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“It would be very worrying to return to the situation... when heads of state remained in power until the end of their days.”
PUTIN REJECTS IDEA OF SOVIET-STYLE LEADERS FOR LIFE (PAGE 8)



“Accountability is very important. There is a severe lack of accountability in society and state. So, accountability has to be exercised.”
PROF EMERITUS SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY AT A PROGRAMME AT DHAKA UNIVERSITY. (PAGE 3)



“If the Awami League was in power without Sheikh Hasina [as the prime minister], the trial of war criminals might not have happened.”
HISTORIAN PROF MUNTASSIR MAMMOON AT A DISCUSSION. (PAGE 3)



WB-FUNDED PROJECTS/PROGRAMMES 2016-20

Only half the targets met

Says draft of country performance report

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and WASIM BIN HABIB

Bangladesh could achieve only a little more than half of the targets set by the World Bank Group for 84 projects and programmes in the last four years, says a draft performance review report of the World Bank Group.

The government's prolonged processing requirements, delayed procurement and weak capacity are the major reasons behind the slow implementation of the projects, according to the report.

The multilateral lender has already

given Bangladesh \$10.06 billion under the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for five years from fiscal 2015-16.

With the funding, it set some targets in sectors such as energy, transport, social protection, education, job creation, health, and climate and environment management.

Under the CPF, the lender will provide \$12.26 billion from fiscal 2015-16 to 2019-20.

The WB has already given Bangladesh

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WB COUNTRY PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK RISK TO ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES		
CATEGORIES		RATING
Political and governance		High
Macroeconomic		Moderate
Sector strategies and policies		Moderate
Technical design of project or program		Moderate
Institutional capacity for implementation		Substantial
Fiduciary		High
Environment and social		High
Stakeholders		Moderate
OVERALL		HIGH



A card-holder uses his prepaid card to withdraw water from the Rajnarayan Dhar Water ATM Booth in the capital's Lalbagh yesterday. Inset, the booth, set up and operated by WASA and gaining popularity with more than 100 members, dispenses drinking water at a rate of Tk 0.4/litre, offering a low-cost solution to the water needs of locals. WASA has plans to set up similar booths at sites with WASA pumps throughout the city.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

India's CAA unnecessary

Says prime minister

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said she did not understand the purpose of the Citizenship Amendment Act passed recently in India, and observed that it was an unnecessary law.

But she added that the CAA was India's internal matter.

"We don't understand why [the Indian government] did it. It was not necessary," Hasina told Gulf News in an interview during her recent visit to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The CAA was passed by the Parliament of India on December 11, 2019, and provides a path to citizenship for members of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist,

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DHAKA CITY

POLLS 2020



Two top mayor candidates for Dhaka South City Corporation share with *The Daily Star* what they will deliver, if elected, for residents of a city plagued by numerous civic problems.

DSCC door will remain open 24/7

RASHIDUL HASAN

Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, ruling Awami League mayor candidate for Dhaka South City Corporation, pledges to ensure civic services for the DSCC people within the first 90 days of him being elected.

In a recent interview with *The Daily Star* at his Dhanmondi election office, Taposh, who resigned as lawmaker from Dhaka-10 to run for mayor, explained what he would do for the DSCC dwellers.

Taposh, a barrister and a Supreme Court lawyer by profession, said if elected, the door of the DSCC office would remain open 24/7 to provide the city people with services.



Taposh

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Will press for metropolitan government

RASHIDUL HASAN

BNP's mayoral pick for DSCC polls Ishraque Hossain is all set to face his main rival Awami League's Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh.

Ishraque, son of late Sadeque Hossain Khoka, the second mayor of an undivided Dhaka city who served the office from 2002 to 2011, earned his MSc degree from University of Hertfordshire in the UK.

After finishing his studies, he said, he returned home only to serve the country.

According to the mayoral candidate, he seasoned himself for the role over the years and is now prepared to serve the people.



Ishraque

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No harassment or arrest till hearing

HC orders law enforcers about Prothom Alo editor, 5 others; bail hearing today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the law enforcers not to harass or arrest Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman and five others until the hearing on the bail petition in a case filed over the death of Naimul Abrar Rahat, a student of Dhaka Residential Model College.

The HC bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice AKM Zahirul Huq passed the order after Matiur Rahman and five others appeared before the court seeking bail.

The court also fixed today for hearing the petition. The five others are: Anisul Hoque, deputy editor of Prothom Alo, Kabir Bakul, head of event and activation of Kishor Alo, Shuvashish Pramanik Shuvo and Shah Paran Tushar, assistants at event and activation of Kishor Alo, Mahitul Alam Pavel, senior assistant editor of Kishor Alo.

Barrister M Amir-ul Islam, AM Aminuddin, Sumaiya Aziz, and Prashanta Karmoker appeared for Prothom Alo while Deputy Attorney General Sarwar Hossain represented the state.

On January 16, a Dhaka court issued arrest warrants RELATED STORY ON PAGE 2

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BUSINESS



'We are a nation in a hurry'

In a freewheeling interview with *The Daily Star*, Planning Minister MA Mannan conveyed his intent to fast-track implementation of development projects. He hopes to reduce waste and fight corruption along the way, all of which will improve Bangladesh's less-than-ideal business climate. "The projects that go through my machine would be directly beneficial to the rural masses, to the poorer section of our people."

STORY ON B1

Ijtema ends seeking divine blessings

STAR REPORT

The second phase of the Biswa Ijtema, the second largest congregation of Muslims, ended yesterday with the Akheri Munajat or final supplications seeking divine blessings for people and the Muslim Ummah.

Maulana Muhammad Jamshed, an Indian preacher, conducted the 17-minute munajat that started at 11:49am.

Earlier in the morning, Mawlana Iqbal Hafiz and Mawlana Wasiful Islam delivered a sermon on the importance of Islam based on the Holy Quran and Hadiths.

Thousands of devotees of all ages gathered at the Ijtema ground on the Turag banks and on the roads adjacent to the Ijtema venue during the munajat. Many people, including women, joined the prayers even from rooftops buildings, nearby houses, and on the roads.

More than a thousand devotees from about 35 countries, including Saudi Arabia, USA, UK, Turkey

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Devotees offer prayers during the second phase of Biswa Ijtema's Akheri Munajat on the banks of the Turag river in Tongi yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SUMON

RAPE, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN Form commission within 30 days

HC directs govt; asks why no death penalty for rape of children under 16

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday directed the government to form a commission within 30 days under the law ministry to stop rape and violence against women.

The court also issued a rule asking the authorities to explain why rapists should not be awarded capital punishment if the rape victim is under 16.

Besides, it wanted to know in the rule why the government's inaction to drop life imprisonment provision alongside the capital punishment in case of death in rape incident should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahsan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader came up with order and rule after hearing a writ filed in the form of public interest litigation.

It ordered to form the commission, led by a law ministry additional secretary, comprising representatives from lawyers, judges, rights activists, renowned personalities, media persons, physicians, and victims if any victim agrees.

The HC also asked the commission to be formed to make recommendations within the next six months on how to stop rape incidents.

It also sought why directives would not be given to enact the law for protection of witnesses in rape cases, create database to save rapists DNA samples, ensure protection for victims through the one-stop crisis centre in every district, remain alert in publishing images of victims in media, form separate court for rape trial and resolve rape cases as early as possible.

Rabeya Bhuiyan stood for the writ petitioner and Deputy Attorney General ABM Abdullah Al Mahmud Bashar represented the state.

Rabeya filed the writ last week.