



From left, Raisul Kabir, CEO of Brain Station 23 Limited; Selim RF Hussain, managing director of Brac Bank; A Towhid, director of IBCS PRIMAX; Shaikh Abdul Wahid, managing director & CEO of LEADS Corporation Ltd; Zia Ashraf, COO of Chaldal.com; State Minister for ICT Zunaed Ahmed Palak; Finance Minister AMA Muhith; Waseem Alim, CEO and founder of Chaldal.com; Mustafa Jabbar, president of BASIS; Hussain M Elius, CEO of Pathao; Constantinos S Gavriel, general manager of Le Méridien Dhaka; M Rezaul Hassan, group CEO of REVE Group; and Adnan Imtiaz Halim, CEO of sheba.xyz, at "The Daily Star ICT Awards" in Le Méridien Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

ICT can drive away graft

Says finance minister at The Daily Star ICT Awards ceremony; five companies, two individuals win the award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Corruption will be eliminated from the country if the information and communications technology is used properly, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said yesterday.

"The most effective tool to fight corruption will be the ICT," he said at The Daily Star ICT Awards ceremony in the capital's Le Méridien Hotel yesterday.

Two individuals and five local IT firms were awarded by The Daily Star and Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) for their outstanding contribution to the country's fast growing ICT industry.

The event was organised in association with Microsoft Bangladesh Ltd, the country office of the world's leading technology company, and private commercial lender Brac Bank, with Le Méridien as hospitality partner.

Within five to seven years, the ICT sector would reach such a point where no one would be able to do without it, he said.

"We will do everything riding on the ICT," said Muhith, who handed

over trophies to the winners.

M Rezaul Hassan, group chief executive officer of REVE Systems, an internationally acclaimed Bangladeshi software firm, won the ICT Business Person of the Year award.

A Towhid, a shareholder director of IBCS-PRIMAX Software (Bangladesh) Ltd, bagged the ICT Pioneer of the Year award. The IT firm focuses on onshore and offshore software development and systems integration.

Of the five winning firms, Chaldal Limited, an online shop based in the capital, got the e-Business of the Year award. Brain Station 23 Limited got the ICT Solution Provider of the Year award in the global market focus category.

The ICT Solution Provider of the Year award in the local market focus category went to LEADS Corporation Ltd.

Sheba.xyz Platform Ltd, a start-up company that became the country's largest service marketplace online, won the ICT Start-up of the Year award while Pathao, a leading local ride-hailing service, got the ICT Start-up of the Year award.

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Two BAF trainer aircraft crash

Four pilots escape unhurt; investigation on to know the cause of the accident

STAR REPORT

Two trainer aircraft of Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) crashed at Maheshkhali upazila in Cox's Bazar yesterday evening.

"All four pilots of the planes were rescued alive with minor injuries they sustained when they ejected," Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director Lt Col Rashidul Hasan told The Daily Star.

Of the four pilots, group captain Sharif was with squadron leader Monir, and wing commander Rajib was with squadron leader Azim.

The ISPR official said the two Yak 130 aircraft crashed around 6:30pm. They lost connection with the control tower at 6:15pm, around 15 minutes after they took off from Jahurul Haque Air Base in Chittagong.



The burning wreckage of one of the Yak 130 aircraft.

The cause of the accident is yet to be known. A high-power committee was formed to investigate the incident, said Lt Col Rashidul.

The pilots are receiving treatment at BNS Patenga Hospital. They are out of danger, he added.

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Khaleda has no links to trust funds

Counsel tells court in Zia Orphanage case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A senior counsel of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday pleaded with a Dhaka court to acquit her in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

Wrapping up his three-day argument, Abdur Rezaq Khan told the Dhaka Special Court-5 that Khaleda didn't have any distant involvement in the process, let alone misusing power for setting up the trust, receiving donation from a former Kuwaiti ameer and disbursing the money.

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US to cut its UN budget by \$285m

Announcement comes after UN rejects Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israeli capital

AGENCIES

The US government has announced significant cuts in its United Nations budget obligations for 2018-19 in what will be interpreted as a further ratcheting up of pressure from the Trump administration looking to bend decision-making at the international body to its will.

In a statement released over the holiday, the US mission to the United Nations said next year's budget would be slashed by over \$285m and unspecified reductions would also be made to the UN's management and support functions.

US ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley said that the "inefficiency and overspending" of the organization is well-known, and she would not let "the generosity of the American people be taken advantage of."

She also said that while the mission was pleased with the results of budget negotiations, it would continue to "look at

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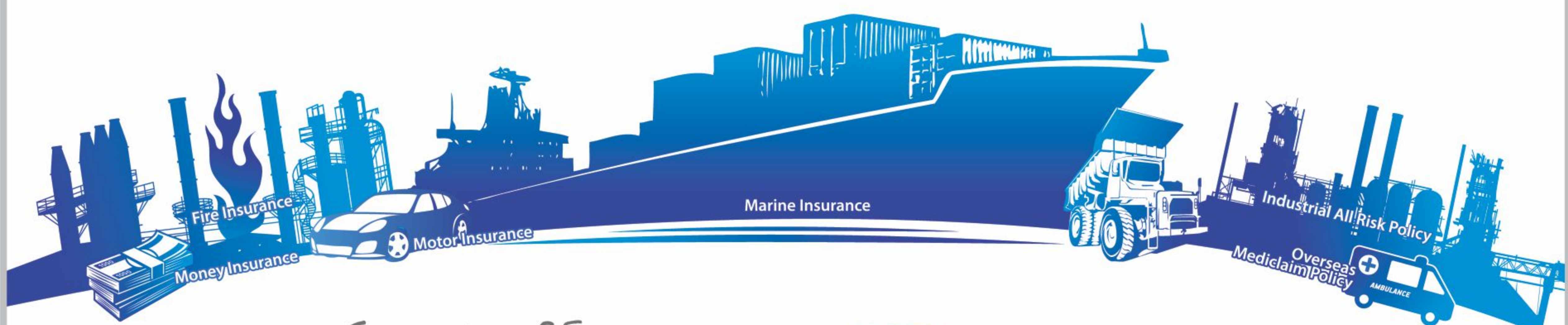
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