

## Govt to alleviate job uncertainty of journalists: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government is going to enact a law to eliminate job uncertainty of journalists in both print and electronic media.



In reply to a query from ruling Awami League MP Shahiduzzaman Sarker from Naogaon-2, the premier said journalists of print and electronic media suffer from uncertainty about their jobs, which is also a threat for free media.

"To remove this job uncertainty, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is going to enact a Media Workers (Terms of Service) Act, which is at the final stage for approval," Hasina said in her written answer.

Earlier, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, who was presiding over the sitting, tabled the question-answer session.

### "SUNDARBANS IS EXPANDING"

In reply to a query from Awami League MP Sultana Nadira (Women's Seat-15), Hasina told Parliament that the world's largest

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Women's rights activists, under the banner of "Samajik Protirodh Committee", yesterday formed a human chain in front of the National Museum in the capital, protesting what they termed the "unconstitutional" and "unacceptable" recommendation by a parliamentary committee on assigning an alternative person to give guard of honour to a deceased freedom fighter, in case the local Upazila Nirbahi Officer is a woman. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad President Dr Fauzia Moslem presided over the event, attended by representatives of Ain O Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha, We Can, IED and others.

PHOTO: STAR

## CORRUPTION, MONEY LAUNDERING

# Finance, health ministers come under fire at House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Strong criticism of corruption and mismanagement in different ministries continued in parliament yesterday, as lawmakers from Jatiya Party and BNP came down heavily on the health minister and finance minister for their failure to curb corruption and stop money laundering.

Opposition Jatiya Party MP Pir Fazlur Rahman slammed Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal for seeking names of money launderers from lawmakers.

"The finance minister is a talented person in the finance sector. He should know very well who are laundering money from the country," he said while participating in the discussion on the proposed budget for 2021-22.

He also criticised the finance minister for his failure to stop money laundering.

"Money is being laundered abroad, but the finance minister cannot stop it. The stock market is looted, the finance minister cannot find it out. The Financial Intelligence Unit of Bangladesh Bank says evidence of money laundering has been found in 1,024 cases in five years. Then why does the finance minister not get the information?"

Criticizing the finance minister for not being present during the parliament sitting, Fazlur Rahman said, "We are delivering speech in parliament on the proposed budget. But we did not find the finance minister in parliament yesterday (Tuesday) either. Not even today (Wednesday)."

The JP MP said, "PK Haldar is sleeping abroad after laundering huge amount of money and his girlfriends are being put to sleep in jail here."

He said the finance minister has sought the list from MPs about those who have laundered money from the country.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Since June 6, TCB trucks in Chattogram city saw people lining up to get their daily essentials for cheap. As the service is being halted today, many rushed to the sale points to stock up. This photo was taken yesterday from Tiger Pass area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

## Mamunul among 43 sued for Tk 20cr misappropriation

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Hefajat-e-Islam's former secretary general Mamunul Haque among 43 people has been sued for misappropriating Tk 20 crore.

Among the accused, 24 are religious speakers. Maulana Abdur Razzak Kasemi, director of Al Madrasatu Mueenul Islam, filed a case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Morshed Al Mamun Bhuiyan on Tuesday, court sources said.

The 24 accused religious speakers are Maunala Ataullah, Maulana Mahfuzul Haque, Mufti Selim Ullah, Maulana Shahriar Mahmud, Mufti Mamunur Rashid, Maulana Hanzala, Maulana Fakhru Islam, Maulana Mahmudul Hasan, Maulana Bin Yamin, Maulana Golam Muktedir, Maulana Muinuddin, Maulana Nuru Alam, Maulana Ali, Maulana Yousuf, Maulana Foysal, Maulana Tarek, Maulana Talha, Maulana Abdur Razzak, Maulana Abdul Aziz, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Mufti Jasim Uddin, Maulana

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Bank IT officer arrested for siphoning Tk 2.57cr

Three others also held; the amount was embezzled by altering electronic journals of ATM: DB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A racket led by an IT officer of Dutch Bangla Bank Limited have allegedly embezzled Tk 2.57 crore by changing the electronic journal of the bank's ATM.

A team of Dhaka Metropolitan Police's (DMP) Cyber and Special Crime Division of Detective Branch arrested four people including the IT officer's wife from different areas in Dhaka and Narayanganj on Tuesday, AKM Hafeez Akter, additional commissioner of DB, told a press briefing yesterday at DMP Media Centre.

Mir Md Shaharuzzaman Rony, a senior officer at DBBL's ADC Division, is the main perpetrator behind the embezzlement, according to DB.

"While working at the bank's ATM Monitoring Roaster Team, Rony changed electronic journal of ATM making 1363 transactions through 637 accounts and embezzled Tk 2.57 crore," said the DB official adding that they could not arrest Rony as he has fled the country.

The four arrestees are -- Saima Akhter, wife of Rony, Al-Amin Babu, Mehedi Hasan Mamun and Asaduzzaman Asad.

Describing the process of fraudulence, the DB official said that Asaduzzaman took agent banking membership of Dutch-Bangla Bank under the name of Bismillah BD Enterprise in Narayanganj where a large number of garments workers open salary

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

### ESSENTIALS AT FAIR PRICE

# OMS halt worries port city residents

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The open market sale (OMS) service of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) has brought much relief to the low- and lower-middle income groups in the port city recently, as prices of daily essentials, especially soybean oil, have shot up in retail market.

But with the service scheduled to end today, residents are now worried about how they would manage their meals.

TCB started open market sale (OMS) in port city on June 6. The service is usually offered for a set amount of days.

The OMS has been operating at a total of 21 spots, including Jamal Khan Road, Anderkillah, Dewan Bazar, Chawkbazar, Alkaran, New Market intersection, Kotwali intersection, Muradpur, Chandgaon, Steel Mill Bazar, CEPZ intersection, Bibirhat, Alankar, North Kattoli and Halishahar.

Each kilogramme of daily essentials, including lentils, sugar and edible oil, is being sold for Tk 10-15 cheaper than at shops.

Rickshaw-puller Tobarak was seen in queue near an OMS truck at Dewan Bazar area yesterday. He said he bought lentils, sugar and soybean oil.

"A kilo of lentils is being sold at Tk 80 in the market, while sugar goes for Tk 70. Here, I get both at Tk 55 per kg," he said. "A litre of soybean oil is normally sold at

Tk 145, but here I got it for Tk 100."

"The price hike of daily essentials has made our lives difficult. I've heard that OMS would close from tomorrow [today]. How would we live? I request the government to continue it for the sake of poor people like us," said Tobarak.

Many people standing in line said their main target was to buy soybean oil for cheaper.

"The price of soybean oil is increasing like crazy. I used to buy a litre at Tk 95 even in March, but now it has gone up to Tk 145," said Tanmoy Paul, who was standing in line.

Tanmoy alleged that he wanted to only buy oil, but the salespeople forced him to buy lentils and sugar too.

"The salespeople said they were selling a package comprising oil, lentils and sugar. If I don't buy the other two items, I wouldn't get the oil," he said.

As the price of edible oil has shot up, not only the poor, but many from the middle-income group were also seen in line near the truck.

Schoolteacher Ahsanul Haque said as he found the OMS truck on his way back home, he decided to stand in the queue to buy soybean oil, but echoed Tanmoy's complaints.

Asked, a salesperson -- wishing not to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Nipun Roy secures HC bail in 2 cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted ad-interim bail to BNP leader Nipun Roy Chowdhury in two arson and subversion cases, clearing the way of her walk out of jail.

The HC bench of Justice Muhammad Abdul Hafiz and Justice Mohammad Ali granted the bail till submission of police reports in the cases to trial court.

The bench passed the bail orders after hearing two separate petitions filed by Nipun seeking bail in the cases.

Nipun's lawyer Zainul Abedin told The Daily Star that the HC granted bail on hearing his arguments that his client has not made the phone call that allegedly spread on the social media ordering to torch vehicles in March. Besides, the accused bail petitioner, Nipun Roy Chowdhury, is a woman and has been suffering in jail for a long period of time, he said.

Zainul Abedin said there is no legal bar to his client getting released from jail following the HC orders.

Deputy Attorney General Harun ur Rashid told this correspondent that the state might move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging the HC orders of bail.

Nipun Roy Chowdhury, a member of the BNP Central Executive Committee, was

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Vaccinate outbound migrant workers on a priority basis

Recruiting agencies urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Recruiting agencies yesterday urged the government to take immediate step to vaccinate migrant workers with Covid-19 vaccine on a priority basis, demanding at least 1,00,000 doses to mitigate a rising crisis.

There are about 50,000 new and old migrant workers waiting to fly abroad at present. They need to be inoculated to have a safe journey, leaders of the agencies told a press conference at the capital's Dhaka Reporters Unity.

The press conference was held under the banner of 'Sammilita Samannay Parishad', an electoral alliance of members of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira).

They said a non-vaccinated migrant worker travelling to Saudi Arabia now requires to spend about Tk 70,000 to Tk 80,000 as hotel quarantine fee in the Kingdom.

Moreover, different airlines set their ticket price "too high", which added to the financial burden of workers, they further said, seeking the prime minister's intervention to bring down ticket price to a "tolerable level" and for immediate arrangement of vaccination.

In a travel advisory issued last month, Saudi Arabia asked passengers from non-restricted countries including Bangladesh to be vaccinated, to avoid a seven-day institutional quarantine there.

Later, Bangladesh government decided to pay Tk 25,000 as subsidy to the quarantine fee for each migrant worker.

Addressing the press conference, Abul Bashar, a leader of the alliance and former president of Baira, said if migrant workers are brought under the vaccination process it will support the sector immensely.

Remittance sent by migrant workers have a huge contribution to boost the country's foreign exchange reserves, he said.

However, most workers have to sell their property to arrange migration cost, he added.

Now, an additional burden to bear quarantine fee has been imposed on them which is like "pouring water on a drowned mouse", he further said, adding vaccinating migrant workers will help save roughly Tk 375 crore.

He urged the government to immediately arrange at least 1,00,000 doses of Covid-19 vaccine for migrant workers from its own reserve or any other source.

If required, Bangladesh government through the foreign ministry can approach to the Saudi government to have the doses since Bangladeshi workers are employed for Saudi Arabia's development, he said.

At present, Bangladesh is sending workers only to Saudi Arabia as other overseas job markets have

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## EVICION DRIVE AT BURIGANGA

# BIWTA tears down 25 illegal structures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the second consecutive day, a joint team of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and Dhaka district administration demolished illegal structures in Buriganga's second channel yesterday.

The drive started around 10am, where 25 establishments that choked the channel were knocked down, bringing the total number of structures demolished to 34.

The latest eviction move came as the High Court on March 28 directed the government to evict 74 illegal structures from the channel in Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar areas within three months.

In its order, the HC also asked the deputy commissioner (DC) of Dhaka and BIWTA to submit a compliance report to it by June 26.

The HC bench of Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore and Justice Mohammed Ullah passed the order while hearing a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) seeking necessary order.

"We have started excavating a 500ft wide and 1,000ft long channel after removing the truck stand that stood there. This portion of the land will be navigable by Wednesday," said an official of BIWTA.

Contacted, BIWTA Joint Director Md Gulzar Ali said they will ask the HC for an extension of another two to three months for the completion of the works since it had to be delayed due to the ongoing pandemic.

"In these two days, we have managed to demolish 34

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Almost half of the 74 illegal structures have been demolished in Buriganga's second channel in two days, aimed at enabling excavation work to restore navigability of the river. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## National University promotes 3.17 lakh first-year students

Police blocks students' procession for reopening education institutes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authorities of National University have decided to promote 3,16,676 first-year students of academic session 2019-2020 to the second year.

They gave the promotions on one condition: students must sit for first-year exams when the Covid-19 situation improves, said a university statement yesterday.

The decision was taken as authorities could not take the final exams due to the pandemic, said the release.

Students who had filled forms to participate in exams of honours first-year were given promotion. They were also granted permission to take part in online classes.

Of the 3,16,676 students, 2,97,626 are regular students and 19,050 are irregular.

The detailed information will be available on the university's website: nu.ac.bd

Meanwhile, police yesterday barred a procession brought out by left-leaning student organisations, when the students went to besiege the education ministry, demanding reopening all educational institutions.

The organisations, under the banner "Pragatashil Chhatra Sanggathan Samuho", brought out the procession from Dhaka University's TSC around 11:45am.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2