

## Monitor war in Ukraine closely PM asks officials



### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has directed the foreign ministry and other officials concerned to closely monitor the situation in Ukraine. "There was discussion on the Russia-Ukraine war. Definitely, we've not taken sides," Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam told reporters after a cabinet meeting chaired by the PM at the secretariat. "Our ambassadors in Romania and Poland are observing the situation. They are monitoring the conditions of Bangladeshis," Anwarul said.

The foreign ministry officials are observing the overall situation and maintaining regular communication, he said.

Earlier, Russian, the EU, and the US diplomats based in Dhaka met foreign ministry officials and shared their position with Bangladesh.

Bangladesh foreign ministry has said Dhaka maintains the policy of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



People fleeing Russian invasion of Ukraine arrive at a temporary camp in Przemyśl, Poland yesterday. The head of the UN refugee agency, UNHCR, said that more than 500,000 people have fled Ukraine to neighbouring countries since the start of the invasion last week.

## RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

# Ceasefire talks begin

Moscow, Kyiv plan 'second round' of negotiations as first talks yield no results; dozens killed in rocket strikes on Kharkiv

### AGENCIES

Russian and Ukrainian officials met on the Belarusian border to discuss a ceasefire yesterday while invading Russian forces met with determined resistance from Ukrainian troops and civilians on the fifth day of the

conflict.

Russia faced deepening isolation and economic turmoil as Western nations, united in condemnation of its assault, hit it with an array of sanctions.

But Russian leader Vladimir Putin did not appear ready yet to think again about

the invasion he unleashed on Russia's western neighbour last Thursday, having dismissed the West as an "empire of lies" and put his nuclear-armed units on high alert.

Meanwhile, Moscow and Kyiv announced

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## CEC promises 'a beautiful election'

Seeks consensus among all political parties

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal yesterday said a consensus among political parties was needed for holding free and fair elections.

He hoped all political parties would participate in polls to make the country's democracy stronger, ensure good governance and have a "good parliament".

The newly appointed CEC was speaking at a press conference at the Nirbachan Bhaban on his first day at office. The four election commissioners were present.

Awal urged all political parties not to leave electoral field.

"We from the bottom of our heart hope and pray that all political parties will join elections to make the country's democracy stronger."

The CEC said it is the EC's managerial role to make the polls environment favourable for all parties.

"Political parties have some roles to play in making an election fruitful. If they do not play their role, they will be called into question. Also, the Election Commission will be called into question."

"I will humbly request all to join elections to restore democratic process. We will try to give the nation a beautiful election. With that, we will try to ensure good governance and good parliament," he said.

The CEC at least three times talked about the need for a consensus among the political leadership.

"We as a whole will assist the political leadership. If the political leadership does not assist itself and if there is no minimum understanding, we will not be able to be their guardian."

"They [political leadership] are much more knowledgeable and experienced than us. We will

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## DIGITAL SECURITY ACT CASES

# Politicians worst victims

Shows data as at least 167 of them prosecuted under the controversial law in 2020-21

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicians are the worst victims of the Digital Security Act, with at least 167 of them being prosecuted under the controversial law during 2020 and 2021.

DSA Tracker, a project of the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS), studied cases against 1,468 individuals and could determine the professions of approximately 400 of them.

Politicians comprised the largest chunk, while journalists were a close second with at least 160 facing prosecution under DSA.

At a virtual discussion hosted by CGS yesterday, the organisation's Executive Director Zillur Rahman said, "We don't see politicians taking a stance against this law even though we are seeing a lot of [DSA] cases against them."

"We are observing that instead of the people directly affected, others are filing the cases on their behalf," he also said, at the discussion titled "The Digital Security Act 2018: In the Eyes of the Politicians".

Kazi Firoz Rashid, co-chairman of the Jatiya Party, said, "The most egregious thing about this law is that most of the sections are

non-bailable. The law that attempts to repress opposing ideologies is leading us in a direction that is at odds with democracy."

Abdul Awal Mintoo, vice-president of the BNP, delved into specific sections of the law which prosecute "hurting the spirit of the Liberation War".

"Can someone explain to me what the spirit of the Liberation War is? One can go to jail for going against the spirit of the war, but we don't know what it is," he said.

He added that the Liberation War was fought to protect people's

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7

## TANGAIL WATER TANK

# Mute witness to 1971 massacre

MIRZA SHAKIL, *Tangail*

The land surrounding the water tank behind the Tangail Circuit House was turned into a killing field by the Pakistani occupation forces during the Liberation War in 1971. Mixed into the soil are the remains of freedom-seeking people of the country, their lives cut mercilessly short and their bodies dumped there more than half a century ago.

The water tank in Tangail Sadar is a mute witness to the atrocities, but otherwise, none can say how many were killed by the Pakistani forces and unceremoniously dumped there.

On April 3, 1971, while entering Tangail, Pakistani forces encountered stiff resistance from freedom fighters and endured heavy casualties at the Goran Satiachara in Mirzapur.

The Pakistan army, however, entered Tangail town the same day after overcoming the local freedom fighters and set up a military camp at Tangail Circuit House. The government residential buildings located next to the circuit house were converted into prison and torture centres.

Nityananda Pal was a lecturer of Mawlana Mohammad Ali College, Kagmari in Tangail. When the war started, he chose to stay in his motherland despite the opportunity to leave.

According to a book written by Nityananda's brother Porisosh Pal, Razakars knocked on the door of his brother's house at Kagmari in July 1971. Some of their faces were covered with black cloth. Although his family members, including his wife, begged for



Countless freedom-seeking people were killed and dumped around the water tank in Tangail town in 1971

Nityananda's life, the collaborators of the Pakistani forces abducted Nityananda.

He hasn't been found since. After the country achieved victory in the nine-month war, Nityananda's family members came to know that he had been killed brutally in the killing field below the water tank.

Freedom Fighter Mohammad Salahuddin came to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## WE MOURN

We are deeply mourned by the loss of our most beloved, Founder & Honorable Chairman of Pacific Jeans Group. Industrialist M. Nasir Uddin has breathe his last today, 28 February, 2022 around 03:15 pm in a hospital in Bangkok (Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un). He was 71. May Allah (SWT) forgive him & grant him Jannatul Ferdous.

**NAMAZ-E-JANAZA TIMING:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> NAMAZ-E-JANAZA - 02 MARCH, 2022; 9:30 AM, EPZ Central Mosque, CEPZ.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> NAMAZ-E-JANAZA - 02 MARCH, 2022; AFTER ZUHR, Jamiatul Falah Mosque, Dampara, Chattogram.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> NAMAZ-E-JANAZA - 02 MARCH, 2022; AFTER ASAR, Own Residence Mosque, Solimpur, Chattogram.

**PACIFIC JEANS**