

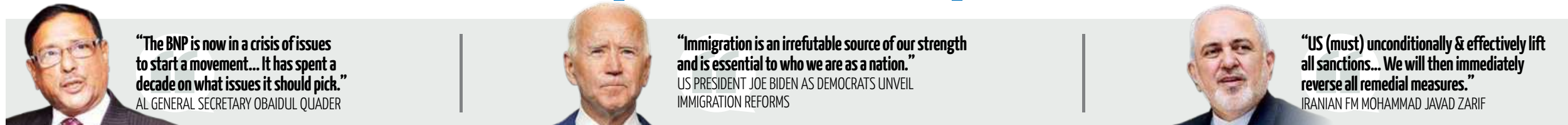


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JS to decide fate of Papul soon

Receives Kuwait court verdict against him; parliamentary process of taking action against the convicted MP begins

PORIMOL PALMA and RASHIDUL HASAN

A decision on parliament membership of Mohammad Shahid Islam alias Kazi Papul is likely to be made in two to three days, around three weeks after a Kuwait court sentenced him to four years in prison in a bribery case.



Earlier yesterday, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said his ministry received the 61-page verdict -- both in Arabic and English -- and sent it to the Jatiya Sangsad speaker and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Like in Bangladesh, it takes some time to write the full verdict in Kuwait. Besides, it also took a while to secure it from the court in the Middle East country, he said.

“We were under heavy pressure because the media often ask us about it. The honourable speaker also often calls us. Therefore, we had appointed a lawyer to get the copy of the verdict fast, through our ambassador in Kuwait,” he told reporters after an event titled “WE Colorful Fest 2021” organised by Women and E-commerce Forum at Purbachal Club.

Papul was staying in Kuwait as a businessman. He neither had diplomatic passport nor did he seek any assistance from Bangladesh mission in Kuwait as he had good connections over there, Momen said.

The independent lawmaker from Lakshampur-2 was also fined 1.97 million Kuwaiti dinars (Tk 55 crore) by the court in the case on January 28.

The copy of the verdict on his conviction reached Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury on Thursday, and the process of taking action against the convicted lawmaker began.

“We received the copy of the verdict Thursday. We will evaluate the matter in line with the constitution and the rules of procedure of parliament,” she told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

Zafar Ahmed Khan, senior secretary of the Parliament Secretariat, said it might take two to three days to complete the process of taking a decision on the matter.



A three-storey building lying on its side after it toppled in Keraniganj's Charail Khelarmath area yesterday morning. Members of the fire service rescued eight people -- seven of them injured -- from the building. Officials said it might have collapsed due to faulty construction.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Mayhem in Noakhali

50 hurt as AL factions clash; 9 bullet-hit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

At least 50 people were injured in clashes between two factions of ruling Awami League over establishing supremacy in Noakhali's Companiganj upazila yesterday.

One group was led by Abdul Quader Mirza, younger brother of AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, said police.

The other group was led by Mizanur Rahman Badal, organising secretary of upazila unit AL, also a follower of lawmakers Ekramul Karim Chowdhury and Nizam Uddin Hazari.

At least nine people, including a local journalist, were hit by bullets during the incident. They were shot in their chests, heads, and necks.

Of them, two were critically injured. They are Borhan Uddin Muzakkar, 30, correspondent of local online portal Barta Bazar, and Kamal Uddin, 60, an AL activist. The two were shifted to Dhaka for better treatment. The rest were undergoing treatment at Noakhali General Hospital,

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Mother tongue neglected in higher education

University students find very few textbooks, research works written or translated in Bangla

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangla has long been neglected in the country's higher education as a medium of teaching and learning mainly because of a lack of textbooks and adequate research work.

Educationists say the authorities concerned lack the eagerness to ensure that there are adequate academic and reference books in Bangla.

Outside of the department of Bangla literature and some other departments in the arts faculty, not many books written or translated in Bangla can be found in academia.

At Dhaka University's sciences, biology, earth and environmental, and engineering and technology faculties, only 34 out of the 3,201 reference books are in Bangla, according to the syllabus of the departments.

Seven of the 13 departments of these faculties do not have a single reference book in Bangla.



Sadly, 104 authors of many of those reference books are Bangla-speaking.

Juwel Rana, who graduated in microbiology, said “I have never seen a Bangla book being referred in my classes at Dhaka University. And I hardly ever see good translations of academic books.

“Many students lacking in English skills feel frustrated and that must affect their grades.”

The DU published 174 books since its inception in 1921. Only 61 of those are in Bangla. But 26 of those books are not available anymore, according to records.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Akhteruzzaman said, “We need to encourage our scholars to write science, medical and engineering textbooks in Bangla.”

He added that a foreign language is a barrier in learning.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

BCB allows Shakib to choose IPL over SL Tests

SPORTS REPORTER

The country's sports arena was abuzz yesterday morning when news broke that premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan was granted permission to skip the Sri Lanka Tests to play in the upcoming 14th edition of the Indian Premier League.

Shakib had sent a letter to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) asking permission to sit out the two-Test tour of Sri Lanka in April as he wants to fulfil his IPL commitment for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), who bought the left-hander for 3.2 crore rupees during Thursday's auction.



SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

G7 refocuses on Covid recovery

Pledges \$7.5b to Covax facility to ensure vaccines for poorer nations, vows to uphold 'multilateralism'

AFP, London

Wealthy G7 powers yesterday ramped up health funding for poorer nations after accusations they are hoarding coronavirus vaccines, as US President Joe Biden and the rest of the leaders declared a “turning point” from the psychodramas of the Trump era.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, this year's chair of the G7, vowed to free up any surplus UK vaccines for poorer countries at a future date, and underlined the need for collective action to recover from the pandemic.

“We've got to make sure the whole world is vaccinated because this is a global pandemic and it's no use one country being far ahead of another, we've got to move together,” he said in opening remarks at the online summit, the G7's first since last April when the group was rent apart by then President Donald Trump.

At the G7, Biden brought a pledge of \$4 billion (4.6 billion euros) in US aid to the UN's Covax fund to buy vaccines for global distribution.

Germany said it was giving an extra 1.5 billion euros for the global rollout, and the European Union doubled its own Covax funding to one billion euros.

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Volunteers paint graffiti at Central Shaheed Minar yesterday as part of the last-minute preparations for observing Amar Ekushey and the International Mother Language Day tomorrow. On this day, the nation pays glowing tributes to the martyrs of the historic Language Movement.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

FAMILY FEUD Youth 'kills' stepmother, her two kids

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A woman and her two children have been murdered allegedly by her stepson over a family feud in Sylhet sadar upazila.

Abad Hossain, 22, stabbed and hacked Rubiya Begum, 30, her daughter Maha Begum, 9, and son Tahsin, 7, around midnight on Thursday and tried to set their home in Mirer Mahalla on fire, said police.

On being informed by the neighbours, a team of police rushed to the spot and detained Abad on the spot.

Rubiya, Maha and Tahsin were taken to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital where Rubiya and Maha were declared dead. Tahsin died hours later at the hospital, said Syed Anisur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Shahporan Police Station.

Abad's father Abdal Hossain, 42, is a shopkeeper and he was at work when the incident happened, he said.

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