

Assistant High Commission of India to open soon in Khulna

Says Shringla, adding alternate route will be found to transport coal for Rampal power plant

An Assistant High Commission will open soon in Khulna, said Indian High Commissioner Harsh Vardhan Shringla yesterday at a discussion meeting. Earlier, the high commissioner visited the Khulna-Mongla rail project financed under a line of credit from India. Shringla said an alternate route will be found for transporting coal for the Rampal coal-based power plant to preserve the Sundarbans biodiversity. Abus samad, divisional commissioner of Khulna, Monir-Uz-Zaman, DIG Khulna, Nibas Chandra Mazhi, police commissioner, Nazmul Ashan, deputy commissioner, Arundhati Das, first secretary of India, were present.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attends the commissioning ceremony of two ships for Bangladesh Coast Guard named "CGS Syed Nazrul" and "CGS Tajuddin" at the Coast Guard Berth in Patenga, Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

HC asks local admin to save Habiganj hills from cutting

Declaring the cutting of Mirirtala hill at Dinarpur in Habiganj illegal, the High Court yesterday directed the local administration to take effective steps to protect and maintain all the hills, including Mirirtala hill, in the district. The HC bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice Kazi Md Ejarul Haque Akondo came up with the verdict after final hearing on a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh in 2015. Following the petition, the HC December 14, 2015 ordered the government to stop cutting hills at Dinarpur and issued a rule asking it to explain why cutting hills should not be declared illegal. Yesterday, petitioner's counsel Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star that the HC delivered the verdict as the government has not replied to its rule.

Highlight history, heritage in films

Says president BSS, Dhaka

Describing the film as a prime weapon for building a knowledge-based progressive society, President Abdul Hamid yesterday urged film-makers, producers and artistes to highlight the country's history and heritage in the film remaining accountable to the society and people. "Film is not only a medium of entertainment, it is a strong mass media and also a mode of non-formal education. As it has good side, it has bad side also and its impact on the mind of the viewers is direct and long-lasting," said the president while addressing the opening of the "15th Dhaka International Film Festival-2017" in Bangladesh National Museum auditorium.



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EC should comprise bold, efficient persons

Ex-CEC Shamsul Huda tells SHUJAN roundtable

The Election Commission (EC) should be reconstituted with persons capable of discharging duties boldly and efficiently, said former chief election commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda at a roundtable in the capital yesterday. "If the commission is not strong enough, how will it play a supervisory role over the government agencies during election periods?" he pointed out referring to news reports on the January 11 dialogue between President Abdul Hamid and the Awami League (AL). The reports said the AL placed an 11-point proposal, including empowering the EC with supervising authority over the administration, law enforcement agencies and all other departments engaged in the election process. Shushashoner Jannoy Nagorik (SHUJAN), a citizens' platform advocating for good governance, organised the roundtable, "Draft of the proposed law on appointing election commissioners and related thoughts", at Jatiya Press Club. Huda emphasised scrutinising beforehand backgrounds of probable CECs and election commissioners. "...whether they were involved with any political party in the past, even in their stu-

dent life... It will not be right if anyone who was involved with a particular party is appointed in the commission," he said. "The nation will be grateful to the president if he constitutes a good commission," said Huda. Former election commissioner M. Sakhawat Hussain said people capable of taking accurate decisions amid adverse political situations should be appointed. He suggested the upcoming EC to regularly hold dialogues with all the stakeholders, including political parties and the government. Eminent columnist Syed Abul Maksud called upon the two major political parties, AL and BNP, to reach consensus over the reconstitution of the EC under which the next parliament election would be held. Presenting a keynote paper, SHUJAN Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar demanded formulation of a law on the reconstitution. All the ECs since independence were reconstituted in the absence of a proper legal framework violating the constitution and any repetition may face legal challenges, he said. "The law should have detailed guidelines on forming a search committee for appointing the CEC and election commissioners, he said."

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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EC law cannot be hurried: Anisul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A law for constitution of the Election Commission cannot be formulated hurriedly because such an act will have a far-reaching impact, Law Minister Anisul Huq said yesterday. This law should be made after well scrutiny and detailed assessment of relevant issues, he said. "That's why I am waiting for the president's instruction in this regard," he told reporters after attending the inauguration ceremony of a training course for lower court judges at Judicial Administration Training Institute in the capital. Replying to a question, the minister said there was no confrontation between the judiciary and the executive over relocation of the International Crimes Tribunal

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Youth volunteering for street children starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Being imbued with the slogan, "No Child To Remain Without Identity", youngsters from Blue Roses Foundation launched two projects in Dhaka yesterday for the welfare of street children. The projects -- ensuring birth registration and citizenship of homeless street children and establishing the "World's First Street Children Rehabilitation Village" -- were launched at a ceremony at Shaheed Munir Chowdhury Auditorium, Dhaka University. Hailing the organisation's efforts, DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique encouraged the foundation to keep up their work and humanitarian efforts, said a press release. Prof Mahfuza Khanam, president of World Federation of Teachers' Union and member of National Human Rights Commission, said she had been deeply inspired by the foundation's ideas and efforts. "We find the young generation is today too busy with their own lives without thinking about helping others, but these youngsters of Blue Roses Foundation -- Rubaiya, Riaz, Arnob, Firoz -- prove that there are young people out there who not only think about themselves but also think of the society, country selflessly and yearn to make a difference," she mentioned.

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13YRS OF GRENADE ATTACK AT SHAHJALAL SHRINE

A struggle for survival



DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

For the last thirteen years Amirul's life has been a continuous struggle. Once an ambitious cook, the 40-year-old is now restrained to a walking frame for providing him support to maintain balance or stability while walking. Amirul Islam lost his walking ability after a grenade splinter hit his spine on January 12, 2004 during the attack at the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal in Sylhet city. Amirul, a chef at the shrine, was cooking for people as there was an Urs (religious congregation) going on that night when the incident took place. "Around 8:30pm, I was going to the restroom, suddenly I heard a sound and fell to the ground senseless," he said. Amirul was admitted to a hospital in Sylhet and later to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. Then he was shifted to the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP). "After a year of treatment there, I started walking with help. But I lost my work, my goodwill and have been struggling ever since," Amirul said. "Recently, the doctors suggested a spinal surgery, which requires a substantial amount of money that I cannot afford," he sighed. His family consists of his wife, a son and two young daughters who live at a rented house in Sadipur area in the city. "My son works at a biscuit factory. We are barely surviving on his meagre income."

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CID still in the dark

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Yesterday marked the 13th anniversary of the grenade attack that killed five and injured around 25 people at the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal in Sylhet in 2004, but Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is yet to find any clue to the gruesome attack. The attack took place around 8:30pm near the western side of the pond, when thousands of devotees gathered on the premise to take part in a religious congregation. Over the years several investigation officials have been changed and one CID official has been investigating the attack for the last seven years but to no avail. Two cases, a murder and an explosives

one, were filed with Kotwali Police Station after the attack. The then CID Sylhet Zone inspector submitted an investigation report to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court of Sylhet in November 2008. Another probe committee headed by the then Sylhet police superintendent also submitted a report in February that year. But no clue of the attacker or motive was found, though the reports confirmed a grenade attack. On December that year, the home ministry also ordered CID to reinvestigate. The then CID inspector, now ASP of CID Sylhet Zone Shamimur Rashid Peer, has been

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