



"My guess is he [Putin] will move in. He has to do something."

Biden predicts Russia will invade Ukraine

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SECOND EDITION

THE DAILY

Star

ON FRIDAY

DHAKA FRIDAY JANUARY 21, 2022

KSRM

শেখড় থেকে শিখরে

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXII No. 8

MAGH 7, 1428 BS

www.thedailystar.net

JAMADUS SANI 17, 1443 HJRI

16 PAGES PLUS TOGGLE : Tk 12.00

# Those who built Rab now loathe it

Says home boss; 12 int'l organisations urge UN not to involve Rab in peacekeeping missions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said those who built Rab are now speaking against it.

"They are running a smear campaign against Rab. They are not highlighting the positive impacts Rab has had on society. They are not talking about Rab's war on drugs or terrorism," he said while replying to reporters' queries after the DC conference in the capital.

"They speak of human rights violations, but we can throw down a challenge to them - there is no country where encounters don't take place," Asaduzzaman said, referring to alleged shootouts involving the force.

His comments came in the wake of 12 international organisations urging UN to ban Rab from its peacekeeping missions.

On December 10, the US announced sanctions on Rab and seven of its current and former members in the face of widespread allegations of human rights abuses against the force formed in 2004.

Earlier, on November 8, 2021, the 12 organisations wrote to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix. They include Human Rights Watch (HRW), Asian Human Rights Commission and Robert F Kennedy for Human Rights, who have for the past year been campaigning to have Rab banned from the UN peacekeeping missions.

The nine other organisations are Amnesty International, International Federation for Human Rights, Civicus, World Organisation Against Torture, Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), Asian Network for Free Elections, Capital Punishment Justice Project, and The Advocates for Human Rights.

The letter urged the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations to ban Rab from its missions, HRW in a statement said yesterday, adding that the department was yet to provide a formal response.

The organisations requested the department to implement a systematic requirement to disclose all previous affiliations so that a background check can be done to make sure that the peacekeeping candidate was not affiliated with Rab.

They demanded that "all uniformed personnel deployed by the UN, regardless of level or rank, are subject to systematic scrutiny of their

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Looking at this overcrowded bus, who would say the country is going through a third wave of Covid-19? Many of the passengers were not even wearing masks. Such disregard for health safety in public transport is all too common, increasing chances of the virus spreading further. The photo was taken in the capital's Khamarbari area.

# Mad race claims young life

14-year-old crushed between two speeding buses; man beaten to death by transport worker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rakibul Islam should have been in school and not on the streets selling masks to pedestrians and bus passengers.

But that was what the 14-year-old was doing at the capital's Moghbazar intersection to help his family cope with the pandemic when he became yet another victim of competition between buses.

He was critically injured when two buses of the same company converged and crushed the hapless boy in the middle around 5:00pm yesterday.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition and was pronounced dead around 5:30pm.

Harun-or-Rashid, a pedestrian who brought Rakibul to DMCH, said three buses of Gazipur-bound Ajmeri Glory Paribahan were competing with each other at Moghbazar intersection.

Bachchu Mia, DMCH police outpost in-charge, said the body

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As a student falls sick, others tend to her during the second day of their hunger strike demanding Sust VC Farid Uddin Ahmed's resignation yesterday. Fourteen of the protesters were put on saline drips. Five of them were later hospitalised. More on page 5.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

# Stop abuse of DSA

Law minister asks DCs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The deputy commissioners have been instructed to stop the misuse and abuse of the Digital Security Act, Law Minister Anisul Huq said yesterday.

"We've [also] asked the home ministry not to accept digital security act cases immediately after filing. There is a provision in the law to send cases to [the corresponding] cell. And in the case of journalists, [instructions were given] not to make arrests right away," he told reporters after meeting the DCs on the third and final day of the annual DC conference held at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

"The act is mainly formulated to combat cybercrime. It is not enacted to curb press freedom... Our constitution has clearly pointed out that freedom of expression and freedom of press are fundamental rights.

"There has been some cases of misuse. We'll talk with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to find out best practice... If necessary, we'll bring some amendment to the act. We informed them three days ago that we're ready for a discussion."

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen urged the DCs to be "more sensitive" in ensuring hassle-free services to expatriate Bangladeshis as over one crore people of the country live abroad.

He said the expatriates come with complaints of not getting passports, police clearances, marriage

and birth certificates in time. In some cases, they complain about losing control over their land.

Seeking a stronger role of the DCs in stopping sand lifting from rivers, Zahid Faruque, state minister for water resources, said an initiative to formulate a river dredging policy was underway to save the country's rivers.

Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, state minister for shipping, said they directed the DCs to strengthen measures to protect rivers from pollution, encroachment and restoring navigability.

Meanwhile, Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury urged the DCs to rescue Khas land (government property).

He also said that they are considering cancelling the Power of Attorney system in the Land Acquisition act, adding that people are regularly being deceived and harassed due to it.

The last session was held with Mohammad Moinuddin Abdullah, chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

"The DCs know well where graft takes place in their offices. We asked them to take preventive measures in those sectors," he said.

The DCs requested the ACC to dispose cases quickly.

"Sometimes, there are delays and perhaps DCs face problems because of it... We are trying to address the matter," the ACC boss said.

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News cannot be broadcast on IPTVs and YouTube

Says info minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

News items cannot be aired via IPTV and YouTube channels, said Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday citing the broadcast policy.

He also said newspapers cannot broadcast news or talk shows online or via YouTube.

"But news is still being broadcast through IPTVs [internet protocol televisions]. Regular bulletins are being presented and aired through YouTube channels. But this can't be allowed as per our broadcast policy," he said.

The minister came up with the comment while talking to reporters after a session on the third day of the DCs' Conference at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

Hasan urged the DCs to remain alert and take effective action in this regard.

After holding a discussion with representatives of the Association of Television Channel Owners (ATCO) yesterday, the minister said they approved newspapers' online portals and that there was a stipulation that only content published in print could be made available online.

"There's no way to go beyond that. Adding a YouTube channel, and broadcasting news or talk shows are not to be done," the minister said, adding, "Since they are not approved, we will take action against them on the basis of ATCO's recommendation."

"One should not invade the field of the other. Television channels should not publish magazines,

IMMORTAL MEMORY WITH DEEPEST LOVE

Mahabub Alam Mridul (1997-2021)



Director, Walton Group

Today, 21 January is the first death anniversary of Mr. Mahabub Alam Mridul, the Honorable Director of Walton Group. With his sudden demise, we have lost a promising young entrepreneur. It was his dream to work on new innovations in the development of the Electrical & Electronics (E&E) industry and devote himself to the welfare of the country and the people.

We pray from the bottom of our hearts that his departed soul be granted Jannah where it finds eternal peace. Ameen-

Walton Family

