

## BCL men

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upazila on Sunday afternoon. During the programme, some BCL men suddenly attacked some of the students. Four of them were injured. One of them was taken to the upazila health complex for treatment.

After school authorities filed a complaint with Sreebardi Police Station, a team, led by ASI Hannan, raided the houses of BCL leaders and activists in Tengorpara and Bhayadanga areas. However, no one could be detained.

Around 8:00pm on Sunday ASIs Hannan and Rafiqul Islam went to Sreebardi Bazar as part of their routine patrol. Around 20 to 25 BCL men stopped them and asked why the raids were carried out, police said.

At one stage, the BCL men attacked and beat both the police officials, sources said.

On information, additional policemen went to the spot and rescued the two injured and brought the situation under control. Police tried to catch the attackers, but they fled the scene.

Injured ASI Rafiqul later filed a case with Sreebardi Police Station against 12 people, including Ziaul, in this regard.

Upazila Chhatra League Convenor Merazuddin Chowdhury said it was true that the police officers were victims of an attack but “no BCL men was involved with it”. He claimed that outsiders or some so-called Awami League activists may have carried out the attack.

## Two minor girls

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The accused has been on the run since the incident, he added.

In Madaripur, a 14-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a 15-year-old boy in Shibchar upazila.

Victim's elder brother said the boy had long been making improper advances towards his sister on her way to school.

“On the day of the incident, the boy came to our house around 2:00pm when no one was there except my sister and raped her,” he said, adding that the locals rescued his sister hearing her screams, but could not capture the boy.

She is currently receiving treatment at Madaripur General Hospital, he added.

However, a cousin of the accused told The Daily Star that the boy had no relation with the girl. Her family is making false allegations against the boy and his family.

Uttam Prasad Pathak, additional superintendent of police in Madaripur, said, “The victim's elder brother filed a case against the boy, including some other unidentified people for assisting him, with Shibchar Police Station yesterday.

“We are trying to arrest the culprit,” he added.

Our Savar and Faridpur correspondents contributed to the report

## Ex-Assam CM

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the voters list and they will cast their vote, he said.

“We (when Gogoi was the chief minister) had impressed upon the Centre that a similar NRC updation exercise has to be taken up in all states and not exclusively in Assam,” Gogoi added.

Regarding the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, he said it has not only been opposed in Assam but also across the country with the BJP's allies -- the JD(U), Shiv Sena and most of the chief ministers in the northeastern states being against it.

“Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma say we don't understand the bill. None of us understand (it), only two of them understand,” Gogoi said.

## De Villiers

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In the day's first game, bottom-placed Khulna, led by Mahmudullah Riyad, suffered a hammering at the hands of Comilla. In a game that had nothing at stake for the Titans as they are already eliminated the race to the playoffs, Mahmudullah's men conceded 237 for five -- the second highest total in the tournament's history -- and were also at the receiving end of a hattrick from left-arm pacer Riaz.

Asked to bat first, Comilla opener Evin Lewis marked his return from injury with a magnificent, unbeaten 49-ball 109 to help his side post the mammoth total. While Lewis shone with the bat, left-arm pacer Riaz entertained the crowd by dismissing David Wiese, Taijul Islam and Mohammad Saddam in the 19th over to wrap the Khulna innings up in style.

The second game of the day did not fail to entertain as well as it saw Rangpur Riders' big guns -- opener Alex Hales and AB de Villiers -- fire at the top as their unbeaten record third-wicket partnership helped Rangpur chase the challenging 186-run total posted by Dhaka and win the game comfortably by eight wickets. De Villiers, hailed as Mr.360 showed why he got such a name as he authored a magnificent 50-ball 100-run knock. The South African was well supported by Hales as the right-handed Rangpur opener also remained unbeaten on 85 runs.

## Paid agents

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“Just a decade ago, there were only hovels and corrugated-iron-sheet houses in the area. People lived on fishing and salt enclosures. But now you see posh mobile phones and lavish cars.

“This miracle comes from tablet business. You won't see a beggar here.”

The conversation with the shop owner was abruptly halted when a middle-aged man signalled him to stop talking to one of the correspondents.

Most people in the villages were not willing to open up during the correspondent's visit on Friday. People were found living inside the compounds of the mansions but they refused to talk.

A local, after being cajoled to talk, said about the house owners, “They went into hiding after the law enforcers started the anti-narcotics crackdown. Some of them might come back after their agents assure them that it is safe now.”

According to police sources, law enforcers in the last one month and a half demolished around 47 mansions in the yaba villages.

## Poor infrastructure

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and “government integrity countering declines in investment freedom and fiscal health.

Of the 186 countries included in this 25th edition of the index, 180 are fully scored and ranked. Because of the lack of sufficient reliable data, six countries -- Iraq, Libya, Liechtenstein, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen -- are evaluated and partially-graded but not ranked.

Ranked countries were given an overall score ranging from 0 to 100 on each of the 12 components of economic freedom, and these scores were then averaged, using equal weights, to compute a country's final economic freedom score.

“The average level of economic freedom in the world declined this year by 0.3 point, from 61.1 to 60.8. That's still the third-highest level ever, but any decline is cause for concern,” the report said.

The index used four broad categories for measurement: rule of law, government size, regulatory efficiency and open markets.

There are sub sectors in four categories including property rights, judicial effectiveness, government integrity, tax burden, government spending, fiscal health, business freedom, labour freedom, monetary freedom, trade freedom, investment freedom, and financial freedom are also taken into account while measuring the economic freedom of a country.

The report said robust economic growth of approximately six percent annually for two decades had been driven by a rapid increase in private consumption and fixed investment in Bangladesh.

However, it added, “The judiciary is slow and lacks independence... Endemic corruption and criminality,

Sources said mansions of Ziaur Rahman of Nazirpara (killed in a gunfight in November), Md Jubayer (now in the police-protected house in Cox's Bazar Police Lines), Jiaul Haque and Mozammel Hoque of Jaliapara, and Saiful Karim and Nurul Haque Bhutto of Nazirpara, have been demolished.

Sources claim that law enforcers also set fire to 16 boats in Baharchhara Ghat and Mundir Dail area, which were reportedly used for smuggling yaba from Myanmar.

Police, however, deny doing anything to the houses and boats.

Pradip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday that they did not demolish anyone's building and do not know who were behind it. No one even came to the police station to file a complaint.

“If anyone files complaints, they will definitely look into the matter,” he said.

Pradip said locals were not happy with the yaba smugglers. “They might have demolished their houses after the anti-narcotics drive began.”

RELATIVES STRENGTHS
Government Spending and Fiscal Health
CONCERNS
Government Integrity and Financial Freedom
REGIONAL AVERAGE (ASIA-PACIFIC REGION)
60.6
WORLD AVERAGE
60.8
BANGLADESH SCORE
55.6

weak rule of law, limited bureaucratic transparency, and political polarization have undermined government accountability.”

The report also observed that high-profile corruption cases were common, including two recent cases involved a former chief justice and a former prime minister.

“A well-functioning labour market has not been fully developed, but labour productivity growth has been slightly higher than wage hikes,” said the report.

The index showed that Bangladesh also ranked 27th among 43 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and its overall score was below the regional and world averages.

The world average freedom score is 60.8 points, while the Asia Pacific regional average stands at 60.6 points.

The report said in the South Asian region, Nepal ranked 136th, Sri Lanka ranked 115th, Bhutan ranked 74th, India 129th, Pakistan 131st, and the Maldives achieved the status of 141st economy.

Hong Kong, Singapore and New Zealand each logged increases in their index scores, finishing first, second, and third in the rankings, respectively scoring 90.2, 89.4, and 84.4 points.

## HC summons

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The commission then summoned Salek to its office where the bank officials, including the account's introducers, were present.

However, the man who appeared before the ACC claimed that the authorities concerned were mistaken and his name was Jaha Alam, not Abu Salek.

“To ascertain further, we sent the photo that Salek used in the bank's Know-Your-Client form to Nagarpur's Union Parishad chairman, who identified him as Jaha Alam,” said an investigation officer preferring anonymity.

Later, the ACC placed a charge-sheet before the court identifying him as Abu Salek alias Jaha Alam.

In 2016, Alam was arrested by police in connection with most of the cases in which Salek was accused.

**HOW JAHA ALAM'S IDENTITY WAS KNOWN**

Different media outlets reported that Jaha Alam said he was wrongly accused, after which the ACC investigated the matter further.

The commission found Alam's claim to be true.

Contacted, ACC Director General Moyeedul Islam said of the 33 cases, Alam was made accused in most of them.

“We have already urged the court to exempt Jaha Alam from prosecution,” he said, adding that the process was underway.

He, however, said Salek, who was on the run, would remain as the accused in the cases.

Yesterday, the HC bench passed the order in a suo moto move following a report published in the Bangla daily Prothom Alo yesterday under the headline “Wrong accused in jail in 33 cases: Sir, I am Jaha Alam, not Salek.”

Supreme Court lawyer Amit Das Gupta placed the news report before the HC bench for necessary orders in this regard.

HC judges issued the summons after going through the report.

The court also gave a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain why Jaha Alam should not be acquitted of the cases in which he was not an accused, Amit told The Daily Star.

Earlier, the DG of the ACC said that the faces of Abu Salek and Jaha Alam, according to the photograph, were similar.

**'JAHA IS INNOCENT'**

Speaking to our Manikganj correspondent, Alam's elder brother Shanur said his brother used to work in Narsingdi's Ghorashal Jute Mill in 2003 as a machine operator.

His job was made permanent in 2012, from which he earned Tk 2,000-3,000 per week.

His family is unable to bear the expenses of the cases.

“I demand the release of my brother and [for the] punishment to the real culprits,” he said, adding that the family sought compensation from the government in this regard.

Meanwhile, the ACC learnt from a Facebook post on Salek's profile that he was in Nepal about one month ago.

Alam is still languishing in Kashimpur jail.

## GM chickens

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which has anti-viral and anti-cancer effects, and another protein called macrophage-CSF involved in the production of white blood cells.

These substances are produced as part of the egg white, and the genes have no harmful effects for the chickens.

“We are not yet producing medicines for people, but this study shows that chickens are commercially viable for producing proteins suitable for drug discovery studies and other applications in biotechnology,” said Professor Helen Sang of the Roslin Institute.

While the new research is still in its early days, the scientists said it provided a “promising proof of concept” that could set the stage for improved drug production.

As chickens are capable of laying up to 300 eggs every year, the scientists suggest this method could provide a cheaper approach than existing methods.

Often producing protein-based drugs to treat cancer and other diseases involves a complex and expensive production and purification process involving mammal cell cultures.

Eggs are already used to grow viruses for use in vaccines, and other animals such as goats have been genetically modified in the past to produce useful proteins in their milk.

The new research was published in the journal BMC Biotechnology.

## \$5.9b siphoned

FROM PAGE 1

used or moved and which crosses an international border.

Trade misinvoicing is a method of moving IFFs, and includes the deliberate misrepresentation of the value of imports or exports in order to evade customs duties and VAT, launder the proceeds of criminal activity or to hide offshore the proceeds of legitimate trade transactions, among other motivations, it said.

The new study comes more than a year after the GFI's 2017 report which estimated that Bangladesh had lost between \$6 billion and \$9 billion to illicit money outflows in 2014.

At that time, the GFI analysed discrepancies between bilateral trade statistics and balance of payments data, as reported to the IMF, to detect flows of capital that were illegally earned, transferred, or utilised.

This year, the GFI detected the IFFs by analysing the trade data on over invoicing and under invoicing.

The GFI found Bangladesh was one of the top 30 of countries, ranked by dollar value of illicit outflows in 2015. These countries not only include resource-rich countries such as South Africa and Nigeria but also European countries such as Turkey and South American nation Brazil.

The Asian countries in the top 30 countries in this category include Malaysia, India and the Philippines. The amount of IFFs from Malaysia was \$33.7 billion, \$9.8 billion from India and \$5.1 billion from the Philippines.

Bangladesh lost the second highest amount of fund through IFFs after India among the South Asian nations. The illegal outflow through trade misinvoicing in other South Asian countries including Pakistan, Sri Lanka was less than a billion dollar.

The research and advisory organisation said increasing trade among developing and emerging market countries is seen by many economists as a primary path to greater development.

“However, high levels of misinvoicing, as a percentage of total trade, indicate that most developing country governments do not benefit from a significant portion of their international trade transactions with advanced economies,” said the GFI.

The GFI data showed that the amount of IFFs from Bangladesh was 17.5 percent of the nation's total trade with advanced countries at \$33.73 billion in 2015.

In its previous report, the GFI said Bangladesh lost \$75 billion due to trade misinvoicing and other unrecorded outflows between 2005 and 2014.

## Maduro warned

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On Sunday, Israel and Australia joined countries backing the 35-year-old Guaido, and US President Donald Trump said his government had accepted Venezuelan opposition figure Carlos Alfredo Vecchio as a diplomatic representative to the United States.

Nearly 30 people have been killed and more than 350 arrested in clashes with security forces over the past week.

Guaido took advantage of a major street demonstration on January 23 to swear himself in as the country's rightful leader, accusing Maduro of usurping power following a disputed 2018 re-election that countries around the world described as a fraud.

**MILITARY INTERVENTION**

Guaido is asking for help in getting control of the Venezuelan government's offshore assets, reported Reuters.

In recent days, he urged British Prime Minister Theresa May and Bank of England Governor Mark Carney to block Maduro's government from collecting more than \$1 billion in gold held by the Bank of England.

Venezuela's once-buoyant socialist economic system has imploded from corruption and mismanagement since the collapse of world oil prices in 2014, pushing inflation to almost 2 million percent and driving millions of Venezuelans to neighbouring countries.

Maduro says his government is the victim of an “economic war” led by his political adversaries with the help of Washington, which has levied several rounds of sanctions against the country since 2017.

Venezuela's military attache in Washington, Army Colonel Jose Luis Silva, switched his support to Guaido in a video that called on his brothers in arms to follow his lead.

In Washington, Republican Senator Marco Rubio, considered a key architect of the US policy on Venezuela, played down the possibility of a military intervention despite his and Trump's warnings earlier in the week that “all options are on the table.”

The Venezuelan leader earlier had given US diplomats until late Saturday to leave the country, reported AFP.

But as the deadline expired, Maduro said he had begun negotiations to set up within 30 days an Interests Section in Caracas to maintain a minimum level of diplomatic contact, similar to the arrangement the US had with Cuba until their 2015 rapprochement.

## Jubo League leader shot

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Talking to The Daily Star, Mehabub's wife Boishakhi Rahman said police cordoned off their house around 1:30am and took her husband to the roof.

“At one stage, we heard firing. Police shot my husband in his leg,” she alleged.

AL sources said there had been a long-standing rivalry between Jashore-3 Awami League lawmaker Kazi Nabil Ahmed and district AL General Secretary Shaheen Chaklader over establishing supremacy in the party.

Tension was high in the town as several cocktails exploded near the lawmaker's house and a business institution of Shaheen on Sunday night.

Mehbub is a supporter of the MP, said locals.

Imam Hasan Lal, acting general secretary of Jashore town AL, said his house was next to Mehabub's. Early yesterday, police cordoned off his house and asked him to open the gate.

“As I opened the gate, police rushed to the roof of my building. After a while, I heard gunshots. I don't know what happened on the roof. In the morning, I came to know that Mehabub sustained bullet injuries,” Imam told this correspondent over the phone.

Moin Uddin Mithu, district Jubo League organising secretary, said Mehabub became partially paralysed after suffering a stroke a couple of months ago.

He took part in a procession in Jashore town on Sunday night protesting the bomb attack at the lawmaker's house, Moin added.

“Around 3:00am on Sunday, a party man informed me over the phone that police shot Mehabub in his leg.”

Samir Kumar Sarker, inspector (investigation) of Kotwali Police Station,

said hearing about a clash between two groups of criminals, they rushed to the spot and found Mehabub bullet-hit.

Police recovered two pistols and eight bullets from Mehabub and a gun and four bullets from his accomplice Mehedi, he added.

Law enforcers sent Mehabub to Jashore 250-bed General Hospital.

Abdur Rashid, orthopedic surgeon at the hospital, said Mehabub was hit either by pellets or bullets. His blood vessels were torn and a bone was broken.

Later, doctors referred him to the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases in Dhaka.

Samir last night said Mehabub, who had been facing several criminal cases, was undergoing treatment at a hospital in the capital under police custody.

A case was filed against the two arrestees with Kotwali Police Station.

Meanwhile, a Jashore court yesterday sent Mehedi to jail after he was produced before it.

## Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 2

After dropping to their lowest level in 2018 since records started being kept, the 3 killings in a span of just 10 days may represent an unwelcome reversal of that this year.

The BSF was termed “trigger happy” by Human Rights Watch in 2010, when border killings of Bangladeshis by the BSF were frequent. According to Odhikar, a platform of Dhaka-based human rights advocates, 74 Bangladeshis were killed in BSF firings that year. The number was 98 in 2009.

Last year, the number dropped to 11.

## Confusion

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In Moulvibazar-2 and Mokabbir Khan in Sylhet-2. The BNP got six seats, while ruling Awami League-led grand alliance bagged 289 seats.

The BNP, alleging election rigging, said the party would not join the House.

Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain had once hinted at going to parliament, but he was silent after the BNP took the matter before him.

Mansur, former AL leader and Ducus vice-president, told this newspaper that Gonoforum MPs-elect wanted to play a pro-people role in parliament.

In the press statement, Montu said, “The Jatiya Oikyafront's unity is intact. The news being run by various media outlets that elected lawmakers of the Gonoforum are joining parliament is untrue and baseless.”

**UPAZILA POLLS**

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader has called upon the BNP to reconsider its decision of not participating in the upcoming Upazila Parishad election.

“I don't know whether it's their final

decision, but I would like to call upon them to reconsider their decision,” Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, told a press conference at his secretariat office.

Mentioning that the BNP had emerged victorious in the first phase of the previous upazila polls, he said the party should not be frustrated.

He said the polls would be competitive if the BNP contested.

Referring to the prime minister's invitation to 75 political parties, including the BNP, and alliances to exchange greetings over tea, Quader said it was not for dialogue; it was for exchanging pleasantries.

If they had come, there could have been a discussion there, he said, adding, “But the way they [BNP and Oikyafront] responded to the prime minister's invitation does not go with democratic norms. It is the continuation of their habitual negative politics.”

The Oikyafront declined Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's invitation for February 2, saying that there was no agenda for the meeting.

## Malware sent to BB

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and infiltrate the BB: watsonhenny@gmail.com, yardgen@gmail.com, and two accounts connected to them, rasel.afiam@gmail.com and rasfall8808@gmail.com. The spear-phishing emails from each of those four accounts were nearly identical.

The links in the emails may have hosted the malware that allowed the senders to gain initial access to the computer network of the BB, the FBI complaint said.

A hacker using yardgen@gmail.com sent 10 emails to 16 different employees of the BB on January 29, 2015. Each of those messages purportedly sought an employment opportunity. In the emails, a link was included, which appeared to contain a résumé.

On February 23, 2015, yardgen@gmail.com sent two emails to 10 recipients at the BB, which were identical, except that the “linked” text displayed only “Resum.zip” (but if clicked, it would take the computer to the same URL or website).

Between January 29 and February 24, 2015, at least three BB computers had attempted to download the file from the link sent by yardgen@gmail.com, the FBI mentioned.

The investigation found evidence that the subjects were successful in causing recipients at the BB to download the payload from their spear-phishing emails.

In March 2015, the subjects had moved within the BB network and had saved a malware capable of performing file transfers, creating .zip archives, and executing certain files. It had three IP addresses programmed into it.

Nearly a year later, on January 29, 2016, days before the fraudulent transfers were made, the subjects engaged in a number of lateral movements throughout the network. One of those moves was to the BB's SWIFTLIVE system. That system was the core component of the BB's SWIFT processing environment. It used the SWIFT Alliance Access application, which was a customer-managed gateway to the SWIFT network that transmitted and received messages from other banks that create and confirm financial transactions. As the application received SWIFT messages, it would record local copies of the messages, including by formatting and printing those mes-

sages to files or a printer and by entering information associated with them in a separate database.

As the hackers tried to move onto the BB computer hosting the SWIFTLIVE system, they made at least four attempts to log-in to it. The subjects had successfully deleted some evidence of their attempts to log-in to the BB's SWIFTLIVE system, but left some evidence that was later found during the forensic examination.

**BB CASE**

A three-member team from the central bank left Dhaka early yesterday for New York. Officials hope that the case will be disposed of in two to three years. A lawyer from London will join the BB team in the US.

A BB official familiar with the proceedings said the reason for the delay in filing the case was that the government was hoping to retrieve the amount with assistance from the government of the Philippines.

“We later realised that the Filipino court would take a while and we would miss the chance to file a case with the New York court,” the official added.

Money laundering cases have to be filed within three years of the crime being committed, according to US laws.

If it is proven in the New York court that the foreign hackers were involved in the heist and the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation in Manila assisted them, the untraced money may be returned, the BB official said.

“So, we are going to file a damage claim with the NY court.”

On February 4, 2016, hackers broke into BB's systems and generated 70 fake payment orders for the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to draw about \$1.94 billion.

While the NY Fed's security system flagged the payment orders, five of them fell through and \$101 million was released. Finally, \$81 million was wired to RCB's branch in Manila, while \$20 million landed in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka sent back the entire sum immediately after the heist was exposed, while the Philippines sent back \$14.54 million in November 2016 -- meaning \$66.46 million is yet to be retrieved from the Philippines. A number of cases involving a major portion of the fund are pending with courts in the Philippines.