



**EVERY FACE TELLS A STORY...** A young man breezily crosses Pragati Sarani, as exasperated policemen rush to stop him, and passers-by gather to see a show. After a firestorm of protests following death of university student Abrar Ahmed near this very spot less than a year ago, authorities constructed a footbridge nearby. Although road medians have been warded off with ropes and bamboo, jaywalkers continue to flout traffic regulations, sometimes right in front of law enforcers. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## ‘Amend University Ordinance of 1973’

**BNP lawmaker demands at House to enforce uniform admission tests**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP lawmaker Harunur Rashid yesterday in parliament demanded that the government amends the University Ordinance 1973 to “force” four leading public universities to follow the uniform admission tests from this year.

Speaking on a point of order, the opposition MP also urged Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, who was presiding over the sitting at that time, to issue a ruling so that the government can introduce the uniform university admission tests from this year removing all barriers.

“Vice chancellors of 28 universities sat in a meeting on Tuesday. It’s a matter of concern that some VCs of major universities, including Dhaka University and Buet, are talking about the 1973 ordinance and showing their unwillingness to accept the uniform admission test,” he said, referring to media reports.

As per the ordinance, authorities of universities can make decision about their academic activities on their own.

According to media reports, Dhaka University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), Jahangirnagar University and Chittagong are

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## ‘Don’t deport Rohingyas’

**Global coalition urges Saudi Arabia**

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Free Rohingya Coalition, a global platform of Rohingyas worldwide, has urged Saudi Arabia not to deport any Rohingyas until the genocide against Myanmar is over.

“Once the case is settled and peace prevails in Rakhing state of Myanmar, they will go back to their country of origin. At this moment, we urge Saudi authorities not to deport any Rohingyas -- either from the detention camps or outside in the Kingdom -- to Bangladesh,” said Free Rohingya Coalition Co-founder Nay San Lwin.

The urge comes as a Saudi delegation is in talks with Bangladesh authorities over the deportation of the Rohingyas from Saudi Arabia.

“This is a sensitive issue. We don’t want deportation for the sake of deportation. There are issues of security. We are talking about it,” said Mahir Abdul Rahman Gassim, Saudi Arabia’s Deputy Minister for International Affairs of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development.

He said this at a joint press briefing at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) in the

capital yesterday, after a two-day meeting of the Joint Commission of Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia.

The meeting discussed a range of issues including Saudi investments in Bangladesh and the welfare and protection of Bangladeshi migrants in Saudi Arabia.

ERD Secretary Monowar Ahmed said the Rohingya issue was raised at the discussion.

“We took note of it. A few ministries are involved in the issue. We will discuss and then decide on the matter,” he told journalists, but did not mention the number of Rohingyas Saudi Arabia wants to deport.

According to media reports, Saudi Arabia wants to deport some 42,000 Rohingyas, who are carrying Bangladeshi passports.

Nay San Lwin said there are some 3 lakh Rohingyas living in Saudi Arabia. Around 1,600 of them were in detention camps in Jeddah. Of them, a few dozen were deported to Bangladesh last year.

“The Rohingyas living in Saudi Arabia are a source of livelihoods for their families back either in Bangladesh or Myanmar.

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## MIGRANT WORKERS IN LEBANON

# 470 to return home this week

JAMIL MAHMUD

Some 470 Bangladeshi migrant workers are set to return home this week from crisis-hit Lebanon, following applications for repatriation under a special programme announced by authorities. Many of them are desperate to return home, said officials and migrant workers living in the Arab country.

The returning migrant workers, including some physically ailing and more than 200 women -- will be the second batch of workers to be repatriated willingly since the programme was announced in September last year.

Six Air Arabia Airline flights will carry the workers to Dhaka between February 15 and 23, said an official at the Bangladesh embassy in Beirut.

The first batch, comprising about 582 workers returned home in December last year, the official said.

Amid an economic meltdown, around 1.6 lakh Bangladeshi migrant workers are passing days in uncertainty in Lebanon, as many of them have either lost their jobs or remained unpaid over the last few months.

Of them, some 30,000 are undocumented, according to media reports.

Abdullah Al Mamun, first secretary at the labour welfare wing of the Bangladesh Mission in Beirut, said they have received about 3,683 applications in two phases since the special programme was announced.

Of those, 2,383 applications were received in September and about 1,300 more in February this year, he told this newspaper by phone.

Mamun, also head of chancery at the Beirut Mission, said they are expecting to receive about 1,200 more applications in the second phase which will bring the number of workers to be repatriated under the programme to nearly 5,000.

“Those who applied are now illegal residents [in Lebanon],” he added.

He said they are looking for a suitable place outside the embassy to run activities under the programme, as the embassy premises is not large enough to handle the rush of the workers.

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## Nirmalendu Goon admitted to hospital



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BanglaAcademy, Swadhinata and Ekushey Padak winning poet Nirmalendu Goon was hospitalised last night with pneumonia and respiratory complications.

The 74-year-old poet is currently receiving treatment at the intensive care unit of LabAid Hospital under the supervision of physician Baren Chakrabarty.

Mrittika Goon, the poet’s daughter, said her father was hospitalised last night after he felt unwell.

“He has been suffering from respiratory and pneumonia related complications. The exact problem can be known after test results come back,” she added.

Nirmalendu Goon is one of the most prolific and versatile poets of Bangladesh. His poem “Shadhinota Ei Shobdoti Kivabe Elo (How did the word independence come about)” brought him huge fame. Apart from poems, his prose is also widely appreciated.

## Limit trans-fat use to 2pc in all foods

**Consumer rights activists urge govt**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Consumer rights activists at a discussion yesterday urged the government to limit the use of trans fat in all foods to maximum of two percent, and maintain the standard strictly as the substance is injurious for health.

They also detailed a nine-point demand, including ban on hydrogenated oil -- the major sources of trans fat, and formulation of a policy in this regard.

Industrially-produced trans-fatty acid, also known as trans fat, causes severe health risks -- such as increasing risks of cardiovascular disease and cancer. However, several foods in the country contain an excessive amount of the fat and there is no policy to control it, they said.

Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), National Heart Foundation of Bangladesh (NHFB) and Progotir Jonno Gyan (PROGGA), in association with Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAII), organised the discussion on the health risks of trans fat at Cirdap auditorium in the capital.

Speaking as chief guest, Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun said the government is working on regulating the use of trans fats and planning to formulate a policy in this regard.

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## A mistaken first day of spring at the fair

SAYED MOHMUD ULLAH



It was not the first day of spring according to the revised Bangla calendar, but Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela still adorned the colours of the season. Visitors showed up in different shades of yellow, and the fair took on a festive mood as evening fell.

Both Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan saw a large turnout of people as the day neared its end. Many visitors, dressed up for Pahela Falgun, claimed they did not know about any changes in the Bangal calendar.

Publishers passed a busy day with booming sales. “We are now waiting to welcome a large number of visitors tomorrow [today], on the occasions of Pahela Falgun and Valentine’s Day,” said Rezwan Habib Rafsan, a stall attendant of “Bhumi” at Suhrawardy Udyan.

Many visitors said they had been waiting near Faculty of Fine Arts in Dhaka University for the Boshonto Boron (Welcoming Spring) festival, planning to go towards the book fair afterwards.

“Since my childhood, I knew that the first day of spring is celebrated on February 13, but today [yesterday] after reaching Charukola, I realised Pahela Falgun is tomorrow [today],” said a disappointed Saily Biswash Kotha (23).

Having started from home in a yellow saree, ready to celebrate the arrival of spring, Saily said, “Bangla Academy and other stakeholders had carried out a wider campaign, we would be better-informed.”

However, her visit to the book fair was not in vain, as she bought Marzuk Russell’s poetry book from the stall of “Bayanno”. A stall attendant of this publication house said the lyricist’s book saw a boom in sales yesterday.

The enthusiastic book lovers also passed a busy time with gossiping in front of some special corners include Arjan Chatter featuring various achievement of the country on big cut out since 1971, Shongram featuring the history of the country’s liberation war, Lekhakh Bolchi featuring various

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**It might not have been Pahela Falgun yesterday, but spring was a state of mind for the colourfully dressed visitors at Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela yesterday.**

PHOTO: COLLECTED

### 8th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

**Al Hajj Lt. Col. Hesamuddin Ahmed, psc (Retd).** served as a Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh in various ministries. He was the Administrator of the Dhaka Municipality, Chairman of RAJUK and other important corporations.

Being the Founder President of the National Shooting Federation Bangladesh, the Founder Member and Founding Vice Chairman RAOWA, his contributions will always be remembered.

He was associated with UCEP Bangladesh, SAHIC and various sports and social welfare organizations. In recognition of his remarkable contributions in the field of Sports development and social welfare he was awarded the National Sports Award (2003), Atish Dipannkar Gold Medal, Poet Sarojini Naidu Gold Medal, C R Das Gold Medal etc.

**-Dearly Missed & Always Cherished by Wife, Son, Daughter, Daughter in Law Son in Law & Granddaughters**

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