussions between March 20 and July 31. It also includes notes of dissent – most from the BNP and some from other parties.

On whether political parties would be bound to take the notes of dissent into consideration, Prof Ali Riaz said, “Discussions with legal experts are underway.... The parties would be obliged to follow the interpretations given by the experts.”

Giving priority to the July uprising aspirations, the commission sought pledges on eight broad commitments.

The charter pledged full implementation of its provisions as a reflection of the sacrifices and aspirations of the July-August 2024 movement, describing it as the framework of a new political settlement adopted through consensus.

The commission urged political parties to incorporate all provisions of the charter and its decisions into the constitution. If there is any conflict between the charter and existing laws or the constitution, the charter will take precedence.

It vested the authority to interpret any provision or recommendation of the charter in the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, while declaring every provision constitutionally and legally binding, beyond judicial challenge to its legitimacy or necessity.

The charter said the people's uninterrupted struggle for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law – particularly the historic significance of the 2024 uprising – would receive constitutional and state recognition.

Parties are urged to pledge justice for the killings during the July uprising, state honours for the martyrs and assistance for their families, and rehabilitation of the injured.

In the preliminary draft, the commission asked parties to pledge to recognise and “enshrine the historical importance of the 2024 anti-discrimination democratic movement and popular uprising in the constitution with due prominence.”

That version, however, made no mention of constitutional and state recognition for the broader democratic struggle or of ensuring justice for the killings.

The final draft, in its pledges for the parties, said that although no constitution was in force between March 26, 1971, and November 4, 1972, all activities during that period were later incorporated into the 1972 constitution – paying tribute to the martyrs of the Liberation War and granting those activities legal and constitutional legitimacy.

It also said that, in the aftermath of the December 6, 1990 mass uprising, the resignation of the chief justice, his assumption

of the vice presidency, temporary presidency, and eventual return to the judiciary had no legal framework.

“Yet those actions were legitimised on the basis of political commitments, and the subsequent parliament endorsed them as the people's will, strengthening both constitutional convention and democracy,” it added.

Ruhin Hossain Prince, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, said his party needs to consider whether they will sign the charter or not.

“Looking at the proposal sent by the commission, it seems they have submitted not a proposal of consensus, but a proposal of a particular group. What was written in the introduction was not discussed with us. We, along with some other parties, have notes of dissent on the proposed fundamental principles of the state and some other issues, so it cannot be called a consensus.”

Speaking about the absence of a timeframe, he said it seems the current government wants to implement the proposals within its term, which appears “quite impossible and unrealistic”.

Raved Rasin, senior joint convener of the National Citizen Party, said they are disappointed as the draft does not mention a timeframe; which proposals are immediately implementable; how they will be implemented; the fate of issues over which parties submitted notes of dissent; or those on which no consensus was reached.

“We will write to the commission about this,” he said, expressing hope that it will take their concerns into consideration.

Both BNP Standing Committee member Salahuddin Ahmed and Jamaat-e-Islami Nayebe-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher, who represented their respective parties during the consensus talks with the commission, could not be contacted for comments despite repeated attempts.

Burglaries at Khulna

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group of burglars vandalised and looted a Dutch Bangla Bank Fast Track ATM booth along with two shops on Sadar Road early yesterday.

Around 3:30am, the gang stormed the ATM booth at Adalatpara, tied up and assaulted security guard Mojibur Rahman, and then vandalised the booth, looting a laptop, said Sadar Police Station OC Imtiaz Ahmed.

Mojibur, left seriously injured after being struck on the head, was admitted to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital.

About 20 minutes later, the same gang broke into “Fashion Optical” on Sadar Road, stealing products, a

computer monitor, and about Tk 2 lakh in cash.

Around 4:30am, they targeted “Shikdar Store” in the area, looting a CCTV monitor, cash, recharge cards, and other items, the OC added.

Md Rinku, channel officer of Dutch-Bangla Fast Track, confirmed Mojibur had been tied up and attacked.

“We have obtained video footage of the incident. An investigation is underway, and the culprits will be identified and brought to justice soon,” the OC said.

[Our correspondents from Khulna and Patuakhali contributed to this report.]

Army seizes arms

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“Relevant intelligence agencies have already begun detailed investigations, and the operation is still ongoing,” it added.

Meanwhile, the detainees were identified as Montaserul Alam Anindo, locally known as an English teacher and owner of the coaching centre, and two others, Md Robin and Md Faisal.

Anindo is the son of Shafiq Alam, alias Lattu, former vice-president of BNP's Rajshahi city unit, and owner of the building of the coaching centre, according to media reports.

He is also a cousin of former Rajshahi City mayor and Awami League leader AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, said a press release issued by 40 East Bengal, Rajshahi Sena Camp.

Anindo was earlier arrested as a suspect in the 2016 murder case of Rajshahi University English department teacher Rezaul Karim but was later acquitted, said media reports.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Spokesperson Gaziur Rahman told The Daily Star last night that the trio have been shown arrested in a relevant case filed in connection to the raid and recovery of weapons.

PRAYER TIMING		AUGUST 17	
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-25	12-45	4-45	6-38 8-00
JAMAAT 5-00	1-15	5-00	6-41 8-30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION			

Two held over Banani shisha

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had gone there with his friend Nurul Islam Khokon.

Allegedly, around 5:28am, on the second floor of the building, suspects Munna and Hamza confronted Rahat. During an argument, Munna stabbed Rahat multiple times before fleeing.

He was rushed to Kurmitola General Hospital, where doctors

declared him dead.

Following intelligence efforts yesterday, authorities got to know that 26-year-old Hamza was hiding in Barura, Cumilla. Based on his information, Munna was also apprehended from the same area.

The knife used in the murder, a Swiss Gear blade, was recovered from Rajia Sultana Road in Dhaka's

Mohammadpur area.

In preliminary interrogations, the suspects revealed a long-standing dispute with Rahat over dominance in the Banani lounge.

On the night of the incident, Rahat reportedly asked Munna to leave the lounge around 1:00am, which escalated the conflict and led to the stabbing, the press release stated.

EC alone cannot ensure fair polls

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universities, he noted, can influence national elections.

He also discussed the limitations of both the proportional representation system and the constituency-based system in parliamentary elections. He said discussions are ongoing about forming the lower house

through constituency-based elections and the upper house through a proportional representation system.

In his concluding remarks, Debate for Democracy Chairman Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron said the process of organising the upcoming national election should be expedited.

However, he added,

without the cooperation of the EC, the administration, political parties, candidates, and voters, it will not be possible to hold a free and acceptable election.

The Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT) debaters emerged as winners, defeating the team from Sir Salimullah Medical College.

A tug of war over ‘plough’ symbol

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provision. The appointment of an acting chairman by anyone else is completely illegal. Moreover, those appointed were already expelled,” he said.

He also noted that the timing and venue of presidium or council meetings must be set with the chairman's consent and chaired by him, making the rival council invalid. He alleged that no EC representative was present at the council, questioning how expelled members could organise or join it without reinstatement.

On August 9, Anisul's faction held JP's 10th

council in Gulshan, electing Anisul as chairman, Mujibul Haque as executive chairman, Kazi Firoz Rashid as senior co-chairman, and Ruhul Amin Hawlader as secretary general. Earlier, GM Quader had expelled them from party positions and membership.

In response, Anisul and 10 leaders filed a case with Dhaka First Joint District Judge's Court against Quader and joint office secretary Mahmud Alam. The court imposed a temporary injunction on the organisational activities of both sides until August 12.

During the injunction, Anisul's faction held the council and formed a committee. On August 11, the court transferred the case to the Sixth Joint District Judge's Court. The next day, the judge allowed the complainants to withdraw it, lifting the injunction on GM Quader.

Asked why they withdrew the case, Mujibul told The Daily Star: “He [GM Quader] is no longer the chairman of Jatiya Party. We formed a new committee through the council – why would the case remain? If the case remains, that means he is accepted as chairman.”