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**"We won't put burden on you [project directors], rather we'll discuss with you and solve the problems ..."**  
PLANNING MINISTER MA MANNAN ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STANDARDS, EFFICIENCY



**"We'll send some nurses to help carry out vaccination in the Maldives particularly for the large Bangladeshi community there."**  
FOREIGN MINISTER AK ABDUL MOMEN



**"Our strong message is we will do what we can from here in New Zealand."**  
PM JACINDA ARDERN ON SUSPENDING MYANMAR POLITICAL, MILITARY TIES

## BB RESERVE HEIST

# Criminals from 6 nations involved

*Finds CID after a 5-year investigation; charge sheet once the case in US is settled*

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Criminals from at least six countries, including Bangladesh, have been found involved in the \$81-million heist from Bangladesh Bank reserves with the New York Fed five years ago.

Several high officials of the Criminal Investigation Department of Bangladesh Police have disclosed the findings to The Daily Star after five years of investigation into the heist.

A case filed by the BB over recovery of the stolen money is now pending with the Southern District Court in New York. Once that case in the US is settled, the charge sheet in the case in Bangladesh over the biggest-ever cyber heist in history would be submitted, said CID officials.

Confirming the development, CID chief Mahbubur Rahman, additional inspector general of police, yesterday said the probe into the BB reserve theft case was at the final stage. But the lawsuit over recovery of the stolen money was still pending with the US court.

"We have engaged a law firm in the US. We met officials of the firm and discussed the case with them a few days ago," the CID chief told this correspondent.

"They [the officials of the law firm] said it would not take too long, and that the case should be disposed of quickly... We are now waiting for settlement of the case.

"We will submit our charge sheet as soon as the case at the US court is settled."

About the wait for the US court verdict, Mahbub said, "We seek to protect the interest of our people and the country. It is our people's money."

After discussions with the law firm and Bangladesh's panel of lawyers

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**A small kingfisher is trapped in a gill net, set up along a vegetable field, in Rangpur city's Damdama area yesterday. Locals said farmers use such traps to keep birds, cattle, and poultry away from their plants and crops. Growers free the birds and animals from traps later. However, some birds get hurt or die.**

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKAR

The Daily Star  
CELEBRATES  
GLORIOUS  
50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE  
COURAGEOUS  
30 YEARS OF JOURNALISM  
30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
SPECIAL  
SUPPLEMENTS

This year, we celebrate The Daily Star 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, as well as 50 years of Bangladesh's independence. To mark the occasion, we are bringing out a five-part 184-page special supplement series, beginning February 11, which looks at Bangladesh's achievements over the last 50 years and its aspirations for the next 50. We thank you our dear readers for your sustained support over these 30 years, and we hope you enjoy this modest effort of ours.

The five segments are: **"FROM CHALLENGED BEGINNINGS TO STANDING TALL"** which features a collection of articles on the many achievements and challenges on the path to developing a sustainable Bangladesh. **"GOING DIGITAL"** which covers how our business community has adopted technology to tackle the next 50 years.

**"AGENTS OF CHANGE"** which casts a spotlight on the youth who are working towards building a better Bangladesh.

**"GOLDEN JUBILEE BEGINNINGS"** which looks into the wider world around us, from heritage weaves, the current state of the women's liberation movement, to observing the harmony in striking snapshots of a city.

**"ASPIRATIONS FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS"** which focuses on what more Bangladesh needs to accomplish that it couldn't in the first 50.

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## BUSINESS

### Default loans drop riding on loan moratorium

Default loans went down in 2020 on the back of a general forbearance on loan payments, a development that does not cheer experts and bankers as the fall did not paint the actual scenario. Non-performing loans stood at Tk 88,734 crore last year, down 5.93 per cent year-on-year, data from the Bangladesh Bank showed.

STORY ON B1

## MASS VACCINATION

# Teachers to get jobs in a week

*Over one lakh vaccinated, two lakh registered in a day*

MOUIDUH AHMED SUJAN

The government plans to vaccinate all teachers as it aims to reopen educational institutions, which were closed on March 17 last year to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

It comes when the mass inoculation against Covid-19 has gained momentum with more than one lakh people taking the first shot yesterday, the third day of the nationwide vaccination campaign.

"We are planning to vaccinate all teachers of all age groups so that the educational institutions can be reopened," Prof ABM Khurshid Alam, the director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star yesterday.

Earlier in the day, State Minister of Primary and Mass Education Md Zakir Hossain said all the teachers of the government primary schools would be administered Covid-19 vaccine within a week, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already asked the health ministry to bring the teachers under the vaccination drive. We'll try our best to complete their vaccination within the next seven working days," he said while talking to reporters after getting vaccinated at the Clinic Building of the Bangladesh Secretariat.

He also urged the ministry staff and the teachers aged 40 and above to

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## CURBING CORRUPTION

### Won't allow pick and choose policy

HC warns ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said it would not allow any "pick and choose policy" of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

"It seems from the activities of the commission that it implicates people according to its wish. We will not allow the commission's such pick and choose policy in any manner," said the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim. It also said the "hands of the corrupt have to be broken" to ensure the country's development. "Otherwise, the country will see no development."

The HC bench was hearing two petitions filed

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## PADMA RAIL LINK PROJECT

# May cost even more, take even longer

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The Padma Bridge Rail Link Project, the biggest project of Bangladesh Railway, is facing several challenges that may have an adverse impact on its cost and duration, officials said.

Changes in the design of viaducts on both sides of the bridge, the Covid-19 pandemic, changes in work scopes following the demands of local representatives and government decisions are major the challenges, they said.

These issues of the Tk 39,246 crore project came to light at a meeting yesterday at Rail Bhaban. The meeting was call for a review of the progress of the four biggest projects the state-run transport agency is implementing.

Railways ministry's Secretary Salim Reza, who presided over the meeting, heard different aspects and challenges the projects are now facing and gave several directives to overcome those, meeting participants said.

The government approved the rail link project in March 2016 with the cost initially estimated to be Tk 34,989 crore to connect the capital with Jashore through a 169-km rail line over the under-construction Padma Bridge.

But the physical work of the project commenced only in July 2018, mainly due to the delay in signing of the loan contract with Chinese Exim Bank.

In the meantime, project costs climbed to Tk 39,246 crore and the deadline was extended up to 2024, two years more than the original tenure.

The construction of the rail route suffered a setback due to problems in

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## BANGLADESH BORDER

### India should probe abuses by BSF men

Says Human Rights Watch

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Indian authorities should investigate and prosecute newly alleged abuses by the Border Security Force (BSF) along the Bangladesh border, Human Rights Watch said yesterday.

In a media release, the rights body said Indian and Bangladeshi nongovernmental organisations have reported that the BSF is continuing to commit abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and ill-treat Indian and Bangladeshi border residents.

"The Indian government orders to border forces to exercise restraint and limit the use of live ammunition have not prevented new killings, torture, and other serious abuses," said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at HRW.

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**Two workers wash plastic bags, already used by nearby factories for packing chemicals, in the Dhaleshwari river near Savar Bank Town, polluting the water body. Traders buy the bags from the factories and clean those for sale. The photo was taken on Saturday.**

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## FOSSIL FUEL POLLUTION

# One in 5 deaths globally: study

*Bangladesh among most affected countries*

AGENCIES

More than 8.7 million people died in 2018 from fossil fuel pollution, significantly higher than previous reports suggested, researchers said yesterday.

This accounts for nearly 20 percent of adult mortality worldwide, said researchers from Harvard University, who collaborated with the universities of Birmingham, Leicester and the University College London.

The researchers estimated that exposure to particulate matter (PM 2.5) from fossil fuel emissions accounted for 18 percent of total global deaths in 2018, a little less than 1 out of 5.

Half of that was split across China and India, with another million deaths equally distributed among Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan and the United States, they reported in the journal Environmental Research.

According to Sydney Morning Herald, a quarter of all deaths in China were caused by fossil fuel pollution (representing 2.3 million people), rising to 30 percent in India and 35 percent in Bangladesh, the highest percentage in the study.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the claims.

The toxic cocktail of tiny particles cast off by burning oil, gas and especially coal was responsible for a quarter or more of the mortality in half a dozen nations in Asia.

"We often discuss the dangers of fossil fuel combustion in the context of CO2 and climate change and overlook

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