

## Google Translate to get 4 lakh Bangla words on March 26

BSS, Dhaka

The country is set to add four lakh Bangla words to Google Translate, a free online language translation service, on March 26.

"We are going to create a new record by contributing four lakh Bangla words to the Google Translate on the Independence Day," ICT State Minister Zunaïd Ahmed Palak told a press conference.

He urged all Bangla speaking people living around the world to join the endeavour and fulfil the target.

The ICT Division and Google Developer's Group-Bangla (GDG-Bangla) jointly organised the press conference in the capital yesterday.

Palak also said, "Bangla word vocabulary in the Google Translate is not satisfactory. That is why the ICT Division and GDG-Bangla are jointly taking the initiative."

The move will remove inadequacy of Bangla content, he added.

The minister further said over 50 events would be held in different locations, including universities, and people would directly work at the points to add Bangla words to Google Translate.

Volunteers from Australia, Portugal, the USA, and other countries will also join the effort on March 26, he added.

## 'Ideal mother'

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Abu Daooh was left without an income when her husband died while she was pregnant. The newspaper reports that her situation was made more difficult by the fact that working as a woman was frowned upon in her community in Luxor.

Faced with a lifetime of begging on the streets, she disguised herself as a man by wearing loose, full length robes and took on manual jobs making bricks, working in construction and polishing shoes.

"I preferred working in hard labour like lifting bricks and cement bags and cleaning shoes to begging in the streets in order to earn a living for myself and for my daughter and her children," she said.

"So as to protect myself from men and the harshness of their looks and being targeted by them due to traditions, I decided to be a man ... and dressed in their clothes and worked alongside them in other villages where no one knows me."

Her daughter Houada went on to marry a man who later fell ill and was unable to work, leaving Abu Daooh once again responsible for the family. She now works mostly polishing shoes, which she says earns her a "decent income".

Houada praised her mother for providing for the family and said she still gets up at 6:00 every morning to go to work.

## Don't call hartal

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Atia said the authorities concerned had earlier taken the tests at night in case of daylong hartal. But there was huge uncertainty over holding the tests this time due to continuous hartal, she added.

The authorities always put highest emphasis on security of the students, she said, adding, "In case they take a decision to cancel the tests due to the current political situation, the students will lose six months to one year."

"We don't want cancellation of any exams," said Sunil Saha, father of another student.

Another mother, Sultana Kaniz Fatima, said the students would be able to sit for the tests if the hartal was enforced from dawn to dusk.

Earlier, the guardians formed a human chain in front of the Press Club to press home their demand. The O and A-level examinees had earlier faced major difficulties in taking their tests of January session this year due to the BNP-led alliance's shutdown. They had to take several of their tests at midnight.

Even the authorities had to cancel the tests on two days in Dhaka.

The ongoing political unrest has been taking a heavy toll on about 5 crore students of schools, colleges and universities as it has messed up their academic activities at the very beginning of the year.

The 15 lakh candidates of SSC examinations have been the worst victims of the situation. Not a single written test of the exams could be held on scheduled dates. The tests, which were supposed to end on March 10, are still going on.

All the tests have so far been held on weekends, thanks to the BNP-led alliance's hartal.

Similarly, the political unrest is also causing worries among around 12 lakh Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinees and their guardians who apprehend the same fate as the exams are scheduled to begin in less than two weeks.

# Replace all gates of Farakka barrage

## Mamata writes to Modi urging New Delhi to stop free flow of water to Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his immediate intervention for phase-wise replacement of Farakka barrage gates one of which had collapsed recently leading to free flow of water to Bangladesh.

State Irrigation Minister Rajib Banerjee said in Kolkata today that in her letter to Modi on Wednesday, the chief minister has urged the federal Indian government to initiate phase-wise replacements of all the 112 gates of the barrage.

"The collapse of gate number 49 recently has led to free flow of water to Bangladesh. The situation may worsen if other gates too collapse," Rajib Banerjee said.

He said Mamata has written to Modi for ensuring a time-bound replacement to protect the interests of West Bengal as with the collapse of the lockgates the water was quite often flowing down to Bangladesh.

The Farakka barrage is located 17 km from Bangladesh border.

Gate number 49 was washed away on March 15, leading to free flow of water down the barrage. Following this, Indian authorities had diverted excess water to a feeder canal and towards Bangladesh.

Bangladesh and India signed a landmark 30-year agreement in 1996 on sharing of Ganga waters.

"Most of these gates are damaged and need replacement. So far, only 22 have been replaced. So the chief minister has written to the Prime Minister seeking his immediate intervention," Rajib Banerjee said.

Rajib said that during his recent meeting with Indian Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti at Siliguri he had apprised her of the poor condition of all the lock gates at Farakka and that at least two of them had collapsed some time back.

Bharti had told him that all the lock-gates of the barrage needed to be changed phase-wise by 2017, Banerjee said adding she had also apprised the Prime Minister of the matter so that a time-bound programme in this regard could be initiated.

## Nasir gets AL backing

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work for any candidate picked by the AL high command.

Other aspirants, including Nurul Islam Bsc, vice-president of the city AL; Abdus Salam, chairman of Chittagong Development Authority and city AL treasurer, and senior leader Eshaque Miah, also addressed the meeting and assured the AL high command that they too would work for anyone picked by Hasina.

Following their assurance, Hasina announced that the party would back Nasir in the polls, Col (ret) Faruk Khan MP, who was present at the meeting, told The Daily Star.

"Everyone accepted the decision happily," he said, adding that Nasir shook hands with his party rival Mohiuddin and others and sought blessings of senior leaders.

AL leaders Tofail Ahmed, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Abdur Razzaque, and 15 to 20 top leaders of Chittagong city AL were also present at the meet.

Hasina on February 26 picked Sayeed Khokon, son of late Dhaka mayor Mohammad Hanif, and businessman Annisul Huq for the polls to Dhaka South and North city corporations respectively.

In another development, the Premier Bank Ltd has claimed that Dhaka South City Corporation mayoral aspirant Sayeed Khokon defaulted payment on a loan of Tk 100 crore. The bank has recently sent a letter to the Election Commission on the matter.

An EC assistant secretary said, "We have got a letter from the bank that requested us to consider the issue of the loan default while we scrutinise nomination papers."

According to a senior Premier Bank

official, the letter read two companies - S&S Corporation and DD Corporation - owned by Khokon and his mother, owe Tk 100 crore to the bank.

Sayeed Khokon denied the allegation and said, "The allegation is absolutely false. I am not a loan defaulter. I have sufficient documents and proof to this end."

According to Local Government (city corporation) Act, 2009, if any person, who is either director or partner of any company that fails to repay loans of a bank or financial institutions within one year prior to filing nomination, will be disqualified from taking part in the elections.

Deputy Secretary Shamsul Alam of the EC told The Daily Star, "We have not taken the letter into consideration because the letter was received before announcement of the polls schedule and Sayeed Khokon is yet to file his nomination."

## Plane crash in Uruguay leaves seven dead

AFP, Maldonado

A small Argentine plane carrying 10 people crashed shortly after takeoff Thursday from a resort in neighboring Uruguay, leaving at least seven dead, authorities said Thursday.

The other three people were missing but there were no signs of survivors, said fire department spokesman Leandro Palomeque.

The Beechcraft prop plane had just taken off from an airport near the Uruguayan resort city of Punta del Este when the aircraft went down.

## No headway in probe

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targeted Avijit for long.

"I have always told investigators that the probe should look into every possible clue... so that the real murderers don't get away, making innocents the scapegoat," Ajay told The Daily Star after the meeting.

Prof Anizuzzaman who presided over the meeting reminded everyone that the murderers appeared to be fundamentalists.

"We must not forget that fundamentalism has very close ties with terrorism and intolerance to dissenting opinions," he said.

"We will be confused and make others confused if we forget this fact."

After the murder, police arrested Shafiur Rahman Farabi, operative of a banned militant outfit, who had issued at least a dozen death threats to Avijit for what he said demeaning Islam.

Though Avijit tried to play on logic to point out that Farabi was misquoting him, Farabi kept saying on Facebook that it was a Farz (must) for Muslims to kill Avijit.

Ansar Bangla 7, presumed to be an organisation of militants, celebrated the murder in a tweet and claimed responsibility for it.

The organisation evoked names like Ansarullah Bangla Team and Ansar Al Islam, which have claimed responsibility for two separate murders, including of another secular blogger, since 2013.

DU Vice Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique, politicians Mojahidul Islam Selim and Nuh Ul Alam Lenin, Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali, prominent citizens Khandker Ibrahim Khaled, Dr Sarwar Ali and Fariduddin Ahmed also participated in the meeting.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday placed Shafiur Rahman Farabi, the prime suspect in the killing of blogger Avijit Roy, on a fresh four-day remand in a case filed under the Information and Communication

Technology Act.

The order came after investigators produced him before the court on completion of his five-day remand.

Wahiduzzaman, an inspector of Detective Branch (DB) of police and also the investigation officer of the case, had sought a seven-day remand for Farabi.

Earlier on Saturday, he was put on a five-day remand in the same case.

Fazlur Rahaman, Inspector of Detective Branch of police, filed the case against Farabi with Ramna Police Station on March 14 for issuing threats to kill Avijit through a number of posts on Facebook.

Farabi was arrested on March 2 and placed on a 10-day remand in connection with the Avijit murder case the following day.

During the remand that ended on March 14, detectives searched his blog and Facebook account and found that Farabi issued threats to many people, which is an offence under the ICT Act.

Farabi, however, denied his involvement in the murder.

Unknown assailants hacked Bangladesh born American citizen Avijit to death and injured his wife Rafida Ahmed Bonya on the Dhaka University campus on February 26.

## Khaleda

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earlier in the day said the party is still undecided on participating in the upcoming DCC election.

"We are still discussing the issue. A final decision has not yet been taken," said BNP standing committee member Lt Gen (ret) Mahbubur Rahman while visiting Salahuddin Ahmed's residence in Dhaka yesterday.

There are two views at the grassroots regarding participation in the city polls, he said.

## 120,000 flee Philippines violence: UN

AFP, Geneva

More than 120,000 people have fled their homes in the impoverished southern Philippines since fighting broke out between government troops and Islamic militants in late January, the UN refugee agency said Friday.

"UNHCR is concerned about the safety of civilians as the conflict spreads into local villages," spokesman Babar Baloch told reporters.

The Philippines military launched an offensive earlier this year against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), a rebel group fighting for an independent Muslim homeland in the south.

The offensive, including attacks with artillery and helicopter gunships, has taken place in poor farming areas on Mindanao island, where Muslim rebels have for decades fought for independence.

Baloch said an estimated 13 municipalities in Maguindanao and North Cotabato had been affected by the eight weeks of clashes.

More than 120,000 had been displaced and sought shelter in schools, public buildings and madrasas, he said.

But he acknowledged, "the estimated number of displaced could be higher, since it does not include people hosted by relatives and friends."

## Iron, folic acid

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were provided with proper counselling on consuming IFA tablets, access to trained health staff and community workers, and adequate supplies of medicines.

The findings of the study were revealed at a workshop titled "Strengthening Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation Program to Reduce Anaemia among Pregnant Women" at Hotel Lakeshore in the capital on Thursday, said a press release.

Encouraged by the success of the project, IPHN decided to replicate the programme with MI's support in 10 more districts with higher rate of anaemia.

Additional Secretary to the health ministry Roxana Quader, Additional DG of the Directorate General of Health Services Shah Newaz, IPHN Director Md Alamgir Ahmed, MI's Regional Director John McCullough, Deputy Director Planning and Lead Analyst of Canadian High Commission Heather McBride and MI Director SM Mustafizur Rahman participated in the workshop.

## Loggers

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As many areas of Matamuhuri are not protected, at least 20 to 25 Chander Gari (locally modified 4x4 vehicle), trucks and boats laden with illegal timber pass through the Matamuhuri to Chittagong every night, locals allege.

Foresters under the Lama Forest Division engage local poor people in the theft of wood, they add.

The locals also blame a few influential timber traders from Bandarban and Chittagong for this daily plundering of the greens.

Timber merchants, who have been in the trade for a long time, allege the foresters on a few occasions seize illegally logged timber for eyewash.

Saw Hla Pru, timber trader and president of Bandarban Kathbabsayee Samity, blames the foresters for not protecting the reserve forests.

Contacted, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Bandarban Aminul Islam denied the allegations.

The DFO said, "Our officials can't properly check the forests due to inaccessibility and insecurity. Shortage of manpower is another problem. As a result, trees from the forests are stolen sometimes."

During a visit to Sadhumock Para, Homkri Para and Ronin Para, a number of lumberjacks told The Daily Star they illegally cut down trees.

They also boasted of having "good understanding" with the foresters.

## Withdraw proposal

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works. Therefore, the marriageable age should rather be increased, said Dr Zeenat.

"To increase the number of women entrepreneurs, reduce female students' dropout rate, infant and maternal mortality rate and contain population explosion, the marriageable age of women must be increased," she said.

Women Envoy President Shikha Bhuiyan contradicted State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroz Chumki's claim that reducing the marriageable age would reduce incidents of gender-based violence.

She also suggested that the government adopt a project encouraging parents to give importance on educating their daughters instead of marrying them off.

# UK Bangladeshis are at higher risk of poverty

PTI, London

British people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin are around three times more likely to be in poverty compared to their white counterparts while people of Indian descent have largely closed that gap, according to new research by Oxford University.

The report by the Centre for Social Investigation (CSI) at Nuffield College at the university also found that people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin were also more likely to be living in less comfortable conditions.

"Rates of poverty are much higher among two groups - 57 per cent for people of Pakistani and 46 per cent of people of Bangladeshi background - compared with 16 per cent for the white British in 2009-11," the report entitled 'Ethnic Inequalities' found.

"People of Pakistani and Bangladeshi background are also more

likely to have a limiting long-term illness or disability and to live in more crowded conditions," it noted.

In reference to other large ethnic minority groups in Britain, the report mentioned that Indian-origin people also remain at high risk of poverty along with other minority groups but "Indians made great strides both over time and across generations in education and occupation".

"Continued racial discrimination in the labour market against second generation black people and people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi background cannot be ruled out as a significant part of the explanation for their continuing disadvantage," the report said.

The CSI was set up in September 2014 at Nuffield College as a new interdisciplinary research programme to address contemporary social issues of public interest and to carry out non-partisan research.

## 5 suffer burns in arson

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intersection of Chandpur Sadar upazila on Thursday.

The body of the family's lone breadwinner reached his home around 7:00am yesterday. Hundreds of villagers thronged the house, but nobody could find words to console the family members.

Jahangir left behind his elderly mother, wife and two minor children. His mother Sajeda Begum was fainting frequently with the shock.

"Criminals took away my son's life, my jewel... who will now look after the family?" wailed Sajeda. She demanded the prime minister ensure trial of her son's killers.

Victim's wife Khadiza Khatun said her husband had many dreams for his sons. "The dreams have been shattered."

Jahangir was buried at the family graveyard after Juma prayers.

Police in Chandpur detained Kazi Murad Hossain, general secretary of Chandpur city Jamaat-e-Islami and vice-principal of Chandpur Al-Amin Academy, in the town's Mukherjee area on Thursday in connection with a case

filed for the arson attack on the truck.

In the capital, a cleaner of Dhaka South City Corporation was injured by splinters of an abandoned crude bomb.

The bomb went off while Zohura Begum was sweeping a road in Azimpur around 5:30am yesterday. She received treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said hospital sources.

In another incident, a team of Rapid Action Battalion-10 detained a "BNP activist" in possession of 20 crude bombs and as many firebombs in Jatrabari early yesterday.

The Rab claimed that detainee Razaur Rahman Fahim is one of the prime accused in the case filed with Gulshan Police Station in connection with the February 16 bomb attack on the rally of Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan that left at least eight people injured.

However, his name was not in the first information report (FIR) of the case.

Our correspondents from Feni, Satkhira and Chandpur contributed to this report.

## BNP leaders

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committee member Lt Gen (ret) Mahbubur Rahman.

The former chief of army staff made the comments while visiting Salahuddin's family in Gulshan. He extended his sympathy to the family.

Salahuddin's family alleged that a team of 20-30 members of law enforcers, introducing themselves as detectives, picked up the BNP leader from a house in Uttara on the night of March 10.

However, following a writ petition filed by Salahuddin's wife Hasina Ahmed with the High Court, police headquarters, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Rab, Criminal Investigation Department and Special Branch of police, through five separate reports, claimed that they neither arrested nor detained the BNP leader.

Mahbubur Rahman also said it was the government's responsibility to find Salahuddin and that the BNP was ready to help the government in this regard.

During Mahbub's visit, Hasina Ahmed urged the prime minister to give directives to law enforcers to bring back her husband, safe and unhurt.

## Twelve threats from Farabi

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in America. But he will certainly be killed once he is back."

Police, however, could not care less.

"We can't do anything about it even if you complain," Prof Ajoy quoted a police officer as saying.

Prof Ajoy, globally known for his research on magnetic resonance, then consulted one of his lawyer friends at the High Court to see if he could get a court ruling in Avijit's favour for legal protection. But the lawyer also discouraged him.

"They [police and lawyer] said a mere death threat given online is unlikely to stand up in court," Ajoy told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Mashur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Ramna Police Station, said, "Duty officers may sometimes discourage people under certain circumstances. In that case, the complainant should have seen me to get the work done."

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Ramna) Assistant Commissioner Shibly Noman said police usually record general diary on such complaints.

A general diary has to be investigated by police to see if it had any merit to be accepted as a case.

Avijit, a Georgia-based software engineer, was hacked to death on February 26, about two weeks after he came to Bangladesh from the US to visit his family and see two of his books published in the country's

annual book fair.

Police are yet to identify the killers, let alone arrest them. His wife Rafida Ahmed Bonya was also injured in the attack.

Over a dozen policemen were on duty in the night Avijit was attacked around 8:45pm and the area was overseen by around 70 CCTV cameras at that time, police said.

Barely half an hour after the attack, a militant outfit calling itself Ansar Bangla 7 tweeted: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is great]!!! Brothers We can!!! Target down here in #Bangladesh."

Earlier in February 2013, Ahmed Rajib Haider, a progressive blogger, was hacked to death in the capital's Mirpur. Detectives found that militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team was behind his murder.

Two other militant outfits Ansar Al Islam Bangladesh 2 and Ansar Al Islam emerged last year after the murder of a Rajshahi University teacher, AKM Shaiful Islam, and an anchor of an Islamic programme on Channel i, Sheikh Nurul Islam Faruqi.

Police are still in the dark about who had murdered the teacher and the anchor.

Prof Roy believes that this culture of impunity has given militants a free hand.

"You have seen what happened to your son, haven't you? Have faith on Allah... better learn your lesson before time runs out," an unidentified caller told Prof Ajoy three hours after Avijit died.