

PHOTO OF THE DAY

PRABIR DAS



A little boy travels through Dhaka's Panthapath on a crate attached to a family member's bicycle -- an ideal winter morning commute, indeed. The photo was taken recently.

## Modernise jute mills to save the sector: labour leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Modern machinery and technology in government-owned jute mills can turn the sector profitable and can solve ongoing problems of the beleaguered workers, said leaders of Sramik Kormochari Oikya Parishad.

Leaders of the Parishad at a press briefing at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday also said enhancing skills of workers and reforming the current organogram of the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) are also important to ensure proper benefit of the reform.

"Currently 10,835 century-old handlooms (hessian, shaking and CBC) are operational in 22 factories under BJMC. Yearly production capacity of the three types of handlooms are 73 tonnes, but these older machines can produce only half of their capacity," said Shahidullah Chowdhury, president of Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra.

By using automatic [low-cost Chinese]

machines, it is possible to significantly increase productivity, said Shahidullah.

He said if the government does not go for modernisation, it will not be possible to save this sector.

This reform work will have to be done in phases, keeping scope for workers to continue production, said Fazlul Haque Montu, joint coordinator of the Parishad.

He said it is possible to get the same production from 3,000 Chinese automatic machines, replacing 6,232 old hessian handlooms.

Tk 1,000 crore would be needed to replace the hessian handlooms in the first phase, he added.

It is also possible to secure Tk 45 crore profit from Lotif Bawani Jute Mill after paying workers -- following the recommendations of Wage Board-2015 -- through increasing its production capacity, said Montu.

Among others, General Secretary of Jatiya Sramik League AKM Ajam Khosru spoke at the press conference.

## DHAKA TODAY

**SEMINAR**  
Future of Youth Leadership:  
Bangladesh Perspective  
Venue: Lakeshore Hotel  
Gulshan  
Time: 10am

**PROCESSION**  
Opposing fascism  
Venue: Jatiya Press Club  
Time: 3pm

**FAIR**  
Poush Mela 2019  
Venue: Canadian University of

Bangladesh  
Time: 12pm-4pm

**LECTURE**  
Economic growth, structural  
transformation and employment  
Venue: RC Majumdar Auditorium,  
Dhaka University  
Time: 4pm

**THEATRE**  
Eka Ak Nari  
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall,  
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
Time: 7pm



## INDIA'S CITIZENSHIP LAW Govt must prepare for consequences: Dr Shahdeen Malik

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh should take preparations in light of recent developments in neighbouring India over its National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, eminent jurist Dr Shahdeen Malik said yesterday.

Consequences of what is happening in India could be felt in Bangladesh in future, he told a programme at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

"I am not saying we have to face a great crisis... However, concerns cannot be brushed aside," he added.

The government has to take preparations to this end, including on legal aspects, he further said.

Shahdeen Malik said Bangladesh is already facing a crisis regarding the Rohingyas, and that a "political narrative" has been developed over the last couple of years on the issue which is "the border was opened for them on humanitarian grounds".

However, it's an international legal obligation of any country to open its border to persons who are fleeing persecution, he said.

The jurist said such a narrative has been developed largely because of lack of knowledge on relevant international law, and stressed on developing further expertise on "refugee laws" at the government level.

Expressing her concern over India's NRC and CAA issues, Prof Tasneem Siddiqui of Dhaka University's Political Science department said the government should form a taskforce to deal with the concerns.

The taskforce could comprise politicians from ruling and opposition parties and experts. They should sit for strategic planning immediately, she said.

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## Adopt uniform policy for appointment of teachers

President suggests UGC

BSS, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid yesterday asked the University Grants Commission (UGC) to play its due role in ensuring proper academic environment and quality education in the universities.

"Take necessary steps to make education more time-befitting at all public and private universities," the president said when a UGC delegation, led by its Chairman Prof Dr Kazi Shahidullah, submitted the "Annual Report-2018" to him at Bangabhaban in the afternoon.

President's Press Secretary M Joynal Abedin briefed journalists after the meeting.

President Hamid, during the meeting, stressed the need for setting world-standard academic curriculum to prepare the graduates.

The head of the state urged the UGC authorities to consider adoption

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## Fishing havens turning into dead zones

Experts call for comprehensive maritime policy



Participants of the roundtable at the The Daily Star Centre yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government needs to create a comprehensive maritime policy, experts at a roundtable at the The Daily Star Centre said yesterday.

This is especially crucial in the face of climate change, said Dr Lailufar Yasmin, professor of International Relations at University of Dhaka.

"The rate of heat absorption by the ocean is rising in a menacing manner. Among all the seas, Bay of Bengal is more at risk because it does not have connection with the Arctic ocean which is the coldest," she added. "Right now, havens for fishing are turning into dead zones."

Maritime policy does not simply mean a maritime security policy, it means managing ocean resources too, said attendees.

The discussion titled "Bangladesh: Our Maritime Future" was organised by Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies.

"We need to come out of a state-centred policy and think of coastal communities," opined Dr Niloy Ranjan Biswas, associate professor of International Relations at DU.

"The centre makes its storyline in

favour of the state's interest. We need to hear from the society too. For example, climate change is important to them," he added.

Seas and oceans are used by developed nations as tools for defence expansion, said Rear Admiral AMS Awal. "But least developed countries like Bangladesh have to use the sea for access to marine resources," he stated.

"We have the potential to contribute to the blue economy," stated Rear Admiral Awal.

"Blue economy" refers to the use of marine resources in a sustainable way, for economic growth.

"Our fish exports are declining. Our shrimp is polluting and damaging the coastal area," he added.

Blue economy should be a part of the sustainable development growth targets of Bangladesh, said Rear Admiral M Khaled Iqbal.

"We need to go into deep sea fishing. We have huge unexploited resources in the sea," he added.

Speakers also said that the ship-breaking sector needs to be made environment-friendly.

BIPSS President Maj Gen ANM Muniruzzaman (ret'd) moderated the event.

## Two confess to killing Tejgaon businessman

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two youths yesterday confessed to magistrates that they killed 70-year-old businessman Tobarak Hossain at his Tejgaon flat on December 25, with an intention for looting valuables.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Ziaur Rahman recorded a statement of Imon Hossain (20) at his chamber, while Metropolitan Magistrate Abu Sayeed recorded the statement of Golam Rabbi (24) at his chamber.

Syed Iftekhar Hossain, an inspector of Detective Branch of Police (DB) and investigation officer of the case, produced the duo at their chambers.

The two arrestees gave identical confessional statements to two separate magistrates, court sources said.

After recording their statements, the arrestees were sent to Keraniganj Central Jail.

Meanwhile, another Dhaka court yesterday placed Sohul Pradhan (29), Babul Pradhan (28) and Al Amin Khondkar Rihan (21) -- on four-day remand each after they were placed before the court with a 10-day remand prayer.

All five of them were arrested from Narayanganj and Cumilla on Saturday.

Tobarak, a businessman by profession, used to live in Shanti Niketon area of Tejgaon. On Wednesday, masked men entered the flat and stabbed Tobarak to death.

## Poverty reduction the key challenge

Planning minister tells seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Planning Minister MA Mannan yesterday said poverty reduction is the main challenge ahead of the government as the rate is still high, although the country has made significant economic progress in recent years.

"At present, one out of five persons [in the country] live below the poverty line. We are trying to bring it down to one out of 10 within the next five to seven years," the minister said while speaking as chief guest at a seminar organised by civic platform "Bangladesh-China Silk Road Forum" at a Dhaka hotel.

"We are trying our best to reduce poverty," he added. The minister said the government has undertaken various rural development plans in this regard.

About what Bangladesh can learn from the development in China, Mannan said

the base of Chinese economy has been established through its infrastructural development.

"We, perhaps, are moving towards that type of economy, which has already started to reap us benefits," the minister said, adding that Bangladesh has a lot to learn from China.

Speaking at the event, Chinese Ambassador to Dhaka Li Jiming said China has been working for Bangladesh's development for a long time. This partnership will continue in the future as China believes in cooperation, he added.

Noted columnist and writer Syed Abul Maksud, the forum's Chairman Dilip Barua, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Huq Inu, BNP central leader Abdul Moyeen Khan and former ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmed spoke at the programme, among others.



Freedom Fighter Mahfuzur Rahman Dilu being given a guard of honour in Moghbazar's Peyarabagh area yesterday. He was later buried at his village home in Sonargaon upazila of Narayanganj. Mahfuzur, father of The Daily Star's Deputy Chief Photographer Anisur Rahman, died at his residence on Saturday. He was 86.

## CORRUPTION ALLEGATION AGAINST GK SHAMIM ACC summons Sheikh Maruf for statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has issued a notice to former presidium member of Awami Jubo League central committee Sheikh Fazlur Rahman Maruf, to record his statement over corruption allegations against GK Shamim.

The notice -- signed by ACC's Director Syed Iqbal Hossain -- asked Maruf to appear before the anti-graft watchdog on January 7, confirmed an ACC official seeking anonymity. Maruf is the younger brother of Awami League Presidium Member and lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim.

Over a month after his arrest, the ACC on October 21 filed a case against contractor SM Golam Kibria Shamim and his mother for amassing Tk 297.08 crore wealth beyond known sources of income.

During the arrest of Shamim at his residence on September 20, Rab recovered Tk 1.81 crore and US \$9,000 in cash, and Fixed Deposit Receipts of Tk 165 crore.

Besides, ACC found that Shamim has moveable and immovable property worth

about Tk 133.26 crore, which he amassed beyond known sources of income.

Shamim is known to be an influential contractor of the Public Works Department and other government organisations. His firm GKB & Company (Pvt) Ltd was handling 15 major construction projects of the government, involving around Tk 3,000 crore.

The projects include construction of Rab Headquarters in Ashkona; Revenue Building in Agargaon; Artha Building; two 25-storey buildings at the Secretariat; National Institute of Traumatology, Orthopedics and Rehabilitation; the Neuro Science Building, and the NGO Foundation in Agargaon.

In yesterday's notice to Maruf, ACC said there are allegations against Shamim of bagging big construction projects through huge amount of bribe given to government officials, operating casino business, and laundering crores of money abroad illegally.

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## National Prof Maniruzzaman no more



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Professor Talukder Maniruzzaman passed away at Apollo Hospitals in the capital early yesterday.

The 81-year-old professor of political science department at Dhaka University was taken to the ICU of the hospital on December 9 following an ischemic stroke.

His son Sadik Muneer said he breathed his last around 3am.

Sadid also said his

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