





DHAKA WEDNESDAY JUNE 1, 2022 www.thedailystar.net

**REGD. No. DA 781** 

Farooki joins 2022 Sydney **Film Festival** 

Vol. XXXII No. 133



Big tobacco **'poisoning** our planet':

**JAISHTHA 18, 1429 BS** 



**Booters face Indonesia** in Bandung today

SHAWWAL 30, 1443 HIJRI



New stock investment tool ETF in three

16 PAGES: TK 12.00

### Govt would amend DSA, if necessary

Says law minister STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the

government would, if necessary, bring changes to the Digital Security Act to ensure the best practice as the law was misused to some extent.

"I had a meeting with the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva through the UN resident coordinator in December 2019 to know how to ensure the best practice of the Digital Security Act in our country. After that, a committee was formed comprising representatives from the ministries of law, foreign affairs, home affairs, and information and communication technology to work with the UNHRC on this issue.

"The committee held a meeting with the UNHRC and will hold another one

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The construction of the third terminal of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital is going on in full swing. A passenger terminal building, roads, an airport apron, a parking lot, a cargo complex, and other structures are being built under the Tk 21,399 crore project. The terminal is likely to be opened by October next year.

### US DOLLAR CRUNCH

## Many banks fail to follow BB exchange rates

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

Amid a US dollar crunch in the domestic market, many banks failed to comply with the exchange rates set by Bangladesh Bank a couple of days ago.

Though the BB injected \$123 million into the market bills at Tk 89.15 per dollar fixed by it on Sunday, say officials of several banks.

The central bank has so far supplied a record \$5.95 billion to the foreign exchange market this fiscal year

The Daily Star yesterday contacted seven banks to know whether they followed the BB-set exchange rates. Of them, five said they had no choice but to sell each dollar to importers for Tk 91-94.

The BB on Sunday also asked banks to offer exporters a maximum of Tk 88.15 for each dollar while purchasing export bills and Tk 89.20 for foreign exchange houses that channel remittances to Bangladesh from abroad.

The central bank fixed the interbank rate -- the benchmark exchange rate of the taka against the dollar

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#### RAIL TRANSIT FOR INDIA THRU' BANGLADESH

# Railways of 2 countries to work on one route

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

After a proposal from Indian Railways (IR), Dhaka and New Delhi have agreed to work out the details of the possibility of India using rail transit through Bangladesh.

Under the plan, Indian trains will run between Sealdah and Haldibari of West Bengal through Bangladesh. In that case, trains will enter Bangladesh through Gede-Darshana (Chuadanga) border and exit through Chilahati (Nilphamari)-Haldibari border to reach Siliguri.

At the moment, India has road transit facilities through Bangladesh. If approved by the two governments, the proposed route will be the first rail transit facility between the two nations after more than half a century.

Before India-Pakistan partition in 1947, there were eight railway

interchanges between the two countries. Only five of them

Benapole-Petropole, Darshana-Gede, Rohanpur-Singabadh, Biral-Radhikarpur, and Chilahati Haldibari -- are now operational.



The IR placed the proposal at a meeting with Bangladesh Railway (BR) in April.

Meeting documents seen by The Daily Star show the infrastructure of the route from Gede-Darshana-Ishwardi-Abdullpur-Parbatipur-Chilahati Haldibari is "fully ready" for the

opening of the route.

The IR delegation also sought to increase the number of trains from India through various points for freight transit from one carrier to another.

At the meeting, BR officials sought a new overnight train service from Dhaka to Kolkata via Darshana. Dhaka will place a formal proposal in this regard soon, the document reads.

Apart from the freight trains, two passenger trains are being operated between India and Bangladesh for several years.

Currently, the Maitree Express between Dhaka and Kolkata uses the Gede-Darshana interchange. Bandhan Express operates between Khulna and Kolkata.

Rail communication between the two countries via Chilahati-Haldibari route resumed in December 2020, after a 55-

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# Rice pricier even in peak Boro season

Traders allege millers not supplying enough; drives against hoarding begin

PINAKI ROY and MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The prices of rice rose by Tk 8-10 per kg over the last two weeks even though it is the harvesting season and there is ample supply of paddy.

At different kitchen markets, the price of coarse rice rose to Tk 52-54 a kg while the fine varieties sold for Tk 65 to Tk 80 yesterday.

According to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), the prices of coarse and fine rice increased by 5.38 percent and 3.17 percent over the last seven days.

Traders said the rice mill owners were not supplying enough rice to the market and the prices might rise further if they do not improve supplies.

Asked, Benjir Alam, director general at the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), said there was no shortage of rice in the market because farmers cultivated Boro on 49.63 lakh

hectares, which is 90,000 hectares more than they cultivated last year. Floods have damaged

paddy on only about 18,500 hectares this season, he said. "Besides, the production was

The expectation was to harvest 2.11 crore tonnes of paddy this Boro season, the DG said, adding that almost 94 percent of the target has been met already.

different parts of the country would continue to bring paddy from the fields until the end of this month. He blamed the traders and millers for creating an artificial shortage in the market.

However, several rice mill owners in different districts said the paddy they bought from farmers were not properly

ripe and not dry enough to produce rice instantly. Meanwhile, the government raids across the country to control the prices have largely failed to make an

impact on the first day. Yesterday afternoon, officials conducted a drive at the wholesale rice market in Babubazar, Oid Dnaka, bu

found most of the shops closed. Eight teams of officials of the food ministry and food directorate will conduct drives in the capital today.

The drives were launched a day after the cabinet directed officials to take action against the companies

involved in unauthorised rice businesses and hoarding. Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam said on Sunday that some large companies without any legal

authoritsation were hoarding rice. At a kitchen market in the capital yesterday, Siddikur Rahman, a resident of the capital's Nakhalpara, said, "I used to buy miniket rice at Tk 62 a kg. After the prices of other essentials went up, I switched to BIRI-29 which was

Tk 52. Now BIRI-29 is Tk 57 a kg. "I am trying really hard to reduce my expenditures, but I'm failing," he said.

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### US has concerns over human rights, press freedom Says Ambassador Haas about Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Washington wants Dhaka to ensure accountability and reforms in Rab for lifting the sanctions imposed on the elite force on December 10 last year over potential human rights violations.

It also wants to see a free, fair and transparent general election in Bangladesh, slated for next year, said US Ambassador Peter Haas.

He said the Election Commission, free media, and the civil society have important role in this regard.

The US envoy was addressing the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB) Talk at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

"The United States has decided to put human rights, the issues of freedom of the press at the centre of our foreign policy and we make no excuses about that," he

Haas said sanctions on Rapid Action Battalion and seven of its current and former officials were the result of



Underprivileged children don't get fair chances in life. They are left with poor playing options. This picture taken recently in the capital's Bangla Motor area shows two children, away from their home, playing on the sidewalk with a fallen branch of a tree. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

#### **Mominul** wants to quit Test captaincy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following a lot of criticism over his individual performance and that of



the team in recent times, Mominul Haque vesterday revealed his desire to not continue as the Test captain of Bangladesh after a meeting with the Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan yesterday.

Since being appointed as the captain in October 2020, Mominul led Bangladesh in 17 Tests and managed to win just three times, losing on twelve occasions and drawing

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