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“We think the decision to use EVMs in the elections is part of the conspiracy to permanently snatch people’s voting rights.”
BNP SECRETARY GENERAL MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR AT A PRESS BRIEFING (PAGE 3)



“If I allow high charges for recruitment [of Bangladeshi workers abroad], I will betray my constituents...”
EXPATRIATES’ WELFARE AND OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT MINISTER IMRAN AHMAD AT A MEET-THE-PRESS (PAGE 16)



“The Iranian regime telling Iraq’s government what to do puts Iraqi patriots’ lives at risk.”
US SECRETARY OF STATE MIKE POMPEO ABOUT PRO-IRAN FACTIONS’ THREATS TO IRAQI TROOPS (PAGE 8)

POLICE WEEK 2020

Demands pile up, unimplemented

PM unhappy as many of her earlier directives not carried out

SHARIFUL ISLAM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Yet again, the police are going to place at least a dozen demands during this year’s Police Week though more than two dozen demands raised in the last two years remain largely unimplemented, say insiders.

The fresh demands include special residential facilities for officials of the rank of DIG and above in Dhaka, business or executive class air tickets for additional IGs during official tours abroad, “interest-free advance” for buying personal vehicles and postings in Bangladesh missions abroad, according to them.

On the first day of the Police Week 2020 yesterday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed resentment at the non-implementation of many of her directives to meet the police demands placed in previous years.

She sought to know from the home ministry the reasons for the failure to implement the directives.

Police personnel -- from constables to additional superintendents of police -- placed a host of demands at yesterday’s

Police Welfare Parade in the capital’s Rajarbagh.

One of the officials raised the past demand for increasing compensations for police members if they are killed or injured while on duty or in action.

The PM then said, “I want to know why my directive to raise the compensations is still lying with the ministry.

“I want action in seven days,” she was quoted as saying by an official present at the parade.

During last year’s Police Week, the PM had pledged to consider a raise in compensations from Tk 5 lakh to Tk 15 lakh if a police member is killed while in action, from Tk 5 lakh to Tk 8 lakh if one is killed while in service and from Tk 1 lakh to Tk 4 lakh if one suffers grievous injuries.

Raising the demand yesterday, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Mahfuza Liza said as per a 2016 government order, if officials or employees of various government departments are killed while in service, their families get a compensation of Tk 8

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Four people, including two children, travelling on a motorbike near Kakrail mosque in the capital yesterday. None of them are wearing helmets. According to Nirapad Sarak Chai, 19 percent of the road crash fatalities last year involved motorbikes.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

DU student raped, tortured in capital

STAR REPORT

A second-year student of Dhaka University was allegedly raped and tortured in the capital’s Kurmitola area last night.

Her fellow students and several DU employees brought her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital around midnight and got her admitted there, police said.

Some of her friends who rescued her told The Daily Star that she was walking from Kurmitola bus stop to a friend’s house in a nearby area around 7:30pm.

Soon after getting down from the university bus, someone grabbed her from behind, gagged her and took her to an isolated place nearby. She was raped and tortured there, they said, quoting the victim.

Assistant Sub-inspector Abdul Kahan of DMCH police outpost said the 21-year-old woman, who appeared to be traumatised and disoriented at the hospital, told her fellow students that she fainted at the time and regained consciousness after 10:00pm.

She then called her friends who rescued

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Trump threatens to hit 52 sites in Iran

Tehran vows military response, dares Washington to attack first, decides to forego ‘limit’ on nuclear enrichment

AGENCIES

Iran yesterday vowed military response after US President Donald Trump threatened to hit 52 Iranian sites “very hard” if Iran attacks Americans or US assets to avenge the killing of a top military commander.

Stepping up pressure over the US killing, Iraq’s parliament, after passing a resolution, yesterday urged the government to oust thousands of American troops from the country.

Qassem Soleimani was killed on Friday in a US drone strike on his convoy at Baghdad airport, an attack that took US-Iranian hostilities into uncharted waters and stoked concern about a major conflagration.

Meanwhile, Iran said it would further roll back its commitments to a 2015 nuclear deal with six major powers, by enriching

uranium without restrictions, but it will continue to cooperate with the UN nuclear watchdog.

State television said Iran would not respect any limits set down in the pact on the country’s nuclear work: whether the limit on its number of uranium enrichment centrifuges



to its enrichment capacity, the level to which uranium could be enriched, or Iran’s nuclear Research and Development activities.

Iran has steadily overstepped the deal’s limits on its nuclear activities in response to the US withdrawal from the accord in 2018 and Washington’s reimposition of sanctions that have crippled Iran’s oil trade.

As Washington and Tehran, longtime foes, assailed each other with threats and counter-threats, the European Union,

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Be a people-friendly force

PM asks police

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked police personnel to make themselves the “police of people”.

She said it is very easy to eliminate any crime gaining people’s confidence and trust.

“I hope you’ll work keeping this in mind,” she said.

The prime minister was inaugurating the five-day Police Week-2020 with the theme Mujib Borsher Angikar Police Hobe Jonatar at the Rajarbagh Police Lines.

She said the government wants the police to be a



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Local TV channels lose 20pc viewers

Satellite transmission unavailable in Middle East, Australasia and Malaysia

MUHAMMAD ZAHIDUL ISLAM

It became a habit for Golam Masood, who has been living in Saudi Arabia since the 90s, to tune into Bangladeshi television channels the moment he returned home from work.

But that decade-long habit, which eased his homesickness and also helped his children to learn Bangla, was abruptly disrupted one fine day.

That day was October 2 last year, when all 37 Bangladeshi TV channels began to fully broadcast from Bangabandhu-1, the country’s first satellite, which unfortunately does not have coverage in the Middle East, Australasia, Singapore and Malaysia.

About 20 percent of the local satellite television stations’ viewership came from those markets, which they could reach through their previous transmission arrangement by way of Apstar 7, a Chinese communications satellite that has coverage in almost all parts of the world.

The local channels though had to run out their agreements with APT Satellite, the parent company of Apstar 7, to move to Bangabandhu-1, so they do not have alternative arrangements to reach out to viewers in those regions either.

“We have a big hole in our daily lives now. Though we are very far from home, thanks to the Bangladeshi televisions we never feel that we were out of the country,” said Masood, who runs a grocery store in Riyadh.

And, sadly for expatriates like Masood, none of the Bangladeshi stations

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MONEY LAUNDERING Arrest order for SK Sinha, 10 others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday took cognisance of the charges against former chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha and 10 others for allegedly misappropriating and laundering about Tk 4 crore from the Farmers Bank in 2016.

After accepting the charges, Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Senior Special Judge’s Court of Dhaka issued arrest warrants against all the accused as they have been shown “fugitives” in the charge-sheets.

The court also directed police to submit the reports on execution of arrest warrants, issued on December 3 last year, by January 22.

On December 10, the Anti-Corruption Commission pressed charges against Sinha and 10 others in this regard.

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Boatloads of winter vegetables arrive at the bank of the Sankha river in Chandaish union in Chattogram for sale at Dohazari Bazar. Farmers and traders bring the vegetables on boats with the hope of getting better prices in the city. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Pay Tk 138cr in 5 months

HC asks mobile operator Robi to pay the dues to BTRC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed mobile operator Robi Axiata Ltd to pay Tk 138 crore of what it owes Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission.

The carrier has been asked to pay the money in five equal instalments in five months.

The HC bench of Justice Mamnoon Rahman and Justice Khizir Hayat passed the order after it heard an appeal filed by Robi seeking an injunction against BTRC realising Tk 867.23 crore.

BTRC lawyer Khandaker Reza-E-Raouf told The Daily Star that the HC came up with the order in line with the Supreme Court directive that asked Grameenphone to pay Tk 2,000 crore out of Tk 12,580 crore “it owes”.

Tanjib-ul Alam and Kazi Ershadul Alam appeared for Robi. On July 31 last year, the telecom regulator issued a notice asking the carrier to pay Tk 867.23 crore “dues”.

Later, Robi filed an appeal with a lower court in Dhaka seeking an injunction on realisation of the money, but the court turned down the petition.

Robi in October last year submitted the appeal to the HC seeking an injunction on the BTRC’s move to realise money. On October 20, the HC admitted the appeal for hearing.

Following the same appeal, the HC on November 25 issued a rule asking the BTRC to explain as to why it should not be ordered to refrain from realising Tk 867.23 crore from the carrier.

On November 24 last year, the SC ordered Grameenphone to pay Tk 2,000 crore, around 10 times higher than what

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