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## PURCHASE OF 10 LOCOMOTIVES Ministry probe finds breach of contract

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

South Korean Hyundai Rotem Company has supplied 10 locomotives to Bangladesh Railway deviating from some clauses of the contract, a probe committee has found.

The three-member committee, led by an additional secretary of the railways ministry, has blamed Hyundai and a firm hired by BR for the pre-shipment inspection for this, three people who are aware of the probe findings told The Daily Star.

The committee has recently submitted its report to the ministry and a meeting in this regard, chaired by Railways Secretary Salim Reza, was held at the Rail Bhaban yesterday. A representative from Hyundai was also present.

At the meeting, the secretary informed the participants about the probe findings and formed a technical committee led by Mohammad Hassan Mansur, the previous director of the project, to find a solution.

The metre-gauge diesel electric locomotives -- bought under the project worth around Tk 300 crore -- arrived at a railways workshop in Chattogram's Pahartoli after they were unloaded at the Chattogram port in September last year.

Later in its report, a commissioning committee said the technical specifications of three capital components -- alternators, compressors and traction motors -- of the supplied locomotives did not match the specifications mentioned in the agreement, showed railway documents obtained by The Daily Star.

Under such circumstances, the project authorities halted

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Protesters lie on the ground after police open fire in Myanmar's Mandalay yesterday. Myanmar has been facing chaos since February 1, when the military seized power in a coup and detained much of the country's civilian leadership, including leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

PHOTO: REUTERS



## Moinuddin Abdullah new ACC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Managing Director of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation Mohammad Moinuddin Abdullah has been appointed chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Besides, former chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Jahurul Haque has been made commissioner of the ACC.

The Cabinet Division yesterday issued a gazette notification in this regard. On January 28, the Cabinet Division had formed a five-member selection committee to pick a new ACC chairman and a commissioner.

The tenure of the current commission will expire on

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## 26,695 rape cases filed in last 5 years

Police report to HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 26,695 rape cases have been filed across the country in the past five years, said a short report submitted by the office of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) to the High Court yesterday.

Of the cases, 4,331 were filed in 2016, 4,683 in 2017, 4,695 in 2018, 6,766 in 2019 and 6,220 were lodged till October 2020, according to the report, signed by Md Rezaul Karim, additional deputy IGP.

Deputy Attorney General Nawroz MR Chowdhury placed the report, on behalf of the IGP office, before the HC during a hearing on a writ petition in line with its October 21, 2020, order.

Nawroz also sought two months' time for submitting the complete report on this issue.

The bench of Justice Md

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## ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

### 'Can Pakistan be saved?'



People lining up to donate blood for the injured of the non-cooperation movement in Dhaka on March 4, 1971.

MARCH 4, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### AL ASSUMING THE ROLE OF A DE FACTO GOVERNMENT

In a statement issued on March 4, 1971, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman asked government and non-government offices where employees had not yet been paid their salaries, to function between 2:30 pm and 4:30pm for the purposes of disbursing salaries during the next two days of hartal. The banks should also function during these hours for cash transaction within "Bangladesh" only in respect of salary cheques not exceeding 1,500 rupees. No remittances should be effected outside "Bangladesh", he added.

Issuing these directives, according to Kamal Hossain, was the first step towards the Awami League assuming the functions of a de facto government in the eastern wing. He refers to the timing of transaction, as an example, which was deliberately limited from 2:30pm to 4:30pm, rather than in the morning, to show that offices and banks were not

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## PAPUL'S VACANT SEAT By-election in Laxmipur-2 on April 11

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

By-elections to the Laxmipur-2 constituency will be held on April 11 as Kazi Papul's position got vacated on the grounds of moral turpitude after his conviction in Kuwait for bribery.

On the same day, polls will be held in 371 union parishads (UPs) in the first phase and 11 municipalities in the sixth phase of the staggered elections. Election Commission Secretary Humayun Kabir Khandaker told a press briefing yesterday.

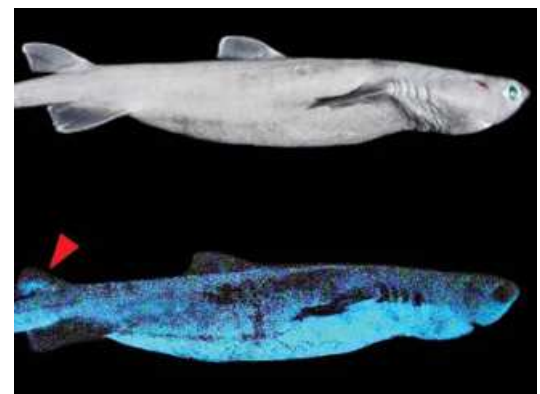
According to the schedule, the deadline for submitting nomination papers is on March 18.

Returning officers will examine the papers on March 19, and candidature cannot be withdrawn after March 24.

Electronic Voting

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## Glow-in-dark sharks found off New Zealand coast



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have been left puzzled by a glow-in-the-dark shark after conducting the first experimental study of the deep-sea dweller.

The researchers, from Belgium and New Zealand, found that the kitefin shark possessed bioluminescent sites along its belly, sides, back and dorsal fins which were controlled by hormones.

Samples were collected from the Chatham Rise area of seabed east of New Zealand.

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## New policy for faster rice import

Govt curtails bidding time

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and DWAIPIYAN BARUA

To replenish the country's fast-depleting food stock, the government has approved a proposal to lessen the time of bidding process by over a month for ensuring a faster import of rice.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in a meeting yesterday approved in principle the proposal that slashed the time from 42 days to 10 days starting from the publication of advertisement in newspapers.

While addressing a briefing virtually, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal told reporters that the measure was taken since there was less rice production this year.

Rice production was hampered due to natural disasters like flood

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## Vaccination mandatory for hajj 2021

Says Saudi Arabia

REUTERS, London

Saudi Arabia's health ministry has ruled that only people who have been vaccinated against Covid-19 will be allowed to attend the hajj this year, Saudi newspaper Okaz reported on Monday.

"The Covid-19 vaccine is mandatory for those willing to come to the hajj and will be one of the main conditions (for receiving a permit to come)," the report said, citing a circular signed by the health minister.

Saudi Arabia stakes its reputation on its guardianship of Islam's

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### PRAYER TIMING MARCH 4

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5-15 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30  
JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A father gleefully holding his son on a railing, showing him his new home, while disembarking one of the six ships carrying the fifth batch of Rohingyas from the Cox's Bazaar camps to Bhashan Char. Around 2,260 Rohingyas arrived on the island around 3:30pm yesterday. Another 2,200 or so are expected to arrive this afternoon.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

## CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC 168m kids missed school for a year

Says Unicef; US brings forward vaccine goal

AGENCIES

Schools for more than 168 million children globally have been completely closed for almost an entire year due to Covid-19 lockdowns, according to new data released by Unicef yesterday.

Furthermore, around 214 million children globally -- or 1 in 7 -- have missed more than three-quarters of their in-person learning.

The analysis on school closures report notes that 14 countries worldwide have remained largely closed since March 2020 to February 2021.

Two-thirds of those countries are in Latin America and the Caribbean, affecting nearly 98 million schoolchildren. Of the 14 countries, Panama has kept schools closed for the most days, followed by El Salvador, Bangladesh, and Bolivia.

"As we approach the one-year mark of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are again reminded of the catastrophic education emergency worldwide lockdowns have created. With every day that goes by, children unable to access in-person schooling fall further and further behind, with the most marginalized paying the heaviest price," said Unicef Executive Director Henrietta Fore.

"We cannot afford to move into year two of limited or even no in-school learning for these children. No effort should be spared to keep schools open, or prioritise them in reopening plans."

According to latest data by Unesco, more than 888 million children worldwide continue to face disruptions

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