

BANGLADESH  
UPDATE



243  
New cases in 24hrs



15,72,744  
Total cases



27,926  
Deaths



15,36,744  
Recoveries

GLOBAL  
UPDATE



5,119,100  
Deaths



254,323,911  
Total cases

## FR TOWER DESIGN FORGERY Rupayan chief, 15 others indicted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against Rupayan Housing Estate Ltd Chairman Liaquat Ali Khan Mukul and 15 others in a case filed over forging the design of the fire-ravaged FR Tower in the capital's Banani.

All the accused, now on bail, pleaded not guilty and demanded justice after Judge Syed Kamal Hossain of Dhaka Divisional Special Judge's Court read them the charges, court sources said.

The 15 other accused are: FR Tower leaseholder Syed Md Hossain Imam Faruque alias SMHI Faruque, Quasem Dry Cell's Managing Director Tasvir Ul Islam, Rajuk's Higher Division Assistant Saiful Alam, building inspectors Imrul Kabir and Md Shawkat Ali, Higher Division Assistant (issuer) Shafiullah, former authorisation officer Shafiqul Islam, former building inspector Nazrul Islam, former director (estate) Shamsul Alam, former deputy director Muhammad Shawkat Ali, former assistant director (estate) Shah Md Sadrul Alam, former caretaker (estate) Jahanara Begum, former inspector Md Mehduzzaman, lower division assistant-cum-typist Mojibur Rahman Mollah, and office assistant-cum-computer operator Enamul Haque.

Earlier in the day, the judge dismissed the petitions submitted for discharging them from the charges of the case.

The judge discharged two accused -- former director (estate) of Rajuk Md

Abdullah-al-Baki and former caretaker Mofazzal Hossain -- from the charges.

The judge also set December 1 for starting trial of the case.

On March 28, 2019, a massive fire broke out in the FR Tower in Banani, leaving 25 people dead and 73 injured.

The Anti-Corruption Commission on June 25, 2019, filed a case over violation of building code in constructing FR Tower, raising it to 23 floors from 19 through fake clearance, and illegally mortgaging and selling the upper floors.

No clearance was taken from any of the agencies concerned during the construction of the four additional floors of the FR Tower, said the case statement.

Even, no fee for the extension had been obtained, nor had the design been approved, according to the case statement.

Rajuk officials did not take any legal and administrative action during the construction of the building.

Tasvir Ul Islam had taken a loan by mortgaging the illegally constructed building.

On December 13 last year, the ACC pressed charges against 18 people, including Mukul, in the case.

The same court on October 18 this year framed charges against Mukul, SMHI Faruque, former Rajuk chairman Humayun Khadem and its former chief engineer Saidur Rahman in another case filed over forgery in the design of FR Tower.

## Bangladesh can make, export

FROM PAGE 1

In her speech, Hasina said Bangladesh has changed in the last decade and the country's image has brightened up before the world.

She said her government has proved that it is possible to make progress for the people. "We have proven that Bangladesh can be developed."

Hasina thanked the people of the country for supporting her party and casting votes for it repeatedly in the elections.

The PM spoke about how the country was globally acknowledged for its success in tackling the Covid-19 pandemic.

She said her government wanted to advance the country following the footprint and ideology of Bangabandhu.

Talking about the youth, she mentioned the start-up programme of the government to help fund young entrepreneurs to start their business.

In this connection, she thanked Sajeeb Wazed, Radwan Mujib Siddiq, and some young MPs for initiating Young Bangla, which support start-ups.

The Unesco-Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman International Prize for Creative Economy was introduced in 2020 to recognise and reward exceptional

initiatives taken by individuals or organisations that support young entrepreneurs in the field of the creative economy.

On November 11, Hasina has handed over the "Unesco-Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman International Prize for Creative Economy" to MoTIV, a Uganda-based integrated creative studio.

"Uganda got the award this time. InshaAllah, entrepreneurs from Bangladesh will get it in the future."

The PM said her government has been creating the scope for the young people to tap into their talents and creativity.

Education Minister Dipu Moni, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Deputy Leader of the Opposition GM Quader, AL MPs -- Amir Hossain Amu, Matia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim, Nurul Islam Nahid, Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jatiya Party MPs -- Moshir Rahman Ranga, Mujibul Haque Chunnun, Fakhrul Imam, BNP MP Harunur Rashid, among others also took part in the discussion.

The parliament later unanimously adopted the motion by voice vote with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair.

## Campaign starts from Korail Bosti

FROM PAGE 1

addressing a programme in the capital marking the handover of four refrigerated vans by USAID to the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

These vans can transport vaccines required to be kept under 70 degrees Celsius. Those will be used to carry Pfizer Covid-19 vaccines.

"The USAID will provide us another 14 such vans as donation," DGHS Line Director Dr Shamsul Alam, who heads the EPI programme, said at the handover ceremony.

Zahid said Pfizer vaccines were currently being administered in 23 districts. "People of another 24 districts will get them soon."

He said the government now has a stock of 96 lakh doses of Pfizer vaccine, 1.06 lakh of AstraZeneca vaccine, and 73 lakh of Moderna vaccines.

The government had placed orders for around 21 crore doses of the vaccines and has so far received around 11 crore shots from different sources, including two crore doses under the COVAX arrangement. "Of those, around eight crore shots have already been administered," he said.

Urging people to take vaccines, the minister said, "We have got a new drug

which is effective in treating Covid patients. But there is no alternative to vaccines. So, those who haven't got their shots should take them on an urgent basis."

About local vaccine production, Zahid said state-owned Essential Drugs Company Limited would start building necessary infrastructure to produce vaccines in Gopalganj soon.

"They [EDCL] have prepared the detailed project plan which will be placed for approval before the EcneC soon. Once approved by the EcneC, the company will start working," he said.

Besides, Incepta will also go into production of Sinopharm vaccines soon following negotiations with the health ministry.

As the number of Covid deaths and new cases have come down notably, many hospitals have stopped admitting new coronavirus patients, the minister said, adding, "We will keep all Covid patients in several key hospitals like Dhaka Medical College Hospital and the DNCC Covid-19 Dedicated Hospital."

Meanwhile, the DGHS reported four Covid deaths and 234 new cases for 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday. The positivity rate was 1.32 percent against 17,700 tests.

## Master storyteller falls silent

FROM PAGE 1

Writer Hasan Azizul Huq, one of the most prominent figures of Bengali literature, passed away yesterday.

He was 82.

He breathed his last around 9:00pm at his Rajshahi home, "Ujan", in Bihas residential area near Rajshahi University campus.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed profound sorrow at the death of Hasan Azizul Huq.

In a condolence message, the president said, "Hasan Azizul Huq's demise was an irreparable loss for the literary arena of the country. His contribution to literature and culture of the country will always be remembered."

In a separate message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved family.

"Hasan Azizul Huque will be remembered for his literary and creativity work," she said.

People of Rajshahi city, especially writers, intellectuals and cultural activists were left grief-stricken; many rushed to

the residence of their beloved writer who they always consider a guardian figure.

"His main achievement is that he stayed beside those people who he wrote about," playwright Prof Malay Bhowmick, his former colleague, told this correspondent at "Ujan".

Rajshahi City Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha, RU Vice-Chancellor Golam Sabbir Sattar expressed their shock at the passing of the writer.

Body of Hasan Azizul Huq will be kept at RU Central Shaheed Minar for people to offer their final respect today. After the Zuhur prayers, he will be buried at RU central graveyard.

Hasan left behind a son and three daughters. His wife Shamsun Nahar passed away on February 2, 2013.

On August 21, Hasan fell sick and was taken to Dhaka. He returned to his Rajshahi home on September 9 on doctor's advice.

His son Imtiaz Hasan had then said, "In addition to age-related health issues, he also has heart problems and diabetes."



Locals of Bhabadah stage a sit-in in front of the chief engineer's office of Khulna Water Development Board yesterday, demanding that they are given a permanent solution to waterlogging in the area. The demonstration was organised by a local platform named Bhabadah Water Drainage Sangram Committee.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## Strict watch thru' central platform

FROM PAGE 1

digital platform through an application programming interface (API), a software intermediary that allows two applications to talk to each other.

Since most of the e-commerce platforms conduct their financial transactions with customers and dealers via payment gateways, those need to be API-enabled for quick retrieval of information, according to the policy.

This will allow for easy scrutiny of financial transactions made by the e-commerce companies, it said.

All e-commerce companies will have to register with the digital platform or else they will not be allowed to operate.

When registering, the e-commerce companies must provide information on their business model.

"By business model, we refer to how the company will conduct their business and earn money from their customers, how they will supply their products, how they will conduct financial transactions," says the draft policy.

Before registration, the commerce ministry will verify whether the e-commerce company is conducting any Ponzi scheme or practising multi-level marketing or has any other illegal motive.

It also states that the NTMC will verify the applicant's national identification and passport information and other personal

details.

Concurrently, the BFIU will verify the bank details and financial transactions of the proposed company, according to the draft policy.

The law enforcement agencies and detectives will investigate if any criminal activity is taking place.

All of this information will be stored in the BCC's server and will be accessible to the six agencies thanks to the API.

The server will include information regarding completion of orders, courier management, labelling, order invoicing, order tracking, order confirmation and financial transactions.

While the government will have access to such specific data, it does not mean they will always access it, Ziaul Ahsan, director of NTMC, told The Daily Star.

"We can monitor all calls for example, but that does not mean that we do," he said, adding that this is necessary only to track illegal activities.

The information available to each agency will be contingent on its work description, according to the policy.

"Who can see what will be decided by the commerce ministry, which retains the power to give user access permissions."

For example, the BFIU will be able to use the API to pull information about financial transactions for regular scrutiny. They will also be able to see the transaction history.

## Cheating thru' 36 cheques

FROM PAGE 1

education board Chairman Prof Mollah Amir Hossain, Secretary Prof Reza, Accounts Assistant Abdus Salam, local printing press owner Sheikh Shariful Islam Babu, and stationery shop owner Ashrafal Alam.

"The chairman and secretary were accused because their signatures were on the tampered cheques," Md Nazmus Sadat, deputy director of Jashore ACC, told The Daily Star, adding that both the officials admitted that they signed the cheques.

"Of the 36 cheques, at least nine were issued to two business outlets that had no bills due with the board," he added.

**THE EMBEZZLEMENT**

Audit Officer Abdus Salam Azad said a team of auditors on October 7 found a mismatch between the amounts written in different parts of a cheque.

According to the complaints filed by the education board's audit department, the money was embezzled from account no 2323240000024 of Sonali bank's Jashore Board branch through cheque tampering.

Emdad Hossain, head of accounts and audit section of the board, said, "The amounts mentioned

in our ledger and on the cheques were different from the amounts withdrawn from the bank."

Emdad added that Accounts Assistant Abdus Salam, who was accused in the case, went into hiding after the board lodged the complaint. He later returned around Tk 30 lakh in two phases through bank drafts.

He said the accounts section used to be "too dependent on Salam".

According to the complaints, the stolen money was withdrawn by Venus Printing and Packaging, Shahilal Store, Business IT, Noor Enterprise, Khwaza Printing Press, Nihar Printing Press, Samia Electric, Mim Printing Press, Sharif Printing and Packaging, and Arpanet.

More suspects might be identified through investigation, said ACC Deputy Director Sadat.

**'NO MANIPULATION IN OUR SYSTEM'**

The board uses its own software to maintain its accounts and the exam related operations, said Senior System Analyst Jahangir Kabir.

Information on monetary disbursement is a few clicks away for the authorised individuals, he said.

"There has been no manipulation in our system. We print our cheques on A4 papers containing three parts:

counterpart, forwarding part and main cheque. The chairman and secretary had their signatures on it," Jahangir said.

He added that the probe committee members found that the digital record of the cheques contained no fault.

The record of the expenditures is stored in the system and there is no way of tempering with it, said Rabbani.

"We found a mismatch of the font on a cheque submitted to the bank for disbursement," he added.

SM Shahidur Reza, manager of Sonali Bank Jashore Education Board branch, said the bankers cleared the cheque since the signatures of the chairman and secretary matched.

At least seven cheques were settled with the Jashore branch of First Security Islami Bank.

Branch Manager Riaz Hasan said the cash against the seven cheques was paid to Venus Print and Packaging because Sonali cleared the cheques.

Education board secretary Prof Reza said, "We have formed a probe committee that could uncover how the money was stolen."

Chairman Prof Dr Molla Amir Hossen's phone was found switched off.

## Same judge

FROM PAGE 1

disclose what was in that order.

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain relieved Judge Kamrunnahar of her duties on Sunday, three days after she recommended police not to register any rape case if the complainant goes to them after 72 hours of the incident.

Judge Kamrunnahar of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-7 of Dhaka came up with the recommendation while acquitting all five accused, including Apan Jewellers owner's son Shafat Ahmed, in the sensational Banani Raintree double rape case.

The recommendation drew flak from different quarters and sparked protests.

She was also withdrawn from the tribunal and was attached to the law ministry on Sunday.

During a hearing yesterday, a five-member bench of the Appellate Division, led by the CJ, passed the order on a petition filed in 2019. The petition, under the name of "State vs Aslam Shikder" case, appeared in the cause-list of the court.

Contacted, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told The Daily Star that he wanted to know the details of the order, but the Appellate Division did not disclose them.

An SC source said the details would be known after those would be formally communicated to the parties concerned of the case.

While hearing the same state petition, the SC on March 12 last year summoned Judge Kamrunnahar. It also scrapped Aslam's bail granted by her and ordered Aslam to surrender to the trial court concerned in two weeks.

The same day, the SC asked for the case documents from the court concerned, said court sources.

And then came the pandemic and the physical functions of the court were suspended on March 25 last year. The judge has not appeared before the court yet, said the sources.

Court sources also said the case against Aslam was filed with Hatirjheel Police Station on September 13, 2018, on charge of raping a woman.

Police arrested him the same day. He was sent to jail the following day. After he moved a petition, the High Court on June 18, 2019, granted him bail.

The state then filed a petition with the Appellate Division challenging the HC bail order.

After hearing the petition, a chamber judge of the Appellate Division stayed the HC bail order on June 25, 2019.

But Judge Kamrunnahar granted bail to Aslam on March 2, 2020, and acquitted Aslam on October 20, 2020, Deputy Attorney General Sarwar Hossain Bappi told The Daily Star.

The state filed an appeal with the HC challenging the tribunal verdict of acquittal. The appeal is pending with the HC now, he said.

## Khaleda's family

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either by granting her bail through the court or by giving permission.

AZM Zahid Hossain, Khaleda's personal physician, said it was for the fifth time the BNP chief's family sought the government's permission to take her abroad.

The last time her family sought the government's permission was in August this year. The government refused saying there was no scope for a convict to avail such a scope.

As per the advice of a medical board formed earlier for her treatment, the 76-year-old was readmitted to the hospital on Sunday nearly a week after she was discharged from the same healthcare facility.

On October 12, Khaleda was admitted to the hospital as her temperature had started fluctuating.

She has long been suffering from arthritis, diabetes, and dental and eye problems.

In April, she had Covid and initially received treatment at home. When complications cropped up, she was admitted to the hospital on April 27.

Khaleda was sent to jail on February 8, 2018, in a corruption case. She has been on a temporary release since March 25 last year.

## United Nations Development Programme

### জাতিসংঘ উন্নয়ন কর্মসূচী



#### Procurement Notice: Request for Proposal (RFP)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh is in need for the requirement of proposal from interested Companies for the following requirements:

- **RFP-BD-2021-037: Hiring firm to Development and Maintenance of Unique Business Identity (UBID) Platform a2i**, Deadline for submission of proposal is at **4:30 p.m. (Bangladesh Local Time), 01 December 2021**.

Proposals may be submitted on or before the deadline indicated by UNDP in the e-Tendering system. For submission through online e-Tendering system kindly use the following link: <https://etendering.partneragencies.org> and use the username and password provided below to start the registration for the e-tendering.

**Username:** event.guest **Password:** why2change

The complete user guide can also be downloaded from the UNDP Bangladesh website in the link below: <https://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/procurement.html>