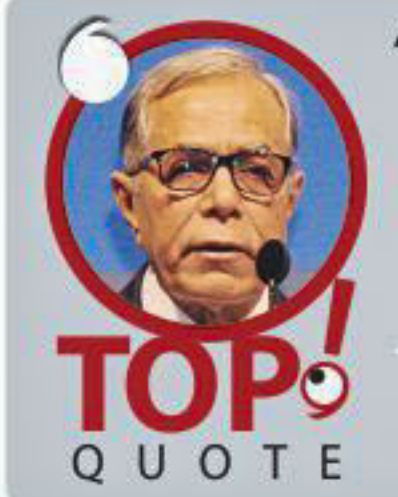




The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



"I think it is urgent to give the womenfolk proper dignity along with ensuring their rights and empowerment."
PRESIDENT ABDUL HAMID
IN HIS MESSAGE ON THE EVE OF INT'L WOMEN'S DAY

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Tk 44cr shares, lot of questions

Mercantile Bank chairman taking NRBC Bank for a ride

JEBUN NESA ALO with REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Mercantile Bank Chairman Shahidul Ahsan has drawn benefits from nearly Tk 44-crore shares held by two sponsor directors in the NRB Commercial (NRBC) Bank, violating the Banking Company Law, according to Bangladesh Bank findings.

Shahidul influenced the NRBC Bank board to allow him to enjoy dividends against the shares and get loan facilities for his business organisation. He even attended meetings of the NRBC Bank board on several occasions in breach of the law, found the BB.

"Shahidul Ahsan is the actual beneficiary of the shares held by two NRBC Bank directors -- Kamrun Nahar Sakhi and ABM Abdul Mannan -- and those shares are forfeitable," said a central bank report prepared last year.

Contacted, Shahidul said, "The report [by the central bank] is completely false." He, however, declined to explain.

Asked, NRBC Bank Chairman Farasath Ali refused to say anything on the matter.

According to the BB report, Shahidul was present in last year's annual general meeting of the NRBC Bank as proxy for Sakhi, who lives in Canada. He also attended several meetings of the NRBC Bank board and its executive committee in violation of the rules. The NRBC Bank chairman admitted this to the BB enquiry team.

Sakhi has shares worth Tk 13.30 crore and Mannan, a Bangladesh-born US citizen, holds shares worth Tk 30.41 crore in the NRBC Bank. None of the two sponsor directors travelled to Bangladesh since the NRBC Bank's inception in April 2013.

But both were shown present in a number of meetings of the NRBC Bank board and its executive committee by forging their signatures, the report pointed out.

As allegations of irregularities at the NRBC Bank began to surface in 2015, AKM Shafiqul Islam and Syed Golam Farouque -- both directors of Ahsan Group owned by Shahidul -- were appointed alternate directors for Sakhi and Mannan.

Farouque had attended four meetings of the NRBC Bank board before he was appointed alternate director, the BB found.



IRREGULARITIES BY SHAHIDUL

Enjoyed dividends on others' shares

Influenced NRBC Bank board to allow him to get loans for his company

Being Mercantile Bank's chairman, he attended meetings of NRBC Bank board

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY TODAY

Today, on the occasion of the International Women's Day, we dedicate our business pages to women leadership, their business ventures, entrepreneurship and hurdles.



Two policewomen pull over a vehicle at the Sonargaon intersection in the capital yesterday. The presence of women in law-enforcement agencies in Bangladesh, which was rare even a few years ago, reflects the theme, "Be bold for change", adopted for this year's International Women's Day.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Biman's first flight with all-women crew today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today's 1:15pm Biman flight to Sylhet will be operated entirely by women.

The first-ever all-women crew of Biman will fly a 160-seater Boeing 737-800 about 195km to Sylhet from Dhaka. The national flag carrier will operate this special flight to mark the International Women's Day today.

Captain Tania Reza and First Officer Sarwat Siraj Antara would be in charge of the BG-0603 flight and its six other female crew members.

Security personnel and ground-handling staff for the flight will also be women.

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COUNTRY'S FIRST FEMALE POLICE OFFICER

Fatema persisted despite constant taunts

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and AKRAM HOSEN

She is one of the first two women who chose to join the police after their Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exam in 1984.

But plagued by constant goading and teasing by male colleagues and supervisors, her only female colleague quit the job within the first four months of training at the Public Administration Training Centre in Savar.

She too was forced by her bosses to write to the home

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



When women suffer, the world suffers too

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

It's always a challenge to come up with a piece for International Women's Day that will not sound clichéd and filled with lofty recommendations that are bound to make policy makers and anti feminists (if they have even deigned to read this at all) yawn with boredom. But on this day apparently I am elevated to a status that gives me the 'privilege' of being as tiresomely 'feminist' as I want.

So let me start with that 'dreaded' word: empowerment. What does it really mean, for a woman in particular? To have her treated as an equal human being? So that she is not

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



Sri Lanka batsman Kusal Mendis pulls one during the first day of the opening Test against Bangladesh at the Galle International Cricket Stadium on Tuesday. The right-hander, who got a reprieve having edged a no-ball to the keeper on the first delivery he faced, went on to remain unbeaten on 166 as the hosts piled up 321 for four at stumps. PHOTO: AFP



Tigers wilt after inspiring start

SAKEB SUBHAN from Galle

Cricket is a game of fine margins. If the coin had been angled differently when it hit the Galle International Stadium pitch yesterday, maybe it would have been Bangladesh enjoying a batting-friendly pitch and the Sri Lankans toiling away in the heat. If Subashis Roy's front foot was a few centimetres behind where it actually landed when he bowled the fourth ball of the first over, Kusal Mendis would have had to go back and Sri Lanka would have been 15 for two.

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ATTACK ON PRISON VANS Hunt on for three more attackers

STAR REPORT

Mustafa Kamal, the youth caught "red-handed" with bombs during Monday's attack on prison vans, had left his home in Mymensingh one and a half months ago, police claimed.

During the attack, three of his accomplices showed him the vans and asked him to hurl crude bombs at them, said Firoz Talukder, officer-in-charge (OC) of Tongi Police Station.

Mustafa threw two crude bombs but both of them missed the target, said the OC after the arrestee's primary interrogation.

The police officer did not disclose the identity of the other three youths, who managed to flee.

Police were raiding different places to arrest them, reports our Gazipur correspondent.

Firoz also claimed that Mustafa had been involved in militancy for the last three years. He, however, did not say whether the youth had a hand in any other attacks for "the sake of investigation".

Mustafa was a student at Jamia Emdadia Hedayennahu Zannat Madrasa in Sheikherchar village in Narsingdi's Madhabdi upazila for some three years. He had been absent from there for the last three months, the OC claimed.

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Police attacked by 'militants' in Comilla 2 attackers held

STAR REPORT

Police again came under attack by suspected militants during a routine check of a bus on Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Comilla's Chandina yesterday. Two attackers were detained.

Around 11:30am, police stopped a bus at Kutumbopur checkpoint when two "militants" hurled crude bombs at police. Law enforcers then opened fire. One of the "militants" was hit, said Nasir Uddin Mridha, officer-in-charge of Chandina Police Station, reports our Comilla correspondent.

The bombs did not explode and no policemen were hurt, he said.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4






The bond that makes you **beautiful**
The inner strength that makes you **special**



HAPPY WOMEN'S DAY