

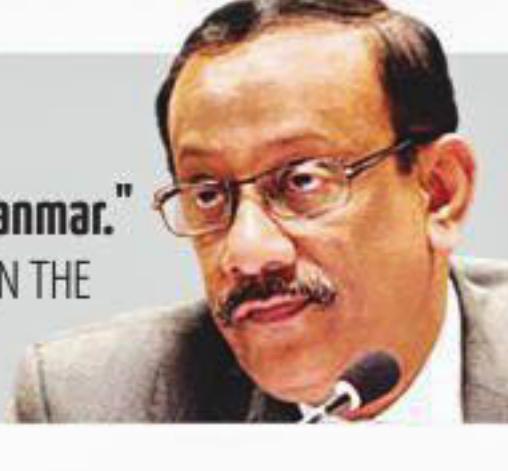
"You have to take steps after having a clear idea about everything... but don't make any decision being influenced by anyone else."
PM ABOUT INVESTING IN CAPITAL MARKET (PAGE B4)



"You are public servants, not servants of the Awami League... So, don't harass, arrest or file cases for no reason."
BNP LEADER KHANDAKAR MOSHARRAF TO GOVT OFFICIALS, POLICE AT THE PARTY'S TOKEN HUNGER STRIKE (PAGE 3)



"We are not thinking of assimilating them [Rohingyas] in Bangladesh. They belong to Myanmar."
BANGLADESH FOREIGN SECRETARY SHAHIDUL HAQUE ON THE SIDELINES OF WEF ON ASEAN IN HANOI (PAGE 2)



Cases too puzzling

Man lives in Oman, accused of joining 'secret meeting' in Comilla; questions over another case against a schoolteacher

KHALID BIN NAZRUL and SHARIFUL ISLAM

Implicated in three "false cases" and tired of police harassment, Ahad Khalifa was desperately looking for a break.

So he shut his tailoring shop at Muradnagar Bazar in Comilla and left the country for Oman four and a half years ago.

The last time he came home was on October 25 last year with the body of his father-in-law, who died in Oman. Ahad, 36, left the country again on February 10 this year, according to his travel documents.

But his living in a faraway land, some 3,500km from home, could not save him from being implicated in another case.

On September 8, Muradnagar police named him in a case on charges of planning to carry out subversive activities.

According to the case statement, Ahad is among 33 identified and 15-20 unknown accused who were holding a secret meeting at the Muradnagar Madrasapara house of Alamgir Hossain, convener of the upazila unit Chhatra Dal on that day. There, they were planning to vandalise key installations and vehicles on the highway.

They all are members and supporters of BNP and Jamaat and their front organisations.

The accused were also planning subversive activities to cause irreparable loss to the state, the case statement claims.

Sub-Inspector Abdul Gofran, who filed the case, wrote in the statement that based on a tip-off they raided Alamgir's house at Pirkashimpur around 12:30am on September 8.

Police arrested accused Alamgir, ANM Ilias,

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Naria Upazila Health Complex building in Sharifupur goes into the Padma river yesterday. The river is changing its course and is devouring establishments of commercially important Mulfatganj Bazar, left and right.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Padma keeps eroding parts of Naria

Locals demand quick steps to stop erosion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Locals have started demonstrating for government action to tackle erosion by the Padma in Sharifupur's Naria upazila.

Officials, however, have said they cannot begin the work for protecting the river bank right away because of "official procedures".

Meanwhile, the two-storey building of the Upazila Health Complex, which was over 500 metres away from the bank a couple of months ago, is being devoured now. Over 4,000 families have become homeless and many affluent farmers broke during the same period.

"As per government decisions, the project would be implemented by Khulna Shipyard and BWDB would supervise it. The decision would have to be approved by the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase," said Shafiqul Islam Sheikh, executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Sharifupur.

A proposal for the project is likely to be placed at the cabinet committee's meeting this week, he added.

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PM slams traffic rules violators

Says people still lack awareness despite road safety movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even after the recent vigorous students' movement for road safety, people are still not conscious, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in parliament yesterday.

Nearly 43 percent of the total defaulted loans in the sector are at the five banks, he said.

Total defaulted loans, including non-performing and written-off loans, as of June was Tk 131,666 crore, he added.

The amount is equivalent to 73 percent of the country's development budget in the current fiscal year and more than double the government's borrowing target from external sources.

Answering lawmakers' questions, Muhith in a scripted answer said Sonali Bank accounted for Tk 18,662 crore in defaulted loans, Janata Bank Tk 14,840 crore, Agrani

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DEFAULTED LOANS

5 state-run banks hold nearly 43pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bad loans at five state-owned banks totalled Tk 56,283 crore as of June, Finance Minister AMA Muhith told parliament yesterday.

Nearly 43 percent of the total defaulted loans in the sector are at the five banks, he said.

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- Total defaulted loans Tk **131,666cr**
- **5 state banks' bad loans Tk 56,283cr**
- Total number of defaulters **230,658**
- List of top **20** defaulters placed in JS

Bank Tk 9,284 crore, BASIC Bank Tk 8,576 crore and Rupali Bank Tk 4,901 crore.

The minister also revealed the names of top 100 organisations and businesses that defaulted on their repayments, citing data from Credit Information Bureau of Bangladesh Bank.

He, however, did not mention the amount they lent.

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ZIA TRUST CASE
Khaleda didn't appear before special court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia did not appear before a special court at Old Dhaka Central Jail yesterday for the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case proceedings.

Judge Md Akhteruzzaman of the Special Judge Court-5 adjourned yesterday's hearing of the case, saying that the court would today hear whether it should continue its proceedings in absence of Khaleda.

The judge said this after the jail authorities informed that court about her unwillingness to appear before it.

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Poor healthcare plagues RMG units

Shoddy working conditions and hygiene affect workers' health; maternal benefits still not enough

SHADMA MALIK

Four months into her pregnancy, Tahmina, 35, found herself under constant stress as she tried to meet the production quota in the RMG factory in Tejgaon where she had been working for the last four years.

She saw that the working conditions were quite unfavourable to her current condition.

"The work we do demands constant physical activity and if we fail to meet the quota, we are held accountable by the higher authority," she told The Daily Star recently.

Recalling an incident, she said, "One of the elevators is always shut off. If the other one breaks down, we are required to use the staircase," she said.

Tahmina is expecting her second child

after 12 years, and is under constant fear of losing her job. The Tk 7,500 that she earns supplements the finances for her dual-income household of which her husband earns another Tk 8,000.

"There is a constant struggle to balance my pregnancy and work. I can't complain, though, as this limited salaried job has given me an opportunity to earn and support my family."

However, the nature of her job takes a toll on her health. She has to stand for long hours at work. In another instance of poor working conditions, once Tahmina asked for a stool to sit and although she was provided one, it was very low and she struggled to reach the table while sitting, hampering her work.

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RECRUITMENT, PROMOTION AT UNIVS

Irregularities for lack of uniform guidelines: VCs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vice-chancellors of the country's public universities yesterday painted a grim picture of their teachers' recruitment and promotion process, saying different irregularities take place during the procedures as there is no uniform set of guidelines.

The common irregularities include appointing more teachers than the posts advertised, recruiting less qualified candidates leaving the deserving ones and promoting teachers even though they don't meet the required criteria, they said.

Besides, the standard of education is not the same everywhere as different universities follow different guidelines for teachers' recruitment and promotion, they said.

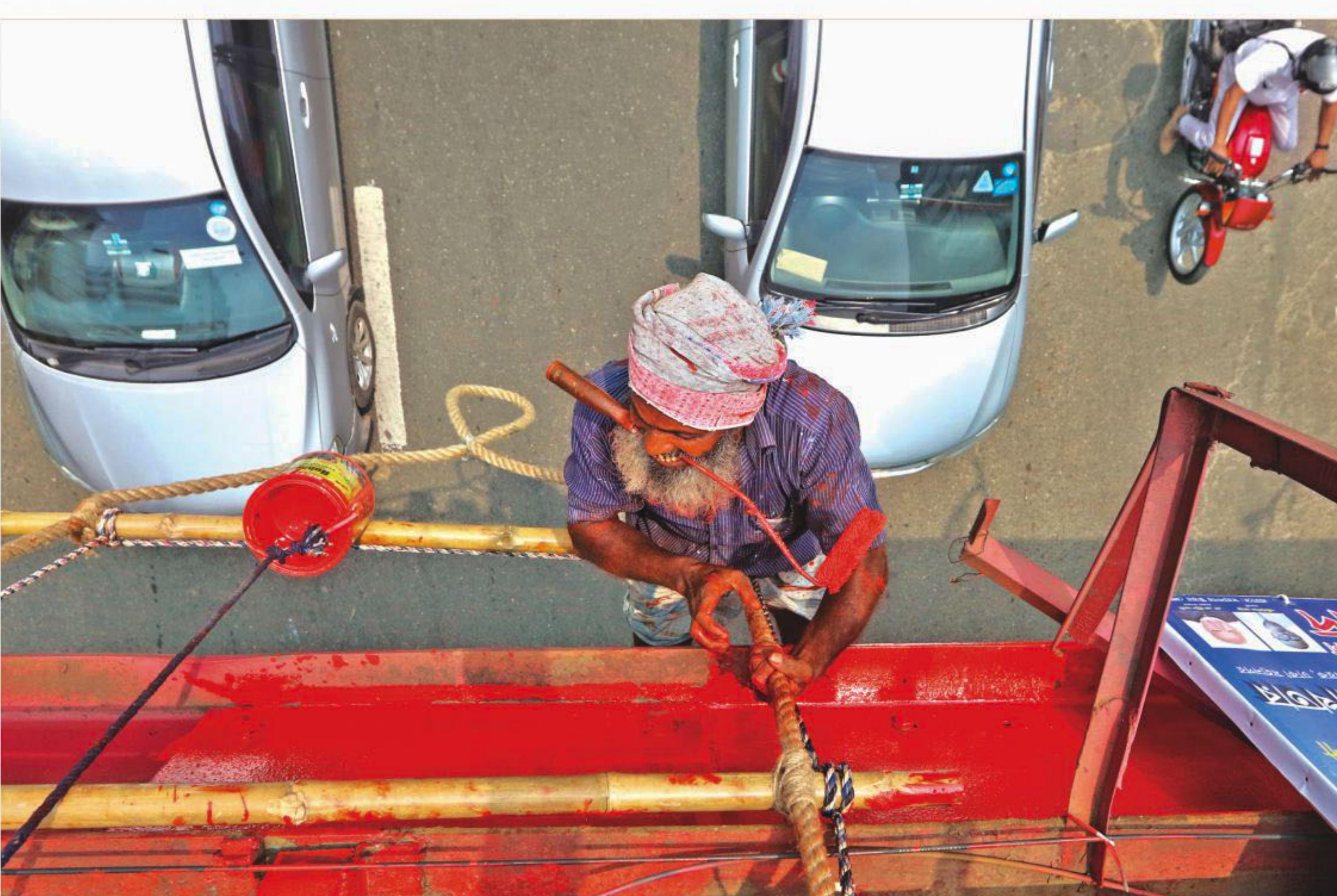
They suggested holding a mandatory written test for teachers' appointment and ensuring their training.

The VCs made the observations at a workshop at University Grants Commission (UGC) auditorium in the capital.

The secondary and higher education division of the education ministry organised the workshop to finalise a draft set of guidelines, prepared by the UGC, on the recruitment and promotion of teachers of public universities.

Coming up with some examples of irregularities, Prof Mijanur Rahman, VC of Jagannath University, said Dhaka University recruited many teachers "who did not even have the minimum qualifications".

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With no safety gear on, a worker paints the footbridge at Bangla Motor intersection in the capital yesterday. dangling from a makeshift rope ladder. Apart from falling to the busy street, he runs the risk of getting hit by high vehicles, like a double decker.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS