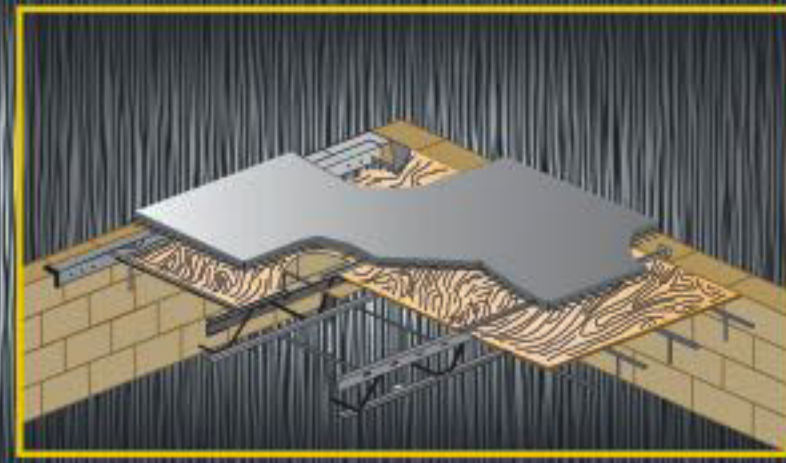


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Freedom of speech shrinking

Says national rights commission chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The space for freedom of speech has been gradually shrinking in Bangladesh, said National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman yesterday.

"This shrinking [of space] is a threat to journalism, a threat to right to information and human rights," he said during the launching ceremony of a weekly at The Daily Star Centre.

Apart from addressing the launching ceremony of the Jessore-based Bangla weekly Shampratik Deshkal, Prof Mizanur also inaugurated its news portal shampratikdeshkal.com

The state should be asked how much freedom of expression had been curbed by section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act, he said.

"But it has become even harder to raise questions," he said, referring to a recent

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Bobbing in dangerous proximity to cargo vessels carrying sand, dinghies ferry people from Kamrangirchar to Sadarghat in the capital. On many occasions in the past, accidents took place when these vessels hit small boats. To save money and time, locals ignore the risks and choose the tiny boats to cross the Buriganga. The photo was taken near Badamtoli Ghat yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Man held for killing wife, daughter

A CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

A woman and her minor daughter were strangled allegedly by her husband over dowry in Tarali village of Kaliganj upazila early yesterday.

The dead are Sabina Yasmin, 26, wife of Abdur Rouf of Ghona village of the same upazila, and their two-year-old daughter Aysha Siddiqua. Rouf, who works at a shrimp enclosure, married Sabina around four years ago.

Sabina's mother Jahanara Khatun alleged that Rouf had been demanding Tk 50,000 and a motorcycle as dowry from them for the last one month. As they refused, Rouf sent back Sabina and her daughter to their house 10 days back.

Rouf came to visit on Monday night and went to bed along with Sabina and their daughter after dinner, she said.

"Around 1:00am, I woke up hearing a sound and saw Rouf fleeing on a bicycle. I went to Sabina's room and found my daughter and granddaughter Aysha lying dead there," Jahanara added.

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ILLEGAL WEALTH

MP Bodi indicted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against Awami League lawmaker from Cox's Bazar-4 constituency Abdur Rahman Bodi in a graft case filed over amassing illegal wealth.

After rejecting the discharge petition, Dhaka Special Judges Court-3 Judge Abu Ahmed Jomadar passed the order and set October 6 to begin the trial in the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Bodi, now on bail, claimed himself innocent and demanded justice after the judge read out the charges to him.

On September 12 last year, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka turned down his bail petition and sent him to jail on his surrender in the case.

Later, he got bail from the High Court.

There are widespread allegations that Bodi is a very influential drug lord of Cox's



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NEW PAY SCALE

Muhith slams agitating university teachers

Remarks draw flak from teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith came down hard on the teachers of 37 public universities who stayed away from work yesterday protesting "discrepancies" in the eighth national pay scale.

"Their [the teachers'] work abstention has no justification," he told reporters at the secretariat.

"I am extremely surprised that the most educated section [of our population] has gone for such a movement due to their lack of knowledge."

On Monday, the cabinet approved the new pay scale for civil servants with a minimum basic salary of Tk 8,250 and maximum of Tk 78,000 per month. The pay scale kept the grades as proposed in the draft.

Soon afterwards, the teachers announced the protest programme, saying they were expecting a separate pay structure.

Later, Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan said a cabinet committee

was asked to sit with the teachers and discuss their proposal.

Yesterday, the teachers of the 37 universities did not attend classes or hold examinations as planned.

As per a decision of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA), a platform of the teachers, silent processions were brought out on different campuses, reports our correspondents.

At the programmes, the teachers said they were eagerly waiting for a response from the cabinet committee.

On the Dhaka University campus, over a 100 teachers brought out a procession from the Aparajeyo Bangla around 11:00am. It ended near the Central Shaheed Minar.

Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed of DU's Economics department said they would continue their movement unless their four demands were met.

Farid, also the president of the FBUTA,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

'Bee' careful up there!

700 hives hang from 4,000 feet high cliff-face

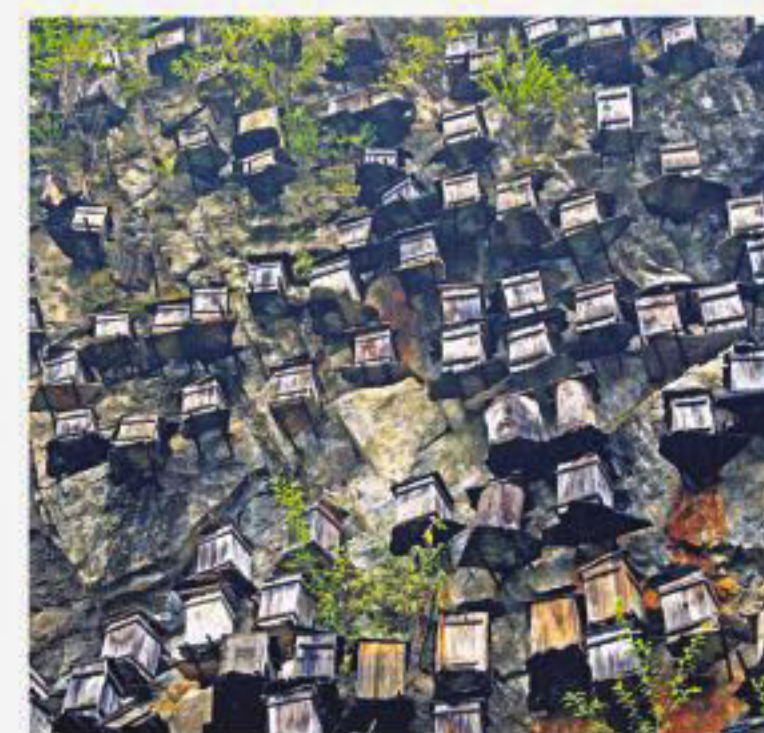
MAIL ONLINE

A vertical apiary in China has recently made the headlines as the 'home of Chinese bees'.

The unusual apiary is found in the mountains of Shennongjia Nature Reserve in Hubei, central China, reported People's Daily Online.

Unlike other bee farms, more than 700 hives of this apiary is situated on a cliff-face at 4,000 feet

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Ex-MP Shakhawat, 8 others face war crimes charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The war crimes tribunal yesterday accepted charges against former BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Shakhawat Hossain and eight others while cleared three other suspects.

The three-member tribunal led by Justice M Enayetur Rahim took the charges into cognisance against the nine, saying it had found prima facie evidence of their involvement in crimes against humanity.

Of them who are from Jessore, Shakhawat and Billal Hossain Biswas are in jail while the others are on the run.

The court, however, asked the jail authorities to release three others if they were not wanted in any other case because no evidence was found of their involvement in war crimes. This is the first time any accused in a war crimes case has been cleared of charges brought against them.

The prosecution will make its next legal move on receiving the certified copy of the order, said Prosecutor Zead Al Malum and Rezia Sultana Chaman, adding that they were allowed to seek review of the order within seven days.

Those who have been cleared of the charges are Moshair Rahman and Ajihar Morol of Chingra and Akram Hossain



SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Education hit by floods

Over 50 schools in Bogra inundated

MAMUN-UR-RASHID, Bogra

Thousands of students have been deprived of education since the ongoing flood hit three upazilas in Bogra over two weeks ago.

Over 50 primary schools in Sariakandi, Dhunat and Sonatola upazilas were inundated while over 57 other educational institutions, including a few colleges, were affected, said locals and an education officer in the district.

In some cases, the authorities were taking classes on comparatively higher places, but that is hardly helping their cause as most of the students are failing to make it there due floodwater.

Shima Khatun and Protima Rani of Ayesha Osman Girls' High School of Chandanbaisha in Sariakandi said their classes had been suspended for nearly 15 days now.

Guardians said the candidates of Primary terminal and junior school certificate examinations, to be held a few months later, were the worst sufferers. They fear about their results.

Hossain Ali, primary education officer in the district said, teachers of flood-hit schools in the upazilas were trying to make up the losses by taking alternative classes on higher locations.

Deputy Commissioner Ashraf Uddin echoed Hossain and added that floodwater had already started to recede yesterday.

He said they would provide all sort of support to the students in the future.

Submerged in floodwater -- a girls' high school in Chandanbaisha union of Sariakandi upazila, above, and a primary school at Vandabari union of Dhunat upazila, bottom left, in Bogra. The situation is worse for this educational institution, bottom right, in Sariakandi. A portion of the primary school has collapsed, failing to withstand the strong currents of the Bangalee River.

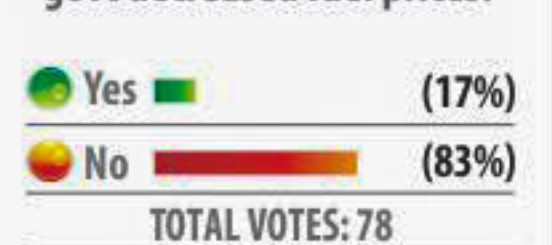
PHOTO: STAR



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ONLINE POLL

Do you think it was justified for the State Minister for Power, Energy & Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid that people would not get the benefit if the govt decreased fuel prices?



TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Prof Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) that the salary hike will not contribute to any significant inflationary pressure?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net



PRAYER TIMING

SEPTEMBER 9

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-35 12-45 4-30 6-20 7-45
JAMAAT 5-10 1-15 4-45 6-25 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION