



**FASTBUILD**  
PROVIDES RODS OF ANY SHAPE AND SIZE AS PER DESIGN

BSRM  
building a safer nation



**PADMA BRIDGE**

Proud Construction Partner

SHAH CEMENT

## DEMO FOR TK 300 DAILY WAGE Tea workers vow not to back down

MINTU DESHWARA

Hundreds of tea workers blocked roads for hours at multiple points of Moulvibazar yesterday, the 12th day of their work abstention, to press home their demand for a daily wage of Tk 300.

One group of workers blocked the Juri-Barlekha regional highway for about four hours from around 11:00am, while another group staged a demonstration on the Dhaka-Bianibazar regional highway for about three hours from noon.

A third group blockaded the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Sreemangal upazila's Satgaon for around two and a half hours.

In the last couple of days, some workers in a few tea gardens had resumed work, but they rejoined the strike yesterday, said Kajal Kalindi, panchayat president at Satgaon Tea Garden.

"They have joined the movement again. Our movement is going on peacefully -- we will continue it until our demand is met," he added.

Meanwhile, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Affairs Minister Md Shahab Uddin yesterday met the demonstrating workers in Juri upazila.

He announced that the prime minister will talk to the workers within three days to solve the problem.

Senior officials of the district administrations, law enforcement agencies and the labour department visited

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Holding signs with slogans like "The fight for livelihood will continue, wages must be Tk 300", at least 250-300 workers of the Lakkatora Tea Garden stand in front of its factory to continue their protest for the 13th day, demanding an increase in daily wages, yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## Babul hired killers for Tk 3 lakh to kill Mitu: PBI

UNB, Chattogram

Former Chattogram superintendent of police Babul Akter hired killers for Tk 3 lakh to kill his wife Mahmuda Khanam Mitu in 2016, found a probe by the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI).

"Babul developed an extramarital relationship with a foreign woman and they had a child. That's why he took the decision to kill Mitu," PBI Inspector Abu Zafar Mohammad Omar Faruk, also investigation officer of the murder case, said yesterday.

The PBI report also revealed that Quamrul Islam Shikdar Musa and five others took part in the killing mission.

After the murder, Babul asked Musa to go into hiding, said the report.

Inspector Zafar also said they were at the final stage of submitting the charge sheet. He said the mystery surrounding the killing

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## Overwhelmed by development at grassroots

### Outgoing WB country director tells PM, lauds her leadership

UNB, Dhaka

Outgoing World Bank Country Director Mercy Miyang Tembon yesterday highly appreciated Bangladesh's overall socioeconomic development, including women empowerment, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Temon conveyed the appreciation to the PM when she paid a farewell call on her at the Gono Bhavan.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

The WB official said that she visited several places in Bangladesh and was overwhelmed with the development at the grassroots level.

She also lauded the premier for implementing Ashrayan project to provide homes to the homeless.

Hasina told Tembon that both husband and wife are the owners of the house being given under the project, and they are utilising the land on their homes premises by growing vegetables.

The WB official said that she was also pleased to see that students and other people volunteered to harvest paddy to help farmers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The PM said leaders and activists of the Awami League and its associated bodies did the job owing to their political commitment.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



## EC chose EVM with smooth voting on mind

Says CEC on decision to use it in 150 seats in next nat'l polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal yesterday said political parties' stance was not the main consideration for the Election Commission when it decided to use EVMs in up to 150 parliamentary constituencies during the next general election.

The EC rather considered how the vote would be fair and voters can cast their votes, Awal told reporters at his office.

The EC on Tuesday decided to use EVMs in the next general election even though major opposition political parties still have no confidence in the voting machines.

The commission, however, is yet to pick the constituencies where EVMs will be used. This will be finalised when the election schedule will be fixed.

The CEC categorically said that they would not add voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) to the EVMs though many political parties recommended adding this.

"We have taken opinions from experts. Even they said that there is no need to add VVPAT," Awal said.

He said the commission has

unanimously taken the decision after reviewing the recommendations from all political parties.

"The decision of using EVM was the EC's. The EC will handle the polls, not the political parties. It is the EC's big responsibility to conduct the election."



The CEC said the commission will make sure that the election can be held in an even smoother and fairer manner. Those who would cast votes were our main consideration, not what the political parties have said, he added.

Asked whether the EC's decision to use EVMs would add fuel to the debate and create further political crisis, Awal said that they can't predict the future. "You had talked about crisis centering 2014 and 2018

polls. We cannot predict a crisis over the next election... You should wait and we will also wait."

Enquired whether the EC's target of holding a free, fair and participatory election will face any hurdles, the CEC said, "We cannot predict the future."

He said that if the BNP changes its stance and joins the polls and demands no use of EVM, the EC would then sit and discuss the matter.

Meanwhile, Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury yesterday said that EC would need to shoulder the responsibility if political parties boycott elections following the commission's decision on using EVMs.

"Like the EC, the government will also be responsible if political parties boycott elections... They [EC] are under pressure from the government," he told reporters after holding a meeting with the CEC at the latter's office.

He said the decision to use EVMs in 150 parliamentary constituencies was wrong. "As a result, elections may not take

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

## Israel unveils 1,200 year-old desert mansion

AFP, Rahat



Israeli archaeologists unveiled a 1,200 year-old mansion on Tuesday, broadening knowledge of the southern desert region where a mosque was recently discovered.

Described as a "luxurious rural estate" by the Israel Antiquities Authority

(IAA), the home boasted a marble-paved hallway and walls decorated with frescoes.

The first building of its kind to be found in the southern Negev desert, according to the IAA, it contained vaulted rooms around a central courtyard.

The remains of oil lamps were unearthed in storage rooms underground, along with a cistern.

"The luxurious estate and the unique impressive underground vaults are evidence of the owners' means," said a statement from the archaeologists leading the excavations.

"Their high status and wealth allowed them to build a luxurious mansion that served as a residence and for entertaining," added Oren Shmueli, Elena Kogan-Zehavi and Noe D. Michael.

"We assume whoever lived here was some local ruler," Michael told AFP, adding that such estates

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## LDA enforces half-day hartal today

UNB, Dhaka

The Left Democratic Alliance is enforcing a half-day hartal across the country today protesting the recent hike in prices of fuel, urea fertiliser and daily essentials.

The coalition of eight left-leaning political parties will enforce the shutdown from 6:00am to noon, said LDA Coordinator Ruhin Hossain Prince, also the CPB general secretary.

BNP has extended its support to the LDA's hartal.

Speaking at a press conference at the capital's Mukti Bhavan yesterday, Prince called upon people to observe the hartal with their spontaneous presence on the streets.

He said it would mount pressure on the government to stop the process of increasing the prices of electricity and gas.

Stating that people are suffering immensely due

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



The capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue saw intense traffic as the afternoon rush increased yesterday due to the new office timings -- 8:00am to 3:00pm -- of all government, semi-government and autonomous organisations coming into effect.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Thai court suspends PM Deputy PM to take over as interim leader

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thailand's Constitutional Court yesterday suspended Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha from office after accepting a petition from an opposition party seeking his ousting on the grounds that he has held office for his full, legally mandated term.



The petition filed to parliament last week by the main opposition Pheu Thai party argued that Prayuth's time spent as head of a military junta, after he staged a coup when he was army chief in 2014, should count towards his constitutionally stipulated eight-year term.

Though Prayuth could be restored to his position when the court rules on the petition, the surprise suspension threw Thai politics into confusion.

"The court has considered the petition and related documents and sees that the facts from the petition are cause for questioning as demanded," it said.

Prayuth has 15 days to respond, the court told media in a statement, adding that a panel of judges ruled five to four in favour of his suspension, starting from yesterday.

Government spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri said Prayuth respected the court's decision and had ceased active duty, adding that Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan would take over as interim leader and the suspension would have no impact on the government's work.