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River grabbers build illegal structures around the boundary pillar 31 of the Buriganga in Kamrangirchar of Dhaka. The BIWTA had evicted establishments there and built the pillar but the grabbers are at it again. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Sharif seeks PM's help to get back job

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sacked ACC officer Sharif Uddin yesterday sought the prime minister's intervention to get back his job and safety.



"Adhering to the prime minister's zero tolerance on corruption, I took some bold steps against influential individuals and became a target of their wrath," said the former deputy assistant director of Anti-Corruption Commission.

Sharif was sacked on February 16 without prior notice or an opportunity to defend himself. He came to the ACC's Segunbagicha headquarters in the capital to be quizzed.

Talking to reporters, he said, "You [the PM] are my mother. I'm helpless. My family and I are going through hard times... I have been saved from getting disappeared because of the well wishes of my former colleagues, journalists and the general public..."

ACC initiated three departmental proceedings against him for issuing no-debit status on bank accounts of suspects and delays in turning over case documents and joining the new workplace. Yesterday's quizzing was about the delays in turning over legal documents, he said.

On February 27, he applied to the ACC to

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## 16 injured in Gopalganj post-polls clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Fariapur

At least 16 people were injured, including 11 who got shot, in a clash between the supporters of a former union parishad chairman and the current one in Parchandra Dighlia area of Gopalganj yesterday.

"Ever since Rana Mollah got elected chairman of Suktail Union Parishad on January 5, he and his men became rivals of former chairman Murad Sheikh. The two groups engaged in a clash yesterday morning," said a local, requesting anonymity.

Ashit Mollik, assistant director of Gopalganj General Hospital, said, "Sixteen people were admitted to the hospital and one of them was sent to Dhaka with serious injuries."

Contacted, both the current and the former chairman blamed each other.

Sitol Chandra Paul, inspector at Gopalganj Sadar Police Station, said, "Police are looking for the individuals involved in the clash."

## ENACTING LAWS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL POSTS

# Mandates unfulfilled

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The country's constitution stipulates that there should be specific laws to appoint Supreme Court judges and regulate the appointments of the chiefs of staff of the defence services.

It also states that an auditor general and an ombudsman should be appointed under relevant laws.

But most of the related laws are yet to be enacted or executed five decades after the adoption of the charter.

Legal experts say these laws are necessary for ensuring good governance and transparency in the republic.

According to them, successive governments did not feel it necessary to enact laws to meet the constitutional obligation.

If the laws are enacted specifying the procedure and criteria for the appointments, the government will not be able to exercise absolute power to pick its favourites for the key positions, the experts point out.

Parliament on January 27 passed

a law on the appointment of the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners amid objections from opposition lawmakers and criticism from civil society members.

After the hasty enactment of the law, the issue of the constitutional obligation to the appointments to these posts came to the fore.

Law Minister Anisul Huq said the present government is attaching the utmost importance to the issues regarding formulation of laws in line with constitutional provisions.

"I hope we can formulate a specific law for the appointment of High Court judges within this year, as it is the job of my ministry. The ministries concerned will take steps to enact laws on other related issues, as mandated by the constitution," he told The Daily Star.

The minister, however, said the government was being run in line with constitutional provisions and there was "no violation of the provisions".

The constitution, the supreme law

of the land, containing 153 articles was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh on November 4, 1972. It became effective on December 16, 1972.

Speaking to this correspondent, eminent jurist Dr Shahdeen Malik said the constitution mandated parliament to enact laws to ensure transparency in the process of appointments to constitutional posts.

"But from the experience of the formulation of the law on the appointment of the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners, we feel that it would be better if the present government does not enact any other law as it is not ready to make such laws to ensure transparency. It would better not formulate such a law which might make things worse than better," he said.

The lawyer said no government showed interest in formulating laws as mandated by the constitution as the laws would ensure that the

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## New US envoy in town

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Peter Haas, the new US Ambassador to Bangladesh, arrived in Dhaka yesterday.



He is taking over from Earl R Miller, who left Bangladesh on January 21 after three years.

The US Senate confirmed Haas, a career diplomat, as the ambassador to Bangladesh in December last year after he was nominated by President Joe Biden on July 9.

Haas most recently served as US Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs.

Haas worked as deputy assistant secretary for Trade Policy and Negotiations and served as head of the US Consulate General in Mumbai, India.

He also served as the chargé d'affaires and deputy permanent representative at the US mission to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and economic councillor at the US Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The other diplomatic postings of Haas include London, Rabat, Washington, Port-au-Prince and Berlin.



An elderly man checks out the kites a hawkler was selling on a street in Karwan Bazar. The seller purchases kites of different sizes and colours from Chawkbazar and sells those in different parts of the capital.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Govt launches health insurance for the disabled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time in the country, people with disabilities are being brought under health insurance such that they can get treatment at a low cost.

Called Bangabandhu Suraksha Bima for Persons of Disabilities, people with autism, Down's syndrome, intellectual disability and cerebral palsy will initially be eligible for the insurance policy, which was launched by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday to mark the National Insurance Day.

The initiative has been piloted in Dhaka city, Dhaka district and Sylhet district.

While the persons with the disability do not have to pay any fee to avail of the health insurance service, a portion of the premium will have to be borne by the parents.

The Sadharan Bima Corporation, which is initially implementing the scheme along with Neuro-Developmental Disabilities Protection Trust (NDDPT), will have to pay an annual premium of Tk 600.

Parents whose monthly income is Tk 25,000 or less will have to bear 25 percent of the annual premium or Tk 125. The remaining 75 percent or Tk 450 will be borne by the NDDPT.

Parents whose monthly income is more than Tk 25,000 will have to bear the entire annual premium. Up to Tk 1 lakh of the medical bill will be borne by the policy.

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