



A roundtable discussion on "The Way Forward to Ensure Construction Safety in Bangladesh" was organised by The Daily Star and real estate giant Sheltech at a conference hall in The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Set your own rules

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Saamiya also said many contractors and construction firms did not show interests in taking safety precautions as they would have to pay for them. She called upon the companies to set up their own multi-layered monitoring system and train up workers. Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, executive director of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies, said construction industry is one of the biggest industries in the country. But the industry does not have any "permanent workers". "The recruitment process depends entirely on the contractors. Why such a huge industry would not have any permanent workers?", he questioned, urging the authorities to make a policy to recruit workers in a formal way. He claimed that many construction companies and contractors do not value workers' lives. Architect Mubasshar Hussain, former president of Institute of Architects Bangladesh, said whoever avoids the safety measures should be punished. Calling upon the authorities to ensure workplace safety, he said workers

should get other facilities, including safe drinking water, accommodation and first aid, which in return would encourage them to follow safety rules. Mikail Shipar, a former labour and employment secretary, said the government could not ensure safety of the workers under the labour law as they belonged to an "informal sector" because of their informal recruitment. Ainun Nishat, professor emeritus of Brac University, said the construction companies should come forward to ensure workers' safety and the government should extend its support in this regard. "We cannot always give all the responsibilities to the government alone," he said. Tanveerul Haque Probal, managing director of Building For Future Ltd and former president of REHAB, said the government should not impose any tax on purchase of safety gears. Toufiq M Seraj, managing director of Sheltech (Pvt.) Ltd, said yesterday's roundtable was organised with a view to developing coordination among different stakeholders of the industry,

including company owners, experts and academics. Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said, "We are with your efforts over the safety issue. May be, many of you are doing well. There are some issues, and pointing them out is our responsibility." Sekender Ali Mina, executive director of Safety and Rights, said most of the construction companies did not have any safety plan, but they must formulate one, as done by Sheltech, to avoid casualties at workplace. Brig Gen (ret'd) Shahedul Anam Khan, associate editor of The Daily Star; Akter Mahmud, general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners; Buet teacher Prof AFM Saiful Amin; Mohammad Abu Sadeque, director of Housing and Building Research Institute; M Maksudur Rahman, a professor of Dhaka University; Nafizur Rahman, deputy director of Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources; Zaber Sadeque, an additional superintendent of police and Sultan Mahmud, president of Economic Journalist Forum, also spoke at the roundtable.

7 hurt in 'IS knife attack' in Russia

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that left 14 dead and injured 120 more. Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, said a man in Surgut had "carried out attacks on passers-by, causing stab wounds" yesterday morning. It said armed police called to the scene killed the attacker. The attack also comes a day after a stabbing spree in Finland, which left two people dead and eight others injured and is being investigated as a terrorist attack, although the assailant's motive is unknown. The city of Surgut lies some 2,100 kilometres northeast of Moscow and is the largest in the oil-rich Khanty-Mansi region. It does not have a large Muslim population. A spokesman for regional police downplayed the possibility of a terrorist incident, telling Interfax news agency that the theory that the incident was "a terrorist (attack) is not the main one". There has not yet been any official response to the IS claim. The Investigative Committee said it had established the attacker's identity, saying he was a local resident born in 1994, and that they were looking into "his possible psychiatric disorders". Opposition leader Alexei Navalny questioned authorities' treatment of the incident, writing on Twitter: "Someone runs round with a knife and tries to kill as many people as possible. What is that, if not a terrorist attack?" Investigators have opened a criminal probe into attempted murder, not terrorism, with the Investigative Committee's chief Alexander Bastyryn taking the case under his personal control. Regional officials said four of those stabbed remained in a serious condition while another was stable in hospital. Two have already been discharged. Russian television reported that the stabbing victims are aged between 27 and 77 and include two women. In Finland, the stabbings were initially probed as murders but further information received meant "the offences now include murders with terrorist intent," police said in a statement yesterday. Police shot and wounded the knife-wielding suspect, detaining him minutes after Friday's rampage at a busy market square in Turku, southwestern Finland. Eight other people were injured, among them six women, police said. Among the injured in Turku were an Italian national, a Swede and a Briton. The rest were Finns.

Finland raised its emergency readiness after the attack, increasing security at airports and train stations and putting more officers on the streets. Four Moroccan citizens were arrested in a Turku apartment and refugee reception centre overnight. They have links to the suspect, but police have not yet established whether they were connected to Friday's attack. Officers identified the main suspect as a 18-year-old Moroccan citizen who arrived in Finland in early 2016 and sought asylum. His name was not disclosed, nor his motive known. "We tried to talk with the attacker in hospital but he didn't want to speak," Granroth said. The suspect is being treated for a gunshot wound to the thigh. Media reports said his asylum request had been rejected but police would not confirm this. Police said they were examining whether the suspect had any link to the Islamic State group. Police also issued an international arrest warrant for another person outside Finland, who is believed to be dangerous. Police were also probing whether there was a link to the vehicle attacks in Barcelona and another Spanish seaside resort. Most of the suspects in those attacks were also Moroccan citizens. In Spain, police yesterday hunted for a Moroccan man suspected to have carried out one of two terror attacks plunging the country into shock and grief. Interior Minister Juan Ignacio Zoido said the cell behind the carnage in the holiday cities of Barcelona and Cambrils had been "dismantled". Police said they had cast a dragnet for 22-year-old Younes Abouyaaqoub. Media reports said he was the driver of a van that smashed into people on Barcelona's busy Las Ramblas boulevard on Thursday killing 13 people. Just hours later, a similar attack struck in the seaside town of Cambrils early Friday. Police killed the five attackers in Cambrils, some of whom were wearing fake explosive belts. The so-called Islamic State group claimed responsibility for both the attacks. The IS's claim in Spain is believed to be their first in the country, but the method of using vehicles as weapons follows other assaults commandeered or inspired by the group, including in Berlin, London and Paris. The terror cell in Spain reportedly comprised at least 12 young men, some of them teenagers.

Investigators have been honing in on the small town of Ripoll, at the foot of the Pyrenees, where many of the suspects -- including Abouyaaqoub -- lived. Yesterday, police raided the apartment of an imam, Abdelbaki Es Satty. Spanish daily El Pais, quoting police sources, said the imam may have been one of those killed in an explosion in a home in Alcanar, some 200 kilometres south of Barcelona, where the alleged jihadists were believed to have been building bombs. A waiter at a Ripoll cafe told AFP he had served beers to some of the suspects numerous times, most recently just two days ago. Police said they believed the suspects were planning a much larger attack. "They were preparing one or several attacks in Barcelona, and an explosion in Alcanar stopped this as they no longer had the material they needed to commit attacks of an even bigger scope," said Josep Lluís Traperó of Catalonia's police. Security forces were seen removing dozens of gas canisters from the house in Alcanar on Friday.

Tufan moved

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Bogra jail since August 6, had been enjoying a regular supply of Phensidyle and the comfort of home-cooked meals. Mozammel, however, refuting the allegations, said he had never enjoyed any undue privilege in jail. He speculated that the media reports could be based on claims made by his rival group in Sramik League. Deputy Inspector General (prison) Altab Hossain of Rajshahi range said they have started a probe into the allegations following instructions of the inspector general of prisons. "We are checking the [Bogra jail] officials' working schedule and jail operations since Tufan was moved there," he said.

2 beaten dead
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Upazila Health Complex. Dr Hasan Jamil Kallol of the health complex said the two men were already dead when they were brought to the hospital. The injured driver was referred to Gazipur Sadar Hospital, he added. The owners of the cows could not be found immediately.

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As of 8:00am yesterday, a total of 81,063 pilgrims reached Saudi Arabia. Biman Bangladesh and Saudi Airlines will have to send the rest 46,135 pilgrims by August 28. In 24 hours starting from 8:00 am yesterday, Biman will operate six hajj flights including one from Chittagong carrying over 2,000 pilgrims, Shakil Meraj, general manager, public relations of Biman said. Biman and Saudi Airlines started carrying pilgrims from July 24 and will continue till the morning of August 28. Some 127,198 pilgrims are scheduled to perform hajj from Bangladesh. Of them, 122,998 pilgrims are under private management, while the rest 4,200 are under government management, according to the religious affairs ministry.

Selection questions

FROM PAGE 1
member of a long and complex selection panel. Hathurusingha defended the decision by saying that the diminutive left-hander, whom he calls Mini, has not been performing for the last one year. Mominul failed to make an impact since his outstanding 64 in that windy Wellington Test earlier this year. The coach also said that the left-hander was very much part of the core group. But what Hathurusingha bypassed was that Mominul, the only member of the group tailor-made for Test, was harshly treated for not firing in his last six innings. Curiously though there are instances in the team where certain players enjoyed very long lull periods.

This is perhaps the first time the selectors were in hot water after a relatively peaceful period for a long time. There was however signs of tension regarding the team selection in Sri Lanka, where Mahmudullah was dropped quite unceremoniously ahead of Bangladesh's 100th Test in Colombo. It was a decision that sparked fury but a victory in Colombo served well for Hathurusingha. The Sri Lankan think-tank of the Tigers has so far been successful in transforming an otherwise defeatist team into a very competitive one across all formats of the game. He will again be experimenting in the two-Test series. And this time he will be up against a team he knows better than anybody else. But at the same time

Australia are a team that is not only ruthless but is the most clinically proficient side in world cricket. Steven Smith's men did not train yesterday. They made a brief visit to Mirpur where they had a good look at the wicket and piped through the gym for a while. A team, which is considered as masters of exploiting the opposition's weakness on and off the field, has already started the mind games even before taking to the field. "What to do when all the carriages are full. #watch your head #Bangladesh," Smith wrote in an Instagram post with a video he probably took from his hotel room showing excess passengers sitting on the roof of a running train.

At least 23

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people from the coaches," senior police officer Jitender Kumar told AFP. Another official said metal cutters and cranes were being used to reach inside the damaged coaches as the federal government rushed dozens of rescuers with specialised equipment and sniffer dogs to the spot. "Scores of people have been safely evacuated from the coaches. Some dead bodies have also been recovered," fire and emergency officer Naresh Kumar told AFP. The train had left eastern Puri city on Thursday evening and was scheduled to arrive in northern Hindu holy city of Haridwar on Sunday. The accident is the latest disaster to hit India's most populous state. It comes just a week after dozens of children died at a hospital that had run out of oxygen there. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a tweet expressed sympathies with the families of those killed and assured all possible assistance. India's railway network is still the main form of long-distance travel in the vast country, but it is poorly funded and deadly accidents often occur. Less than a year ago 146 people died in a similar disaster in Uttar Pradesh after 14 carriages of a passenger train came off the tracks. More than 2,000 passengers were on the train when it flipped off the rails that left over 150 injured. In January nearly 40 people were killed when eight coaches and the engine of a passenger train derailed in the forest area of southern Andhra Pradesh. A 2012 government report said almost 15,000 people were killed every year on India's railways and described the loss of life as an annual "massacre". Modi's government has pledged to invest \$137 billion over five years to modernise the crumbling railways, making them safer, faster and more efficient. His government has signed numerous deals with private companies to upgrade the network. Japan has agreed to provide \$12 billion in soft loans to build India's first bullet train, with Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expected to lay its foundation in September.

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A sickening

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Out of 31 students present, only three had submitted the correct answers. Angry with the rest 28, she forced them to drink drain water behind the school, the guardians alleged. All the 28 students were traumatised and became ill. A dead dog had been dumped in the drain two weeks ago, they added. Mannan Hawlader, father of a student, said, "My child became sick on Wednesday night and was admitted to a local hospital." Other parents and guardians of the students said the teacher had committed "a terrible crime by punishing the children in such a manner". Shahnaz said, "I only told them [the students] to drink drain water. I did not force them to drink it. "I did not say it seriously and that was just an incidental remark," she said. Headteacher Jahangir Madbor said, "No teacher should give such a punishment to children." He claimed the issue was resolved through a meeting.

BNP doing 'excesses'

FROM PAGE 16
Chairperson Khaleda Zia now in London. Addressing a discussion organised by Juba League, the youth front of the AL, at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, to mark the National Mourning Day, he said the BNP, coming out of a hole, has started making a fuss over the Supreme Court verdict that declared the 16th amendment illegal. Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the AL's government too would be illegal if Ziaur Rahman's rule was considered illegitimate, reports UNB. "There's no question about the legitimacy of Ziaur Rahman's rule. Introducing multiparty democracy and restoring people's right to expression and press freedom can't be illegal. Not only that, the Awami League registered as a political party following due procedures during his rule," he said. Fakhrul made the remarks apparently in reaction to the AL general secretary's comment on BNP's silence over Supreme Court's observation about its founder's rule. Passed in 2014, the 16th amendment to the constitution had restored parliament's powers to remove SC judges for misconduct or incapacity. Last year, the High Court declared the amendment illegal and the decision was upheld by the SC on July 3 this year. The apex court released the full verdict on Aug 1. Since then, the ruling AL has been criticising and the BNP has been praising the verdict. Addressing the discussion, Quader, also minister for roads, transport and bridges, said the BNP would not win in a participatory, credible, free and fair polls and that was why it has chosen the path of conspiracy.

He called upon the party's youth front leaders and activists to be united in preventing the evil forces. About political dialogue between the AL and the BNP, Quader said, "Khaleda Zia has hurt us by cutting a cake to mark her fake birthday on August 15. On which ground, will we sit across the table to them?" He criticised the BNP men for "not standing beside the flood victims" and "staging photo sessions without distributing relief materials". Fakhrul said the AL contested parliamentary polls and it was still carrying out its political activities with the registration it got during BNP founder Ziaur Rahman's rule. "So, AL stands illegal if his [Zia] rule is illegal." Fakhrul came up with the remarks while talking to reporters after placing wreaths at Ziaur Rahman's grave along with leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Swachhchasebak Dal marking its 37th founding anniversary. Referring to the observation made in the 16th amendment verdict that dubbed Ziaur Rahman's power grabbing illegal, Quader on Friday "thanked" Fakhrul for being silent on the matter. Fakhrul said it was the AL leaders' old habit of misleading people. He said it was the Awami League's strategy to divert people's attention from the verdict's observations by talking about Ziaur Rahman's rule. Fakhrul said people were worried as the government was putting pressure on the chief justice to change the verdict. "They want to obliterate the independence of the judiciary and destroy the basic structures of the state. In fact, their main target is to cement their one-party rule by destroying democracy," he said.

I think he did not do it right

FROM PAGE 1
At the programme, Food Minister Qamrul Islam, "If he [chief justice] is telling us now that appointments have been made on political considerations, then it must be told that he was himself appointed on political consideration in 1999.... He [chief justice] is acting as a toy of a lobby." The apex court on August 1 released the full text of its verdict that scrapped the 16th amendment, which had given parliament the power to remove SC judges for misconduct or incapacity. On August 9, Khairul Haque strongly criticised the verdict terming it "misconceived, irrelevant and immature." Ever since, he has become one of the most vocal critics of the judgment. It is Justice Khairul-led Law Commission that in a report to the government in 2014 recommended restoring parliament's power to remove top court judges. Later, the Commission drafted a law outlining the procedure of removal of SC judges and submitted it to the law ministry. Yesterday, Justice Khairul said that under article 116 of the constitution, the law ministry dealt with the appointment, transfer and promotion of lower court judges in consultation of the Supreme Court. "I personally think this system is good...and this system should continue," he said. But the chief justice in his observation said many things about the article, Khairul said, adding, "This was beyond the issue at hand and beyond the ambit of his judgment. I think he did not do it right." He claimed that Surendra Kumar Sinha, the incumbent CJ, made various comments about parliament and "did vilification which at least shows bad taste if not anything else." Members of parliament are representatives of the people, which is their most important quality, he maintained. "It is not necessary for all the MPs to have PhD degrees. By the way, several of them [MPs of BD] have PhDs. It is true that you would not find such educated people all the time even in the UK and the US. It may surprise you but it is a fact," he claimed. "Educational qualification can't be the criteria to be an MP or a member of congress," he said. "Here [in the judgment], the chief justice termed parliament immature. It is shocking," he added. "He [Sinha] said democracy is immature. Why immature?" said the Law Commission chief, his voice rising. "Because, we have made arrangement for the election of women under article 65 (3) and that's why democracy is immature. What kind of tomfoolery is this? Who is he [Sinha] to say this?" "Not the judiciary, only the elected members [of parliament] can decide what is good for the country and what is not good for the country. It is certainly not for the judges to say. Not for any other reasons, simply because they [judges] are not elected." Justice Khairul said the CJ in the verdict mentioned that 152 MPs have not even been properly elected. "Then, are they [judges] elected? At one point, he [CJ] said parliament did not carry out our [SC] directives. This is not proper. The Supreme Court does

not have any right to give directives to parliament. And if the Supreme Court does give parliament any directives, the House is not bound to carry them out, because parliament is sovereign. "He [CJ] said the most objectionable statement by saying that parliament is dysfunctional. This can't be the language of any judge, judiciary or the Supreme Court," said Khairul. SC judges take oath that they would not do anything out of antipathy or affection. "But the things that I just told you [from the observations] spell out antipathy, if not affection.... "But if any verdict reflects antipathy or affection then what would be the fate of that judgment. Think about it. I have nothing to say," he added. "If you think what I have just mentioned [from the observations] -- 'parliament is immature,' 'democracy is immature,' 'parliament does not pay heed to our directives,' 'pseudo democracy,' 'parliament dysfunctional' -- fall under the definition of antipathy or affection, then what would be the position of the judge?" About the criticism whether he, being chairman of the Law Commission, can criticise the Supreme Court verdict, Khairul said it was the Commission's job to monitor laws and point out any flaws in them. "The judgment of the Supreme Court is also a law and as the chairman of the Commission, it is his duty to talk about the verdict, like it or not, he said. He said many of his friends told him that although he (Khairul) was criticising the verdict, eight amicus curiae, who are very learned persons, spoke in favour of scrapping of the 16th amendment. "I told them [his friends] and now I want to tell you that those who appeared as amicus curiae are very learned persons, there is no doubt it. They practise at the Supreme Court and it is expected that they earn tonnes of money from there," he said. Then he recalled what a senior lawyer told him when he was a young lawyer some 48 years ago. "He [my senior] told me: 'Khairul, if you want to please a certain God, recite the mantra that the certain God likes to hear the most.' I think you got my point. I have nothing to say about the amicus curiae," he said.

First HC judge

FROM PAGE 2
one of the two Queens Counsels (QCs) of Bangladesh origins in this profession. The other is Ajmalul Hossain QC. Akhlaq graduated from Glasgow University in Physics. Later, he received a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of London. He is a specialist in commercial, employment, procurement, information and public law. He was a member of the Attorney General's A-Panel for civil litigation and worked for a long time as a law adviser for Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Defence and other government departments. Akhlaq, son of late Azizur Rahman Choudhury, a community leader of Glasgow, Scotland, was born in Hampshire. He now lives in London with wife Sofina and three children.

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