

## 'CRIMES BY LAW ENFORCERS' 102 SC lawyers for independent probe

File petition with HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 102 Supreme Court lawyers yesterday collectively filed a writ petition with the High Court, seeking its directive on the government to constitute an independent commission to investigate allegations of crimes committed by law enforcers.

They submitted the 1,667-page petition -- including 1,522 pages of documents -- as a public interest litigation to the HC, saying that a section of law enforcers are reportedly involved in 18 types of crimes, including extrajudicial killing, rape, stalking, drug trading, torture, causing custodial deaths and enforced disappearances.

Citing the petition, their lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir told The Daily Star that 589 incidents of such offences have reportedly taken place between January 2017 and December 2020.

Since law enforcers themselves conduct inquiries into the allegations against them, the probes are not done fairly and neutrally, he said.

The lawyer said there are independent

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



A trader attempts to salvage some of his produce yesterday morning at Hasina Market in the capital's Karwan Bazar. A fire spread from a restaurant in the market on Saturday night, and engulfed a number of shops.

PHOTO:  
PRABIR DAS

## Children faced online harassment during the pandemic: ASK study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A survey conducted by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) revealed that a large number of children have experienced various forms of online harassment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The survey was conducted in five districts (Dhaka, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Cox's Bazar and Satkhira) with 108 children; 61 girls and 47 boys who were selected through purposeful and random sampling. The findings were disclosed at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Eighty-three percent of them were students and 17 percent were working children. Eighty-four percent of the interviewees use different types of social media while 94 percent of the interviewees informed that their lives have been clearly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Among these children, a staggering 30 percent that they experienced online harassment last year. Eighty-eight percent of them informed that they were harassed by unknown people on the internet.

Among victims of harassment, 56.25 percent are girls. Forty-one percent of these children informed their parents about the harassment and 12 percent refused to talk about their experience.

The acts of harassment include disclosing private and sensitive information on the internet, online sexual harassment and abuse, cyber bullying, blackmailing, getting exposed to pornography or sexual contents.

Many children reported that they have experienced several forms of harassment at the same time.

However, legal steps have been taken only in six percent of these cases. The survey found online harassment of children sharply increased during the pandemic. According to a pre-pandemic survey of ASK published in early 2020, some 8.39 percent girl children had experienced online harassment.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Won't contest UP polls under party banner: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has decided not to take part in union parishad election anymore under the party banner although it participated in the municipality polls.

The decision came at the party's standing committee meeting, alleging that the local government elections are not held in free and fair manner.

"We excepted that the government will take initiative to hold a free and fair local government polls and the Election Commission will play a neutral role. But the arrangements in municipality and upazila elections are so frustrating that the party has decided not to participate in the upcoming union parishad election," said party Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

Addressing a press conference at BNP chairperson's Gulshan office, Fakhru said free and fair election is not possible under this incumbent Election Commission.

"Its [the EC] task is to implement the agenda of the unelected government," he added.

When asked whether the party will boycott all sorts of elections, Fakhru said, "Till now our party's decision is to boycott the union parishad polls. We will not nominate any candidate for the election."

The veteran BNP leader said they had participated in the municipality election as his party believes in democracy.

## Rab launches onsite verification system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time in Bangladesh, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) has launched an Onsite Identification and Verification System (OIVS) to check profile of a criminal or suspect instantly.

OIVS will have profiles with details of NID, passport and immigration history, criminal record and previous arrest history.

It will provide information on whether a person violated traffic rules. It will help law enforcers trace identity of any unidentified body.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal inaugurated the system at the ministry yesterday as chief guest.

The minister also inaugurated a television commercial titled, "Mrittonjoye Sahoshe Manusher Pashe (By the people with immortal courage)", to commemorate the sacrifices made by deceased Rab personnel.

Col Tofail Mostofa Sarwar, additional director general (operation) of Rab, said any mobile team of the force will be able to check a criminal or suspect's identity instantly. It will also save time, he added.

Mostofa Kamal Uddin, senior secretary of home ministry, said criminals often hide information but through this new system they will not be able to do so.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## 'We all know how independent the judiciary really is'

Supreme Court Justice Mirza Hussain Haider says on his farewell

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Outgoing Supreme Court Justice Mirza Hussain Haider yesterday urged all to refrain from doing anything that might stigmatise the Supreme Court, which he termed the symbol of justice.

"I think the country's judicial system will be more matured and improved with coordinated efforts of all. Collective and coordinated efforts are prerequisite for ensuring justice. So everyone that's involved with judiciary, must work intensively in a coordinated manner. Unity among all from lower grade employees to senior officials of courts is essential to ensure justice," he said.

The justice made the remarks while delivering a speech at his virtual farewell reception in which Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, other justices of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Attorney General Abu Mohammad Amin Uddin and senior lawyers joined.

About independence of the judiciary, he said, "Constitutionally the judiciary is independent. But we all know and understand how independent the judiciary really is. The jurisdictions [that are] the state's three organs -- the executive, the legislature and the judiciary -- have been defined by the constitution. Directives have been given to the three organs to work as complementary to one another. It has been determined by the constitution which organ will do what, so that none can cross their limit."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## No alternative to coordination

Says Quader on ensuring road safety; BRTA service week begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday emphasised on proper coordination among stakeholders to curb road crashes and ensure road safety.

"We have to improve coordination. Road safety is our highest priority," Quader said while inaugurating a special service week of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) marking the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Quader, also Awami League general secretary, took part in the programme virtually.

The minister also inaugurated the enrollment and collection of bio-metric fingerprint of licence seekers by the newly-appointed vendor of BRTA.

Chennai-based Madras Security Printers Ltd began taking fingerprints of licence seekers in four districts and will start the same process at seven divisional headquarters from next week.

BRTA has been providing smart licence cards in a limited scale for a long time but its distribution would start full fledged now and the long wait for smart card is going to end, Quader added.

The minister also said much has to be done to ensure road safety as people are getting killed in road accidents regularly.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## Find out who they are

HC asks ACC, govt on those who laundered, deposited money with foreign banks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know the details, including names and addresses, of Bangladeshi nationals and organisations who have laundered and deposited money with foreign banks, including those in Switzerland, and what steps have been taken against them.

The court asked the authorities concerned of the government and Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to submit before it -- by March 30 -- the lists of names, addresses and status of the persons and organisations and to report on the steps taken against them.

In response to a writ petition, the HC issued a rule asking the authorities to explain in four weeks why their inaction to recover the money laundered from the country should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the court also asked the authorities to show cause as to why they should not be ordered to constitute a special investigation team to find out Bangladeshi nationals' illegal money deposited with foreign banks.

At the same time, the HC ordered the government to explain why it should not be recommended to reform the relevant laws in order to recover the huge amount of money laundered from the country and deposited with the foreign banks.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim came up with the order and rule after hearing a petition filed, seeking necessary steps for bringing back the money laundered from the country.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Rajshahi DC backs creating jobs for hijra community

OUR CORRESPONDENT, RU

During a discussion programme with the hijra community in Rajshahi on Saturday, the district's Deputy Commissioners offered jobs to two members of the community.

The meeting was organised by Diner Alo Hijra Songho, a non-government development organisation at the conference room of Rajshahi District Commissioner's office.

Speaking as the chief guest, Rajshahi Deputy Commissioner Abdul Jalil said, "We have to ensure education and human rights for all communities to take the nation forward. If needed, we have to set up separate educational institutions to reach the hijra community."

While talking to the members, he said, the administration will reach hijras in Rajshahi and arrange employment for them according to their qualifications.

During the discussion, deputy commissioner Abdul Jalil instantly offered jobs to two members of the community, one as computer operator and the other as office assistant.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## 'Masters and Prodigies' on display

Art exhibition begins at Galleri Kaya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An art exhibition featuring works of 34 eminent artists from India began yesterday at Galleri Kaya in Uttara. Titled "Masters and Prodigies", the exhibition was inaugurated by Vikram Kumar Doraiswami, High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh.

"Putting together an exhibition of this scale, even in India, where these artists are from, would not be an easy achievement," he said.

The exhibition is dedicated to the birth centenary of renowned sculptor and printmaker Somnath Hore (1921-2006).

"Somnath Hore was a friend of my father," said Goutam Chakraborty. "They studied together at the Government Art College, Kolkata."

"Masters and Prodigies" showcases 67 artworks done in etching, lithograph, serigraph, silkscreen, woodcut print, intaglio and wood engraving, including some historically significant pieces.

After the independence of India, revered artist M F Husain (1915-2011), along with some other artists of his



Visitors at the exhibition, that will be open every day from 11am to 7:30pm till March 16.

PHOTO: STAR

time, led a movement to extricate art from the formulaic colonial displays of Indian scenes. On the other hand, renowned printmaker Somnath Hore was interested in humanist themes.

The pain and suffering of impoverished people during the Bengal Famine of 1943 was reflected through Hore's "Wound" series, where he used pulp print technique to portray the essence of wounded humanity.

Celebrated artist S H Raza (1922-2016) created a distinct identity for Indian art.

K G Subramanyam (1924-2016)

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## WORLD DIABETES DAY

## Early diagnosis key to tackling it

MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

In 1961, five young friends went for physical check-ups to Dhaka Medical College Hospital on a sudden plan. Of them, four were found to have no issues. But the other friend, Mahub-uz-Zaman, was diagnosed with diabetes.

"This was a different time. Nobody wanted to admit that they have diabetes," Mahub, now 84, told this correspondent yesterday. "I chose not to hide it. From then on, I have passed 60 years following a healthy routine."

Not only did Mahub do that, but he went on to become the incumbent chairperson of the Patients Welfare Committee of Birdem hospital.

For all his efforts to raise awareness of the disease, the Diabetic Association of Bangladesh honoured him with a golden crest yesterday, at a discussion programme on the World Diabetes Day.

This goes along with doctors' words, who say diabetes does not need to be a burden if it is diagnosed timely.

According to International Diabetic Federation, there are more than 84 lakh diabetic patients in Bangladesh. It estimates the number to rise to 1.14 crore by 2030 and 1.5 crore by 2050. Around half of the diabetic patients in the country show no symptoms before clinical diagnosis.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



SWAT and Bomb Disposal Unit of Chattogram Metropolitan Police held a joint drill at the CMP Headquarters field yesterday. US Ambassador Earl R Miller joined the event, inset, where he thanked CMP for being a "partner" in the war on terror.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

## Ban on hilsa fishing in six districts begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

A two-month ban on netting, selling and transporting hilsa starts today.

The ban will be enforced in 432km stretch of six districts including three in Barishal division, Fisheries Officer Masud Ara Momi told The Daily Star.

The districts are: Barishal, Chandpur, Shariatpur, Lakshmipur, Bhola and Patuakhali.

Instructions have been given through the upazila nirbahi officers of the areas to make this programme a success. Preparations have also been made to conduct operations against violators, said officials at the Fisheries Department.

According to sources at the department, 100km from Shatnal Point in Chandpur to Char Alexander in Lakshmipur, 90km from Charilisha to Charpal in Bhola, 100km from Charveduria in Bhola to Charrustam in Patuakhali, 82km from Barishal Sadar to Mehendiganj upazila, 20km from Naria to Bherdiganj of Shariatpur, and 40 km area of Andharmanik river in Kalapara of Patuakhali will be under this ban.

Fishers of the six districts will be given 40kg rice per VGF (vulnerable group feeding) card during the ban, said officials.

However, Israil Pandit, president of the Barishal District Small Fishermen's Association, said 40kg rice is not sufficient, and it should be increased to 150kg.