

## JS budget session begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The budget session, which will also be the 18th session of the 11th parliament, will begin today.

This year, the session will not be curtailed as in the previous two years for the pandemic, and there will not be any restrictions on the entry of officials and employees into the parliament.

President M Abdul Hamid on May 18 convened the session, exercising the power bestowed upon him as per Article 72 (1) of the Constitution.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal will place the budget for fiscal 2022-23 on June 9, according to the sources at the parliament secretariat.

The initial size of the budget is set at Tk 677,864 crore and the target for revenue income is Tk 431,657 crore, Kamal recently told reporters.

Media personnel will also be allowed to enter and cover the Parliament session in person.

The 17th session of parliament was prorogued on April 9.

## 4 killed in Narsingdi as train hits truck

A CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Four people were killed and another was injured as a small truck collided with a train in Hasnabad area in Narsingdi's Raipura upazila around 12:00 noon yesterday.

The dead are Shahin Alam Khan, 18, Sujath Mia, 25, and Anisur Rahman, 24, all residents of Mazyzpara village in Netrakona's Purbodhala upazila, and Anuwarul Islam, 27, of Tarakandi in Mymensingh.

Sub-inspector Emayedul Jahedi, in charge of Narsingdi Railway Police Outpost, said Sylhet-bound Jayantika Express had hit the small truck.

As the train hit the truck, two died on the spot and another breathed his last on the way to the hospital.

Anuwarul died when he was being taken to Dhaka for better treatment.

The bodies were sent to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Sub-inspector Abdul Kadir of Amirgonj Railway Police Outpost said the accident happened at an illegal level crossing.



Speakers at the "Roundtable discussion on rivers and our future" held at The Daily Star centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Ukraine fights back in Severodonetsk

Claims Russian forces suffering huge losses; efforts on to resume export grain from Ukraine

AGENCIES

Ukraine yesterday said its forces were managing to push back against Russian troops in fierce fighting in Severodonetsk despite Russia "throwing all its power" into capturing the strategic eastern city.

Lugansk regional governor Serhiy Gaiday said in an interview posted on his official social media that the invading forces had captured most of the city "but now our military have moved them".

"Right now, our soldiers have pushed them back, they (the Russians) are suffering huge casualties," Gaiday said in a live TV broadcast yesterday.

"The Russian army, as we understand, is throwing all its efforts, all its reserves in that (Severodonetsk) direction," he said. "Russians are blowing up bridges, so we could not bring in reinforcements to our boys in Severodonetsk."

Severodonetsk is the largest city still in Ukrainian hands in the Lugansk region, where Russian forces have been making gradual advances in recent weeks.

Thousands of people have been killed, millions sent fleeing and towns turned into rubble since President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops into Ukraine 101 days ago.

The advance of Russian forces has been slowed by stiff Ukrainian resistance, repelling them from around the capital Kyiv and forcing Moscow to focus on capturing the east.

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**The press service of Ukraine's presidential office yesterday said Russian attacks killed four civilians in the Lugansk region as a whole.**

Russian attacks killed four civilians in the Lugansk region as a whole. The situation in Lysychansk – Severodonetsk's twin city, which sits just across a river – looked increasingly dire.

About 60 percent of infrastructure and housing had been destroyed, while internet, mobile networks and gas services had been knocked out, said its mayor Oleksandr Zaika.

In the city of Sloviansk, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) from Severodonetsk, the mayor has urged residents to evacuate in the face of intense bombardment, with water and

electricity cut off.

Ukraine also reported two victims from a missile strike on the port of Odessa in the southwest, without specifying if they were dead or injured.

Russia's defence ministry said it had struck a "deployment point for foreign mercenaries" in the village of Dachne in the Odessa region.

It also claimed a missile strike in the northeastern Sumy region in a place where it said Ukrainian soldiers were receiving training from foreign instructors on using howitzers.

Russian troops now occupy a fifth of Ukraine's territory and Moscow has imposed a blockade on its Black Sea ports.

But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was defiant on Friday.

"Victory will be ours," he said in a video speech marking the 100th day of the war.

Later, in his nightly address, he dismissed the Russian army as being reduced to "war crimes, shame and hatred" after failing military objectives.

But Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said "certain results have been achieved", pointing to the "liberation" of some areas from what he called the "pro-Nazi armed forces of Ukraine".

## 7 held for cutting off teacher's wrist

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

Rab yesterday arrested seven men for their alleged involvement in cutting off the wrist of a teacher in Kusthia.

Squadron Leader Mohammad Ilias Khan, company commander of Rab-12, said they were arrested from different areas in the district on Friday night.

Three rounds of ammunition, a magazine and a foreign pistol were recovered from the accused.

On Tuesday, the right wrist of Tofazzal Hossain, assistant professor of the Department of Economics at Kumarkhali's Banshgram College, was severed.

A case was filed in this connection.

## Physically challenged girl raped in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A physically challenged minor girl was raped allegedly by a teenage boy in Patuakhali's Bauful upazila on Friday.

According to locals, the victim shared her experience with her mother after the incident.

On information, locals placed four suspects in front of her and she identified the teenage boy.

Members of Bauful Police Station later went to the spot and detained the accused.

The victim was sent to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital for medical tests and treatment, said Al Mamun, OC of the police station.

## Robber arrested in Bagerhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Police yesterday arrested an alleged robber from Dakshin Satalari village in Bagerhat's Morrelgonj upazila.

The arrestee Kabir Bayati, 48, has 17 cases, including three related to robbery, filed against him, said police.

He was arrested in a case filed over the robbery at the house of Mahibul Haque, retired secretary of the Ministry of Aviation and Tourism, in Fakirhat upazila's Lakhpur area.

KM Ariful Haque, superintendent of the district police, said Kabir would be placed before a court with a remand appeal.

## AL expels controversial Selim Khan

UNB, Chandpur

Widely discussed Awami League leader and Laxmipur union chairman Selim Khan has been expelled from the party.

Laxmipur union Awami League at an extended meeting removed the criticized chairman, who excavated sands illegally from the Meghna river, from his post yesterday.

Nasir Uddin Ahmad, president of Laxmipur union Awami League, confirmed.

Party sources said Selim Khan has been expelled from the party permanently for tarnishing the image of the party.

Earlier on May 29, the Appellate Division cancelled the High Court judgement allowing Selim Khan to extract sand from the Meghna River in Chandpur.

## Sri Lanka in diplomatic spat over confiscated Russian plane

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's main airport yesterday denied the island nation's government was behind a decision to detain an Aeroflot aircraft, after Russia lodged a diplomatic protest over the move.

The Airbus A330 was seized at the Bandaranaike International Airport on Thursday, the same day it arrived from Moscow, after a directive from a court in the capital Colombo.

Flight SU289 was about to return to the Russian capital with 191 passengers and 13 crew aboard.

Sri Lanka's top envoy was summoned to the Russian foreign ministry on Friday to receive a "resolute protest" over the detention, Russian state news agency TASS reported.

But Airport and Aviation Services, which runs Bandaranaike airport, said in a statement the dispute was "purely of a commercial nature" and should not be subject to state involvement.

The plane was stopped on the orders of Colombo Commercial Court in response to a commercial dispute filing by Celestial Aviation Trading 10 Limited of Ireland.

## At least 4 killed

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Dhaka Chattogram highway around 10:00pm.

Faruk Hossain Sikdar, assistant director of Fire Service Chattogram Headquarters, said the cause of the blaze could not yet be confirmed.

It quickly spread among containers stored there.

"While the firefighters were working, suddenly there was a massive explosion leading to the casualties. At least seven firefighters were injured in the blast," he added.

At least 16 fire engines were engaged.

Sub-Inspector Nurul Islam Ashek, in charge of Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) Police Outpost, told The Daily Star around 12:30am, "We are receiving many injured, including police, fire service personnel and locals."

Inspector Sumon Bonik of the police outpost at CMCH said at least seven

policemen were injured.

Locals said the shockwaves from explosions were felt from three kilometres away. Traffic on the Dhaka Chattogram highway was halted.

"We have sent injured firefighters to Combined Military Hospital Chattogram," Faruk Hossain Shikder, assistant director of Bangladesh Fire Brigade Chattogram, said over the phone.

"I cannot say the number of other injured people. But there are many injured," he said.

Our staff Correspondent from the spot said around 200 containers were on fire around 2:00am. Firefighters were struggling to douse the flames.

"Most of those injured were depot workers and officials of C&F agencies as they mostly work at night, he said, quoting locals.

Bangladesh Inland Container

Association Secretary Ruhul Amin Sikder said an export-oriented container loaded with hydrogen peroxide exploded around 9:30pm.

He suspected that the container might have been exposed to high temperatures. There were 16 to 18 such containers loaded with the chemical, said Sikder.

Hydrogen peroxide itself is not flammable but it can accelerate flames under certain circumstances.

This paper tried to reach the depot's Deputy Managing Director Nurul Akhter over the phone but failed to reach him.

Sikder said he had heard that Nurul Akhter also got hurt.

Our staff correspondents in Chattogram FM Mizanur Rahman, Arun Bikash Dey, Mohammad Suman, Shimul Nazrul, and Dwaipayan Barua contributed to this report.]

## Ensure more power

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formed and the court declared the river as a living entity. "This sounds soothing. But the actual situation did not change."

The Department of Environment (DoE) has been given enormous power without accountability, he said, adding that the department's officials often feel scared to take actions as the ones who crackdown on polluters during caretaker government in 2007 were later made officer on special duty.

Malik Fida A Khan, member of the NRCC, recommended that the issue of river pollution be included in text books to create awareness among children.

Former Buet professor Mujibur Rahman said international negotiation was required to lower the rate of siltation in different

ivers because the issue involves siltation upstream.

Deforestation and lack of vegetation on the river banks are among the main reasons behind increased siltation, he said.

Since Bangladesh lies in a Delta with its high population density, the country can experience a "humanitarian catastrophe" if it fails to save the rivers, said Sharif Jamil, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon.

Sharmeen Murshid, chief executive officer of Brottee, said political parties have to show their ideological visions to save the country's rivers.

Besides, the NRCC has to play a proactive role in this regard, she said.

Sheikh Rokon, secretary general of Riverine People, said the economic value of rivers

## Iran supreme leader accuses 'enemy' of trying to use protests

AFP, Tehran

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei yesterday accused the "enemy", a reference mainly to the United States, of seeking to use protests to weaken the Islamic republic.

In the past few weeks, demonstrations against the rising cost of living and corruption have occurred in several Iranian cities.

"Today the enemy counts on popular demonstrations to strike the Islamic system," Khamenei said during a televised address.

The May 23 collapse of a building under construction in the southwestern city of Abadan has sparked protests demanding that "incompetent officials" be executed after the tragedy killed at least 37 people.

## Gas prices set to rise

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Its technical evaluation committee had recommended a 20 percent price hike on average at the hearing. But a consumer rights organisations placed alternate options to hiking the price.

The Consumers Association of Bangladesh

and some business organisations, including the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries, urged the government not to hike the prices when people are struggling with inflation.

The price of natural gas was last increased in July 2019.

## Atmospheric

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the possible influence of local pollution.

Before the Industrial Revolution, levels of CO2 held steady at around 280 ppm, a level maintained for approximately 6,000 years of human civilization that preceded industrialization, according to NOAA.

The level now is comparable to what it was between 4.1 and 4.5 million years ago, when CO2 levels were near or above 400 ppm, the agency said in a statement.

At that time, sea levels were between five and 25 meters higher than now, high enough to submerge many of today's major cities. Large forests also occupied parts of the Arctic, according to studies.

CO2 is a greenhouse gas that traps heat, gradually causing global warming. It remains in the atmosphere and oceans for thousands of years.

Its warming effect is already causing dramatic consequences, noted NOAA, including the multiplication of heat waves, droughts, fires or floods.

"Carbon dioxide is at

levels our species has never experienced before — this is not new," said Pieter Tans, a scientist with the Global Monitoring Laboratory.

"We have known about this for half a century, and have failed to do anything meaningful about it. What's it going to take for us to wake up?"

## Oman and Iran ink deals on oil field, gas pipelines: official

AFP, Muscat

Oman and Iran signed deals to develop two gas pipelines and an oil field along their maritime border, Oman's energy minister said yesterday, less than two weeks after Iran's president visited the sultanate.

The visit by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on May 23 came amid stalled international talks to revive a deal on Tehran's nuclear programme, leaving the Islamic republic under sanctions.