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“The way corruption has spread to their [government’s] every organ, it won’t be possible to rescue them.”
SENIOR BNP LEADER MOUDUD AHMED AT A DISCUSSION IN THE CAPITAL.



“He [Shakib] has been a big player for Bangladesh ... Obviously, he has made a mistake and he is paying for it.”
BANGLADESH CRICKET COACH RUSSELL DOMINGO ON THE BAN ON SHAKIB AL HASAN (PAGE 14)



“[Jeremy] Corbyn would be so bad for your country ... I’d like to see you and Boris get together... I think it’d be a great thing.”
DONALD TRUMP URGES EUROSCEPTIC HARDLINER NIGEL FARAGE AS UK GEARS UP FOR POLLS (PAGE 8)

A symbol of optimism

A remote village in Patuakhali bustling with activity as Payra power plant work nears end; local livelihoods see remarkable change

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and SOHRAB HOSSAIN, from Payra

As recently as five years ago, Sobhan Ali Howlader, a native of Kalapara upazila of Patuakhali, would barely make ends meet by catching fish at the nearby Andharmanik river.

Now, he feeds his family of six comfortably by exerting himself half as much, and it is all thanks to the construction of the \$1.56 billion Payra coal-fired power plant, one of the mega projects of the current Awami League-led government, which jumpstarted a myriad of commercial activities in the economically backward region -- and changed the lives of the natives for the better.

Announced with much fanfare in 2015, construction work for the 1,320 megawatt twin coal-fired power plant, a joint venture between the North-West Power Generation Company Bangladesh Limited and China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation, began in 2016. And sensing the onrush of workers, Howlader quit fishing and set up a tea stall near the site

Once this project is completed, Bangladesh’s power generation capacity will stand at 23,222 MW that is enough to bring 94 percent of the population under electricity coverage.

for the power plant, which was a deserted expanse of land then.

Today, there are 700-800 shops and restaurants in the area, all set up by people who previously depended on the physically demanding profession of fishing and farming for their livelihood.

Along with changing the lives of the locals for the better, the power plant has gone on to become a source of strength and comfort for the government: it is the only mega project that is coasting along more or less on schedule, with 9,000 Chinese and Bangladeshi workers toiling away round-the-clock.

As per the original plan, the first of the
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The coal storage silo of the under-construction 1,320MW Payra Power Plant in Patuakhali’s Kalapara upazila. The plant’s first unit, having a capacity of 660MW, is likely to be commissioned in January. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Shakib calls for calm and patience

STAR SPORT DESK

Bangladesh’s star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, in a Facebook post in the early hours this morning, asked his fans to show calm and patience. His message comes after the International Cricket Council (ICC) banned him for two years on October 29 for breaching its anti-corruption code.

“To all my fans and well-wishers, let me start by saying that I have been touched and felt blessed by your unconditional support and affection during what has been a very difficult time for me and my family. In the last few days I have realised more than ever what it means to represent
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AL lists 1,500 ‘infiltrators’

To be ousted before councils

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League has identified around 1,500 infiltrators who joined the party and its affiliated bodies on different occasions.

The party is sending letters to the presidents and general secretaries of its organisational units across the country to get rid of the infiltrators and controversial leaders, several AL insiders told this newspaper.

These controversial leaders will be ousted from the party’s associate and front organisations when their councils will be held at the upazila and district levels, said the insiders.

The move comes amid the ongoing anti-corruption drive that began in September. Several leaders of the AL and its associate bodies have been arrested over their alleged links with casino business, gambling and other illegal activities.

Besides, a travel ban has been imposed on 23 people, including Whip of the Treasury Bench Shamsul Haque Chowdhury and AL lawmaker Nurunnabi Chowdhury Shawon.

Talking to reporters yesterday, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said a list of 1,500 infiltrators was prepared under the supervision of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

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DEPORTATION FROM SAUDI ARABIA

Little steps to end expat workers’ woes

JAMIL MAHMUD

Recent deportation of migrant workers from Saudi Arabia brings to the fore how Bangladesh government fails to prevent malpractices in recruitment and ensure migrants’ welfare, according to experts.

Saudi authorities have sent back over 40,000 Bangladeshi workers in the last two years for staying there after their documents had expired, changing job without permission and not working for the designated employer in violation of the local law, according to Brac Migration Programme.

The Gulf country announced a crackdown on undocumented workers in November, 2017. Over 2.1 million migrants were arrested in the following year, according to Human Rights Watch’s World Report 2019.

Labour migration experts said the Bangladesh should have found out why the workers “became undocumented” in the oil-rich country. Bangladesh also should have raised the issue at global or multilateral

platforms.

Imran Sheikh, 26, of Faridpur’s Modhukhali was sent back along with 119 other undocumented migrant workers on October 4.

He had been detained on September 23 while going to a shop. He later learnt that he was declared “absconding” by his employer about three months before he was arrested.

He said he had given Tk 4 lakhs to a Bangladeshi broker who assured him of a job at a welding workshop in the Gulf country, he said.

However, when he reached the country, his employer forced him to work at a fertiliser factory.

As per Saudi law, it is illegal to work at a place other than the one designated in the visa.

“The company [employer] threatened me and other workers with deportation if we disagreed with them,” he told this correspondent over phone.

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Abrar murder charge sheet within a week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have made significant progress in preparing the charge sheet of Abrar Fahad murder case and are expecting to submit it within this week, Monirul Islam, additional commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has said.

He said two or three more people arrested in connection with the murder may be included in the charge sheet along with the 19 FIR-named accused as the law enforcers have found their involvement during investigation.

The DMP additional commissioner made the remarks while speaking as the chief guest at a debate competition held at Bangladesh Film Development Corporation in the capital yesterday.

Asked whether police had faced any political pressure while preparing the charge sheet, he said they had clear directives to take action against all those involved in the murder directly or indirectly, regardless of their political identities.

Asked about the information that some of the accused
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DSCC COUNCILLOR Manju on remand in narcotics, arms cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Moinul Haque Manju, a ward councillor of Dhaka South City Corporation, on a 10-day remand in two cases filed under the arms and narcotics control acts.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Dhiman Chandra Mondol passed the order after Sub-inspector Harun-Or-Rashid of Wari Police Station produced him before the court and sought a seven-day remand prayer in each case.

The court also put Manju’s driver Sajjad Hossain in a case filed on a five-day remand in the narcotics case after police produced him before it with a seven-day remand appeal.

Rab lodged the cases with Wari Police Station on Thursday night.

Earlier in the day, Rab arrested Manju in a case filed on October 30 over demanding Tk 2 lakh from a trader at the capital’s
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Five people, including four children, ride a motorbike in Chattogram city’s Tiger Pass area yesterday. Inset, pedestrians scale the central reservation of a road in the GEC intersection area to cross over to the other side. The new Road Transport Act came into effect yesterday with provisions for harsher penalties and stringent punishments for violation of traffic rules, but the tendency to flout the rules among drivers and pedestrians seems to have remained unchanged. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

ROAD TRANSPORT ACT BRTA, police not ready for enforcement

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and SHARIFUL ISLAM

Although the much-talked-about Road Transport Act, 2018 came into effect yesterday, it could hardly be enforced anywhere in the country due to a lack of preparation from the authorities, especially the BRTA and the police.

In several places, including in the capital and Chattogram city, traffic police educated road rules violators about different provisions of the stringent law.

The law enforcers could not impose any on-the-spot fines as their point of sale (PoS) machines, providing instant challan, were not updated in with the new law and also due to the absence of other relevant documents.

Besides, mobile courts, run by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), could not step in as the law was not incorporated in the schedule of the Mobile Court Act, 2009, said BRTA officials.

A schedule is a part of an act, often used to spell out in detail how the provisions would be in use.

The officials said the district administrations also could not operate mobile courts under executive magistrates over the same reason.

Asked why the schedule was not included in the mobile court act, Road Transport and Bridges Division Secretary Nazrul Islam said there was a “technical issue”.

“This is a matter related to the law and the home ministries. We are hopeful that the issue would be resolved by Sunday [tomorrow],” he said.

“There is no bar on implementing the law.”

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