## Farmers Bank

days before the expiry of the deadline for the fine.

This was the first time a commercial bank moved the HC against the regulator's decision on fining it, said BB sources.

The BB on January 3 sent a letter to the newly-established bank's managing director, informing him of the

The central bank last week appointed an observer to the bank after it found that the bank's health was deteriorating fast.

According to the letter, the bank disbursed loans of Tk 38.26 crore to six companies -- EBL Securities, International Securities, Prime Islami Securities, Kazi Equities, BD Securities and Union Capital. But the loans were shown as investments, which the BB termed a pun-

The central bank said Farmers Bank committed the offence in a bid to conceal information regarding its loan-deposit ratio.

ishable offence.

"The bank hid information deliberately and knowingly. Your response is not acceptable to us," said the BB letter, asking the commercial bank to pay the fine within 10 days of the issuance of the letter.

The fine was imposed as per section 109 (11) of the Bank Company Act 1991, read the letter.

The regulator also warned the bank of adjusting the fine amount from the Farmers Bank's account with the central bank if it failed to pay the penalty on time.

In May last year, the BB had ordered the bank to remove its executive committee Chairman Mahabubul Haque Chisty. But the order was later stayed by the High Court.

## MPs to have

FROM PAGE 16

Yesterday's meeting also nominated Badal Krishna Devnath and Haji Abdul Latif as mayoral candidates for Char Fashion municipality in Bhola and Shahrasti in Chandpur going to polls on February 15.

For the first time, the UP elections are taking place on party lines. The Election Commission has said over 600 union parishads will go to polls at the end of March in the first phase. There are over 4,500 union parishads in the country.

In last months' municipal polls, presidents and general secretaries of respective district, upazila and municipality units along with local AL MPs were in the selection boards for picking party AL mayoral candi-

Going against party's decision, several lawmakers backed party dissidents that put the AL-backed mayor aspirants in trouble. Besides, in several cases MPs proposed names of their loyal people ignoring grassroots decision.

The party has already formed investigation committees led by the AL's divisional secretaries to probe the roles played by AL lawmakers and grassroots leaders who backed the rebels. Besides, AL served notices to rebel candidates asking them why they should not be expelled for running against the party-nominated candidates.

## Tell int'l community

FROM PAGE 3

no scope to feel complacent." "We should remember that our opposition is spending a huge amount of money to engage lobbyists abroad to conduct propaganda against the trial. But Bangladesh did not take any step to refute the propaganda. This is our weakness," he

Shahriar Kabir said their biggest achievement was the trial of war criminals.

"In Cambodia, a Hybrid tribunal was able to complete the trial of only one war criminal in six years while our tribunal has finished the trial of 21 war criminals. Our tribunals have made the impossible possible. We thank the judges," he said.

Kabir demanded that the International Crimes Tribunal also try the Pakistani soldiers who committed war crimes, and that the wealth of convicted war criminals be confiscated and distributed among the people who suffered atrocities at

their hands in 1971. Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon said the movement initiated by the

Nirmul Committee had revived the spirit of Liberation War and created contempt for war criminals.

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu said the committee proved that there would be results for persistent pressure.

Reiterating the demand for banning Jamaat, Communist Party of Bangladesh President Mujahidul Islam Selim said the superstructure of Jamaat should be broken down

so that the party could not reorgan-Ayesha Khanam, president of

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, martyred intellectual's wife Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury and the Nirmul Committee adviser Justice Syed Amirul Islam also spoke.

# Bangladesh Bank

FROM PAGE 1 "No member shall be appointed to a Committee who has a personal, pecuniary or direct interest in any matter which may be considered by that Committee."

In views of parliamentary expert Nizam Ahmed, a professor of Chittagong University, Alamgir's move is unethical and also tantamount to an offence.

"The public accounts committee may ask the CAG to conduct a special audit on the central bank's functions. But its latest move is completely unethical because of the involvement of Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir's bank," says Prof Nizam, who has done extensive research on the functions of the parliament.

Hafizuddin Khan, a former advisor to the caretaker government, termed Alamgir's action "retaliatory". "As the regulatory body, the central

bank has every authority to take action against any commercial bank on ground of irregularity. Everyone should accept it and take corrective measure accordingly. But taking retaliatory action against the central bank looks unusual," he told The Daily Star yesterday. Hafizuddin, also a former Comptroller and Auditor General, said

the office of the CAG is a constitutionally independent organisation and nobody can direct it to carry any audit. One may request the CAG to do some- one of the 13 directors of the bank. thing, he asserted. Nothing, however, could stop

Alamgir from making the public accounts committee ask the CAG to carry out the audit on the central bank. Why did the central bank take

actions against Farmers Bank?

An investigation by the central bank's team has detected gross violation of banking rules in sanctioning and disbursing loans and incidents of hiding default loans amounting to around Tk 400 crore in some branches in between September and November of 2015. Before appointing the observer on Dhaka Bank Ltd, when they were

letter in October last year to Alamgir to take actions against the officials involved in the irregularities. But his bank did not take any actions. Then, the central bank appointed the observer to help Farmers Bank develop loan discipline and improve

January 13, the central bank issued a

risk management and internal control. The central bank on January 3 also imposed a fine of Tk.10 lakh on the Farmers Bank under section 109 (11) of Bank Company Act 1991 and asked to pay the fine in cheque within the by Alamgir?

next 10 days.

to pay the fine and moved the High Court and got a stay on the central bank's decision on fine for four months, which appears unprecedented.

Alamgir had also sparked controversy with the very formation of the bank and his taking over as its chairman while still in a ministerial position, an act that is unconstitutional and illegal.

When he proposed himself for the office of the chairman, he was constitutionally disqualified for holding the post as he was a minister then in 2012.

Article 147 (3) of the constitution strictly imposed a bar on him like some other constitutional officials from holding any office, post or position of profit or emolument or taking any part whatsoever in management or conduct of any company, association of body having profit or gain as its object.

Therefore, let alone the chairmanship, the constitution in no way allowed him to be involved in the management or conduct of the proposed bank.

Initially, the central bank was

unwilling to give approval to his bank.

But following reported undue pressure from government high-ups, it on April 8, 2012 gave approval to nine new banks, including the Farmers Bank. At the time of its approval, Alamgir, also chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on public accounts, was When the necessary documents

were submitted to the central bank on October 16 the same year for purposes of acquiring a licence, the name of Alamgir was proposed as its chairman. The central bank found itself in a complicated situation with the pro-

posal. Alamgir had taken oath of office

as a minister on September 13 which automatically disqualified him from being the chairman of the bank. In the past, AL leader Abdul Jalil and BNP leader Mirza Abbas had to resign from the chairmanship of two banks, Mercantile Bank Ltd and

appointed ministers during the previous Awami League-led and BNP-led governments. But Alamgir did not resign from his minister's post to become the chairman of his bank. He continued as the home minister until formation of the

polls time cabinet in November 2013. This time around, he seems ready to lock horns with the Bangladesh Bank

The government must stand by the The Farmers Bank, however, refused central bank to uphold the rule of law.

# Refusal to allow

FROM PAGE 16 threatened to implicate him in a false sures as per court directives, the IGP yaba case.

"Around 11:45pm, he [Golam Rabbi] was passing by Geneva Camp. There was a police checkpoint. Police wanted to frisk him, but he would not allow," he said.

"... What I came to know is that the incident happened as he [Rabbi] objected to be patted down and got involved in an altercation with police."

The IGP said only showing identity cards is not enough to make police believe that he is that person, as identity cards could be "fake".

The police official should have taken the man to the police station and verified his identity. After that, he should have given him a lift home, he said.

As the policeman did not do that, and also for the sake of a fair investigation, he was suspended, Shahidul

added. The IGP's statement contradicts

with that of Rabbi and witnesses. Rabbi, an assistant director of

Bangladesh Bank, said there was no police checkpoint. "On that night, a policeman suddenly grabbed my [shirt's] collar from behind and tried to label me a yaba trader. Can this be a process of searching?"

The victim said such statement by the police chief might influence the investigation. He also expressed doubt whether the probe was going on impartially.

Following the incident, The Daily Star talked to two witnesses who also said there was no police checkpoint in the area on that night and there was only a police patrol van parked there. The incident took place between

11:00pm and 11:30pm. As police were trying to drag Rabbi towards the van, he resisted and shouted. As he did not do anything wrong, why would he get on the vehi-

cle, they said. IGP Shahidul said the probe committee had been asked to carry out a

fair investigation and actions would be taken as per its report. "Police is a disciplined force. If any policeman violates law, misuses his

power and harasses people, we investigate the incidents impartially and do not show minimum mercy," he added. He said many police officers lose

their jobs every year or face harsher punishment than they deserve for their

offences. A writ petition, in the meantime, has been filed with a court regarding

on its lawful step against his bank. Which one will win--lawful actions of the central bank or abuse of power

the matter and police would take meaadded.

According to Rabbi, Mohammadpur Police Station's Sub-Inspector Masud Shikder and his subordinates allegedly beat him up and demanded Tk 5 lakh from him on January 9.

The police officer also threatened to kill him in a "shootout" and implicate him in narcotics cases if he did not pay them the money.

Masud was closed on January 11.

After the incident, two probe committees -- one each by Dhaka Metropolitan Police and the Police Headquarters -- were formed.

On Monday, the High Court observed that SI Masud should be sacked as suspension is not enough for

## Guatemala tries 11 ex-soldiers over wartime massacres

AFP, Guatemala City

A Guatemalan judge opened a trial Monday of 11 retired soldiers accused of taking part in massacres of indigenous civilians during the country's bloody 1960-1996 civil war, justice officials said. The decision followed days of the

judge, Claudette Dominguez, hearing arguments and weighing evidence for a trial. That included DNA evidence from

558 human remains found on the grounds of a former army base in the The indicted were among 18 for-

mer Guatemalan soldiers arrested January 6. The judge exonerated three of the 18 from the trial, saying evidence against them "lacked merit" and ordering them released. The other four under arrest are suspected of a separate war-era crime:

#### the capital, Guatemala City. The merits of that case are yet to be decided. Writing judgment

that of the disappearance of a boy in

FROM PAGE 16 In the previous year, 5,789 cases were disposed of, he added.

In the High Court, the number was 33,380 till November last year. It was 22,477 till December 31, 2014.

## JS goes into session today

BSS, Dhaka

The 10th Jatiya Sangsad goes into its ninth session at 4:30pm today. President Abdul Hamid convened

the session on October 15 as per Article 72 (1) of the constitution.

The parliament secretariat has taken all preparations to this end, said sources.

On the first working day, the president will deliver his speech which was earlier endorsed by the cabinet.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury will preside over the

House proceedings today.

## Fury after Afghan husband cuts off wife's nose

AFP, Kabul

A photograph of an Afghan woman whose nose was sliced off by her husband in a fit of rage has sparked widespread revulsion, with activists demanding punishment for the "barbaric act".

Reza Gul, 20, was rushed to hospi-

tal after the attack in Ghormach district in the northwestern province of Faryab on Sunday. Her husband is said to have fled to a Talibancontrolled area. "Mohammad Khan (the husband)

cut off Reza Gul's nose with a pocket knife," Faryab governor's spokesman Ahmad Javed Bedar told AFP. The incident highlights the endemic violence against women in

Afghan society, despite reforms since the hardline Taliban Islamist regime was ousted in a 2001 US-led invasion. "Such a brutal and barbaric act should be strongly condemned,"

Kabul-based women's rights activist

Alema told AFP. "Such incidents would not happen if the government judicial system severely punished attacks on women," added Alema, who goes by one name.

The disfigured woman's photograph was widely shared on social media, prompting calls for tough action against the husband.

Bedar said Gul would need reconstructive surgery, which was not possible in the local government hospi-

It was not immediately clear what prompted the husband to attack Gul, the mother of a one-year-old child who was married off five years ago as a teenager.

## Pak suicide

FROM PAGE 16

arrested Taliban men while in government custody, and said that the journalist was not the target.

A Taliban splinter group also claimed it was behind the bomb.

The attack took place in an area where security forces have stepped up their fight against the Taliban and other militant groups along the border with Afghanistan, following the massacre of more than 150 people, mostly children, at an army-run school in December 2014.

Attacks have fallen since the government crackdown and the Taliban squeezed into small pockets of territory, but militant groups remain able to launch hit-and-run and suicide attacks on security forces.

A spokesperson for the Hayatabad Medical Complex in nearby Peshawar, to where the wounded were evacuated, said earlier that the hospital had received six bodies, including that of a child.

Last month, a suicide bomber attacked a government office in northwestern Pakistan, killing at least 23 people.

#### 'Plant backpack' FROM PAGE 16

plant housed inside the backpack before allowing the wearer to breathe it in.

Even though the idea is still in early stages, it won a Dutch design competition, and the students at TU Delft University have moved to the next stage of making a prototype. "We are testing which plant will

work the best, and it seems that aloe vera may be a possibility," De Kroon told AFP. However, an expert from the Netherlands weather institute said such

a design would not be very useful. "The filter alone will sift out 99.9 percent of the fine particles," the Dutch daily Trouw quoted the expert as saying. De Kroon however insists that the plant will catch the smallest of the

microscopic particles which can penetrate deep into the lungs and trigger varying health problems. "This product may not take off very quickly in Europe, but cities like Beijing and Tehran, cities with serious

pollution problems, will be our main market," he said. In December, Beijing issued its first red pollution alert when levels of PM2.5 particles reached 350 micrograms per cubic metres. The World

Health Organisation's recommended

maximum exposure is 25.

## Humans at risk

FROM PAGE 16

this year's BBC Reith Lectures, which explore research into black holes, and his warning came in answer to audience questions.

He says that assuming humanity eventually establishes colonies on other worlds, it will be able to survive.

"Although the chance of a disaster to planet Earth in a given year may be quite low, it adds up over time, and becomes a near certainty in the next thousand or ten thousand years. "By that time we should have spread

disaster on Earth would not mean the end of the human race. "However, we will not establish selfsustaining colonies in space for at least

out into space, and to other stars, so a

the next hundred years, so we have to be very careful in this period." It is ironic that such a prominent

figure in science identifies scientific

progress itself as the major source of new threats. On previous occasions, he has highlighted the potential risks of artificial intelligence (AI) becoming power-

the human race. But he insists that ways will be found to cope.

ful enough to cause the extinction of

"We are not going to stop making progress, or reverse it, so we have to recognise the dangers and control them. I'm an optimist, and I believe we can."

Asked for advice for young scien-

tists, Prof Hawking said they should retain a sense of wonder about "our vast and complex" Universe. "From my own perspective, it has

been a glorious time to be alive and doing research in theoretical physics.

There is nothing like the Eureka moment of discovering something that no one knew before."

But he also said that future generations of researchers should be aware of how scientific and technological progress is changing the world, and to help

"It's important to ensure that these changes are heading in the right directions. In a democratic society, this means that everyone needs to have a basic understanding of science to make informed decisions about the future.

are trying to do in science, and who knows, you might even end up understanding it yourself." Since his diagnosis with motor

neurone disease, Prof Hawking's deter-

mination to overcome the immense

physical challenges of his disability

ration and fascination. His daughter Lucy, a journalist and writer, who has co-written children's science books with Prof Hawking, was asked to explain his drive.

going and the ability to summon all tal focus and press them all into that goal of keeping going," she said.

purposes of survival, but to transcend this by producing extraordinary work, and other disabilities, and being a fammany people and keeping up with

### Iran supreme leader FROM PAGE 16

Tehran released four Iranian-American dual nationals, some of whom had been held for years, in a prisoner swap, while a fifth American was freed separately, reports Reuters. In exchange, Washington granted

for 14 Iranians. Relatives and supporters of Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian and Marine veteran Amir Hekmati saw them for the first time since being released and shared group photographs. The family of Saeed

The fourth freed Iranian-American,

him.

Rezaian, 39, told his editors he was "feeling good" physically as he met with them for the first time since his release from Iran's notorious Evin prison following a July 2014 arrest, The

In a photograph released by the paper, the usually portly Rezaian appeared to have lost a significant

cally I'm feeling good," Rezaian told the Post, dressed in a gray hooded sweatshirt and blue jeans. "I know people are eager to hear from me, but I want to process this for some time."

deeply disappointed. "Why did Iran prisoner swap not include my father?" asked Sarah Moriarty, daughter of ex-FBI agent Robert Levinson, who has been miss-

ing for nine years. Speaking on behalf of her "crushed and outraged" family, Moriarty denounced "the calculated risk that was taken to decide that five hostages were enough for this deal."

"A deadline to wrap up everything about our current relations with Iran in a pretty bow on January 16... meant to our family that our government was satisfied with leaving my father

Haramain Group of Companies, also

urged the government to set up an

economic zone in Bangladesh so that

permits for the Bangladeshis in

October, 2012, after its concerns over

fake documents and date-expired

visa restrictions, issuing those con-

cerning residency and tourism, and

recruited skilled and domestic workers

now living in the UAE, entering with

Khandker Md Iftekhar Haider, among

others, spoke at the programme yesterday.

attended a programme as the chief

guest at the same building marking 25

years of the establishment of Wage

Centre, and Kushol Centre, to

recover basement car park spaces ille-

gally being used for commercial pur-

pose, said Rajuk Authorised Officer

A Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha

(Rajuk) eviction team led by Executive

Some 7,00,000 Bangladeshis are

Expatriates' Welfare Secretary

Later, Minister Nurul Islam

from Bangladesh.

visas before the ban.

Earners' Welfare Board.

Drive goes

FROM PAGE 16

Mizanur Rahman.

However, it has gradually relaxed

passports and visas went unheeded.

The UAE stopped issuing entry

the NRBs can invest smoothly here.

behind. Again," Moriarty added.

FROM PAGE 16

They individually sent home between Tk 40 crore to Tk 100 crore in remittances in 2014, according to the ministry of expatriates' welfare and

The CIP cardholders will enjoy special privileges for one year from the issuance date of a gazette notification.

spouses and children will have privileges in getting cabins for treatment in public hospitals. They will also enjoy free access to the Bangladesh Secretariat for a year. At the function yesterday, Minister

Nurul Islam urged the expatriates to invest more in Bangladesh for creating local employment opportunities. "We will ensure all the facilities for you [the expatriates in this regard]. I

lems. I will step down if I fail to do that," he said. Nurul also announced that the government will recognise 90 NRBs as CIPs for their contribution to the economy

will personally handle all your prob-

by sending in remittances in 2015. CIP Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman Nasir, a successful entrepreneur in the United Arab Emirates,

by any individual -- in 2014. He said the government should take

Magistrate Abdul Hamid Mian dismantled a number of illegal ramps encroaching on different roads in Gulshan-1.

pancy to help resolve the horrendous Hailing from Sylhet, Nasir, also the chairman and managing director of Al traffic problem of the city.

The drives would continue until February 4 except during the week-A Housing and Public Works Ministry

meeting chaired by Minister Mosharraf Hossain on November 22 decided to free the basement car parks from illegal occu-

"But not just to keep going for the

friends across the world."

according to a family statement. On his Twitter feed, Kildee shared

clemency to seven Iranians. And it withdrew international arrest notices

Abedini was expected to arrive later. named as Nosratollah Khosravi-Roodsari, apparently chose to remain in Iran. Very little is publicly known about

FEELING GOOD

Washington Post reported.

amount of weight. "I want people to know that physi-

Relatives met with Hekmati for about 15 minutes, along with Congressman Dan Kildee of Michigan,

Reward for remitters

Mohammad Kamal Pasha, Mohammad Shahjahan Mia and Sajeda Nur Begum, in Oman; Mohammad Idris, Jahangir Mohammad Hossain and Wahid Mollah, in Italy; and Mohammad Shafi Uddin in Bahrain.

overseas employment.

For example, the cardholders, their

remitted around Tk 100 crore -- highest

more effective steps to remove barriers to getting UAE visas and transit visas for Bangladeshis. "We face a huge problem after the UAE banned its visas for us," he said.

the wider public understand it.

"So communicate plainly what you

has been a source of worldwide admi-

"I think he's enormously stubborn and has a very enviable wish to keep his reserves, all his energy, all his men-

writing books, giving lectures, inspiring other people with neurodegenerative ily man, a friend and a colleague to so

what he said was a personal message

making my freedom and reunion with

my family possible. I'm humbled that

you were personally involved in my

case and proud to have you as my

Matthew Trevithick, returned home to

Massachusetts on Sunday for an emo-

tional reunion with his family after 40

days in prison, according to The Boston

Globe. His detention was not publicly

to hear Matt's voice today. We are

thrilled he is out of Iran," his mother

Amelia Newcomb told CBS Boston

eyed reunions, one family was left

But amid all the rejoicing and teary-

"We're very excited. We were happy

The American released separately,

president," the message read.

acknowledged until his release.

before his arrival.

"Dear Mr President, thank you for

from Hekmati.