

# PM intervenes to end row

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 Apart from them, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury spoke of removing salary discrimination against agricultural scientists.  
 The PM then asked a few secretaries, who are members of the cabinet committee, to sit with her separately to discuss the issue, added the sources.  
 Since the issuance of the gazette on December 15, public university teachers have been protesting the exclusion of selection grade and time scale.  
 Teachers of government colleges, doctors, engineers, agriculturists and scientists have also been pressing for fixing "anomalies" in the pay scale.  
 Talking to The Daily Star, a senior minister said something positive would happen following the PM's directive.  
 "The prime minister took note of the problems and asked the secretaries to take necessary measures," said the minister, asking not to be named.  
 In a press statement last night, the finance ministry said it will see whether there is any anomaly in the new pay scale.  
 The education ministry is working in line with the government decision to make sure that public university teachers get grades I and II in place of time scale and selection grade, read the statement.  
 The Finance Division will not object to any proposal from the education ministry on the matter, it added.  
 Contacted, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Alam said they would sit soon and see if there is any discrimination and vagueness in the new pay scale.  
 If any anomaly is detected concerning any section of professionals, steps will be

taken to resolve it, he added.  
 Meanwhile, the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) hailed the PM's move.  
 "We hope our problems will be resolved and the prime minister's directives will not go in vain," FBUTA President Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed told this correspondent.  
 The FBUTA, a platform of teachers from 37 public universities, has announced that it will go on an indefinite work stoppage at the universities from January 11 unless the government removes the "discriminatory provisions" by January 10.  
 Farid alleged that a section of top bureaucrats was responsible for the discrimination.  
 He said the cabinet committee suggested retaining time scale and selection grade to keep intact the dignity of university teachers. But those bureaucrats ignored the suggestions, and came up with a new pay scale without time scale and selection grade, depriving the teachers of grade-I privileges.  
 Under the new pay scale, university professors will retire as grade-III employees with the status of a joint secretary, he said.  
 Farid demanded full implementation of the cabinet body's suggestions on the privileges and status of university teachers.  
 Dr Nur Ahmed, chief scientific officer at Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, said scientists have been subjected to discrimination in the new pay scale, and the matter should be settled immediately.  
 "Scientists and BCS cadres used to join service in the ninth grade in the previous pay scale. But under the new pay scale, BCS cadres will get the privileges of the eighth grade and scientists that of the ninth grade," he said.

# Who'll bring it home?

FROM PAGE 16  
 machine readable passports and the money was supposed to be deposited in the accounts of Bangladesh missions in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.  
 The IRIS has never been regular in doing that.  
 Finally, newly appointed DIP Director General Brig Gen Masud Rezwana yesterday came down heavily on IRIS officials for not paying up.  
 He asked IRIS officials to tell him how much it had deposited in Bangladesh government's accounts. The IRIS officials could not give any specific answer and sought more time.  
 The DG became furious and warned the firm that "holding government's money illegally is a criminal offence", according to sources in a meeting held at the DIP yesterday.  
 He asked the company to deposit within 48 hours all government fees that have been lying with the company for more than a year, otherwise it would face the music, sources added.  
 "I asked them [IRIS officials] to place the full account of the money by tomorrow [today]. I also told them to hand over all passports it had not given to our people in Saudi Arabia," Masud told The Daily Star last night.  
 The company took about 1.4 to 1.5 lakh printed MRPs from the DIP for Saudi Arabia and about 36,000 MRPs for the UAE, but it did not distribute those passports, Masud said.  
 Another company failed to deliver 2,000 MRPs in Malaysia, he said.  
 IRIS CEO Dato Hamdan, its International Sales Manager Bahjat

Aman and five other officials came to Dhaka and attend the meeting with the DIP officials.  
 The two missions under the foreign ministry and the Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP), which is under the home ministry, issued several letters to IRIS, requesting it to deposit the money.  
 The company did not even respond to the letters and the government has not made any further requests in the last two months.  
 The Daily Star recently contacted the home minister, the ambassadors in Saudi Arabia and the UAE and other officials concerned and they all blamed each other.  
 "It's a matter of the foreign ministry," said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal when asked what his ministry was doing to realise the money.  
 When mentioned that it was the home ministry which signed the contracts with the IRIS, he once again tried to shift the responsibility to the foreign ministry.  
 Under the contracts, the DIP was responsible for supervising IRIS and making the company accountable.  
 The DIP has been silent over the money issue.  
 "Since the fees are supposed to be deposited in the missions' accounts it is their [missions'] responsibility to monitor and maintain accounts," Zeaul Alam, who was director general of the DIP until December 13, told this correspondent.  
 The foreign ministry was shifting blame as well.  
 "The DIP is responsible in this regard since the department signed

the contracts with IRIS. It's not our job," a director general of the foreign ministry said, requesting not to be named.  
 It also seems the Bangladesh missions that were supposed to monitor IRIS's data-collection job and keep accounts of passport fees are doing nothing to realise the money.  
 "The IRIS gave us some money. The company is yet to deposit Tk 10-12 crore but I don't have the exact figure," said Golam Moshi, Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi Arabia.  
 He said the company did not deposit the fees regularly and that was why he did not have the details.  
 Bangladesh ambassador to the UAE Muhammad Imran refused to say anything.  
 "You better contact the DIP," Imran said whenever asked how much money the IRIS deposited and how much was due.  
 Officials of the home and foreign ministries regularly meet senior IRIS executives in Dhaka, but do not put pressure on the company to deposit the money, sources said.  
 Against this backdrop, some officials of the DIP and the home ministry said they were not sure whether the hard-earned money of the expatriates would actually be realised.  
 A number of officials at the DIP said the IRIS should be served with a legal notice.  
 The Daily Star sent two emails to IRIS Senior Manager Bahjat Aman and Assistant Manager in Saudi Arabia project Kamal Bashah, requesting their comments. But the two did not respond.

# People suffer

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 down to Matsya Bhaban to Kakrail to Awami League's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue.  
 People in Dhaka Medical College, Shahbagh, Bangladesh Secretariat, Gulistan, Dhaka University and the adjoining areas were the worst sufferers. All the roads in those areas were packed with vehicles.  
 Most of the busy thoroughfares in Motijheel, Dainik Bangla, National Press Club and Elephant Road areas were clogged too.  
 An employee of Nagar Bhaban, who had to get down from bus at Science Laboratory said there was congestion on the Mirpur Road too.  
 An employee of a private firm wishing anonymity, said, "Seeing the gridlock, I started walking from Gulistan at 1:30pm and reached my office at Farmgate at 3:45pm."  
 The congestion also took a heavy toll on businesspeople. Sigve Brekke, president of Telenor Group, which owns the majority shares of Grameenphone, was one of them.  
 He had a meeting with Tarana Halim, state minister for posts and telecommunications, at the Secretariat at 2:30pm. He started from the Radisson Blu on the airport road at 12:00pm. But he was stuck for three hours at Karwan Bazar.  
 After waiting for more than an hour, the state minister postponed the meeting for the day, according to ministry officials.  
 A former Inspector General of Police lost three and a half hours in much the same way. He was on his way to a programme.  
 "I suffered three kinds of loss -- working hours, energy and money. Why should I face such these losses for a political programme?" he told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.  
 He could not attend the programme. Many government and police officials, like him, cancelled their programmes yesterday.  
 The gridlock on many roads continued even into the evening.  
 The BCL chalked out a five-day programme to mark its founding anniversary, which was inaugurated by Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader at the DU's Aparajeya Bangla.

# Blockade still on!

FROM PAGE 1  
 Gulshan office to attend a showdown in front of BNP's Naya Paltan office, the 20-party combine chief Khaleda Zia on January 5 last year announced the countrywide nonstop blockade, demanding a fresh election under a non-party administration.  
 On April 5, Khaleda surrendered before a special court in Dhaka and later returned to her residence upon getting bail after staying in her Gulshan office for 92 days.  
 But neither she nor any of her party leaders told media anything about ending the blockade although the alliance completely withdrew hartals -- which took lives of around 100 people -- across the country since March 30.  
 In mid-April, Khaleda said: "I alone cannot take any decision about the fate of the blockade as the programme was fixed in consultation with the 20-party leaders. Now the political situation does not allow us to sit together."  
 But the fact remains that the issue was not discussed in any meetings between the

chiefs of the 20-party alliance or the BNP standing committee -- the highest policy level body, insiders told The Daily Star.  
 "It is nothing but a foolish question to ask about the fate of the blockade," a BNP senior leader replied with dismay while talking to this correspondent last week.  
 "Why are you asking this foolish question? Do you have any confusion that the blockade is no more?" the BNP leader said, adding that such foolish questions were raised by some media outlets, not by the common people.  
 Asked whether they should make any official announcement on withdrawing the blockade as it was announced formally to media, he advised this correspondent to contact with the party chief.  
 Despite zero response from people, the alliance enforced hartals in phases till March 29 but the blockade programme still continues officially in the absence of any formal announcement to the effect that it has been withdrawn.

# Strong quake

FROM PAGE 1  
 India's Manipur state, which borders Myanmar.  
 The pre-dawn quake killed six people in India and five in neighbouring Bangladesh, officials said, while shockwaves were felt in the Himalayan nation of Nepal and as far away as the Myanmar city of Yangon, about 1,175 km to the south.  
 The quake struck while many people were asleep, and roofs and staircases of some buildings collapsed in Imphal, a city of about 270,000 people.  
 "It was like being tossed around in a frying pan," said Joy Thanglian, a 33-year-old employee of state energy firm Bharat Petroleum. Police and hospitals in Imphal said the death toll had reached six with 100 people injured, 33 of them seriously.  
 Officials in Bangladesh said as well as the five people who died of heart attacks as they fled buildings,

about 90 people were injured.  
 Rescue workers in Imphal used hand-held drilling machines to clear rubble from the ruins of a six-storey building under construction, the site of the heaviest damage in the city.  
 "I didn't feel the tremor, but when I woke up the entire ceiling had collapsed on me," said R K Ewansana, a 21-year-old student, who was on the first floor but survived as the rest of the building collapsed around him.  
 Residents said people fled from their homes, and power and telecoms links were down in the remote region.  
 At Imphal's airport, flights were normal, although a boundary wall collapsed, and a crack appeared in the terminal building, said Thanglian, who works there.  
 Some people criticised what they called the authorities' slow response, saying that although the army had begun to clear debris, it appeared to

be short of heavy equipment.  
 "We haven't seen any help from the government side," said disaster volunteer worker Kangujam. "The government has not given us any information."  
 The government said two teams from the National Disaster Response Force had arrived to help with the rescue.  
 "The rescue operations are about to start on a war footing," Junior Home Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju told Reuters.  
 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that he was in touch with authorities in the northeast.  
 Manipur is one of seven north-eastern provinces joined to the rest of the India by a thin strip of territory arching above Bangladesh.  
 It was the most powerful earthquake to hit the state since 1957, according to academics at the department of seismological research at Manipur University.

# Sangsad

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 to deliver his speech on the first day of the session which is approved by the cabinet.  
 The president will talk about the government's development activities along with other issues, said sources at the parliament secretariat.  
 Duration of the session will be a long one as lawmakers will speak on the thanksgiving motion on president's speech.  
 The parliament business advisory committee headed by Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury will finalise the duration of the session before the JS begins the session around 4:30pm on January 20.  
 Opposition Chief Whip Tajul Islam Choudhury said the parliamentary party of the Jatiya Party will hold a meeting before beginning the new session to decide the party's stance on different parliamentary issues.  
 The last session of parliament ended on November 23 last year with 14 working days.  
 According to the constitution, there can be maximum 60 days' gap between the end of a session and the beginning of the next one.  
 The BNP, which was either in the treasury or in the opposition bench between 1991 and 2013, don't have any participation in the 10th parliament as the BNP-led alliance and most other political parties boycotted the national election of January 5, 2014.

# 35 hurt

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 The clash took place around 12:30pm when leaders and activists of a faction led by district unit President Mahabub Hossain Rony and General Secretary Sanwar Parvez Pulok locked in a clash with another faction led by GM Siraj Mizan and Sourov Das near Naresh Chowhan Road over control of the organisation office.  
 Both factions held separate rallies marking the anniversary and marched towards the party's central office in the town.  
 Police fired eight teargas canisters to disperse the armed activists.  
 OC of Thakurgaon police Moshirur

Rahman said the situation was under control and additional police were deployed to ward off any untoward incident.  
**MOULVIBAZAR**  
 Five BCL men were hurt and six shops vandalised in a clash between two factions in Rikabibazar area around 2:00pm.  
 OC of Kotwali police Suhel Ahmed said there had been a longstanding feud between President of Sylhet district unit BCL Shahriar Ahmed and BCL activist Shahin Ahmed over taking control of the area.  
 On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

# Economist Dr Mahabub passes away

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 to his long-time employer Brac.  
 Mahabub had been suffering from heart disease for the last two years. He is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son.  
 Before his death, Mahabub was an adviser to the executive director of Brac, the world's largest non-governmental organisation, and a distinguished professor and chairperson of economics and social science department at Brac University.  
 The eminent economist served as the head of social science division of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), executive director of Brac, and director general of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).  
 He spent 15 years (1992-2007) at the IRRI with a dual role as both researcher and administrative head.  
 Mahabub made substantial contributions to research on development economics and agricultural policy in South and Southeast Asia. Throughout his long career as an active researcher and research manager, he contributed to the advancement of knowledge in many fields such as agrarian structure and land reforms; rural non-farm activities; technology, credit and infrastructure policies; income distribution and poverty; and Asian rice economy.  
 His research based on detailed analysis of primary data collected from household level sample surveys has been instrumental in developing a deeper understanding of the operation of rural economy in general and the rice sector in particular.  
 Brac said it deeply mourns the sad demise of Dr Hossain.  
 Brac Founder and Chairperson Sir Fazle Hasan Abed said very few people globally had the depth of understanding of development issues like Dr Mahabub Hossain.  
 "His life was a story of success against all odds, and during his time at Brac, he had a persistent focus on creating opportunities for the poor."  
 Mahabub's research over many decades on proliferation of innovation in agriculture and livelihood improvement of marginalised farmers has been path breaking, said Abed.

"We, his Brac family, mourn today this irreparable loss with his friends, family and many people he touched during his life dedicated to public service."  
 In a condolence message, Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus said, "I am deeply shocked and sad to learn about the untimely death of Dr Mahabub Hossain."  
 He said, "Dr Mahabub Hossain was a brilliant scholar. His contributions in the field of economics and agricultural research were groundbreaking and far-reaching."  
 Mahabub was the first scholar to study Grameen Bank and produce a highly demanded research paper on the impact of Grameen Bank, Yunus said.  
 "His insights in that paper were tremendously valuable to Grameen Bank as it expanded and grew. Above all, his deep commitment to social justice, his empathy for marginalised people, and his humility made him stand out as an extraordinary human being. His death is an irreplaceable loss for the country, and the global community of agricultural researchers," said Prof Yunus.  
 In a statement, Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman said Dr Mahabub was second to none in agricultural research.  
 He was actively involved in devising credit support and its implementation for sharecroppers in the country, said the central bank chief.  
 After completing his masters in economics from Dhaka University, Dr Mahabub obtained his PhD from the University of Cambridge in the UK.  
 He had published many research articles in international journals. Some of his seminal books are: Asian Rice Bowls A Returning Crisis, Rice Research in Asia: Progress and Prospects, Impact of Rice Research in Asia, Strategy of Development in Bangladesh, and Rural Economy and Livelihoods Insights from Bangladesh.  
 Mahabub was awarded the first gold medal from the Agricultural Economist Association in 1984 for contributing to the understanding of the operation of rural economy.  
 The Foreign Policy, an international magazine on politics and economics, featured him in its list of

500 most prominent individuals in the international arena. He was the first Bangladeshi to have achieved the fame.  
 Tributes also poured in on social media following the news of his death, which came just a day after his 71st birthday on January 2.  
 Gene Hettel, senior science editor and historian at the IRRI, wrote on his Facebook page: "Upon the passing of Mahabub Hossain, we have lost a great friend and a colleague in the realm of agricultural research."  
 "It was a privilege and great pleasure to know and work with him at the IRRI."  
 Prof Abdul Bayes, former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, wrote: "It is very sad to convey that my most favourite Dr Mahabub Hossain died."  
 Muhammad A (Rume) Ali, a noted banker, wrote: "One of the sharpest minds I have come across in my life. It is sad that we are now deprived of this intellect that could have done so much more for Bangladesh. His contribution to Brac was phenomenal."  
 Alice Laborte, a scientist at the IRRI, wrote: "I learned a lot from him [Mahabub] starting in the early 1990s when I was his research assistant and as his PhD thesis student 10 years later."  
 "He mentored so many researchers like me and showed fatherly compassion to everyone in the Social Sciences Division at the IRRI which he led for 15 glorious years. I will remember our visits to farmers' fields, his advice about my career and not forgetting my personal life, and his genuine interest in the welfare of rice farmers and the plight of the poor."  
 Dr Mahabub was an inspiring figure who will always be remembered for his contribution to innovative, path breaking research in agricultural economics and rural development, said BIDS.  
 In a press release, Centre for Policy Dialogue said, "... he will be forever remembered for his brilliance in articulation of economic analysis, his path breaking research works, his leadership in agricultural innovation and above all his deep empathy for the marginalised people. This loss is irreplaceable."

Zuckerberg plans to share his progress over the course of the year. Last month, he made headlines for plans to give away 99% of his Facebook stake.  
 He had to defend his philanthropic venture - launched to celebrate the birth of his daughter - after critics argued that it could provide a way for the founder to avoid paying tax on the sale of his shares.  
 Yesterday, Zuckerberg said he would start to build the AI with technology that is already out there and teach it to understand his voice to control everything in his home from music and lights to temperature.  
 "This should be a fun intellectual challenge to code this for myself," Zuckerberg said.  
 "I'll teach it to let friends in by looking at their faces when they ring the doorbell," he said. "I'll teach it to let me know if anything is going on in Max's (his daughter's) room that I need to check on when I'm not with her."

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## Re-Tender Notice

### e-Tender Notice (Open Tendering Method)

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Tender ID	Package No.	Name of work	Date & time of last selling	Date & time of closing
42710	e-GP/14/ZR/BZ/2015-2016	Pavement widening, surfacing & earth work including protective work at Ch: 25+000-32+000, 33+000-35+500, 37+000-38+000, 38+668-39+500, 42+500-43+500, 47+000-48+500, 50+000-50+500km & Construction of 3 Nos RCC Box Culvert at Ch: 24+330(3.00m) Ch: 29+448(1.50m), 33+767(3.00m) km of Goriarpar-Banaripara-Sarshina-Swrupkhathi-Kawkhali-Naikati Road (Pirojpur part) (Z-8033) and (ii) Strengthening & surfacing of pavement including earth work at Ch: 14+100-16+000, 19+000-21+000, 23+500-25+100km of Barguna (Dhakhin Ramna Kheyaghat)-Dawatala-Mathbaria-Baromasua Road (Pirojpur Part) (Z8814) under Pirojpur Road Division during the year 2015-2016.	13 January 2016	14 January 2016

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