



The newly-built 2nd Kanchpur Bridge over the Shitalakhya in Narayanganj is ready to be opened to traffic by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina tomorrow. It is built to ease traffic congestion on the Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet highways. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

## BCL leader stabbed to death in N'ganj

STAR REPORT

A local leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League was allegedly stabbed to death by a group of miscreants over previous enmity in Narayanganj's Rupganj upazila on Wednesdays.

The dead, Sohel Mitra, 27, was the publicity secretary of BCL Bhalobha union unit, said police.

The miscreants waylaid Sohel when he was returning home around 9:00pm and stabbed him indiscriminately, said Badsia Mitra, sub-inspector (SI) of Rupganj Police Station.

He was declared dead after being taken to a local hospital, the SI said.

Police sent the body to Narayanganj General Hospital for an autopsy.

Four people were detained for interrogation and a case was filed in this connection, he added.

Mahmudul Hasan, officer-in-charge (investigation) of the police station said an extortion case was filed against the deceased a few days ago.

"We are suspecting that the case and previous enmity are the causes behind the murder," he added.

## 2 found dead

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The deceased are Imran Hossain, 27, of Utthi village in Chuadanga's Jibonagar upazila, and Lipu Hossain, 32, of Bajumadi village in Alandanga upazila.

Abs Russel, assistant superintendent of Chuadanga police, said locals informed Jibonagar police after finding the body of Imran on Dingkhali field. Police rushed to the spot and recovered the body about 10:30am.

The ASP said Imran stood accused in 14 cases, including rape, drug and robbery. His rivals might have killed him, the police official added.

Police recovered the body of Lipu from Kanaidangi field, said Rashedul Alam, officer-in-charge of Moheshpur Police Station.

Lipu was accused in 11 cases, including rape and robbery.

ASP Russel said both Imran and Lipu were members of the same gang which robs people.

The Daily Star could not contact the victims' families.

In another incident, a suspected drug trader was killed in a "shootout" with BGB members in Deil village of Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila early yesterday, reports our district correspondent.

The victim is Nurul Islam, 28, of Teknaf municipality.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of BGB-2 conducted a drive in Deil village around 4:00am, said Shariful Islam Chamakdar, acting commanding officer of BGB-2.

Sensing the presence of BGB members, the criminals opened fire. The BGB members returned fire, triggering the "gunfight". Nurul was killed during the third phase.

[Sources: Liberation War Museum]

## Laudable job

FROM PAGE 1

DNCRP's Dhaka office in October.

Around a week later, a phone call informed Mamta that her cheque Tk 17,300 was ready to be collected.

"I couldn't have realised the money without their [DNCRP] intervention," said a grateful Mamta.

Popular Life Insurance Managing Director and CEO BM Yousuf Ali could not be reached for comment on the issue.

Mamta's story is one of thousands that the DNCRP generates on a regular basis. The directorate is also fast bringing back consumer confidence in a country widely lacking it.

The DNCRP – which is under the commerce ministry – began its journey in 2009 against the backdrop of widespread allegations of disregard for consumer rights.

Since its inception, it has resolved 18,800 cases out of 21,524 complaints it received until the first week of February.

Sabina Afroz, another consumer who was wronged, happened upon the DNCRP's functions during a news broadcast on TV.

At the time, she was looking for a way to file a complaint against a spectacle seller at the capital's New Market who had sold her broken frames.

She discovered the defect after returning home. When she informed the seller, he refused to change it or give her a refund.

But after filing the complaint, the DNCRP looked into the matter and then found the fault was at the seller's end. They ensured that he compensated Sultana.

"I am happy that we have a consumer rights office. This was urgently needed in our country where business ethics is almost absent," said Sultana.

She urged the government to ensure more publicity about the Consumer Rights Protection Act and the directorate, saying it would make "businesses conscious on how to deal with customers and refrain from cheating".

Like Sultana, consumers who have gotten redress from the directorate have no apprehension of its existence was required.

As more people become aware of the DNCRP's activities, the number of complaints has started to grow, from 16,400 complaints the previous year to 9,019 in 2017-18.

The DNCRP, however, is yet to be fully equipped.

Currently, the body has some limitations – for instance, its mandate excludes real estate. And the DNCRP has 191 people against a requirement of 240.

The agency has offices in every district but only by name as many of those do not have any staffers, said officials.

The DNCRP has offices in 48 districts of which 16 districts are covered by giving additional responsibilities to different officers instead of them working exclusively for the directorate.

The directorate has 79 officers in total, including the DG, to protect rights of consumer up to the grass root level.

Despite the limitations, it continues to do good work.

## Yahya in town

FROM PAGE 1

of people in Bangabandhu's call for peaceful non-cooperation movement.

Bangabandhu said he had taken over the administration of East Pakistan except Dhaka, Cumilla (then Comilla), and Lashore (then Jessor).

He had made an announcement with 35 directives including continuation of the non-cooperation movement and a fresh action programme as the struggle entered its third phase.

[Sources: Liberation War Museum]

But not enough people know about the directorate's functions. The complaints mostly come from capital city dwellers. The number is fewer at district level and even fewer in upazila and union levels.

This is something that is being worked upon.

Meanwhile, the prospect of redress and the provision for getting a part of the fine slapped on the sellers have encouraged consumers to file complaints, according to officials.

Anyone can file a complaint against anti-consumer activities, such as selling goods and services at prices higher than the maximum retail prices mentioned; for adulteration, and failure to supply goods and services as promised.

A consumer has to file a complaint in writing to the DNCRP and drop it off, or send it via post, fax or email.

The complainant has to provide the office with his or her detailed address and mention profession. No fee is required, according to the DNCRP.

The complainant gets a portion of the fine slapped on the seller or service provider as compensation for the trouble faced.

Asif M Saleheen filed a complaint with the DNCRP in December 2017 against a Nomanpur tailor allowing his paralysed father board a aircraft even though they had bought the ticket mentioning that he needed a wheelchair to move.

Prominent activists Loujain Al-Hathloul, Tawfiq Al-Fassi, Azziz Al-Yousef and Eman al-Nafjan were among those who attended Riyadhi's criminal court, where they heard the charges against them, court president Ibrahim al-Sayari said.

## Govt plans

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Kamal said, adding that the government would install a total of 500,000 FIDDS in shops across the country in phases.

Hinting at reducing the corporate tax rate in the next national budget, the minister said he thought the rate was too high in Bangladesh compared to other countries.

Currently, listed financial sector companies in Bangladesh pay corporate tax at 37.5 percent and non-listed ones at 40 percent.

About bringing educational institutions under the Monthly Payment Order (MPO) system, Kamal said the government had taken measures to bring all eligible educational institutions under the system in phases in the next three years.

The institutions would be brought under the MPO system in the next fiscal year, but the money would be paid in phases in three years, he added.

The minister said the education ministry had been conducting a study on the MPO and the government would bring educational institutions under the system based on recommendations of the report.

Earter, Education Minister Dipu

## Budget plans

Fresh institutions under MPO

Crop and health insurance

Company for recovering default loan

## Saudi women activists on trial after a year in detention

AFP, Riyadh

Ten Saudi women appeared in court Wednesday for the first time since being detained last year in a sweeping crackdown on activists, ratcheting up scrutiny of the kingdom's human rights record.

The trial of the women, who have been held for nearly a year without charge, comes as Saudi Arabia seeks to placate international criticism over last year's brutal murder of insider-trading critic Jamal Khashoggi.

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It has a different configuration to many of the other 400 surviving devices, and was a later model of the device which was first invented in the 1920s prior to the breakout of the Second World War.

It included the ability to allow the operator to go back if they made a mistake and a counter to show how long a message was – and also had a plug socket in its side which allowed it to be connected to a printer.

The only other machine with this feature was auctioned by the German auction house Hermann Historica in October 2009.

Enigmas, which resembled large typewriters, were used by German air, naval and army forces to safely send messages throughout the Second World War.

It features a cog-wheel driven wheel mechanism with irregular stepping and a crank to wind it back and forth.

Earlier models had been distributed globally, but when WWII began models started to be developed for Axis forces alone – and were not distributed again after Hitler's defeat in 1945.

The G31 machine was first borrowed by the museum from a collector in 2012, and then subsequently purchased in 2016, after it was dug up in the central European farmland.

Historians at Bletchley Park then spent more than 114 hours restoring the device, and were able to discover the secrets of its past, including that it was likely sold to the Hungarian military in the early 1930s who bought it during their retreat in 1945.

"They were being developed and

## Don't panic

FROM PAGE 1

The technical committee that evaluated the proposals said there was no need to raise the transmission and distribution charges in the current fiscal year, said Kamruzzaman, deputy director of the BERC.

Considering the supply of 300 million cubic feet per day (mcmfd) of gas through LNG imports, the gas tariff at the consumer level will have to be increased by 10.46 percent to Tk 7.92 from Tk 7.17 per cubic metre by this fiscal year.

The end price of gas has to be raised to Tk 11.77 if gas supply from LNG sources goes up to 650mcmfd in May as forecast by the technical committee. The price needs to be set at Tk 12.43 when the supply hits 800mcmfd at the start of the next fiscal year.

Pashchimanchal and Karnaphuli gas distribution companies placed their proposals yesterday's hearing.

Like their peers Titas, Bakhrabad, Jalalabad and Sundarban, the two proposed increasing gas prices to Tk 12.19 from Tk 8.63 per cubic metre, as the average production cost will be Tk 12.19 after blending LNG with locally produced gas.

They called for raising gas price by 80 percent to Tk 1,350 from Tk 750 for a single-burner stove, and to Tk 1,440 from Tk 800 for a double-burner stove.

At the public hearing, Ramin Hossain Prince, a central leader of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, said LNG import had been made inevitable by popular demand throughout the country. It was done in the interest of the section of businesspeople and brokers.

"House rent, transport cost, power tariff, fertiliser prices – all will go up if the proposals are implemented. We

can't accept it."

Md Mizanur Rahman Ratan, general secretary of the Rajshahi chapter of Bangladesh CNG Filling Station & Conversion Workshop Owners' Association, said if compressed natural gas (CNG) prices are increased, the sector would be in big trouble.

Throughout the four-day hearing, the distributors were slammed for cornering the market and for giving emphasis on profits rather than improving services and bringing more consumers under their networks.

"We are importing LNG for the sake of people, industries and entrepreneurs," he added.

Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL), a state-run transmission firm, seeks to increase the transmission charge to Tk 0.5665 per cubic metre in the current fiscal year from Tk 0.4235.

Imported LNG will cost the country Tk 39,086 per cubic metre. It now buys the same amount of gas for Tk 0.7097 from state-run Bangladesh Gas Fields Company Ltd, for Tk 3,0414 from Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Ltd, and for Tk 0.2028 from Sylhet Gas Fields Ltd and for Tk 2.55 from international companies operating in Bangladesh, according to Petrobangla.

Consumers can send their opinions about the proposals to the BERC by March 20.

BERC members Rahman Mursheed, Mahmudul Haq Bhuiyan, Md Abdul Aziz Khan and Md Mizanur Rahman were also present yesterday's hearing.

## Nazi code-breaking

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GO TO PAGE 20

International Women's Day theme, "Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change".

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appliance company.

Her job as a technician is considered to be a non-traditional career for women, but it provides for her son's education.

Nasima says, "I felt lucky to have received skills training at an 'older' age. My dream is to be a supervisor in the production floor of this factory."

Around 31 million women in Bangladesh are not engaged in education, employment or training according to labour force data.

Addressing this issue, Country Director of ILO Bangladesh Tuomo Poutiainen said, "Women face multiple challenges in attaining quality education and in finding decent employment. The ILO, through its skills development programme in Bangladesh, is creating opportunities for women of all ages to access vocational education and training and find job placement."

Shoko Ishikawa, country representative of UN Women Bangladesh, "We have to create an environment where women can thrive as entrepreneurs by removing structural barriers such as gender-bias that banks have towards financing women's businesses and increasing government investment in women-friendly public services such as child care that would free up women's time."

Speaking at the event, UNFPA Representative Dr Asa Torkelson said, "Clearly, women's access to reproductive health has been a game changer for women's economic empowerment across the world, and Bangladesh too."