

WEATHER  
FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S  
TEMPERATURES

DHAKA

H 34.0 | L 23.7

MYMENSINGH

H 32.2 | L 19.0

CHATTOGRAM

H 33.8 | L 22.0

SYLHET

H 33.7 | L 21.1

RAJSHAHI

H 33.4 | L 17.8

RANGPUR

H 32.1 | L 17.6

KHULNA

H 34.5 | L 25.5

BARISHAL

H 34.3 | L 24.2

COX'S BAZAR

H 32.0 | L 21.5

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours till 6pm today, UNB said quoting the Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:07pm and rises tomorrow at 6:07am.

# Disaster risk reduction not possible without coordination

## Speakers say at workshop on 'Towards a resilient Dhaka'

Putting up arbitrary road barriers during night time in many neighbourhoods is a potential hindrance to timely firefighting in the capital, said a senior fire fighter at a workshop in the city yesterday.

"At times, we rush to a fire incident but have to take a detour halfway due to road barrier or dug-up roads that delays the fire fighters' arrival to the scene," said Abul Kalam Azad, senior station officer of Baridhara Fire Station.

Fire department is not kept informed of which city road is undergoing repair or construction work, he said at the workshop titled "Towards a resilient Dhaka city".

Neighbourhood-based welfare societies put up these road barriers in the name of "security", making many important roads off-limits to public and emergency rescuers like fire fighters, said Azad.

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and a Japanese NGO, SEEDS Asia, jointly organised the workshop on World Bank funded "Urban Resilience Project" (URP) and Jica-sponsored "Capacity Building for Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction in Urban Areas of Bangladesh".

Azad, who has served in Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara for last couple of years, said that the fire department has so far trained about 50,000 volunteers out of a targeted 62,000 for disaster management.

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Tar-black water of Buriganga is a result of toxic waste released from factories on its banks for years. The stinky water is unfit for use even after treatment. The pollution is so acute that it affects aquatic species as well. The photo was taken recently, ahead of International Day of Action for Rivers observed yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

# Scrap plan to raise gas price or face movement

## Dr Kamal tells govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday demanded that the authorities withdraw the proposal to hike gas price.

Dr Kamal, also convener of Jatiya Oikyafront, said Gonoforum will wage a movement if the government does not scrap the proposal and stop "fraudulence" in the name of public hearing on the issue.

Terming the proposal illogical, he said the move will increase people's living cost as well as hinder production and development. "This [the hike] will impact industries, daily essentials and even the transportation sector," he said in a statement.

State-run Petrobangla and its distribution companies are

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# Inaccurate demarcation will legalise encroachment

## Green activists criticise walkways without identifying river boundaries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criticising the government for constructing walkways on rivers before demarcating boundaries of the waterways accurately, green activists yesterday said the action would legitimise existing encroachment.

"It seems that BIWTA (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority) is carrying out an eviction drive on the Buriganga to pave the way to build walkways instead of reviving rivers," said Sharif Jamil, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa).

He was speaking at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity. To mark

International Day of Action for Rivers 2019, Bapa organised the event where green activists shared their observations on the ongoing drive against river encroachment.

"If you check patterns of eviction drives, you'll find that BIWTA is only evicting establishments that create barriers in building walkways. Moreover, to save a power plant, built on the Buriganga land, BIWTA is putting pillars on the river bypassing it," Sharif Jamil alleged.

Terming the 2009 High Court verdict "dynamic", speakers said the HC directed the authorities concerned to set up boundary pillars surrounding Dhaka rivers and

demarcate those accurately.

It also directed them to demolish all the illegal establishments, after identifying the boundaries.

But it appears that in the last nine years the HC order was not implemented properly, they said. The boundary pillars were set up incorrectly and as a result, the rivers were encroached upon indiscriminately.

In the name of eviction, some ineffective and small initiatives were taken from time to time, they alleged.

The green activists said about 10 years ago, the authorities built 20km walkway on

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# Increase budget allocation for youth

## Say speakers at Prothom Alo-Oxfam roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inadequate budget allocation, lack of apt expenditure and coordinated approach in developing global standard skills are failing the country's youth, speakers at a roundtable said yesterday.

To overcome this inertia, they urged the government to increase budget allocation for youth notably from 0.27 percent and stressed the integration of marginalised youths in budget implementation process.

Bangla daily Prothom Alo and Oxfam in Bangladesh organised the roundtable on youth budgeting at a conference room of CA Bhaban in Dhaka.

Speaking as chief guest, Planning Minister MA

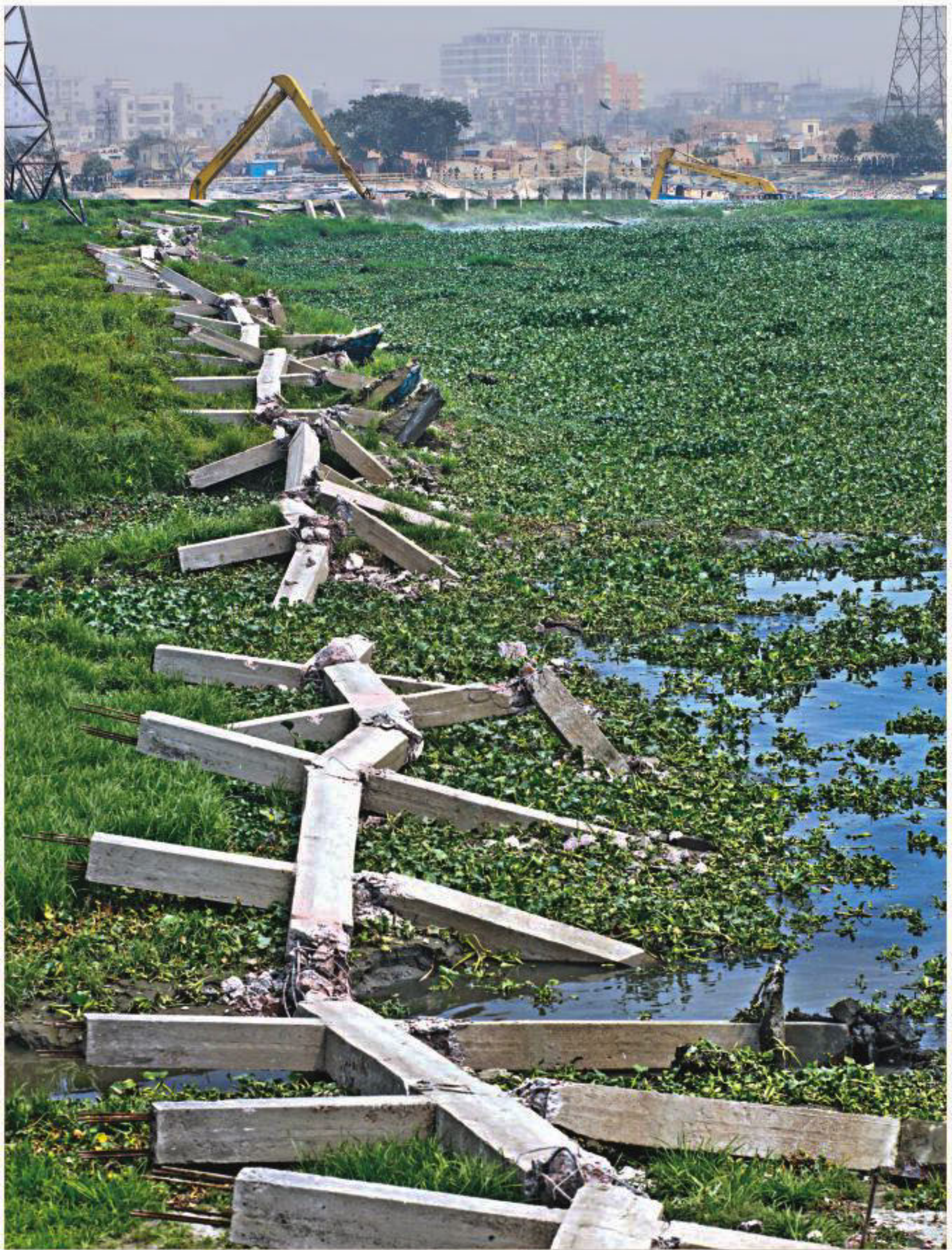
Mannan said, "In fact, two-third of the population in the country are youth. To build a welfare state, we have to well-equip and mainstream the youths."

The government has adopted integrated policy for youth development, whereas stability of policy is important, regardless of who comes to power in future, he said, urging the civil society to play a strong role in this regard.

Conducted by Sohrab Hossain, associate editor of Prothom Alo, representatives from different government and non-government youth organisations and youth entrepreneurs participated in the discussion.

Speaking at the event, lawmaker Abdullah Al Islam Jakob, chairperson of the permanent

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A BIWTA excavator knocks down boundary pillars on the Buriganga in the capital's Gabtoli area yesterday. The authorities dismantled some 55 structures as part of their on-going drive against illegal establishments along the Buriganga and Turag rivers.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

# ZIA ORPHANAGE TRUST GRAFT CASE

## Khaleda files leave-to-appeal petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday filed a leave-to-appeal petition with the Supreme Court challenging the High Court verdict that doubled her five year jail term in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case.

On October 30 last year, the High Court delivered the verdict, accepting ACC plea for revision that sought enhancement of the punishment handed down to her by a lower court in February 2018.

In the petition filed yesterday, the former prime minister prayed to the apex court to stay her 10-year sentence and grant permanent bail in the case.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court is yet to set any date for hearing on the petition.

Talking to reporters, Barrister Kayser Kamal, a lawyer for Khaleda, said that HC has enhanced her punishment "unfairly, unjustly and unreasonably, as Khaleda has not committed any corruption".

The HC delivered the verdict without adequately hearing the arguments from her lawyers, Barrister Kayser claimed.

Khaleda landed in jail on February last year, after a special court in Dhaka sentenced her to five years in jail in connection with the case.

Subsequently, a petition was filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission, following which the HC on October 30 increased the punishment to 10 years' imprisonment.

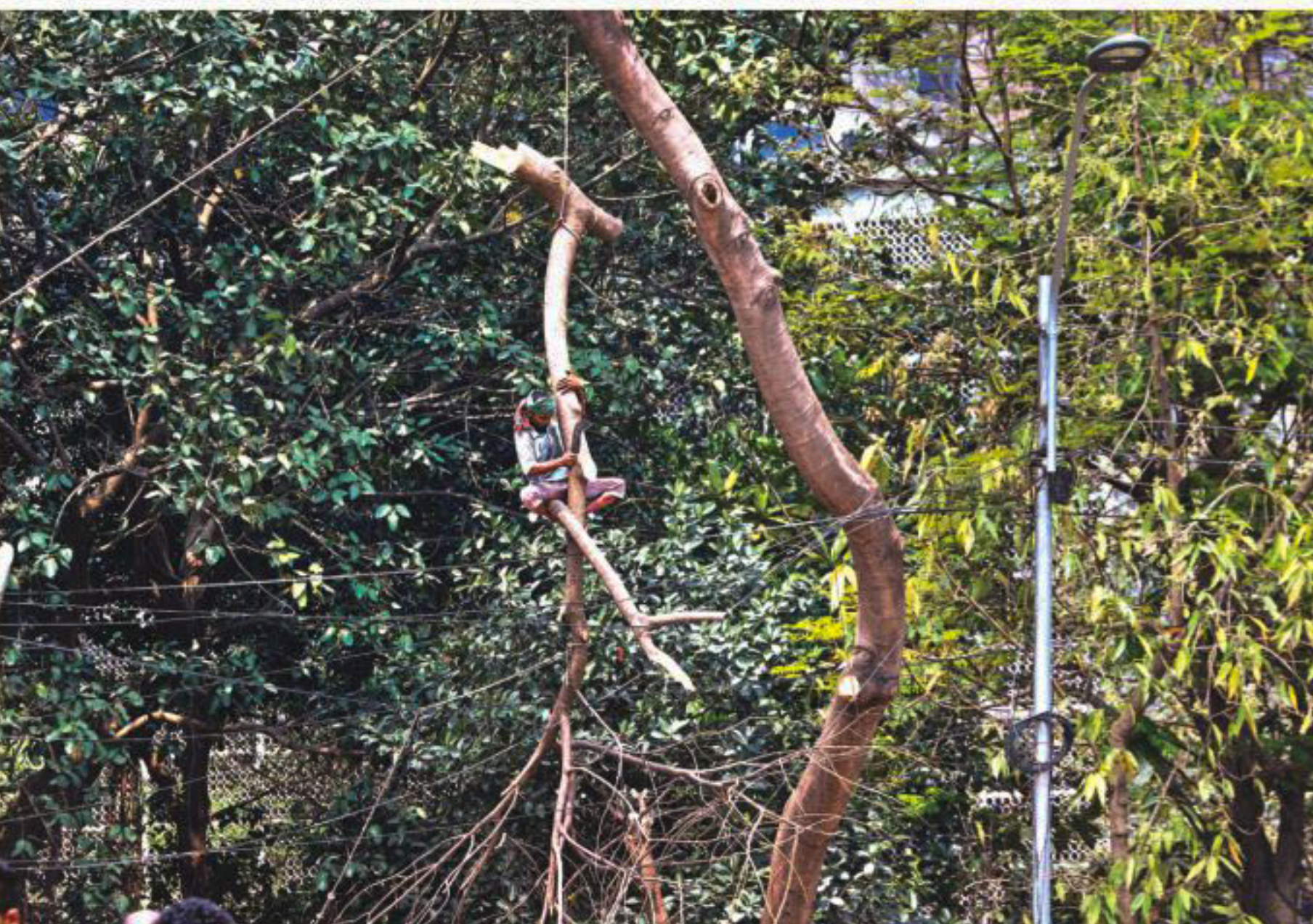
'SHOW KHALEDA ARRESTED FOR RELIGIOUS PROVOCATION'

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered Gulshan Police Station to show the BNP chief arrested in a case filed over religious provocation and spreading communal hatred, reports BSS.

Metropolitan Magistrate Ziaur Rahman passed the order and set April 24 for the authorities to submit a report in this regard.

Bench assistant Rakib Chowdhury said, the court also documented the bail plea submitted by Khaleda's counsel in the case.

Jananetri Parishad president AB Siddiqui filed the case on January 5, 2016 after the BNP chief made a speech at a function in the capital's Engineers Institution on December 21, 2015.



A man dangles precariously on a branch held only in place by rope, while cutting a part of the very same branch. The photo was taken in front of Raju sculpture in Dhaka University on Wednesday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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# BANGLADESH BANK CYBER HEIST

## RCBC filed defamation case to deceive Filipinos: Law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) in Philippines has filed the defamation case against Bangladesh Bank to deceive the Filipinos.

"The government of Philippines and its senate had held RCBC responsible of hacking into the Bangladesh Bank (BB) reserve," he said, while talking to reporters after a meeting with Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Hiroyasu Izumi at his secretariat office. The law minister said that the role

of RCBC officials in this regard did not seem to fall under lawful conduct.

"It will not be defamatory if Bangladesh Bank files another case against them following legal procedures", Anisul Huq said.

RCBC recently filed a defamation suit against the central bank of Bangladesh for "baseless allegation" in connection with the \$81 million cyber heist three years ago. The case was filed with Regional Trial Court in Makati City of Manila on March 6.

A notice was served to BB Deputy Governor

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