



President Abdul Hamid administers the oath of office to the newly appointed state ministers at Bangabhaban yesterday.

# Tarana among 3 new ministers

FROM PAGE 1  
Newly picked Nurul Islam, leader of Chittagong city Awami League, was made technocrat minister, while Nuruzzaman Ahmed, lawmaker from Lalmonirhat-2, and actress Tarana Halim, lawmaker from a reserved seat, were appointed as state ministers.

They were sworn in at a simple ceremony at the Bangabhaban yesterday afternoon.

Nurul Islam will replace Khandkar Mosharraf Hossain as expatriates' welfare and overseas employment minister.

Mosharraf was recently given the charge of the LGRD ministry after Syed Ashraful Islam was removed from the ministry on July 9. Mosharraf ran the expatriates' welfare ministry as an additional duty since then.

Nuruzzaman was made state minister for food with Qamrul Islam at the helm of the ministry, while Tarana Halim was given the charge of the posts and telecommunications ministry.

Sacked minister Abdul Latif Siddique had held the portfolio till October last year. Latif was dismissed after he made anti-hajj comments at a programme in New York.

On the PM's advice, President Abdul Hamid appointed the ministers and administered the oath of office. Hasina and her cabinet colleagues were present at the programme.

With yesterday's expansion, the Hasina-led cabinet, formed after the one-sided January 5 elections last year, now has 53 members. It includes 32 ministers, 18 state ministers and two deputy ministers.

The PM neither dropped anyone from the cabinet nor brought any significant changes in portfolios of the ministers though there were indications that two ministers mired in controversies might be shown the door.

According to government sources, Hasina might bring further changes in her cabinet after Eid.

Kamal, who was sworn in as full minister yesterday, will continue his job of leading the home ministry.

President of Tejgaon Thana AL in the capital, Kamal was elected MP for the first time in the 2008 parliamentary polls.

He was elected lawmaker uncontested in the January 5 polls last year, and was made state minister.

Before him, two AL presidium members Sahara Khatun and

Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir held the home affairs portfolio in the Hasina-led government between 2009 and 2014.

Sources in the ruling AL and the government said Kamal was made full minister as a "reward". He had been successful in tackling the BNP-Jamaat's anti-government agitation that continued for around three months since January this year.

He had kept the PM informed about every crucial issue and extended cooperation to his party leaders whenever necessary, said the sources.

Yeafesh Osman, science and technology affairs secretary of the AL, was first made technocrat state minister in Hasina's cabinet in 2009-2014. He was again included in her present cabinet as state minister for science and technology.

Many AL leaders think that he was promoted to the post of minister for running the ministry with "honesty and sincerity" for the last six and a half years.

Under his leadership, the ministry signed a deal with Russia for setting up 2,400-megawatt Rooppur nuclear power plant.

The AL high-command is happy with Yeafesh, son of renowned writer Shawkat Osman, for his participation in party activities, said AL sources.

According to them, Hasina inducted Nurul Islam into her cabinet, taking note of his "sacrifice" during the January 5 parliamentary polls.

Nurul, a businessman-turned-politician, was elected MP in the 2008 polls, and was the chief of a parliamentary standing committee.

On Hasina's advice, Nurul, senior vice president of Chittagong city AL, pulled out of the January 5 election race to allow Jatiya Party leader Ziauddin Bablu to contest from his constituency. At that time, Hasina assured him that he would be "rewarded", said AL sources.

Tarana Halim, who was re-elected as MP to a seat reserved for women in the current parliament, is considered as a "spirited" leader by many AL leaders.

She has mobilised young cultural activists for the party, and has been active on the streets.

Tarana, appreciated for her articulated speeches in parliament, has been a frontline campaigner for road safety.

Newly appointed state minister Nuruzzaman was elected lawmaker for the first time in the January 5 polls.

His constituency like the others in Lalmonirhat didn't see much develop-

ment, and the PM might have made him state minister to ensure development in his area, believes AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif.

Local AL leaders said Nuruzzaman is known as a dedicated party leader. He broke through the stronghold of Jatiya Party and organised the AL in his constituency for the last seven years.

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Myanmar said the most recent group of 102 migrants was found late in June, after spending nearly a month on the island in Taninthayi, the southernmost region of Myanmar bordering Thailand.

The migrants, all men, were rescued between June 30 and July 12 and hailed from neighbouring Bangladesh, the paper said. They had been left on the island in early June.

"The navy is searching the areas and the victims will be sent back to their home country," it added, but gave no details of where the men were being held.

Officials at the Bangladesh embassy in Yangon said the Myanmar government had not contacted them about the migrants.

"We have just received the news from the media," Tareque Mohammed, the deputy chief of mission, told Reuters. "We have received no confirmation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

The military-owned Myawaddy newspaper said officials in Myanmar found a man on June 30 around two miles off the coast of Saung Gauk Island, prompting a search of the island early in July, which led to the discovery of the rest.

It said the men had left Bangladesh after being persuaded they could earn more abroad and that those who refused were forced aboard a vessel.

They were among the thousands, many Bangladeshi or Muslim Rohingya from Myanmar, who ended up in dangerously crowded boats run by people-traffickers, heading for other southeast Asian countries.

Previously, Myanmar has said nearly all the migrants were Bangladeshis seeking better economic prospects, rather than Rohingya, a group who complain of severe discrimination and mistreatment at home.

Most of the castaways landed in Indonesia, Malaysia and Myanmar, their passengers sick and thirsty. At least 1,200 remained adrift, the United Nations said in a report on June 16.

# Hasina, Khaleda exchange Eid greetings

STAR REPORT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia sent an Eid greeting card to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday, a day after the premier greeted Khaleda on the occasion.

On behalf of the BNP chief, Asadul Karim Shahin and Shamimur Rahman Shamim, assistant secretaries of the party, handed over the card to Hasina's political office in Dhanmondi.

The AL's assistant secretary Sikandar Ali received the card in the morning. Syrul Kabir Khan, BNP chairperson's media wing staff, said.

On Monday, Hasina greeted Khaleda by sending an Eid card, reports UNB.

A protocol officer of the PM handed over the card to Khaleda's personal secretary Abdus Sattar at her Gulshan office, sources at the BNP said.

Sources at the Dhanmondi office said, Khaleda sent the Eid card to Hasina addressing her as Awami League president, not prime minister.

Though they usually send greetings to each other on different occasions, the two arch-rivals have not come face-to-face for a long time.

## Won't take

FROM PAGE 16  
The IMF has attached a condition to the release of the installments, under which the government must hire an international audit firm to audit the state-run Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC).

"I am not in favour of changing laws for a particular company, whereas local firms are auditing all the banks and financial institutions in the country," said Muhith.

He was talking to reporters at the secretariat after a meeting with the board of directors of Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation (BHBFC) and senior officials of the Banking and Financial Institution Division of the finance ministry.

The IMF in 2012 had approved \$987 million as its extended credit facility for Bangladesh, for release in seven installments. Five of the installments, each to the tune of \$141 million, have already been disbursed. The deadline for availing the last two installments expired on July 1.

The minister said the government will transform the BHBFC into a specialised bank from a financial institution. Necessary changes are being made to laws so that the corporation can start functioning as a bank from next year.

The government will provide a loan of Tk 500 crore to the BHBFC in three installments to tide it over. The loan will be made available from the national budget for the current fiscal year, said Muhith.

"Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation is doing well now and lending out money at competitive interest rates. It will be turned into a specialised bank. Once it becomes a bank, it will be able to take deposits."

## Shab-e-Qadr

FROM PAGE 16  
The night is better than 1,000 nights as the angels and the spirit descend therein by the permission of Allah, according to the Quran.

Muslim devotees offered special prayers, recited from the holy Quran, held milad, zikr and other religious rituals at mosques and in their houses at night, seeking divine blessings for the wellbeing of mankind.

A special munajat and waz mahfil was arranged at Baitul Mukarram national mosque on the occasion.

Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar, private TV channels and radio stations aired special programmes while newspapers ran articles, highlighting the significance of the night.

# US military to consider transgender troops

AFP, Washington

The US military will consider opening its doors to transgender people who are currently banned from service and can be booted out if discovered, Pentagon chief Ashton Carter said Monday.

The secretary of defense made the revelation as he unveiled a working group that will be studying the issue during the next six months.

"The Defense Department's current regulations regarding transgender service members are outdated and are causing uncertainty that distracts commanders from our core missions" he said in a statement.

As a result, the Pentagon "will create a working group to study over the next six months the policy and readiness implications of welcoming transgender persons to serve openly," he said.

# Bangladeshis living longer

INDICATORS	2013	2012	2005
Life Expectancy (yrs)	70.4	69.4	65.2
Death per 1,000	5.3	5.3	5.8
U-5 Mortality per 1,000 births	41	42	68
Population Growth (%)	1.37	1.36	1.42
Population Density (per sqkm)	1,049	1,035	939

SOURCE: BBS

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people's living standard has improved," said the population expert.

The BBS study has also found that with the increase in life expectancy, birth and death rates have declined over time.

The death rate fell to 5.3 per 1,000 people in 2013 from 5.8 in 2005.

While 68 children per 1,000 live births would die under the age of five in 2005, the rate dropped to 41 in 2013.

Maternal mortality rate came down to 1.97 per 1,000 live births in 2013 from 3.48 in 2005.

"People are more conscious now. In the past, a mother would give births to many children. This trend has declined, leading to a fall in the deaths of pregnant mothers," said Prof Nabi.

The BBS also finds the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) among women, aged between 15 and 49, is declining. On an average, a woman in 2013 had 2.12 children, down from 2.46 in 2005.

Zaid Bakht, research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), said the government's immunisation programme had an impact on the increased life expectancy.

Steady economic growth spurred employment and income, enabling people to afford more quality food now. Besides, people now have access to better healthcare services due to different initiatives by the government and the NGOs, he said.

## PLANNING AHEAD

However, rising life expectancy war-

rants urgent policy planning by the state, as the number of elderly people, now 1.15 crore, will rise.

By 2050, people above 60 are projected to constitute 20 percent of the total population, Prof Nabi said.

"They will need proper healthcare facilities and treatment. So policymakers should start planning now for ensuring those services at that time," he said.

The increased life expectancy and declining death rate also increases population.

Despite the decrease in birth rate, population grows by 1.37 percent a year, the BBS says.

Population density per square kilometre rose to 1,049 in 2013 from 939 in 2005, the study finds.

MA Mannan, senior research fellow of the BIDS, said the increased population density will cut availability of agricultural land.

"Like China's one-child policy, we should adopt a two-children policy to check population growth."

"Many can argue that they have the rights to take as many children as they want if they can afford. But they should keep in mind that the resources needed to support those children are limited."

Mannan also suggested the government strengthen motivational campaigns for population control and provide incentives for planned housing in rural areas to save farmlands.

# 50,000 Bangladeshis

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the country," a foreign ministry announcement said yesterday.

"The government is also closely monitoring the overall situation in Libya," it added.

According to the foreign ministry officials, all Bangladeshi expatriates in Libya are so far safe and they have been advised to remain alert and avoid conflict zones. Many Bangladeshis have moved to safer places, they added.

The relocated Bangladesh Embassy has opened an Information Cell in Tunisia with the following contact address: ASM Ashraful Islam, counsellor (Labour), landline: +21675750300, e-mail: bdtropical@yahoo.com, mobile: +21621924229.

Contacted over mobile phone, Labour Counsellor Ashraful Islam yesterday told The Daily Star that the locally recruited staff at the mission in Tripoli are now looking after the welfare issues of the Bangladeshi migrants in Libya. A hotline number of the mission in Tripoli has also been opened. The number is 0916994207.

"Manpower export is officially closed till date but the welfare of the Bangladeshis is being looked after by us periodically entering Libya from the Tunisian city of Djerba where we have recently relocated [our mission]," he said.

Meanwhile, the foreign ministry statement said Bangladeshi nationals in Libya should avoid areas where demonstrations are being staged. They should exercise caution in the vicinity of any large gatherings, protests, or demonstrations.

Libya has been in chaos since the death of Muammar Gaddafi in October 2011 following a war between his loyalists and rebels backed by the Americans, British and French and

several Arab countries.

The Bangladesh government banned exporting manpower to the North African country in July last year when the crisis deepened due to the conflict between the two rival factions.

Since then the migrants were advised not to move to the conflict zones, particularly Benghazi and Misrata.

On March 6 this year, Islamic State militants allegedly abducted two Bangladeshis along with seven other from the Al-Ghani oil field in Libya.

However, the two migrants -- Helal Uddin and Mohammad Anowar Hossain, both employees of Vienna-based oil company VAOS -- were freed on March 24.

They finally returned home last April. The Libyan capital Tripoli was considered safe for the migrants.

But an armed group known as Libya Dawn took over Tripoli and declared its own government and parliament last year, driving out the internationally recognised government and deepening the crisis in the country.

In this situation, the Bangladesh government has relocated its staff from Tripoli to Tunisia.

Replying to a query about the relocation or repatriation of the migrants from Libya, Ashraful Islam said, "The situation still does not demand anything like that."

Whenever the situation worsens, the embassy officials move to Libya and look into the matter, he said.

The Tripoli-based government yesterday rejected a UN proposal to resolve Libya's political crisis.

Libya currently has two governments vying for power, one in Tripoli and one in the eastern port city of Tobruk, which is recognised by the international community.

# Controversial plan

FROM PAGE 16  
that may be harmful for Bangladesh, without having talks with Dhaka.

Sanwar Lal Jat, Indian minister of water resources, said his ministry would soon be taking up the planning of a very important link, Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga, in consultation with the governments of Assam, West Bengal and Bihar.

"This link project will not only provide large irrigation and water supply benefits to Assam, West Bengal and Bihar but will also make available large quantum of water for transfer subsequently to southern states," he was quoted by an official statement as telling the fifth meeting of the special committee on the interlinking of rivers.

The governments in West Bengal, Assam and Bihar will soon be approached for their consent, Jat said.

Once these three states agree for the plan, the Indian government will take up the task of preparing a detailed project report (DPR), including the modalities of implementation, water sharing and actual cost of the project.

The Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga link will be the fifth inter-state project. While actual execution work on the first project, Ken-Betwa link between the states of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh will begin by the end of this year, three others are at various stages before being taken up for the Indian Cabinet's approval.

Water resources and irrigation ministers from Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, UP, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh participated in the deliberations and gave valuable suggestions.

Some of them were of the view that the interlinking river should be implemented within a definite timeframe, said the statement.

Jat asked the states with sufficient water resources to appreciate the national need for Inter-Linking of Rivers (ILR) with a spirit of good will and co-operation. He said this mega project would go a long way in enhancing water and food security of the country.

Updating the members with the latest status of several ILR projects, Jat said various clearances related to environment, wildlife and forests for Ken-Betwa link project are in the advance stage of processing.

"I hope with all statutory clearance available, we will be able to start the actual execution of work on the project by the end of this year.... The government will be implementing this national project as model link project of ILR programme," he added.

The minister also said the work for preparation of DPR of Par-Tapi-Narmada river linking project was in concluding stage and it was expected to be completed by this month end.

After the completion of DPR of Par-Tapi-Narmada link project, the issue of water-sharing between Gujarat and Maharashtra states in respect of Damanganga-Pinjal and Par-Tapi-Narmada link project will be addressed, he said.

All these are part of the total 30 interlinking of rivers projects, which was conceived during the earlier BJP-NDA government (1999-2004) under the then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

# CSK, Rajasthan Royals suspended

FROM PAGE 16  
Meiyappan, the former Team Principal of CSK, and Kundra, co-owner of the Rajasthan Royals, were suspended for life for indulging in betting and bringing the IPL and the game into disrepute.

The punishment was handed down by a Supreme Court-appointed three-member committee, headed by former Chief Justice of India R M Lodha, putting a spanner on the high-profile T20 league, which began in 2008.

"He (Meiyappan) is declared ineligible for participation in the sport of cricket as explained in the anti-corruption code for a maximum period of five years under article 2.2.1. Two: He is suspended for life from activities as explained in article 7.5 under level 4 ... The above sanctions commence from the date of this order," Justice Lodha said while giving out the verdict in a packed press conference.

The former CJI then read out exactly the same punishment for Kundra, husband of Bollywood star Shilpa Shetty.

The Committee was constituted by the SC in January this year with its terms of reference being to announce the quantum of punishment against Meiyappan, Kundra and the two franchisees -- India Cements Ltd, owner of CSK and Jaipur IPL, owner of Rajasthan Royals.

Making scathing remarks against the accused, Justice Lodha said the credibility of the game has been hurt quite grievously.

"Disrepute has been brought to cricket, the BCCI and the IPL to such an extent that there are doubts abound in

the public whether the game is clean or not," Justice Lodha said.

Later, the committee took questions from the media and was asked whether any action against IPL COO Sundar Raman, who was also accused of wrongdoing, is being contemplated.

Justice Lodha said it will be some time before his fate is decided.

The committee said its observations with respect to the much-talked about conflict of interest in the BCCI would be given after completing interactions with various stakeholders of the game.

He also refused to comment on the criminal cases pending against the suspended officials, saying, "No aspect touching criminal liability has been decided by us."

On whether the two franchisees would be allowed to participate in case there is a change in ownership, Justice Lodha said that aspect is for the BCCI to decide.

The IPL spot-fixing scandal broke out in 2013 when the Delhi Police arrested Rajasthan Royals cricketers S Sreesanth, Ankeet Chavan and Ajit Chandila for allegedly indulging in betting and spot-fixing during the then edition.

This was followed by revelations that Meiyappan was also involved in the scandal along with Rajasthan Royals co-owner Raj Kundra.

Meiyappan was eventually arrested on May 24 on charges of cheating, fraud and forgery.

The storm triggered by the shocking developments prompted the IPL Governing Council to appoint a three-member probe panel, including two former High Court judges, to investi-

gate the allegations against Meiyappan and Kundra.

The panel gave a clean chit to the duo despite the police's firm assertion that they were involved in the scandal.

This was followed by the unrecognised Cricket association of Bihar filing a PIL in the Bombay High Court which ruled that the BCCI's probe panel was constituted illegally and there was disparity in the evidence collected by it.

Thereafter, the SC issued notices to Srinivasan, BCCI, India Cements and Rajasthan Royals when the Board appealed against Bombay High Court's ruling.

In September that year, the BCCI slapped life bans on Sreesanth and Chavan even as the Board's disciplinary committee continued to hold back a decision on Chandila.

In October, the SC formed a three-member committee to investigate the scandal afresh within four months.

The panel, which included former High Court judge Mukul Mudgal, concluded that there was evidence of wrongdoing against Meiyappan and Kundra.

However, the committee ruled that Srinivasan was not involved in either spot-fixing or betting but he knew of an IPL player's involvement and chose to turn a blind eye to it.

The SC then appointed a new three-member panel, headed by Justice Lodha, to decide punishment for Meiyappan and Kundra and their respective franchises declaring that the verdict "shall be final and binding upon the BCCI and the parties concerned".