

Regular functions resume at HC after 5 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After five months, the regular functions of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court resumed yesterday on a limited scale following the health guidelines. A total of 18 benches of the High Court conducted hearings and disposed of cases in presence of lawyers and court officials, maintaining physical distance. The judges, lawyers and court staffers were seen using face masks and hand sanitiser at court rooms in line with the health guidelines. Physical distance was seen maintained in part at the court premises and its offices. Some lawyers expressed satisfaction as they could go to the SC premises for moving cases before the HC. "We are happy as we could come to the Supreme Court for moving cases after a long period of time. I hope that the litigants now will fight for justice now," Advocate Masud Rana told The Daily Star. Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain on Monday constituted 18 regular benches and 35 virtual benches of the HC for hearing and disposing of cases. Among the regular benches, 13 are division (two judges) benches and five are single (one judge) benches.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Upon hearing word of mouth that a large RMG factory in Savar's Ulail area is hiring, throngs of RMG workers queued up beside the factory's gate yesterday, only to be reprimanded by factory personnel. Many of these workers have lost their job due to the pandemic, and some were formerly employed at this very factory. While they did not create unrest and were simply there to search for opportunities, the factory's in-charge of security, inset was seen shouting at workers.



Looted from Dhaka, sold in Chattogram

Two members of racket involved in 50+ thefts in capital arrested from Jatrabari

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Divided in multiple groups, they mostly targeted shopping malls in Dhaka -- each team assigned a specific task. They had a team for recce, another for breaking locks, a cover up team, a backup team, a "marketing" team to sell looted valuables and finally a "legal" team to release arrested members. They conducted at least two "operations" each month and the racket is involved in more than 50 theft incidents in the last couple of years in Dhaka. Though the thefts were mostly conducted in the capital, they never sold the stolen goods in Dhaka, rather at their native districts -- Chattogram and Cumilla. The Detective Branch (DB) of police got trace of this "theft racket" after arresting two members, including the ringleader, from the capital's Jatrabari area yesterday. The arrestees are Akash Hossain Rubel (24), group leader, and Safar alias Sumon (22). Law enforcers arrested the two while investigating a case filed with Shabbagh Police Station, regarding theft in two shops in a cell phone market in Motalib Plaza. Around nine members of the group took part in the theft incident and took away 95 cellphones and Tk 6.08 lakh in cash from two shops on July 23. Mishu Biswas, additional deputy commissioner of DB (Ramna division) police, told The Daily Star yesterday that the racket has around 15 to 20 members. All hail from Cumilla and Chattogram.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

'Over 100,000 indigenous people became new poor'

Speakers mention at BIPF webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To commemorate International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum (BIPF) yesterday organised a webinar. The online event focused on Covid-19 and indigenous people's situation. BIPF General Secretary Sanjeeb Drong moderated and chaired the meeting. The discussants focused on the high degree of socio-economic marginalisation experienced by the indigenous communities of Bangladesh, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic that triggered joblessness and further marginalisation. Hans Lambrecht, PhD, first secretary & chargé d'affaires of Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh, said, "Realising the rights of indigenous peoples means ensuring their inclusion and participation in Covid-19 response and

recovery strategies. Indigenous peoples must be consulted in all efforts to fight the pandemic." Speakers also focused on the unemployment of thousands of indigenous women in Bangladesh who mostly worked in the service sector and lost their jobs in the recent months. Joan Carling, former member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, said, "Indigenous women, who are responsible for the health, nutrition and care of their families and communities, are suffering immensely in this pandemic. In addition to the existing challenges such as land encroachment, poor access to water and sanitation, food shortages, inadequate healthcare services, this sudden loss of livelihood will push many indigenous families to extreme poverty."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

PADMA BRIDGE

Korean firm to collect toll electronically

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A South Korean company is going to be appointed for maintenance and toll collection after construction of the much-hyped Padma Bridge is completed. The cabinet committee on economic affairs yesterday approved a proposal in this regard with Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal in the chair. Under the approved proposal, Korea Expressway Corporation (KEC) will be appointed for the works following director procurement method under government to government arrangement. The approval came around a year after the Bangladesh Bridge Authority signed a memorandum of understanding with (KEC), for operation, maintenance and toll collection of long-cherished Padma Bridge in September last year. Talking to reporters after the meeting, the finance minister said people abroad have to pay toll for using roads and the toll money is used for road maintenance. "But, we can't collect toll as manual toll collections is troublesome. The famous Korean company will use automatic toll collection system," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Life laid down in line of duty

MOSTOFA YOUSUF

Yousuf Ali (30) joined the forest department on 20 February this year. "He was exhilarated when he secured the job at the forest department," said his father Nizam Uddin. "He was sincere and serious in discharging his duties, to a fault. He never said no to any task." "This is what ultimately cost his life," rued a grief-stricken Nizam, talking to this newspaper. On July 30, Yousuf along with a team went to Koroibunia area of Keruntholi beat at Maheshkhali range to stop a group of land grabbers from damaging saplings. The miscreants were a group of around 25 people. Sensing forest officials, they went on the offensive and attacked the team. At one point, they hacked Yousuf in the head with sharp weapons, Sultanul Ahmed Chowdhury, range officer in Maheshkhali under the Chattogram

Coastal Forest Division, had told The Daily Star after the incident. Yousuf was left unconscious from the attack. He was rescued and rushed to Chattogram Medical College Hospital's (CMCH) Intensive Care Unit. After fighting for his life for five days, he lost the battle on August 5. Yousuf hailed from Kutubdia upazila under Cox's Bazar, and graduated from the 14th batch of Forestry Science and Technology Institute (FSTI), Nizam Uddin, a former government employee, told The Daily Star. "He was one of the best human beings I have ever met," said Farid Kamal Raju, a former classmate of Yousuf. Sultanul Ahmed Chowdhury told The Daily Star Yousuf had a flame in him to serve the department with dedication. "Yousuf was made team leader of a special unit formed to oversee forest

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



As schools are closed and children don't have much to do, this father thought it would be the perfect time to teach his son swimming. So, the two regularly jump into Crescent Lake at the capital's Chandrima Udyan for a quick lesson and some quality bonding time. This photo was taken earlier this week.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'DEROGATORY' FB POST ON CJ SC summons lawyer Mamun Mahubub

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday summoned Advocate Syed Mamun Mahubub to appear before it on August 20 for posting a derogatory status about Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain on social media platform Facebook. The apex court also issued a rule asking Mahubub, a Supreme Court lawyer, to explain why contempt of court proceedings should not be brought against him for posting the status. A six-member bench of the SC's Appellate Division, headed by the chief justice, came up with the order and rule after Attorney General Mahubub Alam raised the issue before the bench during virtual proceedings yesterday. Contacted, Mahubub said he heard about the SC order on him. "I have mistakenly used a word about the chief justice in a Facebook status. I have already deleted the status. I will appear before the Supreme Court on August 20 and will offer unconditional apology for my mistake," he said. Advocate Mahubub also said he will reply to the rule after receiving the apex court order.

'Tobacco addiction could turn youths into burden on country'

Says Progga on Int'l Youth Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi youths, who are one-third of the total population, might become a burden for the country instead of assets due to tobacco addiction, Progga, a platform of anti-tobacco campaigners, said yesterday. In a statement issued marking International Youth Day, the platform said the country's future depends on skills and capabilities of the youth. Each year, 126,000 lives are lost in Bangladesh because of diseases sprouting from tobacco use. The tobacco industry fills up loss of consumers by targeting children, teenagers and young adults, it said. Referring to the latest information by Tobacco Atlas, the statement said the number of tobacco users who are 10 to 14 years old in Bangladesh is 1.72 lakh, which is 1.86 percent more than other mid-level countries of the Human Development Index. According to US Surgeon General Report 2014, nearly 90 percent of adult smokers began smoking by age 18. Smoking at such early age reduces lung efficiency, hampers lung growth, and increases risks of lung cancer, cardiovascular diseases and emotional or psychological distress over years, it added. The statement further said tobacco and related industries use several manipulation tactics, including making sleek designs, and innovative and flavoured tobacco products; promoting tobacco products in movies, TV shows and online streaming shows; and making it available near educational institutions.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Jatiya Sangsad Lego set now closer to reality

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The proposed Lego set of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, the Bangladesh National Parliament, is now in the finals of Lego Ideas, an online platform where individuals can submit ideas to toy manufacturer The Lego Group for commercial manufacturing, after it gathered 10,000 supporters. This initiative is under the "Build Bangladesh" project, which is the brainchild of Lego enthusiast Juditha Ohlmacher, and was launched two years ago to brand Bangladesh in a positive light, said a press release. Juditha played with Lego bricks as a child. As years passed, she became a serious Lego builder, making intricate architectural pieces. One day she had an epiphany. "Bangladesh has one of the greatest masterpieces of modernist architecture in the world, but most don't know about it. Why not suggest Lego to make it into a set?" she thought. Juditha is American and married to a Bangladeshi, and has lived in Dhaka for over 16 years. She says, "I love this country and its people, and want to give back to the country that has given me so much." Juditha built two models of the parliament out of Lego bricks and presented them at Toycon 2018. One was a huge 8,000-piece version and the other a 125-piece tabletop set, which was entered for the competition. It took two years to reach the target of 10,000 supporters. During that time, she has appeared at many local universities, conventions and festivals like Dhaka Lit Fest to gather votes. After a year and a half, though, she had only reached 7,000 votes. "When the coronavirus shutdown started, I became very worried, as I could no longer go around in person to promote the project. But in the past couple of months -- perhaps because more people are at home on their computers -- the project took off and gained a momentum I could only have dreamed of," Juditha said. The project will now be judged against up to 25 other worldwide projects. If selected, it will become an official Lego set, available in stores all over the world.

BAF aircraft brings back 71 people from Lebanon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A transport aircraft of Bangladesh Air Force -- carrying 71 repatriated Bangladeshi nationals from Lebanon -- returned home yesterday after handing over humanitarian assistance to victims of the horrific explosion in Beirut, Lebanon on August 4. The mission consisting of a 12-member BAF air crew, was led by Group Captain Santanu Chowdhury. The mission was conducted under guidance of Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Serriabat, according to a press release of Inter Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR). BAF has always been providing air transport services to carry relief and humanitarian assistance to the victims of any disaster in the friendly countries as per the guidance of the government on an emergency basis, said the statement. In line with this, emergency relief and medical supplies, a physician and a technical team to assess the real scenario of the damaged naval ship, were sent to Lebanon last Sunday as humanitarian assistance to help the affected Bangladeshi expats, people of Lebanon and members of Bangladesh Navy deployed in UN peacekeeping operations in Beirut.



A goods-laden truck overturned at Chattogram city's Dewanhat area yesterday morning, injuring the driver. Due to the accident, the road was blocked for some time, creating a long tailback.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN