

# Building up forces to protect sovereignty

## PM tells Navy parade

UNB, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government is building up every force in such a way so that the country could avail all sorts of measures and training to protect its independence and sovereignty.



"We want peace, not war. But for protecting our country's independence and sovereignty we have to take all measures and training [and] we're building up all our forces that way," she said while addressing the President's Parade-2020, held at Bangladesh Naval Academy, Chattogram.

Attending the event virtually from her official residence Gonobhaban, Sheikh Hasina said the government had transferred Khulna Shipyard and dry dockyards in Chattogram and Narayanganj to the Navy.

"Our aim was to build warships from our own shipyards. We've already started some of our activities for that," she said, adding that a submarine base is being constructed at Pekua in Cox's Bazar while expansion works are going on for Rabanabad Naval Base.

Briefly describing various development activities of Bangladesh Navy, the premier said the government has turned Navy into a three-dimensional force following the Forces Goal 2030.

She said the government has inducted 27 warships, created skilled naval commando and rescue team and aviation teams, inducted two submarines in 2017 and constructed Bangabandhu Complex in the Naval Academy with modern facilities for providing better training.

Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Shaheen Iqbal, on behalf of the Prime Minister, distributed different awards among the cadets for their outstanding results.

HELEMUL ALAM

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday announced the plan of constructing a multi-purpose truck terminal at Tejgaon to accommodate all trucks at the area and keep roads truck-free.

Atiqul made the announcement while visiting the current terminal and meeting with leaders of truck owners' association.

"I have directed DNCC officials concerned to submit a proposal to Bangladesh Railway for getting around 21 bighas of land from the transport agency and forming a project to construct a multi-purpose truck terminal," he said.

As the number of trucks has been increasing day by day, the new multi-storey terminal will be a permanent solution, he claimed.

Around 2,000 trucks would be able to park at the multi-purpose terminal simultaneously, and around 5,000 trucks would be able to use it every day, he added.

Atiqul said floors of the new structure may be both under and above the ground, and the terminal will not be for inter-district trucks.

Hossain Ahmed Majumdar, joint secretary-1 of Bangladesh Covered-van Owners Association, told The

# DNCC to build multi-storey truck terminal in Tejgaon



The Tejgaon-Satrasa Road has once again become a parking spot for trucks, choking traffic movement.

STAR FILE PHOTO

Daily Star that there were 39 bighas of land at the area, and a large part of the land was occupied.

He said railway land acted as truck stands since 1948. Late DNCC mayor Annisul Huq had gotten charge from four ministries to clear all occupants from the current terminal and increase its accommodation capacity.

Former railways minister Mujibur Haque had asked truck owners to use the land as long as it is not being used by Bangladesh Railway. He also asked them not to construct any

structure on the land.

Hossain said they spent around Tk 3 crore for the terminal's renovation, after it was recognised as a terminal during mayor Annisul's tenure.

About the terminal's capacity, he said currently, around 700-800 trucks can park there at a time, and it is possible to keep 5,000-7,000 trucks simultaneously, if some adjoining railway land was provided by evicting existing occupants.

Hossain said a truck stand is essential at the area because of

important establishments like BG Press, Central Medicine Store and Karwan Bazar wholesale kitchen market.

Mohammad Nazrul Islam, divisional estate officer and deputy commissioner (railway lands and buildings) of Bangladesh Railway, a few months back told The Daily Star that around eight acres of railway land is being used illegally for the truck stand.

For decades, an illegal truck stand occupied Satrasa, where trucks, pick-ups and covered vans would block both sides of the road, and there was virtually no walkway.

In face of strong opposition from influential transport leaders, no one dared to remove the illegal stand. But things changed for the better after late DNCC mayor Annisul Huq removed it, despite coming under huge pressure.

The renovated Tejgaon-Satrasa road had soon become an embodiment of the late mayor's tireless efforts to ease the city's unbearable traffic congestion. But the road, named after Annisul after his death in 2017, is now facing the same problem, due to absence of any visible action from authorities concerned for a sustainable parking solution that Annisul had pledged.

# IPI decries worsening press freedom in South Asia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Austria-based global media watchdog International Press Institute (IPI) issued a statement, decrying the worsening state of media freedom in South Asia during the year of the pandemic.

According to IPI's Covid-19 Press Freedom Tracker, nearly 200 cases of press freedom violations were reported from Asia-Pacific region, of which 107 were from four South Asian countries: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal, said the statement.

"As many as 71 journalists faced arrests and charges for their coverage of the pandemic and its consequences, and 32 cases of physical attacks and verbal threats were reported from these countries," it added.

While the statement claimed that India accounted for the greatest number of violations in the region, it also shed

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## CHATTOGRAM HILL TRACTS

# Border outposts to be increased: home boss

## Says 'terrorist groups' are trespassing into India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said border outposts (BOP) in Chattogram Hill Tracts adjoining the Indian state of Mizoram will be increased, to curb the activities of 'terrorist groups'.

"There are terrorist groups in the hilly areas. When we chase them, they go into the remote area and cross the border to that side [India]. We are increasing the number of BOPs so that it does not happen," said the home minister while responding to questions from reporters after a Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) function at Pilkhana.

BGB Director General Maj Gen Shafeenul Islam told reporters they gave a list of terrorist hideouts in Mizoram to India at the recently-held border conference.

"They also gave us a list. We didn't find camps there according to their list, and we informed BSF of that," the BGB Chief said. At the 51st DG-level border conference between BGB and BSF recently, the BGB DG expressed concerns about camps of CHT-based armed separatists in Mizoram.

At a joint press conference on December 25, the Bangladesh delegation also requested India to destroy the camps.

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## EMBEZZLING Tk 35CR

# PBI to probe case against ex-mayor Khokon, 6 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court has directed the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) to investigate the case filed against former Dhaka South City Corporation mayor Sayeed Khokon and six others on charges of embezzlement of Tk 34.89 crore.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Ashek Imam passed the order yesterday. Atiqur Rahman, bench assistant of the court, told The Daily Star.

The magistrate also asked PBI to submit a probe report in the case before the court by January 31 next year, Atiqur said. Delwar Hossain, president of Traders-Owners Association of Fulbaria City Supermarket-2 in the capital's Gulistan, filed the case with the same court on December 29.

The magistrate took the case into cognisance and recorded

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## LEAKING ADMISSION, RECRUITMENT QUESTION PAPERS

# Two bankers among six arrested by CID

MUNTAQIM SAAD

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police have arrested six people, including two bank officials in connection with question leak of different university admission and bank recruitment tests.

The arrestees are Manik Kumar Pramanik, a senior officer of Agrani Bank; Rakibul Hasan Shanto, a senior officer of Janata Bank; Miraz, Rashed, Shafiqul and Ripon.

They were arrested recently following an investigation into a case filed with Tejgaon Police Station in 2018. Of them, Shanto, Rashed and Miraz gave confessional statement to a Dhaka court recently.

"Based on Shanto's statement, a team

of CID arrested Manik along with his two accomplices Shafiqul and Ripon from Rajshahi on Tuesday," a source at the CID, wishing not to be named, told The Daily Star.

Confirming the arrest, SM Ashrafuzzaman, special superintendent of CID's Cyber Investigation and Operation, said details will be shared at a press conference today.

According to CID, the racket was leaking questions of different university admissions including Dhaka University and medical entrance, important government admissions and recruitment exams, including various banks, through digital devices.

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# Renewable energy for recovery, regeneration

## Speakers tell Bapa webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Energy experts, environmental activists and energy entrepreneurs emphasised to go for renewable energy to recover the green economy of the country, as well as environmental and natural regeneration.

They made the call from a webinar titled "Recovery of green economy of Bangladesh: Potential and Challenge" organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) yesterday. The webinar was moderated by Sharif Jamil, general secretary of Bapa.

Taking part in the webinar, Atiur Rahman, former governor of Bangladesh Bank and also vice-president of Bapa, said the country must create youth green entrepreneurs to accelerate green economic recovery.

He said Bangladesh Bank has created a green transformation fund and has been working with 150 organisations to turn the economy into a sustainable one.

"It is high time we move to green energy. We must encourage entrepreneurs to produce more solar power than using fossil fuel," he said.

Dr Nazrul Islam, vice-president of Bapa, said Bangladesh is lagging far behind in producing solar power. "We are heading towards producing more coal-based power when countries across the world have diverted their policy away from it," he added.

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# CMP launches SMS service for plaintiffs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

With an aim to take policing to people's doorsteps and bridge the gap between plaintiff and police, Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) introduced a Short Messaging Service (SMS) based complaint and response management system yesterday.

CMP officials said through this service, any complainant or plaintiff will know the last status of the case or general diary (GD) after lodging complaints with respective police station.

Titled "CMP BONDHON", CMP commissioner Saleh Ahmed Tanvir inaugurated the system as part of "Mujib Borsho" celebration at 16 police stations which will come into effect from January 1, 2021.

Addressing a press briefing held at CMP Headquarters, Commissioner Saleh said, "It's a central automatic online software system and now we are running the system on a trial basis."

"Usually, we register all complaints in the register book of the police station after getting a case or GD. The plaintiff would

visit the police station often to know the name of the Investigation Officer (IO) and update the case, which was a time-consuming matter," said CMP boss.

"When a case or GD is lodged with any police station through the system, an SMS will be sent from the system mentioning the case/ GD number, name of IO, section of laws (as per the complaint) and the full address of the plaintiff," said police official Saleh.

He also said "Both IO and plaintiff of the case or GD will receive the SMS notification through the system. In case the IO of the case changes, the name of the new IO will also be sent to the plaintiff."

Apart from that, SMS will be sent when police press charges in the case. It will include the charge sheet number or final report number, submission date and sections of the laws, he added.

"Senior officials of the zone will be informed as they will also receive the SMS to their phones from the system so that they can monitor it," Saleh Mohammed Tanvir said.

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## HILL CUTTING

# Toma Group fined Tk 50cr

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Department of Environment (DoE) Chattogram region yesterday fined Toma Group and Construction Limited for razing two crore 23 lakh cubic feet of hills from a reserve forest at Lohagara.

The fine was imposed after a hearing at DoE office. According to DoE sources, the group completely flattened a large portion of Rangapahar, a part of Chunar Wildlife Sanctuary, in October with the aim to supply the Dohazari-Cox's Bazar rail project.

On October 28, The Daily Star ran a report covering the massive hill razing.

Mohammad Moazzom Hossain, director of DoE Chattogram region, told The Daily Star Toma Group tried to slow the proceedings by repeatedly delaying the hearing date by seeking time.

"In the hearing we analysed our inspection report, which states they cut a total of 22 million cubic feet of hill at Rangapahar, devastating the whole eco system of the area. Taking all this into consideration, we fined them Tk 50 crore," he said.

Apart from this, a case will be filed against the group for damaging the environment, he added.

# JS session to begin Jan 18

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 11th parliament goes into its 11th session on January 18 amid Covid-19 pandemic.

President Abdul Hamid convened the session exercising the power bestowed upon him by article 72 (1) of the constitution, parliament secretariat said in a press release yesterday.

This will also be the first session of 2021.

The president is scheduled to deliver a speech on the first sitting of the 11th session highlighting the government's various successes and development in different sectors.

MPs will participate on the thanksgiving motion on president's speech and after the discussion the motion will be passed in the House.

Before the House goes into session at 4:30pm, the business advisory

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Dhaka North City Corporation is installing energy efficient LED street lights at different areas under its jurisdiction. Many roads of the capital are dimly lit, and the move aims to help drivers and pedestrians after sundown. This photo was taken from Kalyanpur area yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

# DMP INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE

Like previous years, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has issued special instructions for New Year celebrations, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, and has asked all to follow the following instructions:

- 1 No meeting, gathering or celebration on rooftops, roads, flyovers or public places.
- 2 No open-to-all cultural programme or function.
- 3 No fireworks.
- 4 Dhaka University campus will remain restricted for outsiders after 6pm.
- 5 Teachers and other employees of Dhaka University residing on campus can enter the university premises through Nilkhet and Shahbagh entrances after showing their ID cards.
- 6 No outsiders will be allowed to enter Gulshan and Banani area after 8pm but residents can enter through Kakoli and Amtoli points.
- 7 Residents of Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara areas are requested to return home before 8pm.
- 8 DMP has also discouraged people who live in other areas from entering Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara and Dhaka University areas.
- 9 After 8pm, no one would be allowed to stay in Hatirjheel area.
- 10 Bars would remain closed after 6pm.
- 11 People can celebrate the New Year at hotels but no "DJ parties" will be allowed.
- 12 City dwellers are requested not to carry any licensed arms in public places from 6pm today to 6am tomorrow.

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