



P6 Urmila's Pledge
'I want to ensure legal rights for artists'



P7 Russia Slams The West
For reinforcement amid Ukraine tensions



B1 Deposit Target
Bankers can't be fired for missing it



P11 Mashrafe Returns
He is playing competitive cricket after 13 months



SHINING THROUGH THE DAILY GRIND ... Holding a balloon in one hand, 12-year-old Zinia smiles wide while selling Kadam on the DU campus yesterday. She plucks the flowers, which are mostly associated with monsoon but may also bloom in winter, from the trees on campus and then sells them to assist her mother, who is also involved in the flower trade.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Turag filled up 'MISTAKENLY'

Dhaka-Ashulia expressway project authorities claim contractor did this without consultation

PINAKI ROY

The High Court had directed the government 12 years ago to restore the areas of the Turag and three other rivers around the capital to their original state, but the government still lags far behind in the implementation of the directive.

Even more surprisingly, a government agency has been filling up a part of the Turag in Ashulia, which it claims was done "mistakenly" during the implementation of a development project.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), the custodian of rivers in port areas, completed demarcation of the boundaries of the four rivers only a few months ago.

Visiting the bank of the Turag last week, this correspondent found that Roads and Highways Department (RHD) is filling up a river area which lies between the northern side of the BIWTA river port and the intersection of the Dhaka-Ashulia road.

A stretch of about 100 yards along the Dhaka-Ashulia road has been filled up by RHD. Locals said the government agency is carrying out the work for nearly a month. Kazi Wakil Nawaz, director (port



and transportation) of BIWTA, said Dhaka-Ashulia expressway project authorities did not take permission from them before filling up the river area.

"Probably they [RHD] are going to apply to us for using the area for their project," he said.

Shahabuddin Khan, project director of Dhaka-Ashulia expressway, said: "Our contractor filled the river land without consulting us. I visited the area yesterday [Sunday] and directed the contractor to stop the work. If we need the land, we will talk to BIWTA before continuing the work again."

He said a Chinese company is working as their contractor. "They [contractor] must have got it wrong and filled up the area."

The project director said the BIWTA did not intend to

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7 Bangladeshis on a migrant boat die of hypothermia

AGENCIES

Seven Bangladeshi migrants, who were on a boat from Libya towards the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa, have died of hypothermia, Italian Prosecutor Luigi Patronaggio said in a statement yesterday.

The coastguard saw the boat overnight some 18 miles off the coast of Lampedusa, an uninhabited island near Lampedusa, and rescue operations were conducted, he said, adding his office has opened an inquiry into alleged abetting of illegal migration and manslaughter, reported Reuters.

Lampedusa Mayor Salvatore Martello confirmed the death toll, adding the vessel was carrying 280 migrants, mainly from Bangladesh and Egypt.

Italy, a major route into Europe for hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers and other migrants, has seen an increase in migrant boats in recent months.

As of January 24, 1,751 migrants have disembarked on Italy's ports so far this year, according to government data.

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Extent of graft remains the same

In South Asia, only Afghanistan worse than Bangladesh in TI corruption perception index

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh scored 26 out of 100 in the latest edition of the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, which is more or less the same as in the past decade -- a development that raises questions about the 12-year-old government's actions in snuffing out the social ill.

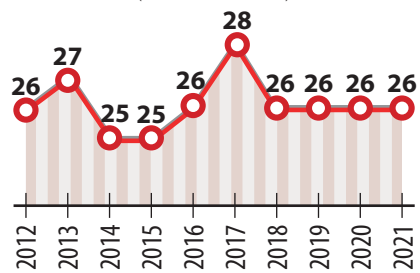
"Bangladesh's score of 26 is much below the average level of corruption," said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of the local chapter of TI, while unveiling the flagship report, which is universally believed to be the most well-known indicator of how much corruption exists.

The results are given on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean); the average score is 43.

TI prepares the CPI based on the perception of corruption, mainly in the public sector, particularly bribery, the use of public office for

private gain, diversion of public funds, nepotism in public sector appointments, red tape, state capture by narrow vested interest groups, mechanisms available for control of corruption.

BANGLADESH'S CPI SCORE (2012-2021)



It also considers legal, institutional and policy capacity and practice to control corruption, the integrity of institutions, effective prosecution of corruption cases, laws on financial

disclosure and conflict of interest of public officials, access to information, legal protection for whistle-blowers.

Among the eight South Asian countries, Bangladesh remains the second-lowest both in score and rank, topping only Afghanistan, which has scored 16 and ranked 174th from the top.

In terms of ranking, Bangladesh stood 147th among 180 countries, a notch lower than in the previous edition of the Berlin-based global corruption watchdog's annual study.

"In terms of development, we have done better than all other countries in South Asia, but our score in terms of corruption is very frustrating and embarrassing," Iftekharuzzaman said at the virtual press conference yesterday.

In South Asia, Bhutan continues to score the highest: 68. It was followed by India and Maldives (40), Sri Lanka (37), Nepal (33) and Pakistan (28).

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DEMONSTRATIONS IN SUST

Five alumni held for donating to students

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Criminal Investigation Department of Dhaka Metropolitan Police on Monday detained five former students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology for donating money to demonstrating students on campus demanding the resignation of the vice-chancellor.

All 28 students on hunger strike are on IV drips and 19 of them are hospitalised.

The CID yesterday handed the five former students over to Sylhet Metropolitan Police.

Md Nisharul Arif, commissioner of SMP, claimed that the five were detained for allegedly financing criminal conspiracy and provoking a peaceful movement.

"We are quizzing them at Jalalabad Police Station and will take legal action against them. We will also try to find their motives for financing the movement."

A case was filed with the police station last night against the five and another 150 unnamed people, said BM Ashraf Ullah Taher, additional deputy commissioner (media) of SMP.

Sujat Ahmed Layek, a resident of Amberkhana area, filed the case, he said without giving details of the case.

Some friends and families of the detainees Reza Noor Muin, Habibur Rahman Khan, AFM Nazmus Sakib Dip, AKM Maruf Hossain and Faisal Ahmed believe that they were detained for other reasons.

Reza's wife Jakowan Salwa Takrim, also a former Sust student, said, "We stood beside the protestors as former students of the university and

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Holding mobile phones aloft, with torches on, students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology take an oath in Golchatter area on the campus to continue their movement until VC Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed steps down. The photo was taken yesterday evening.

PHOTO: STAR

Indifference of people is to blame

Health minister on Covid surge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Zahid Maleque termed the coronavirus situation "very alarming" as the health directorate reported 16,033 new cases yesterday, the second-highest single-day detection.

He blamed people's indifference towards health safety guidelines for the situation.

"Due to this, the positivity rate has increased to 32 percent from one percent," said Maleque while addressing an online event on private hospitals and clinics' coronavirus preparedness.

On July 28, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS)

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