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Your Right to Know

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"We strongly demand that the next parliamentary election be held under a non-party government as we saw in the past it couldn't be held in a fair and credible manner under a partisan government."

GONOFORUM PRESIDENT DR KAMAL HOSSAIN



"Election Commission has already destroyed the electoral system."

WORKERS PARTY PRESIDENT RASHED KHAN MENON



"Every day, there are six times more boosters administered globally than primary doses in low-income countries. ... this is a scandal that must stop now."

WHO CHIEF TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS



SHIPBREAKING INDUSTRY STATUS

Orange from red; green overlooked

DoE caves in to owners' pressure, freeing them from environmental compliance

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

The Department of Environment (DoE) has downgraded the status of the harmful shipbreaking industry in Chattogram from red to orange caving into the pressure from the ship recycling yard owners, in a development that is set to cause serious damage to the ecology in the area.

Recycling of ships is considered the most environmentally-friendly and economically sound way of getting rid of end-of-life vessels.

But the vessels themselves contain hazardous materials in its structure such as asbestos, heavy metals, mineral oil, bilge and ballast water, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, polychlorinated biphenyls, sludge oil and organotin, all of which if not disposed of properly are hazardous to both the humans and the environment.

Until the 1970s, ships were mainly dismantled in Europe and the US. As the social and environmental protection laws tightened in those parts of the world, the industry shifted to areas where legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms are weak, which are the developing



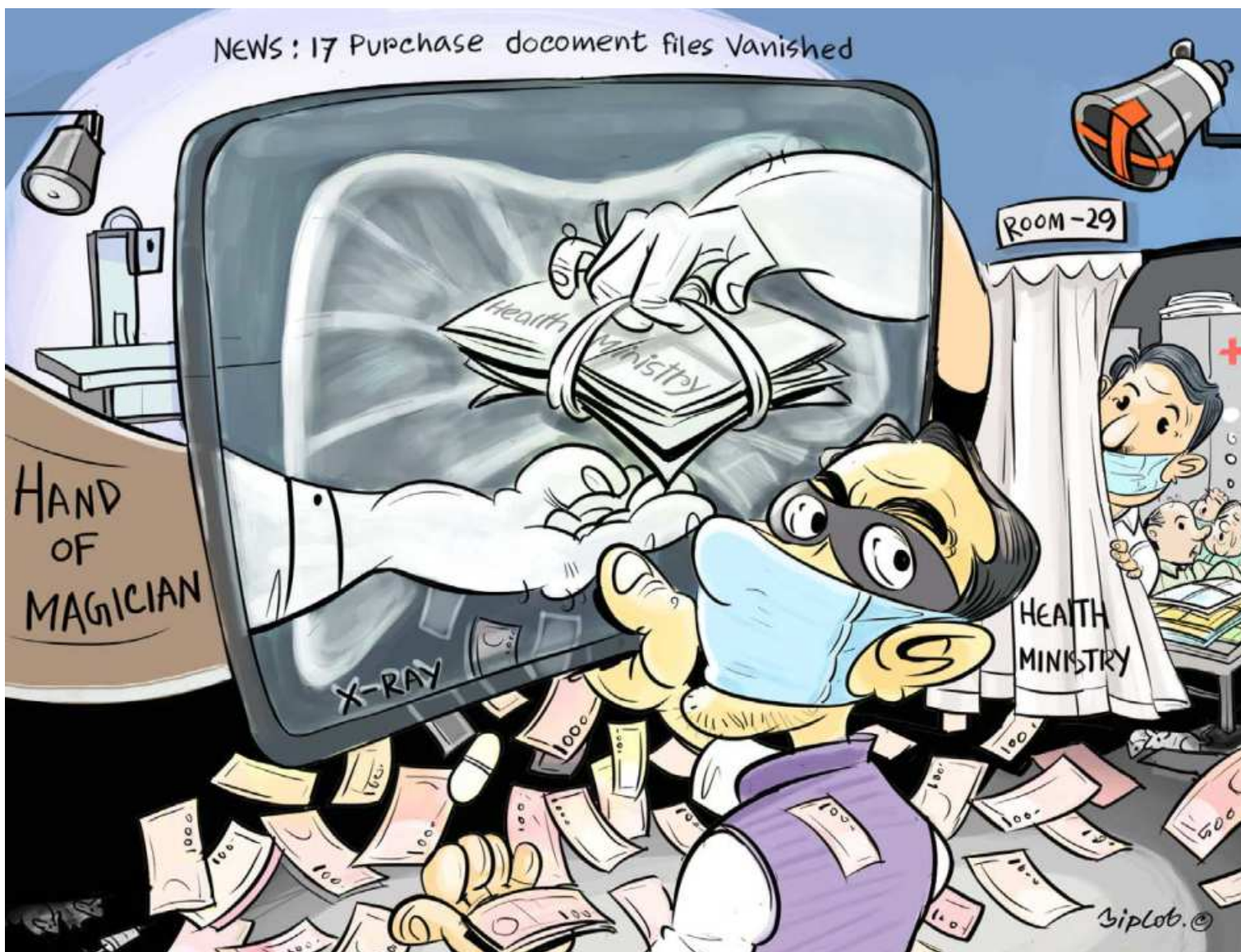
countries.

Each year, about 800 ships come to the end of their lives and need to be broken apart and recycled, and about 70 percent of them end up on the beaches of Alang in India, Chattogram in Bangladesh and Gadani in Pakistan.

The yards offer much higher prices for scrap steel by externalising the costs to the environment, workers and local communities in the absence of weak labour and environmental management laws.

The High Court in a judgement in 2009 ordered the authorities not to allow any ships to enter the territory of Bangladesh without a pre-cleaning certificate that will make sure the ships are cleaned of waste.

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JUDGE'S COMMENT ON RAPE CASE

Totally unlawful, unconstitutional

Says law minister; no time limit for filing case; ministry to write to CJ for action against the judge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The law ministry will write to the chief justice seeking action against Judge Mosammat Kamrunnahr for recommending police not to record any rape case after 72 hours of the incident, said Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday.

The observation made by the judge is totally illegal and unconstitutional as there is no time limit in the criminal justice system for recording the case against this criminal offence, the minister, also an eminent criminal law expert, told The Daily Star.

Judge Kamrunnahr of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-7 made the recommendation while delivering the verdict in the sensational Banani Raintree Hotel rape case last Thursday.

"I think she [the judge] has lost her ability to remain in the post of a judge because of her observation," said Anisul.

The law minister told this correspondent that his ministry will send the letter to the chief justice today requesting appropriate action against the judge.

"The chief justice will make the appropriate decision, but I cannot say what that decision will be," he said.

Legal experts and rights activists severely criticised the recommendation, and said it was contradictory to the law and justice and that it would further encourage rapists.

The judge noted that the case was lodged 38 days after the incident, and so no DNA evidence could be found. "Semen cannot be traced after 72 hours..."

In October last year, the High Court bench of Justice Md Rezaul Haque and Justice Bhishmadev Chakraborty passed a judgment saying that a rape accused cannot be exonerated only due to lack of medical evidence.

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HEALTH MINISTRY

17 days gone, no trace of 17 files missing

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Seventeen days have passed but the law enforcers and a government probe committee are still in the dark about the 17 missing files of the health ministry, leaving the investigation shrouded in mystery.

While the health ministry probe body said they could not make any headway as the CCTV camera was not functional when the files went missing, law enforcers claimed that they could not proceed with their investigation due to legal complications.

This impasse fueled the growing suspicion that it might be aimed at protecting the ministry high-ups who might be involved in the file missing incident.

The documents, mostly related to purchases, went missing on October 28 from the medical education division of the health ministry at the secretariat.

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THIRD PHASE UP POLLS

Walkovers, AL rebels increase

Many local MPs' influence is the reason

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and RASHIDUL HASAN

The numbers of candidates set to be elected unopposed and rebels from the ruling Awami League in the third phase of union parishad polls are higher than in the first two phases.

AL insiders blame local MPs from the party for this situation in most places.

Many of the lawmakers forced candidates into withdrawing from the race, paving the way for the unopposed election of candidates of their choice. In some cases, the MPs encouraged their loyal supporters to contest as dissidents after they failed to secure the party's nomination, they said.

Amid a high number of party rebels, the insiders fear that intra-party clashes might increase centring the third phase election, due on November 28, leading to casualties.

At least 40 people were killed in violence across the country during the second phase of polls held last Thursday, according to media reports.

One-thousand-and-four union parishads across the country are set to go to polls in the third phase.

Five-hundred-and-sixty candidates, including 100 vying for chairman posts, are set to be elected uncontested in the third phase, according to sources at the Election Commission.

The rest of the 560 candidates are contesting for member posts and reserved seats for women.

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SSC exams begin after nine-month delay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

This year's Secondary School Certificate and its equivalent exams are set to begin today, after over a nine-month delay due to the Covid-19 situation.

The exams are usually held in February.

The number of examinees for this year's exams has increased compared to last year.

This year, the examinees will only have to sit for exams in three optional subjects with a shortened syllabus and carrying fewer marks.

Exams for science, humanities and business groups will be held on separate days.

They will not have to sit for tests in compulsory subjects like Bangla, English and Mathematics.

The results of the three optional subjects and the Grade Point Average of the students' previous public examinations, including Junior School Certificate tests, will be taken into

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The day-long drizzling yesterday caused the temperature to drop in the capital. The photo of the young couple crossing a road in the afternoon was taken at the TSC of Dhaka University.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

QUESTION PAPER LEAK

Suspended BB official accused

Cops looking for 15 for leaking questions of banks recruitment test

MUNTAKIM SAAD

A suspended joint director of Bangladesh Bank has been accused in a case of leaking the question paper of a recruitment tests of five state-run banks.

Almas Ali and Abdullah Al Mabud, both joint directors of the central bank, were suspended from their post on June 13 after it was detected that during a recruitment test for the post of CCTV operator in October 2020 the duo helped an impersonator sit for the exam instead of the actual job seeker. The news of their suspension came to light after Almas was accused of leaking the questions of a recruitment test held on November 6.

"The CCTV operator recruitment got cancelled. Officials are still investigating the matter," Serajul Islam, spokesperson for the central bank, told The Daily Star yesterday.

During verification of the candidates, officials found a discrepancy in the handwriting of an examinee named Abu Bakar Siddique. When questioned by the central bank officials, Bakar admitted that he paid Almas Tk 2 lakh so that a man named Netyananda Pal could sit for the test impersonating him.

Almas told investigators that Mabud lobbied for Abu Bakar and that the money was given to Netyananda.

The Bangladesh Bank spokesperson added that he was not aware of Almas being accused in a case by the Detective Branch of police.

Meanwhile, detectives are looking for at least 15 other individuals involved in the leaking of questions from the recruitment test of five banks.

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