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Protests rage on over Tonu murder

STAR REPORT

Protests and condemnation pour in as people from different walks of life mourn Sohagi Jahan Tonu, a college student who was murdered in Comilla on Sunday.

Human chains were formed, processions brought out and demonstrations staged in different places, including in the capital and Comilla, demanding justice for the 19-year-old girl.

"The rapist must be punished. This evil of rape has to be eliminated from the country, once and for all," said Debjani, who organised a human chain of a few dozen social and online activists at the TSC on Dhaka University campus yesterday.

"Every day, we get news of rapes from different

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina poses for a photograph with the winners of Swadhinata Padak (Independence Award) 2016 and their relatives at a function at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital yesterday.

Awards for those work silently for the nation

Says PM distributing Independence Award 2016

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said those working silently across the country for the nation will be honoured in future and the government was working to collect their names.

She was addressing the ceremony to present the Swadhinata Purashkar 2016, the highest state award, at the city's Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

The PM urged all to work together to build the country imbued with the spirit of Liberation War.

"We've gained this hard-earned independence in exchange for the blood of millions of martyrs. We want the benefit of independence to reach every

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UNION PARISHAD CHAIRMAN POSTS Independents win twice as many as BNP

Most are AL rebels; small parties fare badly

PANKAG KARMAKAR

Independent candidates have won more than double the chairman posts grabbed by BNP-nominated candidates in elections to 667 union parishads in the first phase.

Results of another 45 UP polls are not yet available at the Election Commission.

Ninety-eight independent candidates have so far secured victory in the race while BNP-backed candidates have won in 46 union parishads (UP).

Most of these independent candidates were members of the ruling Awami League before they joined the race. Failing to get the party's nomination, these rebel candidates contested the seats independently.

More than one and a half dozen political parties, out of 40 registered with the EC, participated in the

RESULTS OF FIRST-PHASE UP POLLS (667 OUT OF 712)

AL	511 (including 54 unopposed)
BNP	46
Jatiya Party	4
Jatiya Party (JP-Manju)	3
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)	3
Workers Party of Bangladesh (WPB)	1
Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB)	1
Independent	98

SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION

first ever partisan UP polls, according to EC officials.

Of some 3,000 chairman aspirants, who participated in the polls, 1,800 had been nominated by political parties. The rest were independent candidates.

Meanwhile, the AL won a landslide victory in the polls, as 457 candidates with its backing won as many chairman seats.

Earlier, 54 AL-backed candidates were elected unopposed.

Candidates of the main opposition Jatiya Party have won elections to only four UPs though it fielded candidates in 127 UPs.

Of the other small parties, Jatiya Party (JP-Manju)-nominated candidates won in three UPs, Workers Party of Bangladesh in one UP, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal in three UPs and Islami Andolon

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PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES 25pc professors to get grade 1, 50pc grade 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public university professors will get promotions to grades 2 and 1 of the national pay scale without selection grade.

The decision was made at a meeting of the cabinet committee on salary discrepancies yesterday, with Finance Minister AMA Muhith in the chair at his secretariat office.

As the selection grade was abolished in the 8th National Pay Scale, there was no scope for public university professors to get promoted to top two grades.

The Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association (FBUTA), a platform of public university teachers, has been agitating for provisions on the promotions.

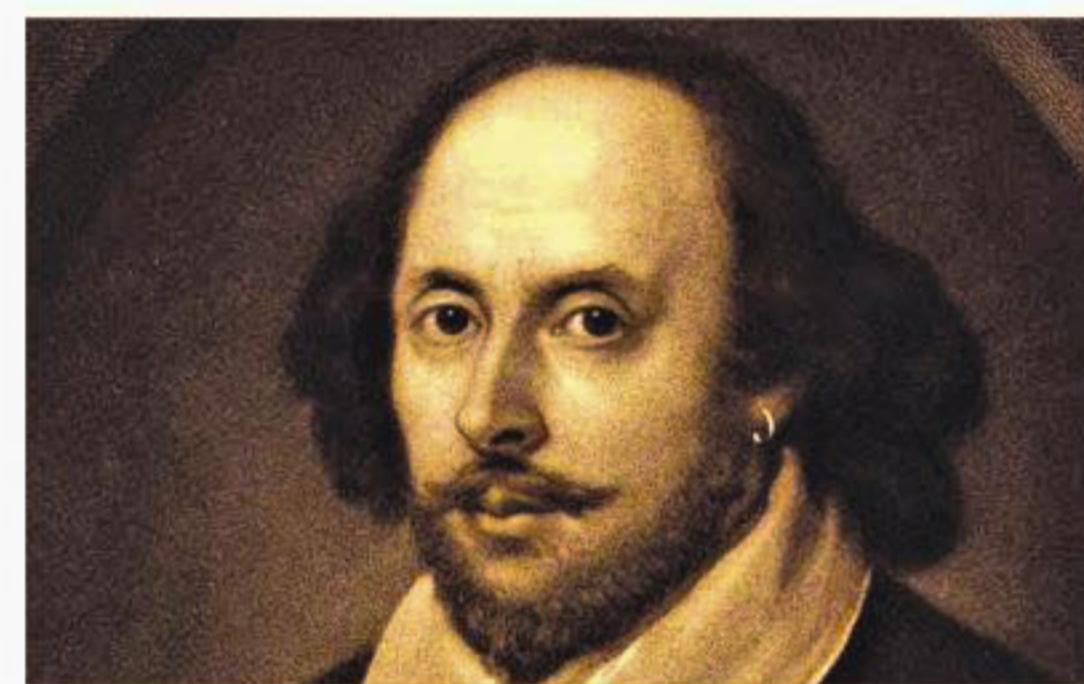
The meeting decided that a maximum of half of the professors in grade 3 will be promoted to grade 2, said meeting sources.

To be eligible for the promotion, a professor must have to serve in grade 3 for at least four years. Besides, he must have two of his articles published in any recognised journal.

After completing 20 years in service, including two years in grade 2, a professor

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Mystery over Bard's skull



AFP, London

A radar scan of William Shakespeare's tomb has discovered signs of tampering with his final resting place that lend credence to a story about his skull being stolen in the 18th century, researchers said.

Archaeologists used ground-penetrating radar on the grave, which is protected by a curse, for a documentary airing on Saturday to mark the 400th anniversary of the famous playwright's death.

"We have Shakespeare's burial with an odd disturbance at the head end," said Kevin Colls, who is heading up the research on the grave site at the Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon, central England, Shakespeare's home town.

"It's very, very convincing to me that his skull isn't at Holy Trinity at all," he said.

According to a story published in 1879, trophy

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LIBEL CASE IN PABNA Star editor gets bail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, secured bail in a defamation case in Pabna yesterday.

Chief Judicial Magistrate Md Nazimuddoula passed the order after Mahfuz Anam appeared before the court and sought bail.

The court also set May 12 for the next hearing.

Advocates Abdur Rahim, Maloy Kumar Das Roy, Abdul Hannan Shely and

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PRAYER TIMING

MARCH 25

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-55 12-15 4-45 6-16 7-45

JAMAAT 5-30 1-15 5-00 6-20 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

POWER PLANT IMPACT Unesco team visits the Sundarbans

UNB, Bagerhat

A high-profile Unesco delegation yesterday visited the Sundarbans to assess the possible impacts of the proposed coal-based Rampal power plant and plying of vessels through the mangrove forest.

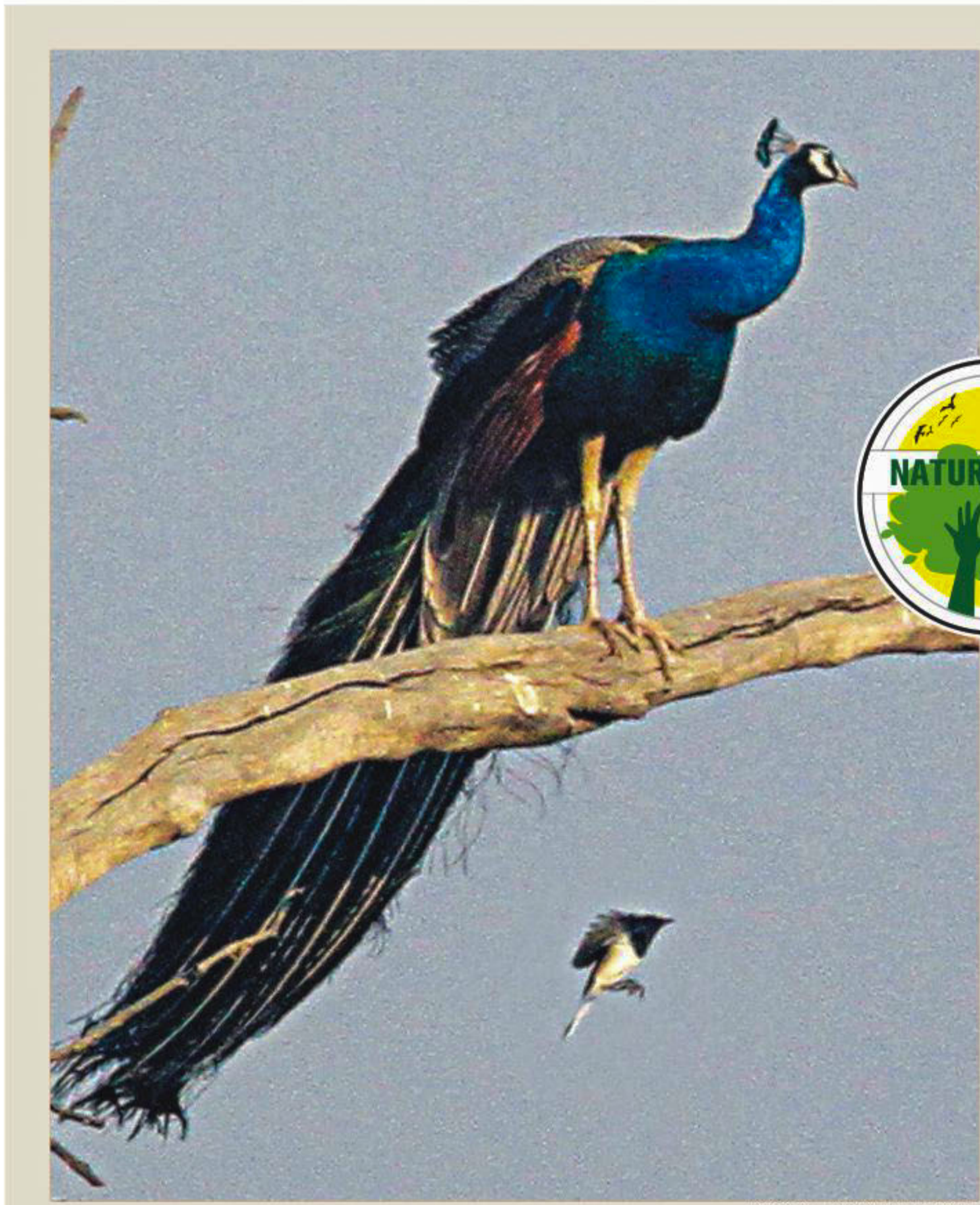
On Wednesday, the Unesco team visited the site of coal-based Rampal power plant project, while the Shela River on Thursday where a tanker carrying about 350,000 litres of furnace oil crashed on December 9 last year and a cargo sank on March 19.

The delegation members will meet senior officials of Mongla Port Authority today. Later, they will meet officials of relevant ministries and departments on Monday.

The members of the "Unesco Reactive Monitoring Team" are Fanny Adolphin, Douver, Naomi Clare Doak and Mizuki Murai.

Forest officials,

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Can we bring peafowls back?

ENAM UL HAQUE

Can we bring the wild peafowls back to Bangladesh? Is it possible for the jostling pedestrians of the bustling capital city to look up and see in amazement a magnificent peacock flying over the skyscrapers? If not today, may be on some auspicious day in future? The time is ripe now to pose these questions to the nature lovers, conservationists and other people of the country. Long lost birds like Bristled Grassbird, Woolly-necked Stork and Black-bellied Tern have recently been rediscovered in the country. That makes it a great time of optimism, rediscovery and reintroduction of the bird.

The peafowls lost their habitats in the forests of Bangladesh recently. The last time a wild peacock was spotted was in 1982 in Madhupur National Park. In 1886, FB Simson, a British author, wrote that the junglefowl and the peafowl are "easy game at Savar". In 1854, Major RC Tytler in his "Miscellaneous notes on the fauna of Dacca" wrote that the peafowls are commonplace in the district. Dhaka was obviously a good place for the peafowls to thrive.

It is, therefore, not too intrepid for us now to consider a reintroduction of peafowls to the wildernesses of our country. After all, these forests were the traditional home of two species of peafowls -- Indian Peafowl and Green Peafowl.

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BRUSSELS AIRPORT SECURITY LAPSES Ministers offer resignations

Manhunt widens as two more suspects identified

AGENCIES

Belgium's interior and justice ministers offered to resign yesterday over the failure to track an Islamic State militant expelled twice by Turkey as a suspected fighter last year and who blew himself up at Brussels airport this week.

Ibrahim El Bakraoui was one of three identified suspected suicide bombers who hit the airport and a metro train, killing at least 31 people and wounding some 270 on Tuesday in the worst attack in Belgian history. At least one other man seen with them on airport security cameras is on the run and a fifth suspected bomber filmed in the metro attack may be dead or alive.

Interior Minister Jan Jambon and Justice Minister Koen Geens tendered their resignations to Prime Minister Charles Michel, who asked them to stay on. "In time of war, you cannot leave the field," Jambon, a right-wing Flemish nationalist, said.

The security lapses in a country that is home to the European Union and Nato have drawn international criticism of an apparent reluctance to tackle Islamist radicals effectively.

Turkish officials said Bakraoui, 29, had been expelled last July after being arrested at Gaziantep near the Syrian border and again in August after he returned to Antalya. Belgian and Dutch authorities had been notified of Turkish suspicions that he was a foreign fighter trying to reach Syria.

At the time, Belgian authorities replied that Bakraoui, who had skipped parole after serving less than half of a

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