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## Autonomy gone, efficiency too

Now a statutory body largely dependent on the ministry with its governing council non-functional

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

As an executing authority managing the vast water resources of the riverine country, Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) has been handicapped ever since the government curtailed its autonomy.

The government turned the BWDB into a statutory body from an autonomous one with the promulgation of the Bangladesh Water Development Board Act 2000.

Although the move was aimed at making it more "efficient", BWDB has been gradually sinking into a bureaucratic tangle since then -- mainly due to a largely symbolic governing council, said experts and insiders.

The 13-member governing council, headed by the water resources minister, with a mandate to look after operational jobs and major projects, is supposed to hold

a meeting every two months, according to the BWDB Act.

In the last 20 years, 120 meetings of the governing council were supposed to be held, but only 45 took place till date, according to its officials.

The 45th governing council meeting, scheduled for May 2019, was deferred a number of times before it was finally held on October 19 this year.

When it was an autonomous body, it used to hold meetings twice a week. It helped to take quick decisions, said a BWDB official working there for three decades.

In the BWDB Act, the governing council, headed by the water resources minister, was incorporated at the top of the organogram.

Other members include the secretaries of water and environment ministries, finance division and local government

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



People callously gather in the middle of the road near the Moghbazar Wireless ramp of the Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover to catch a bus yesterday morning. Many vehicles get of the ramp at speed there. Some of the people standing there are also not wearing masks.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Probe four cases against OC Pradeep

Court orders police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazaar

A court on Monday directed police to investigate four cases against Pradeep Kumar Das, suspended officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, and some others.

The cases were filed on the charge of killing people in the name of "gunfights".

Judge Tamanna Farah of the Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court-4 in Cox's Bazar Sadar passed the order, court sources said.

The court asked the Criminal Investigation Department of police to investigate two cases, the Police Bureau of Investigation to investigate one and the Additional Superintendent of Police

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

## Bangabandhu watches unveiled

Indian high commission has them made

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A series of special edition wristwatches, designed and commissioned by the High Commission of India in Dhaka, were unveiled yesterday to mark the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader and Indian High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswami unveiled the watches at the secretariat office of Quader.

The watches bear the image of Bangabandhu and his signature on the dial to represent the timelessness of his message as well as his eternal relevance, according to a press releases.

Speaking on the occasion, Quader recalled the shared history of the Liberation War which is the bedrock on which the Bangladesh-India bilateral relation is built.

Quader, also the general secretary of the ruling Awami League, thanked

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

## FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

### Swedish support for UN membership

November 18, 1972  
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

INDO-BANGLADESH RIVER ROUTES REOPEN TOMORROW

The river routes between India and Bangladesh will be reopened from tomorrow after a lapse of seven years. The minister of shipping and transport will inaugurate the service from Calcutta tomorrow. Initially, cargo operations will be confined to the two arterial routes which were used by steamer companies in the past: one from Calcutta to Dhubri via the Sundarbans, Khulna, Barisal, Chandpur, Goalundo and Bahadurabad and the other from Calcutta to Karimganj in the Cachar district of Assam via the Sundarbans, Khulna, Barisal, Narayanganj, Bhairab Bazar and Sherpur. The two regions are particularly suited for the transportation of items like tea, jute, timber and base oil.

WICKMAN ASSURES SWEDISH SUPPORT Swedish Foreign Minister Wickman discloses today in Dhaka that his government would give 15 million US dollars (Tk 12 crores) purely as grant to Bangladesh during the 1973-74 fiscal year. He says

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6



## Teacher gets life term for raping student

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A Kushtia court yesterday sentenced a Qawmi madrasa teacher to life term imprisonment for raping a class eight female student in the district's Mirpur upazila early last month.

The court also fined the convict Tk 1 lakh and ordered the money to be provided to the victim.

The convict is Abdul Quader, superintendent of Sirajul Islam Darul Uloom Maryam Nesha Women Madrasa in Poradaha of Mirpur upazila. It is a residential madrasa.

According to prosecution, Abdul Quader called the resident student at his office room around 8:00am on October 3 and raped her. He raped the girl again at night and threatened her not to disclose the matter.

But the girl told a friend about the incident on October 5 when she fell

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## Biden mulling top staff

REUTERS, Washington

President-elect Joe Biden will focus on shaping his core White House team on Tuesday while outgoing President Donald Trump presses on with his increasingly tenuous legal fight to reverse his loss in the U.S. election.

Biden's senior campaign staff have been discussing their roles in the transition and the new administration that takes over Jan 20. Several roles could be announced as soon as today, according to a person familiar with the matter.

US Representative Cedric Richmond,

who was a national co-chair of Biden's campaign and former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, is expected to join the administration in a senior capacity, as is Steve Richetti, who has long been a close adviser to Biden, the person said. Richmond's move would leave his Louisiana congressional seat open.

Jen O'Malley Dillon, who was brought in early this year as Biden's campaign manager and is the first woman to lead a winning Democratic presidential bid, is expected to be named a deputy chief of staff.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



### PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 18

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:00 12:45 3:45 5:25 7:00  
JAMAAT 5:35 1:15 4:00 5:30 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A farmer busy harvesting paddy from his land in Rangunia upazila of Chattogram. The harvest is putting a smile on many farmers' faces as they hope that their hard work would pay off with a good price. The photo was taken in the upazila's Gumai Beel area on Monday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Delhi plans curbs as infections rise

Global cases cross 55m mark

AGENCIES

As India's capital battles its worst phase in the coronavirus pandemic, authorities drew up plans yesterday to reinstate some curbs, such as lockdowns of some markets, if necessary, although elsewhere in the nation new infections are falling.

Meanwhile, global cases topped 55 million as US and Europe reeled from surging infection ahead of what experts a "difficult winter".

The novel coronavirus has killed at least 1,328,048 people since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP at 11:00 GMT yesterday. At least 55,022,350 cases have been registered.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## VICTORY DAY PROGRAMMES Threatening letter stops rehearsals at school

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A school in Dinajpur's Ghoraghat suspended all rehearsals for cultural programmes for next month's Victory Day celebrations after receiving a letter demanding a halt to such activities as Islam does not support it.

Shafiqul Islam, headmaster of Joyrampur High School, told this correspondent about the development and that he filed a general diary with Ghoraghat Police Station in this regard on November 12.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

No Mask No Service  
সেবা পেতে মাস্ক ব্যবহার করুন

করোনা ভাইরাসের দ্বিতীয় ঢেউ সংক্রমণ প্রতিরোধে করণীয়

সঠিক সঠিক নয়  
\* সঠিক পদ্ধতিতে মাস্ক ও স্যানিটাইজার ব্যবহার করুন

\* যারা জটিল রোগে ভুগছেন, তারা করোনা আক্রান্ত হলে দ্রুত হাসপাতালে চিকিৎসা নিন।

\* ইউনিয়ন ভূমি অফিস, উপজেলা পরিষদ, জেলা পরিষদসহ সকল অফিস আদালতে মাস্ক ব্যবহার করুন ও সামাজিক দূরত্ব বজায় রাখুন।

\* যানবাহনে মাস্ক ব্যবহার করুন ও নিরাপদ দূরত্ব বজায় রাখুন।

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

লাইফস্টাইল, হেলথ এডুকেশন এন্ড প্রমোশন স্বাস্থ্য শিক্ষা বুরো, স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়