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Rights, security for all, regardless of faith: PM

BSS, *Dhaka*

The government is committed to ensuring the rights and security of every citizen, regardless of religious identity, said Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday.

Everyone should be treated equally as a citizen of Bangladesh, he said while exchanging views with Hindu community leaders from the Dhaka-17 constituency at his office at the Bangladesh Secretariat, said PM's Deputy Press Secretary Hasan Shiplu.

Representatives of eight temples met him to invite him to attend the Durga Puja celebrations.

Thanking the leaders for acknowledging the government's initiatives for the Hindu community, including extended Puja holidays and increased grants, Tarique said the steps taken so far reflected the government's goodwill and that efforts were under way to address other issues.



Visitors admire a painting at "Durga Through the Eyes of Artists -- Shakti", an art exhibition at Gallery Chitrak in the capital's Dhanmondi. Featuring works by young and senior Bangladeshi artists, the exhibition explored Goddess Durga, power and the spirit of Sharadiya Durga Puja. It ended yesterday.

PHOTO: **MEHEDI HASAN**

IN FOCUS

GRAMEEN KALYAN

HC clears way for NBR to recover Tk 666cr in tax

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday released the full verdicts rejecting two petitions filed by Grameen Kalyan against the National Board of Revenue (NBR) orders reassessing its income tax at around Tk 666 crore, clearing the way for the tax authorities to recover the dues.

Grameen Kalyan is a non-profit charitable organisation founded by former interim government chief adviser and Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus.

"The respondents (NBR chairman and other officials concerned) are directed to take necessary steps to realize the unpaid tax from the petitioner in accordance with law as expeditiously as possible. Let a copy of this judgment and order be communicated to the respondents forthwith," the bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Rezaul Karim said in one of the full texts of judgments.

In another verdict, the same bench said, "The respondents are directed to do the needful relating to the unpaid tax from the petitioner by issuing necessary demand notice immediately. Let a copy

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Childhood behind bars

300 children living in prisons with jailed mothers; social services dept recommends alternative care

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 300 children are currently living with their incarcerated mothers in prisons across the country, prompting the Department of Social Services to recommend alternative family-based care or placement in government children's homes to ensure their safety and development.

The recommendations were made in a report jointly prepared by the department's Child Protection Unit and Probation Section for submission to the High Court, in compliance with its directive.



"According to the latest information received from the field level, around 298 to 303 children are currently staying with their incarcerated mothers in prisons across Bangladesh. Under the supervision of probation officers, the Association for Correction and Rehabilitation of Offenders regularly provides toys, clothing and nutritious food to these children to support their early development and ensure their protection," the report said.

The department, under the Ministry of Social Welfare, said prisons were not conducive to children's long-term physical and mental development.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Dengue cases cross 1 lakh, deaths reach 307

Dengue cases may stay high through November | Cases may decline in Dec if rainfall subsides | Experts raise concerns over underreporting | Poor surveillance hampers mosquito control | DNCC identifies 100 dengue hotspots

HELEMUL ALAM

With 2,167 new dengue cases reported yesterday, the total caseload this year has reached 1,01,442, while the death toll stands at 307.

Experts warned that cases could remain high through November before declining in December if rainfall subsides. They called for sustained mosquito control, accurate reporting and coordinated action to contain the outbreak.

Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, said cases might decline slightly in November but were unlikely to fall enough to indicate a clear downward trend. A more noticeable decline could begin in December, but continued rainfall could prolong the outbreak, he said.

Citing a forecasting model, he said dengue cases could continue rising for up to six weeks after the last rainfall.

Bashar also raised concerns about underreporting, alleging that some major hospitals were reporting zero dengue patients despite indications that patients were being treated there.

He urged journalists to independently verify hospital figures, warning that inaccurate reporting could prevent authorities from identifying hotspots and allocating resources effectively.

GM Saifur Rahman, an entomologist at National University, called for a coordinated, year-round, science-based strategy to identify and eliminate breeding sites.

Rahman urged authorities to launch full-scale preventive measures once cases decline after November to reduce the risk of another surge next year.

He said effective interventions could eliminate an estimated 75% of breeding sites, depending on implementation and coverage.

Rahman stressed the need for cooperation among government agencies, city corporations, NGOs and research institutions to coordinate activities, evaluate programmes and ensure follow-up monitoring. He also called for field-based training and public awareness campaigns.

"Simply pouring out standing water may not be enough, as eggs can remain attached to container surfaces. People should know how to clean, treat or properly dispose of potential breeding sites," he added.

Dhaka North City Corporation Chief Health Officer Brig Gen Imrul-al-Quais said the corporation had identified 100 hotspots, deployed around 100 volunteers daily and collected data directly from hospitals and patients' households.

He said the DNCC was prioritising the elimination of breeding sites, mosquito surveillance and patient tracking rather than relying solely on insecticide spraying.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 8



SONALI BAG

Govt hands over unused machinery to MBSTU

Project scrapped last year over high costs

HELEMUL ALAM

The government has transferred the unused machinery from the Sonali Bag project to Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU) to prevent public assets from deteriorating and support further research into jute-based products and technologies.

A memorandum of understanding was signed on October 8 among the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC), the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust and the university.

State Minister for Textiles and Jute Shariful Alam

SEE PAGE 9 COL 3

'I recognised my son by his clothes'

Mother tells ICT how she found him among piles of bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mother searched floor after floor of Dhaka Medical College Hospital for her son, Mohammad Ismail, after learning he had been shot during a protest in the July uprising. She eventually found him dead in a morgue crowded with 300 to 400 bodies piled on top of one another.

"I recognised my son by the clothes he was wearing," Taslima Akter told International Crimes Tribunal-1 yesterday, breaking down in tears as she recounted finding his body.

Ismail was shot dead in Mohammadpur on July 19, according to her testimony in a crimes against humanity case against former Dhaka South City Corporation mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, former minister Jahangir Kabir Nanak and 26 others over the killings of nine people, including Ismail and another student.

Taslima said her son joined the movement near Allah Karim Mosque that day.

That evening, Ismail's friend Kalu informed his aunt that he had been shot and was being taken to DMCH.

Taslima, with her mother and sister, left their home in Dhaka Udyan by rickshaw and reached the hospital around 10:00pm.

The emergency department was crowded with gunshot victims, both alive and dead.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5



Farmers have set up a market for early winter vegetables in a field beside Bargachhi Union Parishad in Paba upazila, Rajshahi. Cauliflowers are selling for Tk 1,700-1,900 per maund, bottle gourds for Tk 10-12 each and radishes for Tk 600-700 per maund. Wholesalers have to spend an additional Tk 10 per kg to transport the vegetables to Dhaka, Chattogram and Sylhet. Despite reasonable wholesale prices, vegetables remain expensive in retail markets. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: **AZAHAR UDDIN**

GM Quader's Uttara residence attacked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of people attacked the residence of Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader in Uttara's Sector 7 in Dhaka yesterday morning.

Around 10:45am, they gathered outside the house carrying a banner reading "Anti-Autocracy General Public".

They demanded Quader's arrest, accusing him of being an Indian agent, an aide to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina and a betrayer of the July martyrs.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Quader said he and his wife were having breakfast when they heard shouting outside, followed by bricks and stones being thrown at the house from different directions.

The attack shattered windowpanes, scattering broken glass across the drawing room. However, the attackers could not enter the house as the gate was locked, he said.

"They remained there for around half an hour. I informed the police, who rushed to the spot," Quader said, adding that the attackers hurled abuses at him and chanted slogans branding him an Indian agent.

Uttara West Police Station Officer-in-Charge Khalid Mansur said police received information about the attack around 11:00am and rushed to the spot.

Around 30-40 people threw bricks at the house and vandalised it from outside before fleeing upon seeing the police, he said.