

# Finish arguments

**FROM PAGE 3**  
During the hearing, Advocate AJ Mohammad Ali, a lawyer for the BNP chief, said the medical board formed by government for Khaleda's treatment consists of physicians from Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad, a pro-Awami League doctors' forum.  
It is unlikely that Khaleda will get fair treatment from this medical board, which is an infringement of her fundamental right, the lawyer argued.  
He prayed to the bench to direct the government to send Khaleda to United Hospital, as her choice, for treatment.  
Opposing the writ petition, Attorney General Mahububey Alam said that jail authorities have taken necessary steps for the treatment of the BNP chief.  
On September 9, Khaleda filed the writ petition as she had been suffering from various illnesses.  
In the petition, she prayed to be admitted to United Hospital, while the medical board formed by the government recommended her to be admitted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

### CUMILLA COURT REJECTS BAIL

A Cumilla court yesterday rejected bail to Khaleda in an arson case filed under the Special Powers Act in Chaudagram upazila on February 2015.  
Judge Biplob Debnath rejected her bail after hearing the arguments from the defence and prosecution.  
"We were denied justice. Khaleda was not named in the FIR of the case. She was implicated in the case through the charge sheet. We will go to the higher courts for her bail," Advocate Kaimul Haque Rinku, a lawyer for the BNP chief said.



**Due to lack of adequate roads and proper traffic management, tailbacks have become a regular phenomenon in Sylhet city. The situation worsens as schools break. The photo was taken in Rikabibazar area yesterday.**

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

# Bangladesh

**FROM PAGE 3**  
international dignitaries present at the assembly that Bangladesh had already shared best practices in solar home system with several African countries.  
He urged the assembly to work for a cheaper and reliable solar energy through the transfer of solar technology among the member countries. He suggested that "collective approaches" can fulfil the goal and aspiration of the member states in this regard.  
The state minister, who is now on a three-day official visit to India, also attended the 2nd Indian-Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Renewable Energy Ministerial Meeting. The events were simultaneously inaugurated by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the presence of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and ministerial delegation from many of the ISA member countries.

# Political parties should

**FROM PAGE 3**  
in Dhaka, where about 20 journalists from print, electronic and online news outlets participated.  
Welcoming the participants, Dr Badiul Alam Majumdar, country director and global vice-president of THP, said the RTI Act can be a strong tool to get all kinds of information during elections, while accountability of persons and institutions can also be ensured by applying it.  
"Once its use increases, the tendency of 'keeping secrets' will reduce," said Badiul, also a noted governance campaigner.  
He said use of the RTI Act will be helpful to make the democratic process flawless and electoral system effective.  
Nilesh Ekka, senior research analyst at Association for Democratic Reforms in India, said a similar act in his country has helped people and journalists get more information about candidates during elections.  
Stressing the need for increased use of the law, journalist Pranab Saha said the practice of its application is higher among journalists in other parts of the country than those who are Dhaka-based.  
Venkatesh Nayak, coordinator of Access to Information Programme of CHRI, said making electoral system transparent is a prerequisite and first step for ensuring good democratic practice.

# Overburdened with patients

**FROM PAGE 5**  
pathology service at nominal cost, three separate wards for urology, neurology and burn and plastic surgery, a one-stop service centre, as well as free medicine facility.  
At present, it has 339 doctors against 390 posts, 150 interns and 741 nurses as per the organogram of the 100-bed hospital.  
"We are a little understaffed now, as we need 100 more doctors to smoothly handle the increasing number of patients. But our present staff are really working hard to ensure standard and patient-friendly service," said the hospital's Director Brig Gen Md Nasir Uddin Ahamed.  
The number of doctors and nursing staff is decided on the basis of beds in the hospital. So, if the hospital's accommodation capacity was increased, more doctors and nursing staff would be included accordingly, he said.  
Higher authorities have been

informed about the increased number of patients, but no decision has been taken yet, he added.  
Contacted, Dr Motiur Rahman Bhuiyan, president of Bangladesh Medical Association, Mymensingh unit, said despite limitations, the hospital is doing a great job which is proving to be satisfactory for patients.  
**ONCOLOGY WARD NOT FULLFILLING ITS POTENTIAL**  
Compared to other departments, the oncology department has fewer inpatients, as its only radiation therapy machine has been nonfunctional for the last three years.  
As a result, at least 1,000 patients have been left per year with no access to radiotherapy, said Dr Kazi Iftakharuddin Ahmed, head of the oncology department.  
The 13-bed department has six doctors against 11 posts, with an operational chemotherapy unit, said Dr Ahmed, adding, "We also provide free

medicine."  
But there has been no professor in the department since Prof Md Aminul Islam retired in this July. Talking to The Daily Star recently, he said professors do not want to come here since the radiation therapy machine is broken, and inflow of patients is low as a result.  
MMCH is the only specialised cancer treatment centre in a government hospital in the region. Though some private clinics and hospitals in Mymensingh city provide treatment to cancer patients, a majority of them cannot afford the expensive procedures. Therefore, cancer sufferers have to travel to the capital to receive treatment, which could cost them up to Tk 1 lakh at a private hospital.  
"We have informed the higher authorities several times about the radiotherapy machine, but to no avail," said Laxmi Narayan Majumdar, deputy director of MMCH.

# Rescued Zakiganj

**FROM PAGE 5**  
This correspondent tried to talk to Councillor Shakil at the hospital. He could not speak but nodded when asked whether he is recognising everyone around him.  
His brother, Selim Ahmed, said that Shakil had a long-standing rivalry with a local named Shihab Uddin, who threatened to kill him a couple of days before the disappearance.  
"We suspect that he might be behind the abduction and we will file a case against him soon", he said.  
Shihab Uddin, general secretary of Zakiganj Krira Sangstha did not respond to repeated phone calls for comments.  
Kollol Goshwami, investigation officer of the case and sub-inspector of Zakiganj Police Station, said the rivalry between the councillor and Shihab Uddin has been going on for a long time, but it did not escalate to the level that might cause the incident.  
Md. Mostak Sarker, Additional Superintendent of Sylhet District Police (Zakiganj, Beanibazar Circle), said, "We are considering all possible reasons behind the abduction. As Zakiganj is a new zone for drug smuggling, we are also considering that. We hope to make progress in the case soon."



**Two women attendants working at the filling station in Narayanganj.**

PHOTO: STAR

# Treading new ground

Women working as gas station attendants in Narayanganj

**SANAD SAHA, N'ganj**  
Vehicles queuing up at a filling station beside Dhaka-Chattoogram highway in Narayanganj are a common scenario. Be it day or night, the station remains to tend to service seekers.  
A group of workers filling up fuel tanks, some helping vehicles maintain lines while others managing transactions -- an every day state of affairs in any gas station across the country.  
But what make this particular one in Kamal area of Bandar upazila unique are its employees -- half of them, women. Though working at a filling station is often characterised as "a man's job", a visit to Plana Filling Station easily breaks that false perception.  
It was set up in 2000 and since then women have been working there in various capacities. The work goes on in three shifts -- 6am to 2pm, 2pm to 10pm and 10pm to 6am.  
Other than the cashier and manager, three female and one male employees work during the first two shifts. Men work the night shift.

While visiting the place on Monday afternoon, this correspondent met one of the female attendants, Lipi Begum, busy at work.  
"My parents married me off to a truck driver at an early age. They thought it would change my luck. But my husband's income was not sufficient to cope with the increasing cost," said the 35-year-old.  
"One day I was telling the owner [of the filling station] about my situation and he offered me a job," she added

while directing a biker to maintain the queue. "It has been 17 years since I started working here." She said she makes Tk 6,500 a month working an eight-hour shift every day.  
"We also get free quarters, utility services and other benefits," said the mother of three, adding that her eldest son, Zakaria Islam, 19, also works at the station.  
Zakaria said though he could not go to school and had to start working, they made sure that the younger ones do.  
This newspaper also spoke to another employee, Helena Begum, 26.  
"It's not heavy work. I fill up the fuel tanks. The only thing is that there's no weekly holiday," she said. "But, if needed, we can take leave."  
She added, "It's better than working at a garment factory, where one has to work 12 hours a day..."  
"I have been working here for 10 years. Time went by so fast... we work here as a family. I even got married while working here," she said.  
Asked about hurdles, she said some impatient drivers often hurl abusive words or some at times make comments after seeing women working at gas station. "Sometimes we protest, but mostly, we try to stay calm," she added. "Not all men are the same. We try to adjust with circumstances."  
There's also a couple -- Mohammad Sagar Mia and Rikta Begum -- who work at the filling station.  
"We met here, fell in love and got married," said a smiling Sagar, a supervisor. He said he has been working there for 11 years while Rikta six. "All of us -- men and women -- work side by side. We get paid equally based on our positions," he added.  
This correspondent tried to talk to Rikta, but she shied away.  
The customers also seemed to be pleased by the service.  
Abdullah Al-Mamun, a private job holder, said, "The workers here are always welcoming... I'm a regular here."  
Amir Hossain Babul, manager of Plana Filling Station, said around 70 to 80 female workers have worked there so far. "Some worked here for long, some for one to two years. At present, we have six female workers."  
"We work here as a team. Other than on-time salary, workers are given a place to stay beside the gas station where they live with their families. Though they do not get weekly holidays as the filling station cannot be kept closed, they are given even 8 to 10 days leave, if necessary," he said.  
Contacted, owner Saiful Islam said, "I have seen my mother work hard to maintain our family. But she never complained. Women of our country are patient and hardworking. Given a chance, they always prove their efficiency. That's why I wanted to provide women in my area with an opportunity."  
About his female workforce, he said, "My employees are honest and I never hear any complaint against them from service seekers."  
He said he has another filling station in Mirzapur of Tangail and half of the workforce there are also women.

# Govt to double DNC workforce

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The government has decided to more than double the workforce of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC), 28 years after its inception.  
The expanded force will bolster the department's anti-drug drives across the country, hoped Jamal Uddin Ahmed, director general (DG) of the DNC.  
"The public administration ministry has recommended for a workforce of 4,040 people... We hope our new organogram will be okayed by the government in a month," he said.  
DG Jamal said this while addressing a press conference on "Recent Condition of Drugs and Ongoing Special Anti-Drug Drives", organised at the DNC headquarter in the capital's Tejgaon.  
Currently, the DNC has 1,191 people on

its payroll.  
Highlighting their success, the DG said they recently seized a large quantity of a new type of drug from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.  
He said only 20 to 22 people are involved in the smuggling of the drug and the DNC is taking necessary measures so the drug cannot be smuggled into the country.  
During the special anti-drug drive alone, conducted jointly with other law enforcement agencies between September 20 and September 26, they seized 59,506 yaba tablets and filed 559 cases against 603 individuals.  
Between January and August this year, the DNC conducted 30,987 drives and seized about 86.36 lakh yaba tablets, 9.7 kilogrammes of heroin, 2,223 kilogrammes of cannabis and 15,414 bottles of Phensedyl. During those drives they filed 8,406 cases against 9,334 drug peddlers, DG Jamal said.

# Not an accident

**FROM PAGE 3**  
nose of the aircraft up parallel to ground as long as we can and use the full length of the runway. Thanks to the Almighty, our plan worked and we made the emergency landing without any major damage," said the captain.  
Speaking at the briefing, CEO of US-Bangla Airlines, Imran Asif said they operate all their flights maintaining standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization.  
"Before take-off, all flights of US-Bangla Airlines undergo technical checking thrice. Foreign engineers check the flight at night, a day before the flight, and then it is checked again by local engineers. Then the captain re-checks the aircraft. On completion of all the cross-checking, a flight is put in place for take-off," he said.  
Some 17 foreign engineers from Europe, Canada and USA have been appointed to examine the aircrafts and 62 expert-level local engineers are also working for the company, he added.  
"The Cox's Bazar incident is not an accident, it's just an incident," he claimed.

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General Manager  
**পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড**  
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**SAARC Development Fund**  
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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR**  
SAARC Development Fund (SDF), having its Secretariat at Thimphu, Bhutan, was established by the Heads of the Governments of eight SAARC Member States in 2010 and invites proposals from interested eligible audit firms for conducting External Audit of SDF for three fiscal years (2019-2021).  
Eligible firms with adequate experience and proficiency are requested to submit their proposals for the same by 5:30 P.M. (Bhutan Time) on **October 20, 2018** through email on [admin@sdfsec.org](mailto:admin@sdfsec.org) and [ceo@sdfsec.org](mailto:ceo@sdfsec.org). The detailed TOR can be downloaded from our website [www.sdfsec.org](http://www.sdfsec.org).  
Dr. Sunil Motiwaj  
Chief Executive Office

**IRON INTERNATIONAL LTD.**  
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)  
Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line Project, Khulna, Bangladesh  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
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Open Tender in two packets bid system are invited for "Construction of Railway embankment between Km 47+600 to Km 58+590(including Digraj Station Yard) in connection with Construction of Khulna Mongla Port Rail Line Project in Bangladesh."  
**Estimated Cost:** Tk.742,207,637/-  
**Earnest Money Deposit :** Tk.4,392,800/-  
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For further details and updates, Bidders may visit IRCON office, House No. 150, Road No. 9, Sonadanga R/A, Phase-1, Khulna-9100.  
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