



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



REGD. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXXI No. 55 | FALGUN 24, 1427 BS | **Your Right to Know** | RAJAB 24, 1442 HIJRI | 20 PAGES PRICE : Tk12.00



Tenderly holding her baby in her arms, a mother attends a human chain in the capital's Shahbagh area yesterday. Bangladesh Garo Beauty Parlour Owners' Welfare Society organised the programme marking International Women's Day-2021, the theme of which was "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a Covid-19 world".

KHALEDA'S SENTENCE Law ministry opines for 6 more months of suspension

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The law ministry yesterday gave its opinion for extending the suspension of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's jail sentence for six more months.

"I have given my opinion on the application that sought a further extension of suspension of Khaleda Zia's jail sentence. In the opinion, I said the suspension of her jail sentence can be extended for six months on previous conditions," Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star.

"The government has no objection if Khaleda Zia receives specialised



COMMENTARY An appeal to the chief justice

'Tarnishing the country's image' needs defining

MAHFUZ ANAM

In Bangladesh, when we think, talk and seek justice, we think of the courts. And that is how it should be. Among the courts, the higher we go -- meaning the High Court, the Appellate Division -- the more important they become as symbols of justice. On the very top of that edifice sits the chief justice (CJ) who personifies and his office embodies, so to speak, the highest level of our justice system. It is to that person and to that office that we, as citizens, look up to as the last resort when we become victims of injustice. It is to the CJ, and the institution he heads, that we go when everything else fails us. That is how central this institution is to our freedom and rights and that is why it should be revered.

On Sunday, the CJ was presiding over a three-member bench of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and hearing a bail petition concerning Golam Sarwar, 61, who was arrested by the Rab under the Digital Security Act on March 15, 2020. The High Court granted him bail in October, 2020, (after 7 months) for a year on health grounds.

Pandemic exposed inherent weaknesses

Says health minister; claims govt was quick to react

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

One year into the detection of the first cases of coronavirus in the country, Health Minister Zahid Maleque thinks the tumultuous year of the pandemic exposed some of the weaknesses in the healthcare services.

"There have been inherent weaknesses in the healthcare facilities for a long time. That's why some crises arose at the initial stages. But we found out the loopholes quickly and acted promptly to resolve the issues," he told The Daily Star yesterday.



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33PC POSITIONS FOR WOMEN Major parties not there yet

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

All major political parties have failed to meet the 2020 deadline of reserving at least 33 percent of all committee positions at local and national levels for women while the Election Commission is doing nothing about it.

The commission is still in the dark as to which parties have or haven't met the deadline, unaware of the percentage of female representation in central committees of all the political parties -- not to mention those at the grassroots level.

Reserving at least 33 percent of all committee positions, including that of the central committee, for women by 2020 is a pre-requisite for any political party's registration with the Election Commission in line with the Representation of the People Order, 1972.

This target came about following an amendment to incorporate this provision into the RPO in 2008, and failure to meet this means the EC can cancel registration of a political party, according to EC officials.

The deadline ended more than two months ago.

Based on the numbers of female members of the major parties' central committees, as reported in The Daily Star last year, AL, BNP and almost all other parties fall short of the 33 percent target.

Only five parties claimed to The Daily Star that women made up one-third of their central committees. They are Gono Front, Bangladesh National Awami Party, Jatiya Gonotantrik Party, Zaker Party, and Khelafat Majlis.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad General Secretary Maleka Banu and women's rights activist Farida Akter are frustrated about the EC's inaction over the political parties' failure in this regard.

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Shishir shatters glass ceiling Becomes country's first transgender news anchor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Her voice on TV was bold and confident.

"Today is a special day for the country's mass media. Boishakhi TV and I reached a milestone," Tashnuva Anan Shishir said before the bulletin at 4:00pm yesterday.

"As a transgender woman, this is the first time in the country I am appearing before viewers as a professional newscaster.

"I am starting the delivery of the news bulletin expecting your [viewers'] love for Boishakhi TV for making history ...," she added.

She presented the midday news on Boishakhi TV on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Greetings and good wishes poured in under the recorded version of her first news presentation on YouTube as people hailed her and the TV channel.



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Bangladesh has a historic relationship with the UK. The former colonial ruler is now a major development and trade partner of Bangladesh. When Bangladesh celebrates its Golden Jubilee of Independence, the two countries also celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations. British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton Dickson recently shared his views on the relations, prospects and challenges with The Daily Star.

UK part of Bangladesh's economic success

PORIMOL PALMA and REFIYET ULLAH MIRDHA

TDS: How do you evaluate the 50 years of relationship between Bangladesh and the UK?

Dickson: It is a very strong relationship. There was very strong UK public support for Bangladesh's independence in 1971. Bangabandhu's first visit after release from Pakistani jail was to London. Bangabandhu then returned to Bangladesh via Delhi on a Royal Air Force aircraft.

Our relationship was built on a multitude of things. We have a very successful development relationship. For many years, Bangladesh has seen significant economic success and the UK has been a part of that.

We have a very well-integrated and successful Bangladeshi community of some 600,000 in the UK. Four British citizens of Bangladesh origin are now members of the British House of Commons.

So, there is a very strong people-to-people relationship. Also, we have a strong and growing relationship on trade, counterterrorism, and defence.



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TDS: How will you celebrate Bangladesh's 50 years of independence and diplomatic relations with the UK?

Dickson: We had plans for high-profile programmes, but it won't be

No revealing of identities of rape victims: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the government to immediately take necessary steps to stop online and print news media and electronic media from publishing and broadcasting identities and photographs of rape and sexual assault victims in line with the relevant law.

In response to a writ petition, the court asked four high-placed officials to submit separate reports to it after complying with the directive in 30 days.

The four are: secretaries to the ministries of information and home affairs and the chairmen of Bangladesh Press Council and Bangladesh Telecommunication and Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

The HC also issued a rule asking the respondents to explain in four weeks why their inaction and failure to stop publishing and transmitting news which refers to the character of the victims, humiliates or defames the victims and their family members should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the court also asked the respondents to show cause as to why

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Celebrating the chronicles of a gallant soul

The leader of the masses Late Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu; an eminent politician, former Presidium Member of Bangladesh Awami League; the founder of United Commercial Bank Limited and above all, a devoted follower of Father of the Nation has been posthumously awarded the Independence Award 2021.

In response to the call of independence by Bangabandhu, he actively participated in the Liberation War 1971 even in the wake of his brother's death and countless other sacrifices. Not only did he organize public opinion in favor of Bangladesh all over the world but also organized the nation's freedom fighters. In recognition of his remarkable contributions & achievements, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh posthumously awarded him the Independence Award 2021.

United Commercial Bank Limited expresses its sincerest gratitude and thankfulness to Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for this great honor.

