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"Nothing can be termed perfect. There will be mistakes and errors and we have to move forward along with the mistakes."
OBAIDUL QUADER ON THE UPCOMING UPAZILA ELECTION. (PAGE 3)

"The government has moved to raise gas prices, mainly for commercial and industrial consumers and for power plants, to offset the losses caused by LNG import."
STATE MINISTER FOR ENERGY NASRUL HAMID. (PAGE B1)

"Our drive will continue. I will be present at the scene at the time of the drive."
DHAKA SOUTH CITY CORPORATION MAYOR SAYEED KHOKON.

Traders fume at chemical drive

Taskforce against illegal warehouses, factories in Old Dhaka face protest, drive resumes after mayor's intervention

HELEMUL ALAM and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The authorities on several occasions after 2010 Nimtoli fire urged the traders of Old Dhaka to relocate their chemical factories and warehouses from residential areas. But they did not pay heed to the repeated requests.

And when the government is going for tough action against such hazardous establishments after the deadly Chawkbazar fire, a section of them are creating obstacles to the move.

A taskforce comprising officials of 14 government agencies was forced to suspend their operation in the face of angry protests from local traders in Bakshibazar, on the second day of the month-long crackdown.

The drive resumed after around two hours following direct intervention of Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor

Sayed Khokon. Another taskforce, however, carried out its work in Shaheednagar area without hindrance.

On Monday, the mayor announced that a month-long crackdown would be launched against warehouses of "dangerous chemicals", and utility lines of 21 such establishments in Shaheednagar and Islambagh were snapped on Thursday.

At least 71 people were killed and scores injured in a chemical-fed fire in Chawkbazar on February 20, forcing the government to act against chemical factories and warehouses in the old town.

PROTEST IN BAKSHIBAZAR
A taskforce led by Brig Gen Sharif Ahmed, chief health officer of DSCC, started the drive on Joy Chandra Nag Road at

ANOTHER BURN VICTIM DIES, DEATH TOLL RISES TO 71

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PHOTO ON PAGE 16, FIRE AGAIN IN CHAWKBAZAR - PAGE 3



Recipients of "Unsung Women Nation Builders Awards 2019" and dignitaries on stage during yesterday's gala at the capital's International Convention City Bashundhara. The Daily Star in cooperation with IPDC Finance Limited presented the awards to the women for their outstanding contribution to nation-building.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

2 Gonoforum MPs-elect want to take oath

Write letter to Speaker
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Gonoforum lawmakers-elect yesterday wrote to the Speaker expressing their willingness to take oath on March 7.

Sultan Mohammad Monsur and Mokabbir Khan, presidium members of Gonoforum, took part in the December 30 national election as Gonoforum candidates, with the BNP's electoral symbol "sheaf of paddy".

Asked about the matter, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told The Daily Star that he did not know anything about the letter.

Senior Gonoforum leaders said they would take all kinds of actions against the two leaders if they took oath disobeying

POLLS TO DU HALL UNIONS They stand their ground

Despite pressure from BCL, 7 independent aspirants refuse to quit race
DU CORRESPONDENT

At least seven independent candidates stood their ground on contesting the polls to Dhaka University hall unions despite facing pressure from Chhatra League to withdraw their nominations.

The deadline for withdrawal of nominations expired at 1:00pm yesterday, but none of them gave in.

The BCL men beat them up, threatened them with dire consequences, held closed-door meetings with them and even talked with some of their parents to press them to quit the polls race.

The activists of the pro-Awami League student body did all these to ensure their victory in the March 11 elections and in some cases, to earn uncontested wins, said the independent contestants.

Mahbubur Rahman Sajid, independent candidate for cultural affairs secretary of Salimullah Muslim Hall Students' Union, said some BCL men assaulted him on

Salute to SILENT DOERS

The Daily Star - IPDC initiative honours seven women change-makers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hazera Begum left home to escape the torture of her stepmother. Eight-years old and lost in a world she did not know, Hazera was raised by the streets where she made her living by begging.

Eventually, like many other street children, she was forced into prostitution for survival.

Always looking to overcome the trap she was in, Hazera finally came across a development organisation in 2008. It helped her bid farewell to her former life and work for the wellbeing of other sex workers.

In 2010, she established a child development centre in Dhaka -- "Shishuder Jonno Aamra" -- with her savings and support from individual donors. Hazera began gathering street children and providing them with food, treatment and

most importantly -- love -- which they need the most. Most of about 50 children of the centre go to nearby schools to attain formal education.

"These kids are my family. I am embracing my motherhood with these children," says Hazera, 49.

"I want these children to do something for the country one day and make everyone proud... I would be the happiest mother ever that day," Hazera says.

In recognition of such extraordinary contributions, Hazera and six other women were honoured with the "Unsung Women Nation Builders Awards 2019" yesterday. They worked to build an enlightened society, which is currently plagued with struggles and open discrimination against women.

The other six women are freedom fighter Khurshid Jahan; Japanese philanthropist Hiroko

Kobayashi; worker-turned RMG entrepreneur Chhobi Das Gupta; orphanage founder Bilkis Banu; Rupa Dutta, school founder for indigenous children and Salma Choudhury, founder of ASHIC, a shelter for children with cancer.

The Daily Star in cooperation with IPDC Finance Limited presented the awards to the outstanding personalities at a gala event at the International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB) in the capital. They were selected out of more than 100 nominations.

The awards jury consisted of renowned personalities -- Rubana Huq, managing director, Mohammadi Group; Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director, Campaign for Popular Education, and Anisul Hoque, author, screen writer and journalist.

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Dhaka turns a city of processions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After the shocking declaration of suspension of parliamentary session sine die by President Yahya Khan on March 1, 1971, the country, which has long been waiting to spew out its years-long frustration, erupted like a volcano.

On March 3, Dhaka turned into a city of processions that reached Paltan Maidan to join a rally organised by Swadhin Bangla Chhatra Sangram Parishad.

The parishad unveiled the Manifesto of Independence and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announced his



The shade over the roadside bench hangs loosely from its frame and may hurt pedestrians any moment. The picture was taken yesterday near Banglamotor intersection.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Tension eases but not over

Indo-Pak shelling along LoC kills 7 a day after release of captured pilot

AGENCIES

A flare up between arch-foes India and Pakistan appeared to be easing yesterday after Islamabad handed back a captured Indian pilot, but tensions continued to simmer amid efforts by global powers to prevent a war between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, who became the face and symbol of the biggest clash between India and Pakistan in many years, walked across the border just before 9:00 pm (1600 GMT) on Friday in a high-profile handover shown on live television.

However, Indian and Pakistani soldiers again targeted each other's posts and villages along their volatile frontier in the disputed region of Kashmir, killing at least five civilians and two soldiers, and wounding several others, officials on both sides said yesterday.

Fighting resumed overnight into dawn of yesterday, leaving two siblings and their mother dead in Indian-administered Kashmir.

The three died after a shell fired by Pakistani soldiers hit their home in Poonch region near the Line of Control (LoC) that divides the Himalayan territory of Kashmir between the two nuclear-armed rivals, police said.

The children's father was critically wounded and has been admitted to hospital.

In Pakistan-administered Kashmir, a man and a boy were killed by Indian shelling in Nakiyal, said Nasrullah Khan, a hospital official. Khan said a man was also wounded in the

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