



**Building a stronger and safer nation for 70 years**  
Our victories are for the people





**ROOPPUR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT**  
Proud Construction Partner  


**RAB SANCTIONS**  
**Home’s inaction to blame**  
**Says Shahriar Alam as JS body slams foreign ministry**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Had the home ministry provided the foreign ministry with necessary information on alleged extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances in time, the US sanctions on Rab could have been avoided, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam told a parliamentary watchdog.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said a good number of development partners and lawmakers from the US and the EU had written to the ministry seeking information on alleged forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and arrests of journalists under the Digital Security Act.

But the ministry could not write back in time as it did not have information

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



**A view of the walkway recently constructed by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authorities along the Turag in the capital's Ramchandrapur. In order to protect the river from illegal occupants, the BIWTA has been setting up various structures like border pillars, walkways and landing stations on its bank stretching from Gabtoli to Basila. The photo was taken yesterday.**

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## BANGLADESH RAILWAY

# Hefty loss of Tk 13,492cr in 12 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway has incurred Tk 13,492.70 crore in losses in 12 years between fiscal 2008-09 and FY2019-20, according to BR documents.

The state-run transport agency suffered a loss of Tk 2,063.1 crore in FY2019-20, the highest for a single year since FY2008-09. Data on BR's income and expenditure before that fiscal year is not available.

A draft report of the BR shows it posted a loss of Tk 1,384cr during FY2020-21. The final report has not been filed yet.

Every year, the BR publishes an "Information Book" including in it the financial summary of the agency and all the other latest data for the year. The latest book was released in November last year.

BR has not made any profit since FY2008-09, according to data available in the information books. They do not have any data on the income for years between 1971 and 2007.

The books mentioned that the agency made Tk 5.02 crore in profit in FY1969-70 during the Pakistani rule.

It earned TK 1,125.8 crore in FY2019-20 but the operational expenses were Tk 3,188.9 crore that year.

After Covid-19 hit Bangladesh in March 2020, the operation of passenger trains was suspended for over two months to curb the spread of the virus.

BR BALANCE SHEET in crore taka			
YEAR	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	LOSS
2019-20	1,125.8	3,188.9	2,063.1
2018-19	1,406.6	3,050.6	1,644
2017-18	1,486.1	2,918	1,431.8
2016-17	1,303.7	2,835.5	1,531.7

Its effect was visible in the financial report. BR carried 63.99 million passengers in fiscal 2019-20, down from 92.71 million the previous year.

Although the operations of freight trains continued amid the pandemic, the quantity of goods transported by the trains reduced significantly in FY2019-20.

The freight carried was 3,179.68 thousand tonnes in FY2019-20 against 3,959.25 thousand tonnes the previous year, show the books.

BR incurred such losses before the pandemic as well.

In FY2018-19, it earned Tk 1,406.57 crores while the total operational expenses were Tk 3,050.65 crores, meaning it suffered a loss of Tk 1,644.07 crores that year.

It earned Tk 1,486.15 crores in fiscal 2017-18 compared to the operational costs of Tk 2,918.02 crores.

BR incurred Tk 1,531.7 crore in losses in

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## NEW MARKET CLASHES

# DB holds back suspects' party affiliation

### Says no clue yet about Morsalin's attackers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Those who took part in the violence and killings wearing helmets in the capital's New Market area recently are goons and they will be brought to justice, a top DB official said yesterday without disclosing their party identities.

"We are not confirming their party affiliation right now. There is nothing to look into their party affiliation. Besides, there [Dhaka College] is no committee [Chhatra League] here; there is no such thing named Chhatra League.... Those who took part in violence wearing helmets are goons for sure," said Mahbub Alam, joint commissioner of the Detective Branch of DMP, at a press briefing at the its Media Centre.

Local media published photos of many suspects and identified them as Dhaka College Chhatra League leaders and activists who took part in clashes wearing helmets.

Five cases have so far been filed in connection with the clashes, which left two people dead and at least 50

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

## DUTCH HORTICULTURE EXHIBIT

# 100 officials going abroad, austerity out the window

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

At least 100 agriculture ministry officials will participate in phases in a six-month international horticulture exhibition in the Netherlands, even though the government had asked to abandon all routine tours except those involving emergencies.

The fair, which kicked off on April 13, will continue until October 9 in the Dutch city of Almere.

As part of the tour plan, 15 agriculture ministry officials and a gardener have gotten government orders (GO), issued between March 16 and April 12, for the trip. Of them, three top officials and the gardener have already travelled to the Netherlands to prepare the Bangladesh pavilion and participate in the opening ceremony of the 7th International Horticulture Exhibition Expo.

Agriculture ministry officials said according to the plan, two officials will be stationed together at the pavilion in a 10-day slot before two others take their place.

Besides, those who will be travelling to Europe for other project-related study tours will also have a stopover in the Netherlands to participate in the horticulture fare.

"There will be around 70-80 officials travelling to the Netherlands for the two segments," said an agriculture ministry official preferring anonymity.

Besides, for "Bangladesh Day" which is likely to be held in the first week of July, high-level officials including the agriculture minister are likely to attend the fair, said the official with knowledge of the tour plan.

"The total figure considering all the visits is likely to be more than 100," he said.

Bangladesh is participating in the fair for the first time. Thirty-three other countries are taking part in the expo, the theme of which this year is "Growing Green Cities". The expo takes place once every 10 years.

Going through the five GOs already issued, The Daily Star found that 12 of them are high-ranked officials including the agricultural ministry secretary Md Sayedul Islam.

The newspaper tried to contact Islam to ask about the visit, but he did not respond to calls and text messages.

The list includes one joint secretary, four additional secretaries and five deputy secretaries.

The travel plan of so many people including high officials is against the government's stance of discouraging unnecessary foreign trips for public servants.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

## Russia destroys West-supplied arms in Ukraine

### Cuts gas to Poland, Bulgaria; EU denounces the move as 'blackmail'

AGENCIES

Russia said yesterday it had destroyed a large quantity of Western-supplied weapons in Ukraine, while halting gas supplies to EU and Nato members Poland and Bulgaria in a move Brussels branded attempted blackmail.

With the conflict that has claimed thousands of lives entering its third month, Ukraine conceded Russian forces had pushed deeper into the country's east and captured several villages, as Moscow intensifies a renewed offensive to take control of Donbas.

Russia's defence ministry said its forces had destroyed the "large batch" of weapons and ammunition supplied by the US and European countries using long-range missile strikes on southeastern Ukraine.

They targeted hangers at an aluminium plant near the Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia with "high-precision long-range sea-based Kalibr missiles", the ministry said.

Tensions are also rising in a breakaway region of Moldova bordering southwestern Ukraine, where the interior ministry said that shots had been fired at a village housing a Russian arms depot after drones flew over from Ukraine.

The unrecognised region has reported a series of explosions in recent days that it called "terrorist attacks", leading Kyiv to accuse Moscow of seeking to expand the war further into Europe.

Russia's energy giant Gazprom said it had stopped all gas supplies to Poland and highly dependent Bulgaria, after not receiving payment in rubles from the two EU and Nato members.

The 27-member bloc said it was "prepared" for the stoppage and was planning a "coordinated" response, labelling it "another attempt by Russia to blackmail us with gas".

"Europeans can trust that we stand united and in solidarity with the member states impacted," European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said on Twitter.

The EU chief also warned importers that paying for Russian gas in rubles would breach sanctions, reports AFP.

The Russian foreign ministry said

SEE PAGE 6 COL 8



**Syeda Ratna, a coordinator of Tentultala Maath Rokkha Andolon, and her 17-year-old son, who were both detained for protesting against the construction of a police station on the playground, along with children of the area planting saplings along a boundary wall yesterday afternoon. The wall was put up by Kalabagan police authorities to stop protesters from obstructing their work.**

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## HAJJ 2022

# Air tickets get pricier

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The airfare for Hajj was yesterday fixed at Tk 1.4 lakh this year, up 12,000 from 2019, when Bangladeshis were last allowed in Saudi Arabia for the pilgrimage.

"As you know, the price of jet fuel has doubled," said M Mahbub Ali, state minister for civil aviation, which fixed the airfare following discussions with different stakeholders.

If the higher fuel price is considered, the airfare should be Tk 1.5 lakh.

"But thinking about the hajis, we have fixed the airfare at Tk 1.4 lakh. Saudi Airlines will also keep the same fare."

Biman's two Boeing 777 aircraft will be used to operate dedicated hajj flights to ferry pilgrims to Saudi Arabia. The state carrier will operate 75 dedicated hajj flights this year.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1