# Suspension criticised

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attempt from the bourses to pressurise the government to allow public employees to invest in stockmarket," said Toufic Ahmad Choudhury, general secretary of Bangladesh Economic Association.

Stock exchanges had earlier exerted pressure on the government to allow undisclosed money into the market, said Toufic Ahmad, also a member of Ibrahim Khaledled probe team that suggested a bar on government employees' investment in stocks.

The cabinet on Monday decided to remind public employees about service rules that prohibit involvement in profit-making activities, including stock business,

without prior permission. The Dhaka Stock Exchange halted trading, fearing a negative impact of the decision on the market. Later, Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) followed suit.

One hour after the suspension, DSE Chief Executive Musharraf M Hussain at a press briefing demanded the government allow public employees' investment in share business.

The bourses plea comes at a time when many government employees already have investments in stockmarket either in their own name or proxy names. The DSE could not provide any detail of how much investment or how many Beneficiary Owners (BOs) are linked with public

Mirza Azizul Islam, a former finance adviser, said the bar on investment by govern-

HR boss

question of international

standard," Mizanur Rahman

standard the western coun-

tries are playing. And this is

being done because a lot of

money is being spent to

engage lobbyists in

Washington DC, New York,

London and Paris, and they

all efforts to create pressure or

confusion that international

standard is not being followed

in the war crimes trial in

He noted that the tribunal

Bangladesh, Mizanur added.

trying war crimes is named

International Crimes Tribunal

but that does not mean it is an

international tribunal. "It is a

national tribunal which is

very much a national institu-

tion. And this tribunal will try

those crimes which are

defined as international

scope of ambiguity about the

tribunal, its standard and its

He stressed that there is no

crimes," he added.

These lobbyist are making

are doing their job."

This shows the double

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recalled.

ment officials is not new. "The government has just given a reminder to officials about the

took a number of decisions favourable for capital market.

tax rebate facility for stock investment, reduction of tax on brokerage commission and withdrawal of 10 percent tax on income by mutual funds.

impact on the stockmarket,' he said.

DSE for allowing investment of government officials in stockmarket. "I don't support it. The government should not bow down to such pressure."

former chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, did not find any logic behind the trade suspension.

creating pressure on the government," he said, "But the trade suspension may cause panic among the investors and destabilise the market further."

who teaches finance at Dhaka University, said as per law the bourse cannot suspend trad-

"If the trading was susput pressure on the government, it's not right," he said.

may provide scope to heal the

The DU professor said the government employees, who do not work in positions and agencies where conflict of interests can arise, should be allowed investing in the share market.

"If the government does not want to allow investment [from its staff], it could have issued the directive internally instead of making it public,' he said.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, senior research fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue, said as per the 1979 service rules government employees are not allowed to engage in speculative invest-

ensure transparency in stockmarket," he said. "Stock exchanges should cooperate with the government in this regard."

"The government should offer time, say for six months, so that they can gradually withdraw their investments.

Reaz Islam, chief executive

"It is not constructive to discourage participation from such a large segment since our market is still small and trols can be put in place to avoid conflicts similar to practices in more developed

On Saturday, the White House issued a statement that appeared to side with critics of the Acts.

It said: "While we believe that online piracy by foreign websites is a serious problem that requires a serious legislative response, we will not support legislation that reduces freedom of expression, increases cybersecurity risk, or undermines the dynamic, innovative global internet."

Despite the hint of a presidential veto, Wikipedia said that the English site's administrators had decided to stage its first ever public protest because the bills "would be devastating to the free and open web".

Sopa is going away, and Pipa is still quite active. Moreover, Sopa and Pipa are just indicators of a much broader problem. All around the world, we're seeing the development of legislation intended to fight online piracy, and regulate the internet in other ways, that

However, when asked whether Twitter would join the blackout, its chief executive, Dick Costolo, tweeted: "Closing a global business in reaction to single-issue

In a Twitter conversation with Wikipedia's founder Jimmy Wales, Costolo later clarified that his comment was not meant to be read as a "value judgement" about other organisations involve-

### Rooppur nuke

Sheikh Hasina would visit Russia in November when some memorandums of understanding (MoUs) would be signed in this

During the meeting, Zillur recalled with gratitude the invaluable support of the people and government of the erstwhile Soviet Union during Bangladesh's Liberation War, including their role in the UN Security Council and in the early days of Bangladesh's reconstruc-

The president also expressed his satisfaction over the gradual expansion of bilateral relations and cooperation between the

The envoy said Russia is keen to expand trade, commerce and cooperation with

for extending his all-out support and cooperation in discharging his professional duties during his tenure in

# 5 lakh more jobless

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Wikipedia goes

offline today

Protest against

**BBC ONLINE** 

"blackout".

Congress.

shutdown.

defend piracy.

piracy.'

Senate.

**VETO HINT** 

anti-piracy laws

Wikipedia plans to take its

English-language site offline

today as part of protests

against proposed anti-

site Reddit and the blog

Boing Boing have also said

they will take part in the

opposed to the Stop Online

Piracy Act (Sopa) and

Protect Intellectual Property

Act (Pipa) being debated by

declined to take part in the

However, Twitter has

Wikipedia's founder,

Jimmy Wales, told the BBC:

'Proponents of Sopa have

characterised the opposi-

tion as being people who

want to enable piracy or

point. The point is the bill is

so over broad and so badly

written that it's going to

impact all kinds of things

that, you know, don't have

anything to do with stopping

Sopa's supporters in the

House of Representatives

say the legislation is

designed to stop revenue

flowing to "rogue websites".

A similar law, Pipa, is making

its way through the US

"But that's not really the

The sites' webmasters are

The user-generated news

piracy laws in the US.

The number of jobless people in the country rose to 26 lakh in 2010, up from 21 lakh three years ago, says a preliminary report on Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2010 of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

The BBS conducts a survey on the country's employment situation every three years.

"It shows that enough employment is not being created for people who have education up to SSC [Secondary School Certificate] or below SSC level," said Rushidan Islam Rahman, labour market analyst, while explaining the reasons for the rise in the unemployment

Rushidan, research director at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), said, "This group does not want to engage in agriculture. But the scope for regular non-farm employment is not expanding at a sufficient pace."

She said the unemployment growth reflects an under-utilisation of the country's human resources, and suggested that the government adopt policies that encourage labour-intensive industrialisation. "There is scope for labour-

intensive growth in many sectors," she said, mentioning the furniture and leather industry in addition to the

investments due to the

bearish trend since last year,

greeted yesterday's trade

suspension as a relief from

financial pain at least for a

day, but market analysts saw

it as putting pressure on the

government to allow public

servants to invest in the

The suspension, market

experts said, might deepen

panic among the investors

and destabilise the market

Dr Musharraf M Hussain,

chief executive officer of

DSE, told reporters yester-

day that news about the

government's renewed

effort to refrain public ser-

vants, both military and

civilian, from investing in

the stockmarket might "cre-

that it might leave a big

negative impact on the

capital market, he said. "So,

trading has been suspended

for the sake of the capital

think that public servants

both civilian and military,

ket for the sake of the market

and the country's econ-

omy," he added.

officer of CSE.

data from DSE.

cancelled," he said.

The main gauge of the

Dhaka bourse, General

Index, declined 37 percent in

2011, a year that will be

remembered as a time of

twin debacles in the

stockmarket. This year the

index has so far suffered a 9

percent fall, according to

ment in profit-making activ-

ities, including stock busi-

ness, without prior permis-

sion. The public administra-

tion ministry is supposed to

issue a notification to that

of ministers drew the cabi-

number of government

employees and their

dependants being engaged

in stock business, saying this

has been hampering public

At the meeting, a couple

effect in a day or two.

service.

bourse said.

On Monday, the cabinet

'The DSE authorities also

market and investors."

The DSE authorities think

ate confusion".

when trading resumes.

FROM PAGE 1

capital market.

Stocks trading

garment sector.

Prof Shamsul Alam, Member, Planning Commission, said, "The number of the jobless has risen because of an increase in the population."

He said the government had set a target in the Sixth Five Year Plan for creating more than one crore jobs through a promotion of small and medium enterprises and non-farm activities.

According to the BBS, the unemployment rate rose to 4.5 percent in 2010, up from 4.3 percent three years ago. Zahid Hussain, senior

economist at the World Bank, said the mentioned increase in unemployment rate is "somewhat misleading" because the survey does not include Bangladeshi workers abroad. Nearly 75 lakh Bangladeshis work abroad

and their number has gone up

in the last five years, according to the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment minis-Zahid said the yearly inclu- of the labour force, she said sion of new faces in the existing labour force has to be taken into account. "If they cannot find jobs abroad, they

will face a serious social problem," he said. Riti Ibrahim, Secretary, Statistics Division, also recognised the need for including

will have to be absorbed in the

domestic economy or else we

migrant workers in the survey. "We will take the initiative to do that in the future," she

The country's labour force increased 14 percent to 5.67 crore in 2010, with 72 lakh new

in three years. Of them, 67 lakh got jobs. Three-fourths of them are women, thanks to a rise in job opportunities for women in the garment industry, the country's biggest export earner.

"A rapid expansion of the garment industry has created job opportunities for women in recent years," said Zahid.

Rushidan of BIDS, however, linked employment growth to the rise in low productive self-employment and unpaid family work.

"Self-employment alone cannot ensure a healthy growth of the economy. For this purpose, we need larger economic units that engage paid workers for more productive activities." Referring to the expansion

the rise in economically active population was obviously a positive sign, which indicated that a prospective "demographic dividend" was available in the form of labour supply. "Now it is time to make a

proper utilisation of the increased labour force to accelerate economic growth."

### Prime accused

the case produced Salauddin, Amir Hossain Amu and Mamun before the court on completion of their one-day remand.

The IO sought another three days' remand for each of the three accused but the court turned him down and ordered to put them behind bars.

yers of the trio appealed to the district and session judge's court for bail and after a brief hearing the judge granted their prayer.

all five -- Salauddin, Amir Hossain Amu, Hiron Mia, Monowar Hossain Khan and Mamun -- who earlier surrendered before it.

Following the five's surrender on January 15, the court granted one-day remand to Salauddin, Amu and Mamun each and sent two other to prison.

court decision drew huge flak from a cross section of people in the district.

Earlier on different dates, Narsingdi court Hossain.

only Ashraf Hossain Sarkar is now in prison. The slain mayor's family

members and Narsingdi people yesterday expressed strong resentment over the bail order for Salauddin, brother of Posts and Telecommunications Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju, and other accused. They said the minister

others who according to the first information report (FIR) are the masterminds in Lokman killing. Shamim Newaz, the

family members."

best mayor, was shot to death at the district AL office on November 1.

claimed local lawmakers mainly from ruling Awami League - and upazila parishad chairmen demand shares of test relief, general relief, 'food for work' allocations and other such provisions provided by the gov-

ernment for the poor.

dent of Bupf claimed. "We demand that the government send different types of relief directly to us

so that we can distribute protection, the witnesses also need to be mentally prepared about their testi-Rahman said. mony before the court, as the disclosure may be

parishad chairmen interfere in development works, they do not permit us to do any work unless it has been determined by them," said Nusrat Jahan, chairman of number 15 Burir Char union parishad under Hathazari upazila, Chittagong.

chairman of number 2 Shaldanga union parishad.

UP officials demanded decentralisation and policy ment.

without any interference. This is our prime demand," they said.

their work.

The meet was organised with the support of US Agency for International Development (USAID). A new committee of Bupf was formed at the convention.

2003 as the only unified association of Union Parishads of Bangladesh, Bupf has reformed all 64 of its district committees over the last six months after the UP elections held nation-

# dispensation of justice. But

rallies on his way to Rangpur. He urged people to vote for his party nominees in the next general elections and introduced several party men as candidates in different constituencies.

preparations for contesting the next parliamentary polls separately. We have already picked 200 candidates and are looking for 100 more eligible aspirants," he told at a rally in Alenga of Tangail.

"We have made all the

The former military ruler also introduced the party candidates in Mirzapur of Tangail and Mokamtala of Bogra.

Hinting at quitting the ruling Awami League-led grand alliance, he said announcement in this regard

will be made on time. At a rally in Hatikumrul of Sirajganj he said, "Give me another chance to rule the costifvoted to power. country. I promise you to make Bangladesh corruption-free. I will prove my capability by showing how to develop the country and maintain peace and stability."

"The main reason for people's sufferings is the misrule of all the post 1990 governments," Ershad pointed out at a rally in

want it returns to power.

Tangail, Sirajganj, Bogra, Sherpur of Bogra adding, the Gaibandha and Rangpur. country's development has been at a halt since the JP left power and that is why people "People don't want to see Ershad.

Amin Hawlader, presidium member Kazi Zafar Ahmed, among others, accompanied

Azizul said the cabinet also

These include a 10 percent

"So there should not be any

He opposed the plea of Faruq Ahmad Siddiqi, a

"May be it was a means of

Mahmood Osman Imam,

pended with share prices nosediving, then it's good. But if it was taken as a weapon to

He, however, said the trading halt offered investors some time to think before taking any investment decision. "Trading suspension

many people, including a

section of politicians, are

dishing out wrong informa-

demanded increasing the

number of tribunals to com-

plete the trial of war crimes

of the tribunal not to waste

time by producing 70 to 80

witnesses in the cases of the

accused about whose crimes

the entire country knows. It is

possible to prove their guilt by

producing a small number of

crimes trial is not trial of only

some people since the

nation's future is linked with

it. He warned the pro-

liberation forces, "If you fail to

complete the trial, darkness

will never end and nobody

said, "If you show the pictures

of those accused of crimes

against humanity for the sake

of neutrality, please show the

pictures of also those people

who were tortured or killed by

more. Now they want relief

from sufferings by bringing a

change in state power," he

that his party has gained in

around 30 percent popularity.

water-sharing issue, Ershad

blamed the incumbent and all

the post 1990 governments for

their failures to strike the deal.

barrage in 1990. Even after 22

years no government could

sign the water-sharing deal,"

deplored the former presi-

The farmers of the north-

Expressing doubt about

He also urged the Indian

The caravan of the long

government not to do injus-

march started from JP's

Banani office in the capital.

On his way to Rangpur, the JP

chairman addressed around

20 street rallies at different

points including Ashulia,

JP Secretary General Ruhul

tice to Bangladesh.

ern region cannot cultivate

properly as the Teesta has

turned into a desert, he com-

signing of the Teesta deal in

the next two years, he vowed

to ink the agreement at any

plained.

"I constructed the Teesta

The JP chief also claimed

Regarding the Teesta

mentioned.

Turning to the media, he

will come to protect you."

Mizanur said the war

witnesses, he said.

He urged the prosecutors

The NHRC chairman

tion about it, he alleged.

market."

"The initiative is good to

he said.

of LR Global Bangladesh, said public servants may be allowed to invest via an intermediary such as merchant bank that has discretion over the account.

lacks depth. However, concountries," he said.

them." Parishad President Justice AFM Mesbahuddin chaired the roundtable while Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University AAMS Arefin Siddique and Prof Anwar

Hossain, among others

### KL extends

spoke.

**FROM PAGE 20** the irregular foreign workers to get new passports from their local embassies and submit applications to the Malaysian immigration department for regularisa-

tion ended on January 10. By that time, around 17,000 irregular Bangladeshi workers out of 2.68 lakh, who earlier got registered with the Malaysian authorities, did not apply to the Bangladesh embassy for

their new passports. A sense of fear arose in the mind of the workers that it might lead to their deporta-

But they soon felt relief when the Malaysian authorities informally communicated their new decision of time extension to the foreign missions concerned in Kuala

Lumpur. "We hope, we can issue passports to the rest of the registered workers within

two weeks," Biswas said. Indonesia is yet to issue 3 lakh passports for its registered workers, while Myanmar over one lakh passports. Such time extension for the irregular workers of these two countries is like

a blessing, he added.

#### Gilani

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came in the backdrop of the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) implementation case, DawnNews reported.

Barrister Zafarullah in his petition argued that under the Article 248-1 of the constitution, the premier also enjoyed immunity as did the presi-

that writing a letter to Swiss authorities was not the job of the prime minister. It said that the court should have summoned the law

secretary and the law minister

before calling the prime min-

The petition further said

ister before it on Jan 19. Bokhari will make the "final decision whether to continue looking the other away or to move against the Prime Minister", The News reported. Bokhari told the daily that

action will be taken in cases of alleged illegal appointments made on the orders of the premier under the law and rules.

It added: "We don't think

hurt online freedoms.

national politics is foolish."

## ment in the action.

**FROM PAGE 20** 

regard.

two countries.

Bangladesh, and hoped that the relations between the countries would be further strengthened in the days to come. Trotsenko thanked Zillur

Bangladesh. Secretaries to the President's Office and officials of the Foreign Ministry were present at the meeting.

chairman and commissioners yesterday noon and expressed their concern about the market situation. SEC however refrained

from making any comment

about yesterday's trade

suspension and the government's move. After repeated attempts by reporters to reach SEC Chairman M Khairul Hossain for comments, he only said, "If there is any development we will

announce it." Faruq Ahmad Siddiqi, a former chairman of SEC, questioned the timing of the government's reminder for public servants about a rule that had not been enforced in the last 32 years.

"It's not the proper time when the market is passing through high volatility, and everyone is talking about bringing back normalcy," he As a career bureaucrat Siddiqi said government

employees should be allowed to invest in the primary market unconditionally, and in the secondary market only for longshould have the opportunity to invest in the capital mar-"But they should not be permitted to participate in

daily trading, as it hampers an employee's official ser-Chittagong Stock vices," he added. Exchange (CSE) said it Although trading was stopped trading as DSE had suspended, general inveshalted it. "Following trading tors continued their demonsuspension by DSE, we stration yesterday under the stopped trading within one banner of Bangladesh Share minute and fifty seven sec-Investors Association (BSIA) onds of the beginning of in front of the DSE building transaction," said Syed Sajid and the central bank in the Hossain, chief executive

capital. The agitating investors "Trading in the first two were demanding permisminutes has also been sion for public servants to

invest in the stockmarket.

The demonstration, which started at 11:00am and ended at 5:40pm, halted traffic from Ittefaq crossing to Shapla Square for hours. Kazi Abdur Rajjak, general secretary of BSIA, said it

would have been worse if

they had continued traddecided to remind public ing," he said. servants about service rules The government should that prohibit their involveallow public servants to invest in the stockmarket for the development of the market, he added.

Capital Market Investors Forum, submitted a 20point charter of demands to SEC. net's attention to the huge Our Chittagong correspondent added that a group of retail investors brought out a rally in

stability in the stockmarket. To discuss the prevailing They, under the banner of DSE and CSE met the SEC ties.

situation, DSE sent a letter to Finance Minister AMA Investors' Forum of Chittagong, also staged a sit-Muhith yesterday, the chief in in front of the CSE office executive officer of the and submitted a memoran-The boards of directors of dum to the bourse authori-

#### Witnesses **FROM PAGE 20**

"This is the time they need support the most", she said. The Liberation War

Museum organised the programme in association with the International Human Rights Law Clinic of the University of California and Allard K Lowenstein Human Rights Clinic of Yale Law School. Civil society members have a major role to play by

bridging the gap between

the tribunal and the people

to the witnesses after the trial, the speakers said. Security, confidentiality, protection and support of witnesses are vital in the

ongoing trial, they said. While there was no witness protection law, the issue had been incorporated in the International Crimes Tribunal Act 1973 which provides some safeguards, they added.

On December 19, last year, the tribunal had directed the police to investigate the alleged threats received by prosecution witnesses against Sayedee over the phone.

Even yesterday, a witness claimed to have been intimidated by Sayedee's defence counsels at his house in Pirojpur, the speakers said. Apart from physical

emotionally traumatising, they added. Talking about of the standards of the ongoing trial, Secretary General of Sector Commanders Forum Lt Gen (retd Harun-ur-Rashid termed the trial as "above international standards, in certain

aspects".

The tribunal granted bail to an accused, did not issue an arrest warrant was a good decision to susagainst Ghulam Azam and pend trading. "The situation asked his lawyer to produce him in court instead These were instances unheard of in other such trials, he said.

The speakers also highlighted the need for research on genocide, active role of human rights Another platform, the based NGOs in the trial and Federation of Bangladesh greater public awareness of the war crimes trial. Briana Abrams, Sophie

Kaiser and Maya Karwande from the University of California, Berkeley, and Tessa Bialek and Freya Pitts from Yale Law School, gave presentations on the topic Agrabad area of the port city of discussion. around 11:20am demanding Hamida Hossain, a

human rights activist, Mohammad Abdul Hannan Khan, coordinator of the probe agency and Z Tariq Ali, a trustee of Liberation War Museum, among others, spoke at the roundtable.

**FROM PAGE 1** The investigating officer of

faces joining the labour force In the afternoon, law-

The court ordered to free

However, yesterday's

granted bail to eleven others implicated in the murder of mayor Lokman Of the total accused,

had an "influence" on freeing his brothers and

youngest brother of the slain mayor, said, "Freed from jail, killers of my brother are threatening our

and by providing support Lokman, the two-time

## Stop MPs'

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different union parishads

"If we don't comply, they don't okay the release of provisions to us," Mahbubur Rahman, presi-

these among their correct recipients in our unions," "Lawmakers and upazila

"We don't have a proper status in the local government," said Hasnat Jaman,

reforms of the local govern-"We want to carry out our duties independently and

Many also pointed out that the remuneration of Tk 1400 they receive from the government each month is too small an amount for

After its formation in

wide in July 2009.

#### Ershad's ROM PAGE 20 the rule of the two parties any