

## Convictions

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Shahnaz said a majority of cases filed under the act gets dismissed in courts as the complainants bring false charges of torture for dowry. She, however, could not say the number of such cases filed across the country. According to a database of a monitoring cell of the police headquarters, the average conviction rate of the cases filed under the act between 2012 and 2016 is only 3.4 percent. The data shows a total of 93,284 cases were filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act during the period. Police submitted final reports in 24,216 cases and pressed charges in 68,453 cases while only 3,496 cases saw convictions. In most of the incidents, Prof Shahnaz said, victims in a bid to get quick trial and remedy bring charges under section 11 of the act. According to the section, if a husband or his family members cause death of his wife for dowry, he or they would be given death penalty. It mentions jail terms, including lifetime imprisonment, for causing grievous or simple injury to the woman. "As victims file cases under this section even after being harassed or tortured for other reasons, tribunals dismiss the cases," Shahnaz told this newspaper.

Contacted, eminent rights activist Sultana Kamal said the agencies dealing with women and children repression cases often dilly-dally in registering and investigating cases. Besides, evidence is also not properly placed before courts. Salma Ali, executive director of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), said the conviction rate would go up if protection of victims and witnesses, compensation for victims and a strong and independent police investigation were ensured. She also suggested increasing the number of special tribunals and appointing public prosecutors based on their skills and not on political consideration. Saheli Ferdous, assistant inspector general of police headquarters, said in many cases parties settled their differences. Besides, a good number of cases related to dowry charges filed under this act were found false.

## Happy Hefajat

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Leaders of the Qawmi madrasa-based organisation told The Daily Star that they would come up with new agitation programmes after Ramadan, which begins today. "We are now happy as we have achieved primary victory following the removal of the Greek idol from the Supreme Court premises," said Azizul Hoque Islamabadi, central organising secretary of Hefajat. "Our victory will not be complete until all idols are removed from the country," he said, adding, "Our senior leaders will sit together to chalk out tougher agitation programmes against all idols and for realising our demands." Nur Hossain Kasemi, convenor of Dhaka city unit of Hefajat, said "idols" have been built at the intersections of the capital. "We want to save the country from the idol culture," he said. Asked to define "idols", Azizul Hoque said in their view idols mean all sculptures that look like human beings or animals.

## River grabbers

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Manabdhikar and Poribesh Andolon Bangladesh, Riverine People, Solidarity, International Rivers and Blue Planet Initiative jointly organised the discussion, said a press release issued by Riverine People. Harun-ar-Rashid, executive director of Solidarity, delivered the keynote speech, describing the present situation of the common international rivers flowing through Bangladesh. Sheikh Rokan, secretary general of Riverine People, said people would have to work together to save rivers to ensure their uninterrupted flow and navigability round the year. Speakers at the programme stressed the need for ensuring better management and protection of rivers to keep them alive to save the environment, ecology, heritage and culture. Tuhin Wadud, director of Riverine People, presided over the discussion, moderated by its Convener Umar Farooque. Environmental and human rights activists, river researchers, academicians, government officials, NGO executives and civil society members joined the programme. River researchers Mahub Siddique, Shah Alam and Mofizul Islam Mantu also spoke, among others.

## Holy Ramadan

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semi-government, autonomous and semi-autonomous institutions will follow new office timing as announced by the government. All these offices will remain open from 9:00am to 3:30pm with a 15-minute prayer break from 1:15pm to 1:30pm during the month. Meanwhile, President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia issued separate messages greeting the countrymen and the Muslim Ummah on the occasion.

## Lady Justice reinstalled

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While visiting the area around 11:20pm, The Daily Star correspondent saw seven to eight people working at the site. The statue was brought in front of the annex building, behind the extension building of the SC, in a pick-up truck. A small crane was used and Minal Haque was seen giving directions. A team from Shahbagh Police Station, with Officer-in-Charge Abul Hassan leading, was guarding the premises. When newsman tried to take photographs of the activities, policemen asked them to leave. Earlier, the statue was removed from in front of the SC building around 4:00am on Friday amid demands by some radical Islamist groups, including Hefajat-e Islam and Awami Olama League. The statue's removal sparked protests across the country, while people turned to social media to express their anger and frustration over it. Several socio-political and cultural organisations termed the incident an ominous sign for the country. The removal of the statue came as a victory for the Islamist groups, which brought out processions thanking the



PHOTO: COLLECTED  
The statue of the Lady Justice being reinstalled in front of the Annex Building of the SC around 12:30am today.

prime minister at different places on Friday. The Islamist organisations now demand removal of all statues in the country.

## 26 lakh jobless

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Bangladesh people who are underemployed meaning they work less than 40 hours a week or earn less than the income required to meet basic needs or those who work at a lower tier compared to their skills and expertise should be considered unemployed. Unlike many western economies where people get state benefits for periods of unemployment, people in Bangladesh are not entitled to such thing, Prof Nurul said. "There are huge cases of underemployment here." The private sector creates more employment opportunities than the public sector in the country, but the investment in the private sector has been stalled for quite a long time, one of the major reasons behind the high unemployment rate, the Brac University teacher said. According to the survey, unemployed male and female are equal in number -- 13 lakh. The number of

female unemployed population was higher three years ago. An estimated 6.21 crore people aged 15 or above are now in the labour force, up from 6.07 crore population estimated in 2013. Some 5.95 crore were found employed in 2015-16 survey, up from 5.81 crore in 2013. It means 14 lakh people entered the job market during the period. An estimated 18 lakh of those having jobs of less than 40 hours a week were found looking for new or additional jobs. The latest survey also found 86.2 percent of the total employed population aged 15 or above in informal employment. Between 2016 and 2013, non-agriculture sectors like industry, trade and other services absorbed a higher number of people than the farming sector. As a result, the proportion of jobs in the agriculture sector declined to 42.7 percent in 2016 from 45.1 percent in 2013.

## Trump son-in-law

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The Post story is yet another sensational element in the deluge of allegations raising questions about team Trump's relationship with the Russians, whom US intelligence agencies say tried to sway the November election in Trump's favor and thus deny Hillary Clinton the presidency. And it ensures that Trump will be thrust right back into the din of the Russia scandal upon his return to Washington this weekend, following his first foreign trip, a tour of the Middle East and Europe. The Washington Post said the secret comms proposal was made December 1 or 2 at Trump Tower in New York, according to intercepts of Russian communications that were reviewed by US officials. Michael Flynn, who would become Trump's national security adviser before being fired 24 days into the job for not telling the truth about meetings he held with the Russian ambassador, was also at the meeting, the Post said. The Russian ambassador, Sergei Kislyak, was surprised by Kushner's idea of the secret channel and passed it on to the Kremlin, the Post said. It did not specify what came of Kushner's alleged pitch, if anything. The White House did not immediately comment on the Post report. But "not disclosing contacts which has been a pattern here. It raises a lot of questions," Jim Himes, a Connecticut Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, told MSNBC. "If it's true that somebody did ask for some kind of private line, some kind of mode of communication that was secure that was unusual, boy does that raise a whole bunch of questions."

Besides the Kushner developments, which strikes at Trump's core by drawing his family into the crisis, the White House also faces a cascade of other worries in the coming week. The Senate Intelligence Committee has "asked President Trump's political organization to gather and produce all Russia-related documents, emails and phone records going back to his campaign's launch in June 2015," the Post reported. There was no immediate White House reaction. Fired former FBI director James Comey has promised to testify at a yet unscheduled open session before the Senate Intelligence Committee, sometime after Monday's Memorial Day holiday. And the White House staff itself could be facing upheaval. CBS News reported that Trump is expected to consider plans for a shakeup of his communications operation upon his return. But Kushner, the 36-year-old real estate developer who is married to Trump's daughter Ivanka, is likely to take center stage in the coming days. Reserved in public, he was on prominent view during Trump's first presidential trip, as befits a trusted behind-the-scenes adviser involved in everything from Middle East peace to an initiative to streamline the US bureaucracy. The Post reported earlier that investigators are focusing on meetings he held in December with Moscow's ambassador and the head of a Russian bank that has been under US sanctions since 2014. Kushner has offered to talk to Congress about these meetings, according to his lawyer Jamie Gorelick. Trump has denied any collusion, calling the probe "the greatest witch hunt" in American political history.

## Fahim heroics stun Tigers

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which measured approximately 40 yards from the wicket, and brought up his fifty off just 26 balls. The left-hander hit Mashrafe Bin Mortaza for a couple of huge sixes in the 48th over, before dispatching the same bowler for a six off the first ball of the last over, when Pakistan required 13. He picked up three off the next ball and Hasan Ali hit the Bangladesh skipper for four to bring an end to the match. An incredible partnership between the pair blossomed as a result of Fahim's hitting as the duo put on 93 runs off 41 balls for the ninth wicket. Earlier, Bangladesh had posted 341 for nine on the back of an authoritative Tamim Iqbal century. Tamim took full advantage of the short boundary as he went on a rampage -- his 102 off 93 balls was punctuated by nine fours and four sixes. More importantly, the left-hander stuck around at the crease for more than half the innings as well, playing 33 overs and building valuable partnerships with Imrul Kayes and Mushfiqur Rahim.

With Sabbir Rahman being rested, Tamim set about repairing the innings with his former opening partner Imrul after Soumya Sarkar had departed for 19. The pair put on a magnificent 142-run stand in just over 20 overs to put Bangladesh on the ascendancy and banish any memories of that early hiccup. Kayes, playing his first match on the tour, scored 61 off 62 balls and hit eight boundaries before he fell to Pakistan's rising star Shadab Khan, getting trapped in front. Tamim then joined hands with Mushfiqur as the pair powered Bangladesh 219 in 33 overs with a 50-run partnership. The former then departed after offering a simple catch to Junaid, giving Shadab his second wicket. Three overs later, Shoaib Malik produced a moment of magic as he took a fantastic catch off Junaid's bowling to send Mushfiqur back to the pavilion. The Test skipper was the third-highest scorer in the team with 46. Afterwards, Shakib, Mahmudullah and Mosaddek scored in the 20s to take Bangladesh to their total.

## VAT stays

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VAT is now the biggest source of revenue for the government, followed by income tax and import duty. Muhith, on various occasions, said the rate would be uniform but there would be some cuts. However, he changed his stance after the final meetings on the VAT issue last week with officials of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Muhith said he had obtained the 'necessary approvals' at all levels and was given 'enough freedom' in this regard. Replying to a query on if there was a possibility of any negative impact on consumers because of the new VAT measures, he said, "No. Not at all." "When you get the total picture, you will see how helpful it is. You will see how many people become exempted from VAT." He said there is no chance of price hike of essentials under the new VAT system which will be implemented through a fully-automated process. Muhith said all essential products will be exempted from VAT so that the prices do not rise. He was also hopeful that there would be no protests against implementation of the new VAT law ahead of the parliamentary election to be held in 2019. Muhith also said VAT free turnover ceiling will be raised from Tk 30 lakh a year but did not provide further details. The upper threshold of turnover tax would be increased substantially to over Tk 1.0 crore from the present Tk 80 lakh a year, he added. The rate of turnover tax will be increased, he said, adding that the ceiling hike will cause a huge loss of revenue for the state as up to 5,000 firms will go out of the VAT net. To minimise the revenue loss, Muhith aims to increase compliance - taking the number of regular VAT return filers to 50,000 from the present 32,000. The government framed the new law to boost revenue collection from domestic trade and economic activities by increasing compliance and curbing evasion. He said electronic fiscal devices will be installed at retail and wholesale shops to ensure compliance.

## Macron, Trudeau

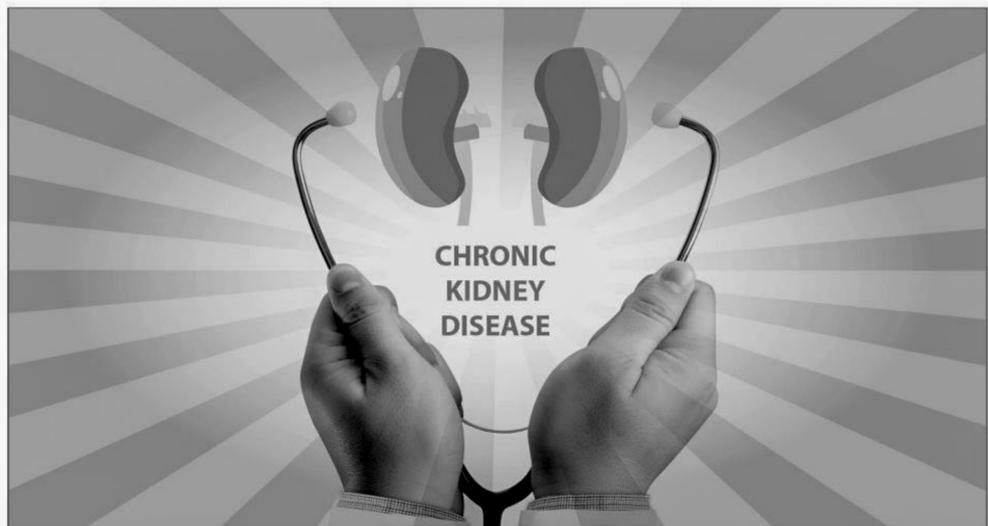
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Emmanuel Macron and his Canadian counterpart Justin Trudeau schmoozing at the G7 summit in Sicily, strolling through flowered walkways and chatting against the backdrop of a sparkling blue Mediterranean sea. "Apparently Justin Trudeau and Emmanuel Macron flew to Sicily for their wedding photoshoot," netizen @sherlockify joked on Twitter. The reaction to the telegenic pair's encounter in the picturesque, hillside town of Taormina, immortalised by Macron himself who tweeted a video of their meeting, provided some light relief from a summit otherwise devoted to thorny issues such as climate change and the threat of extremism. "The Franco-Canadian friendship has a new face," Macron tweeted after sitting down for talks with Trudeau and taking the now famous stroll. "@JustinTrudeau, it's up to us to take on the challenges of our generation!" "Sitting down with @EmmanuelMacron for the first time, talking jobs, security & climate -- look-

ing forward to more conversations, my friend," Trudeau responded on Twitter, posting pictures of both smiling, shaking hands, and looking out over the Mediterranean, their dapper suit jackets billowing in the breeze. Trudeau, 45, is popular with liberals worldwide for his commitment to fighting climate change and easing the refugee crisis -- in stark contrast to the United States, Canada's powerful neighbour. Macron, 39, has only been in power for 12 days but enjoys similar kudos, particularly abroad where he has been compared to Trudeau. "This image of Trudeau and Macron in Sicily is right out of a liberal fantasy dream sequence," tweeted Dhruva Jaishankar, an expert on foreign policy at the India section of the Brookings Institution think tank. Others were even more explicit. "Le swoon, le sigh," tweeted netizen MissMary, above a photo of both leaders in apparent earnest chat. "Is there a budding bromance between Macron and Trudeau? Two hunks!" added @MaureenRamsden.

## Neo JMB

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laptops at the hideouts. "Two militant families living in the dens managed to flee moments before our officials cordoned off the house at 7:00pm on Friday," Mohibul Islam Khan, deputy commissioner of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), told The Daily Star. Acting on a tip off, the officials first cordoned off a five storey building in the area, but found the ground floor apartment, suspected of being a militant den, locked from outside, the officers said. Informed by neighbours that residents of that apartment often visited a nearby six storey building, CTTC officials raided the building and found the "bomb-making factory" on the first floor, he added. After talking to locals, CTTC was able to bust another "den" in a nearby two storey building. DMP's bomb disposal experts yesterday diffused the grenades found there, said Sha Migan Shafiur Rahman, superintendent of police in Dhaka. He added that police evacuated the inhabitants of nearby buildings before

diffusing the bombs. CTTC officials suspect that a group of five men and two women lived at the hideouts and ran the "bomb-making factory". Residents of the area said the suspected militants rented the three apartments claiming that they would make toiletry products there. Shakib Ahmed Alok, owner of the six storey building, said he rented out the first floor apartment to a man who identified himself as Moslem of Noakhali and said he and his pregnant wife would live there. Alok added that he didn't have a copy of Moslem's national identity card. In another building owned by Helal Uddin, another suspect identifying himself as Kamal rented a six-room apartment. The suspect said he would use it for storing toiletry products, said Lili Begum, a neighbour. Kamal's cousin Nasim, nephew Ibrahim and sister Nasrin used to live with him on the ground floor apartment of the five storey building, which was found locked from outside, Lili added. Police said they would find the suspects soon.



## Chronic kidney disease - The silent threat not to be ignored

Are you having these symptoms?

- Fatigue and weakness
- Sleeplessness
- Swelling of legs and feet
- Diabetic
- Loss of appetite
- Itchiness and skin irritation
- Hypertensive

These could be signs that you're suffering from Chronic Kidney Disease- the silent killer. Chronic kidney disease normally isn't detected until the fourth stage, when kidney function has declined by at least 70 percent. If undiagnosed, the disease will gradually worsen over time. Early detection plays a critical role in delaying and preventing kidney damage that could lead to dialysis and kidney transplant.

Bumrungrad International hospital's Nephrology Center established the Chronic Kidney Disease Program with the main purpose of delaying and halting the progression of chronic kidney disease and the development of complications.

You will be taken care by our team of dedicated medical professionals that includes international and locally accredited nephrologists working in combination with nutritionists, pharmacists and clinical nurse coordinators to review and assist all aspects of your lifestyle to help detect and treat kidney based illnesses.

For all medical enquiries and priority appointments, contact Bumrungrad International Referral Office-Bangladesh. No Service Charge.

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