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Your Right to Know

JAMADIUL AWAL 3, 1443 HURI

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"The government should have arranged the same management measures for all arrivals via all ports."
BSMMU PROF SAYEDUR RAHMAN
ON COVID TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS



"The Covid-19 crisis brought education systems across the world to a halt...The loss of learning that many children are experiencing is morally unacceptable."
WORLD BANK'S GLOBAL DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION JAIME SAAVEDRA



"This is the message of Afghan girls right now: we want to see a world where all girls can have access to safe and quality education."
MALALA CALLS FOR STRONGER SUPPORT FOR AFGHAN WOMEN

MURAD QUILTS AS STATE MINISTER

Now facing party action

President accepts resignation letter; district AL relieves him from duties



- Move for disciplinary action in AL's next central committee meeting
- HC orders removal of audio, video of Murad's abusive comments from social media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Murad Hassan yesterday resigned as the state minister for information and broadcasting amid severe backlash for his misogynistic and sexually abusive remarks, while Jamalpur Awami League recommended his removal from his district unit post.

He is also on the verge of losing primary membership of the party as a decision on disciplinary action will also be taken against the Jamalpur-4 lawmaker at the next AL central working committee meeting.

The party's Jamalpur district unit yesterday relieved Murad from the duties of health and population affairs secretary for denting party image, breaching party discipline and carrying out anti-organisational activities.

The unit also recommended the AL central working committee take a "final decision" in this regard, said a press release.

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Holding a photo of his missing son Kamal in his hand, a distraught Ali Kawser looks for the 12-year-old who fell into an open drain while playing in Chattogram city's Sholashahar Railway Station area on Monday afternoon. Fire service divers could not rescue him till yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

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Same drain, same danger

Child goes missing in Chattogram

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 12-year-old boy has been missing since falling into a drain in Chattogram on Monday -- the third incident in just over three months of people dying or disappearing following a fall into open drains in the port city.

On September 28, the body of 19-year-old university student Sehrin Mahbub Sadia was recovered after she had fallen into a roadside drain the previous day.

The drain where 12-year-old Kamal fell into on Monday afternoon -- at Sholashahar Railway Station area under Panchlaish Police Station -- is the same one in which 55-year-old vegetable trader Saleh Ahmed had fallen into on August 25, near Muradpur intersection.

Saleh has since been missing despite a seven-day rescue operation by

AL in a spot of bother

Infighting, scandals embarrassing party high-ups

WASIM BIN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

While the ruling Awami League is grappling with divisions and disputes over the union parishad polls, controversial activities of some leaders have severely embarrassed the party as well as the government.

Bloody clashes between supporters of AL candidates and party rebels in the polls have already become a headache for the top party leadership as such conflicts continued to take place in the staggered elections despite repeated warnings and punitive actions.

The intra-party feuds, especially among the supporters of lawmakers and district-thana level leaders, are considered by the AL high-ups as serious organisational problems. Those incidents also manifested a lack of chain of command in the party.

On top of it, unruly and violent activities of some Chhatra League leaders and activists also remain a cause for concern for the AL high-command. At least three educational institutions had to be shut down following incidents involving BCL, a pro-Awami League student body.

To aggravate the situation, some leaders of AL, which is not facing any major opposition in parliament or on the streets, have got embroiled in controversies, causing further embarrassment to the party.

Over the last couple of months, these leaders made different types of comments. Some of them are accused of insulting religion, while others are accused of making derogatory comments about Bangabandhu Sheikh

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Another univ student dies in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even with the students' movement for road safety continuing across the country, the numbers of accidents and victims are still rising as another university student was killed in Noakhali yesterday.

With this, at least seven students were killed on the road over the past 15 days.

In Noakhali, a lorry hit a CNG-run auto rickshaw from behind around 12:30pm yesterday. The auto rickshaw was carrying passengers, including Ajay Majumder, a third-year student of Department of Information Sciences and Library Management of Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU).

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AIR FARE TO MIDDLE EAST

Migrants priced out

Fares in cases more than doubled since last month

RASHIDUL HASAN

Airfares for flights to different Middle Eastern countries have doubled since last month, adding pressure on migrant workers returning to their workplaces.

In November, airfares for different Middle Eastern countries were between Tk 40,000 and Tk 45,000. At present, the prices are between Tk 70,000 and Tk 90,000, which is totally illogical and unexpected, said Bangladeshi expatriates.

Amid this situation, the Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (Atab) yesterday demanded that the government forms a regulatory board immediately to address the issue.

At a press briefing at a city hotel, Atab leaders said thousands of Bangladeshi expatriate workers couldn't return to their workplaces in different Middle Eastern countries on time due to the high airfares.

Monsur Ahmed Kalam, president, Atab, a platform of around 3,500 registered travel agency, said, at present the airfare for the Dhaka-Dubai or Dhaka-Abu Dhabi route is Tk 87,000, which was Tk 40,000 just last month.

He also said airfare for Dhaka-Muscat route is Tk 72,000, which was Tk 35,000 a few months ago.

The airfares for Riyadh, Jeddah and



Madina from Dhaka were between Tk 42,000 and 45,000. Now, they are between Tk 75,000 and Tk 80,000, said Atab leaders.

Giving a comparison of airfare between Bangladesh and its neighboring countries for Riyadh, Fakhru Islam, president of the Recruiting Agency Welfare Organization of Bangladesh, yesterday told The Daily Star that the fare for the Colombo-Riyadh route is Tk 38,000, while for the Nepal-Riyadh route, it is around Tk 45,000.

He also said airfare for Mumbai-Riyadh route is around Tk 32,000.

Meanwhile, a Bangladeshi passenger needs to spend around Tk 80,000 to Tk 85,000 to go to Riyadh, said Fakhru.

He also said in some cases, the airfare for Dhaka-Riyadh route goes up to Tk 1

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SHRINGLA-MOMEN MEET

Dhaka, Delhi talk new areas of cooperation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and New Delhi yesterday discussed new areas for cooperation, including eco-friendly transport systems, especially rail and river-ways, green energy and technology that engage the young adults more.

Officials said these following meetings with Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla yesterday, a day after the two countries celebrated the 50 years of diplomatic relationship.

Shringla's two-day visit, which comes ahead of Indian President Ram Nath Kovind's visit to Bangladesh on December 15-17 when he will join the 50th Victory Day celebrations of Bangladesh, is primarily meant to prepare the groundwork for the president's visit.

"On December 6 in 1971, India, the biggest democratic country recognised us that filled our hearts. This year we

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Sajid's six-corners Tigers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pakistan off-spinner Sajid Khan's maiden six-wicket haul yesterday made things interesting in the ongoing second Test as Bangladesh need 25 more runs to avoid follow-on on the final day of the game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

A horrible batting display saw the Tigers reeling at 76 for seven at stumps on the fourth day.

Despite rain washing out almost two days' play, the game now awaits an exciting finish, thanks to some irresponsible batting by the hosts.

Following a delayed start to the fourth day's play, Mohammad Rizwan and Fawad Alam struck unbeaten fifties as Pakistan declared their first innings after scoring 300 for four before tea.

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam took the challenge of continuing with spinners when bad light forced him from employing pacers at the latter stage of the day's play.

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The Martyrs' Memorial in Khulna's Gallamari area was built about nine years ago, but the construction of some other structures around it is yet to be completed as per the design of the project. This enables people and animals enter the area freely, which mars the sanctity of the memorial. The mud road leading to the memorial often goes under water after a light shower. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

6 Bangladeshis named in Pandora Papers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six Bangladeshi nationals have been found to hold shell companies in the tax haven British Virgin Islands, as per the latest release from the Pandora Papers, the biggest trove of leaked offshore data yet.

The names include Nihad Kabir, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sakina Miraly, a director of Ambee Pharmaceuticals, Mohammad Bhai, former chairman of Olympic Industries, and Manzurul Islam, chairman of Eastern Housing.

Sayedul Huda Chowdhury, the editor-in-chief of defunct primenews.com.bd and Prime Khobor, was also named in the release on December 6. Chowdhury is the brother of Mohammad Saiful Huda Chowdhury Shatil, a director of Masafi Group and a BNP leader in Munshiganj.

One Anita Rani Bhowmik of Chawkbazar was named as the beneficiary of Anteris Holdings, but no references were found of her.

The disclosure comes at a time when the High Court has cranked up the pressure on the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Criminal Investigation Department and the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit to take action against those named in the Panama and Paradise Papers, the precursors to Pandora Papers.

BNP leader Abdul Awal Mintoo and his family, controversial manpower exporter Moosa bin Shamsheer, United Group's four founding directors, Baraka Patenga Power's director Faisal Ahmed Chowdhury, Brummer & Partners Asset Management (Bangladesh) among others were mentioned in the Panama and Paradise Papers.

The latest release under the Pandora Papers does not specify whether those named had dodged taxes or broke their home countries' laws while opening the shell companies.

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