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The verdict in the cases against those accused of crimes against humanity will be announced on November 17. Extra caution will be maintained to prevent any disorder. Also, law enforcement agencies and security forces will remain on strict duty in the field five days before the election, on the day of the election, and for three more days afterwards.

JAHANGIR ALAM CHOWDHURY
Home Adviser



A customer checks a blanket at a vendor's stall on the sidewalk near Baitul Mukarram Mosque in the capital yesterday. Hawkers there are selling winter clothes and blankets, both new and old, priced between Tk 500 and Tk 3,000. With temperatures dropping in recent days, Dhaka has begun to feel the season's first chill.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

‘Intellectual pursuit being overshadowed by capitalism’

Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury warns of declining value of knowledge at launch of his book

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury yesterday expressed deep concern over the declining value of knowledge in today's society, saying capitalist priorities centred on wealth accumulation have overshadowed intellectual pursuit.

He made the remarks at the launch of his book "Dhaka Bishwabidyalyay: Itihashe, Smritite" (Dhaka University: In History, In Memory) at the National Museum in Shahbagh.

"Knowledge no longer holds its former value. The entire system has become so capitalist that people have become self-centred, forced to think only of themselves," he said.

"Students now go to libraries to prepare for BCS exams. Government jobs have become the most attractive option. The relationship between education and livelihood has been severed."



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury and distinguished guests hold up copies of his new book "Dhaka Bishwabidyalyay: Itihashe, Smritite" at its launch ceremony at the National Museum in Shahbagh yesterday.

He criticised current development narratives, calling such development "hollow and fraudulent -- a development of deception."

"This development does not encourage education or value knowledge," said Prof Choudhury.

He addressed the deteriorating social status of teachers, citing imagery from recent protests for increased allowances.

He described a viral image showing broken glasses on the ground after a teacher was assaulted. "These broken glasses are a mark of teachers' dignity in society," he said.

"The current situation is very bad. Bangladesh's situation has never been good, but the level of hopelessness now is unprecedented," said Prof Choudhury.

"Hopelessness is the most serious issue, and that feeling has truly set in."

Despite the grim assessment, he expressed satisfaction at the gathering with fellow intellectuals. "I felt a sense of fulfilment in my life today."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

Protected on paper, excluded in reality

Neglect, weak oversight, lack of implementation of ratified laws undermine their rights

NILIMA JAHAN

At just 21, Jyoti Hossain from Jhikargachha, Jashore, is fighting not her disability but rather a system that refuses to include her.

Confined to a wheelchair since age four after a spinal cord injury, Jyoti excelled in school, earning an A+ in both SSC and HSC exams. Last year, she fulfilled her dream of studying Physics at Government MM College, Jashore.

But barriers soon closed in. With no accessible transport, she spends Tk 1,400 a day on private cars, and the college's third-floor physics lab -- without a lift -- remains out of reach.

After a year of struggling, her teachers advised her to abandon Physics and switch to the degree pass course, saying practical work would soon become "too difficult" for her.

"Physics is my favourite subject. Why should I switch?" Jyoti said. "This disability is not my fault, so why should I give up my dream?"

Her story exposes the stark gap between law and reality in Bangladesh.

The Rights and Protection of Persons



KEY ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Accessibility barriers➤ Policy-practice gap➤ Dysfunctional committees➤ Employment discrimination➤ Weak UNCRPD compliance➤ Poor coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Reactivate monitoring mechanisms➤ Strengthen NDDF➤ Ensure dedicated budgeting➤ Make campuses accessible➤ Generate disability data➤ Empower OPDs

with Disabilities Act 2013 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) guarantee equal access to education and infrastructure.

Yet inaccessible campuses and systemic neglect continue to hold back students like Jyoti. Bangladesh ratified the UNCRPD in 2007 and its Optional Protocol in 2008.

The 2013 Act incorporated the convention's principles into national law, and the 2019 National Action Plan on Disability outlined short, medium, and long-term goals for 35 ministries across 18 thematic areas.

Still, experts say enforcement remains weak, and policies rarely translate into practice.

Bangladesh enforces the 2013 Act through five disability rights committees -- from local to national -- covering education, health, employment, and rights. They operate under the National Disability Development Foundation (NDDF) under the Ministry of Social Welfare.

By law, these committees must meet regularly, but experts say they rarely do, leaving monitoring extremely weak.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Case filed over Mamun's killing in Old Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five days after the daylight killing in the capital's old town, a murder case was finally filed yesterday -- without naming any suspects -- even though police have already arrested five people, including two alleged shooters.

Bilkis Akther Ripa, wife of victim Tarik Saif Mamun, filed the case with Sutrapur Police Station.

According to the case statement, Mamun went to the city metropolitan court on the morning of November 10 to appear in a case. Afterwards, he stopped near the entry gate of the National Medical College Hospital on Johnson Road to drink coconut water. Between 10:50am and 11:00am, 10-12 unidentified individuals shot him dead in a pre-planned attack.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 7

30 lakh jobs at risk over new ordinance

Says association of travel agents, terms it 'black law'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB) yesterday warned that around 30 lakh people involved in the sector will lose their jobs if the government turns the Bangladesh Travel Agency (Registration and Control) (Amendment) Ordinance into a law.

Terming it a "black law", ATAB members said they would never accept the ordinance and urged the government to review it in line with stakeholders' demands.

Former top leaders of ATAB and general members raised the demand at two separate programmes in Dhaka.

At a human chain in the capital's Naya Paltan, former ATAB president Abdus Salam Aref and former secretary general Afsia Jannat Saleh said several sections of the ordinance, including the proposal to keep Tk 10 lakh as a deposit for offline travel agencies and the ban on the purchase and sale of tickets between agencies, are not business-friendly and would harm the country's travel industry.

Later at a press conference at a city hotel, former president SN Monjur Morshed said they would resist the ordinance at any cost, as it was formulated without consulting stakeholders.

"The government did not involve us in amending the ordinance and approved it autocratically," he said.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4

Police in new uniform

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new uniform for Bangladesh Police has come into effect, with members of all metropolitan police units and several specialised units, including the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, starting to wear it from yesterday.

However, district police have not yet received the new attire. Officials said district and range units will begin using it in phases.

The decision to change the uniform colours was made on January 20 at a law-and-order meeting at the home ministry. Under this decision, the new police uniforms will be iron-coloured.

Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner of DMP's media and public relations wing, said police in DMP areas switched to the new uniform yesterday. Some officers received it on Friday, while others will receive it gradually.

Bangladesh Police spokesperson AHM Sahadat Hossaine, assistant inspector general (media) at the Police Headquarters, said specialised units such as the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI), Tourist Police, Highway Police, and River Police will also use the new attire.

The uniform change comes as part of efforts to reform law enforcement agencies following last year's mass uprising, during which police, Rab, and Ansar were accused of using excessive force against unarmed students, leading to the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5.

Along with the police, the authorities also decided that Rab would wear an olive-green uniform and Ansar a golden-wheat one. However, Ansar has requested the ministry to reconsider the golden-wheat colour.



PHOTO: STAR