

MODI'S FARM REFORM REVERSAL Indian farmers formally end year-long mass protests SEE PAGE 6

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Your Right to Know

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"It is the responsibility of the state, in particular the government, to create a congenial atmosphere for flourishing media's role against corruption."



"Democracy can only function when all people are fully included, their rights are protected, their voices are heard, and their votes are counted."



"Emerging data from South Africa suggests increased risk of reinfection with Omicron."

SPORTS MINISTRY PROMOTIONS Political govt, thus political consideration

Says youth dept DG; massive irregularities alleged

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Nazrul Islam joined the Department of Youth Development under the youth and sports ministry in an entry-level post in 1990. He had topped the list in the recruitment test. After 15 years of "satisfactory" performance, he was regularised in 2005.

Now an assistant upazila youth development officer, he has a clean service record.

On a list of 1,175 officers selected for higher posts, Nazrul was sixth. The department's own committee, formed to pick officers for new posts, prepared the gradation list based on the service tenure and records.

The list was originally prepared in 2016 and finalised in October this year after years of court battle.

But when the department issued the order for the posts last month, an utterly dejected Nazrul found his name was not there.

In a November 25 order, the department elevated 112 assistant upazila youth development officers, giving them "current charge" of upazila youth development officer.

"I have no political affiliation, and no bad service record in my career. But I was left out," said Nazrul.

Like him, some 70 officers were denied new posts. Most of them have

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Students demonstrate by the side of DIT Road in the capital's Rampura around 4:00pm yesterday. During the protest, they distributed copies of a leaflet containing their 11-point demand, including safe roads and justice for those killed in road crashes.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



'Boycott the corrupt'

President prescribes

UNB, Dhaka

"The society should boycott the corrupt" -- that's President Abdul Hamid's curt prescription to end corruption in Bangladesh.

"No man is born corrupt. Family, social and surrounding environment have the greatest impact on human life. So, corrupt people should be socially boycotted," he said yesterday at a programme on the occasion of International Anti-Corruption Day.

The programme was organised at the city's Shilapalaka Academy

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Challenge is to manage natural capital

Speakers tell CPD webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Natural resources and workers at home and abroad bear the cost of development, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

"By 2041, Bangladesh may well become a high-income country by the measure of GDP," said Iftekhar Iqbal, professor at Universiti Brunei Darussalam. "The gravest challenge is, however, expected from diminishing natural capital, especially water."

He opined that Bangladesh will become a high-income country by exhausting its natural resources. But there is no indication that there will be financial regularities, institutionalisation of democracy, independent judiciary, social justice and a knowledge society.

The use of fertiliser per hectare has doubled in the past decade and most of it ends up polluting water, said Dr Golam Rabbani, head of Climate Bridge Fund Secretariat at Brac.

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Murad leaves the country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Murad Hassan, who resigned on Tuesday as the state minister for information and broadcasting amid severe backlash for his misogynistic remarks, left the country early today.

He boarded an Emirates flight which departed the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport for Dubai around 1:15am, said airport sources.

Law enforcement and ministry sources said Murad's destination is Toronto, Canada.

He reached the Dhaka airport around 9:00pm yesterday, said on-duty law enforcement officials.

Earlier around 6:00pm, he was seen driving a white Land Cruiser which was heading towards Gulshan-2 from Gulshan-1. He was alone in that vehicle.

The Awami League MP from Jamalpur-4 stepped down as the state minister upon an instruction of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The instruction came as outrage poured in over some comments he made.

During an online interview, Murad made offensive comments on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his daughter Zaima Rahman.

He then got embroiled in another controversy when an audio clip of a

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Record number of journalists jailed in 2021

Says CPJ; at least 24 killed for their coverage

AFP, New York

The number of journalists jailed around the world hit a new record in 2021, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists said yesterday.

China and Myanmar alone put a quarter of the 293 media workers behind bars, it said.

In its annual report, the CPJ listed 50 journalists imprisoned in China, 26 in Myanmar, 25 in Egypt, 23 in Vietnam and 19 in Belarus.

Adding those jailed in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Russia, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the CPJ said a total of 293 journalists were in prison worldwide as of December 1, up from 280 the year before.

"This is the sixth year in a row that CPJ has documented record numbers of journalists imprisoned around the world," said CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon.

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Break barriers, move forward

Hasina tells women

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged women in the country to move forward by breaking all the social barriers -- big or small -- and be on the path guided by Begum Rokeya.

"Once you move forward [by] breaking the barriers, there'll be no more obstacles. In Islam, girls have been given rights... there area equal rights [for men and women]. Even then, such obstacles appear and will keep appearing in our country. But we've to overcome them and keep moving forward."

The PM was addressing the Begum Rokeya Padak-2021 award ceremony and Begum Rokeya Day-2021, joining it virtually from her official Gono Bhaban residence.

Five eminent women personalities were honoured with the prestigious Begum Rokeya Padak this year for their outstanding contributions to women empowerment and social development.

On behalf of the Prime Minister, Fazilatun Nessa Indira, state minister for women and children affairs, handed over the medals and certificates to the recipients and their relatives.

Those awarded with the Padak this year are Prof Hasina Zakaria Bela, Archana Biswas, Shamsunnahar Rahman Paran (posthumous), Dr Zinat

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The drains of dread

Body of 12-yr-old boy recovered after 68hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Around 68 hours after he fell into a drain and remained missing, members of Chattogram fire service finally recovered the body of 12-year-old Kamal.

The body was recovered from Mirza Khal in Muradpur area around 11:50am, said Kafil Uddin, mobilising officer of Chattogram Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Kamal and his friend fell into the open sewer around 4:30pm on Monday when they were playing. Rakib managed to get out, but Kamal could not.

Kamal's father Ali Kawsar knew well that after such a long time had

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Rescuers try to console Ali Kawsar as he breaks down in tears in front of the body of his son -- 12-year-old Kamal Uddin -- near Mirza Khal in Chattogram city's Muradpur area. The body was recovered from the canal around noon yesterday, almost 68 hours after the boy had fallen into a nearby drain on Monday afternoon.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

HIGH AIRFARE TO MIDEAST Bring it down

Expatriates' welfare writes to civil aviation

RASHIDUL HASAN

Expressing concern over the high airfare to different Middle Eastern destinations, the expatriates' welfare ministry yesterday sent a letter to the civil aviation ministry to take measures for reducing the air ticket prices.

"We have taken the issue very seriously. We have already raised the issue before different forums concerned. Our minister gave a demi official (DO) letter to the inter-ministerial meeting to address the issue," Ahmed Munirus Saleheen, secretary of the expatriates' welfare ministry, told The Daily Star.

In the letter, Munirus said they have requested the civil aviation ministry to bring the airfare down to a logical level.

Asked about introducing "labour fare" for the outbound expatriate Bangladeshi workers, Munirus said his ministry is working on it.

Airfares for flights to different Middle Eastern countries have now doubled, 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. In this situation, leaders of Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (Atab) and Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies have demanded that the government form a regulatory board immediately to address the issue.

They said thousands of Bangladeshi workers could not return to their workplaces in different Middle Eastern countries on time due to high airfares.

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