

## Ministry scraps booklist for civil servants

UNB, Dhaka

The Public Administration Ministry has scrapped a list of 1,447 books selected for promoting “knowledge and reading habit” of government officials amid a storm of controversy over the inclusion of 29 books written by an additional secretary.

KM Ali Azam, senior secretary of the ministry, confirmed the cancellation of the list yesterday. The additional secretary in question is Md Nabirul Islam of the ministry.

Ali Azam said a committee will be formed to select a new list for this purpose.

The senior secretary said choosing books from thousands of publications is a sensitive issue.

“Within a week we will provide the committee topics like history, literature, poems and the committee will make the list with appropriate books. The committee will review the process to recommend books.”

He said a decision was taken by the ministry to build libraries in the offices of divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners and upazila nirbahi officers with small allocations in the next four years to boost knowledge of the officials.

“For this purpose, a list of 1,400 books was prepared by this office but it was not made mandatory to follow the list...,” he added.

## Muktijoddha council bill passed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Muktijoddha Council Bill, 2022 was passed in Parliament yesterday for ensuring welfare of the freedom fighters and their families keeping a provision to prepare a list of people of anti-liberation forces.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque placed the bill which was passed by voice vote.

As per the bill, there will be a council called Jatiya Muktijoddha Council whose head office will be in Dhaka.

The council would prepare the lists of Razakars, and Al Badar and Al Shams members.

## 12-yr-old drowns in pond

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 12-year-old boy drowned in a pond in Chattogram’s Boalkhali upazila yesterday morning.

Md Sajeeb was the son of Osman Gani Faju of Boalkhali municipality, said officials at Boalkhali Upazila Health Complex.



Passers-by stand near a destroyed building following an overnight missile strike in Kharkiv, yesterday, amid Russia's military invasion launched on Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

# Ukraine begins counter-offensive to retake south

Says Kyiv as Western military aid flows in

AGENCIES

Ukraine yesterday announced the start of a long awaited counter-offensive to retake territory in the south seized by Russian forces since their invasion six months ago, a move reflecting Kyiv's growing confidence as Western military aid flows in.

The news came as a team from the UN nuclear watchdog headed to Ukraine to inspect the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant - captured by Russian forces in March but still run by Ukrainian staff - that has become a hotspot in the war.

Moscow and Kyiv have traded accusations of shelling in the vicinity of the nuclear plant, Europe's largest and close to front lines, amid fears of a radiation disaster in a country still haunted by the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

“Today we started offensive actions in various directions, including in the Kherson region,” Ukrainian public broadcaster Suspilne cited southern command spokeswoman Natalia Humeniuk as saying.

Russia rapidly captured swathes of Ukraine's south near the Black Sea coast, including the city of Kherson, in the early

phase of the war in stark contrast to its failed attempt to capture the capital Kyiv.

Ukraine has been using sophisticated Western-supplied weapons to hit Russian ammunition dumps and wreak havoc with supply lines. Humeniuk told a briefing yesterday that Ukraine had struck more than 10 such ammunition dumps in the past week, adding they had “unquestionably weakened the enemy”.

She declined to give details of the counter-offensive, saying Russian forces in southern Ukraine remained “quite powerful”.

The governor of Ukraine's Russian-annexed Crimea Peninsula, Sergei Aksyonov, dismissed her announcement as “another fake of Ukrainian propaganda”. Crimea is adjacent to the Kherson region.

Russia's RIA news agency, quoting local official Vladimir Leontiev, reported that people were being evacuated from workplaces in Nova Kahokva, a town 58 km (36 miles) to the east of Kherson, after Ukrainian forces carried out more than 10 missile strikes there.

Earlier, the head of the International Atomic Agency (IAEA) said he would lead a team of inspectors this week to the

Zaporizhzhia plant, on the Dnipro river in southern central Ukraine, without specifying the expected day of their arrival.

“We must protect the safety and security of Ukraine's and Europe's biggest nuclear facility,” Rafael Grossi said in a post on Twitter.

The IAEA tweeted separately that the mission would assess physical damage, evaluate the conditions in which staff are working at the plant and “determine functionality of safety & security systems”. It would also “perform urgent safeguards activities”, a reference to keeping track of nuclear material.

Russian-installed officials said yesterday a Ukrainian missile strike had punched a hole in the roof of a fuel depot at the Zaporizhzhia plant, reports Reuters.

Russia's defence ministry said its forces had shot down a Ukrainian drone that was trying to attack the nuclear power station, Russian news agencies reported. It said there was no serious damage and radiation levels were normal.

The Kremlin said the IAEA mission was “necessary” and urged the international community to pressure Ukraine to reduce military tensions at the plant.

## Dhaka wants long-term fuel supply deal with Delhi

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka is considering a long-term agreement with Delhi to buy fuel amid a global supply shortage of energy.

“India is in a better position on the fuel issue. So, we will try to go for a long-term deal with them if they have surplus. But it will depend on how much surplus they have. They have their own supply and demand thing,” said Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen yesterday.

The issue, among others, will be discussed during the prime minister's visit to India scheduled for September 5-8.

Russia faces sanctions from the US and EU following its invasion in Ukraine. India, however, managed to buy Russian fuel.

## Charges pressed against suspended cop, five E-orange officials

COURT CORRESPOND

The CID has pressed charges against Banani Police Station's suspended Inspector Sheikh Sohel Rana and five officials of e-commerce platform E-orange in a case filed over embezzling around Tk 78.29 lakh.

The five others are: E-orange proprietor and Sohel's wife Naznin Nahar Bithi, Managing Director Masukur Rahman, Chief Executive Officer Aman Ullah Chowdhury, and directors Nazmul Alam Rassel and Sonia Mehjabin, who is Sohel's sister.

On August 28, Investigation Officer Proshanta Kumar Sikder, also a sub-inspector of CID, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

In the charge sheet, the IO showed Sohel and his wife Naznin as “fugitives” and appealed to the court to issue arrest warrants against the couple.

## Bangladeshi killed ‘by husband’ in SA

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A Bangladeshi woman was stabbed to death allegedly by her husband in South Africa over dowry on Sunday.

The victim, Shanta Islam, 22, was the daughter of Abdus Salam Shikdar of Tholpara village in Mirzapur upazila.

Her husband Sumon Ahmed, 30, has been on the run since the incident.

The victim's family said Sumon, of Kanchanpur Dakkhinpara village of Basail upazila, migrated to South Africa about eight years ago. There he started a business. A year ago, he married Shanta through telephone and took her to South Africa around six months ago.

Shanta's uncle Delwar Hossain said after marriage, Sumon used to pressurise her to take money from her father. Sumon used to torture her physically and mentally. Shanta's father gave him Tk 7 lakh, but he demanded more.

On Sunday, the victim's family learnt that Shanta's body was found in her home.

## ‘Greater unity’ prime focus

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have any intention to make the alliance active and that a dysfunctional alliance cannot continue year after year.

Nazrul Islam Khan, senior BNP leader and coordinator of the 20-party alliance, told The Daily Star yesterday, “We have discussed with the alliance partners and everyone agreed that we all will wage a movement simultaneously in the greater interest. We did not take any final decision on cutting ties with Jamaat.”

The Jamaat ameer, too, had said they were in favour of waging a simultaneous movement in the national interest, mentioned Nazrul, also a standing committee member of the BNP.

About the alliance, he said neither BNP nor Jamaat announced that it was dissolved.

“Right now, our prime focus is on a greater unity among all opposition forces who will wage a movement simultaneously. The goal will be to oust the government and have a free and fair election held under a non-partisan interim government,” he said.

As part of this strategy, the BNP has already held meetings with allies and parties outside the alliance, including Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Rob), Nagorik Oikya, Biplobi Workers Party and Gonosamhati Andolon, and some other organisations.

Mahmudur Rahman Manna, the convener of Nagorik Oikya, said, “The BNP is talking about a greater unity and we are hopeful about this. We have discussed this with the BNP.”

“A simultaneous movement of opposition forces seems a better idea than forming a new alliance. In this trying time, a simultaneous movement is badly needed.”

About the BNP-Jamaat ties, the former student leader said, “It is true that the BNP-Jamaat relations are shaky right now. But even after that, all are talking about a simultaneous movement, which is good.”

The BNP has been observing programmes across the country on its own and its leaders and activists are being attacked and even two of them have been killed during a protest.

“The BNP has the strength to wage a movement alone. So why should we rely on others? We have long been criticised for being with the Jamaat. The sooner we cut the ties, the better it would be for the party,” said Shariful Islam, a Chhatra Dal activist of Bhaluka, Mymensingh.

BNP sources said the party faced huge criticism locally and internationally for keeping relations with Jamaat, condemned for assisting the Pakistan occupation forces in carrying out mass killing and rape during the 1971 Liberation War.

Several top Jamaat leaders were executed in the years since 2013 for war crimes, and the party also lost its registration, becoming ineligible to contest polls.

It, however, continues organisational activities under the name of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, renamed from Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh.

There has been internal pressure within the BNP to cut ties with the Jamaat. Even when it wanted to ally with other political parties, including the left, the latter raised questions about the BNP-Jamaat relations.

So, the party's top brass decided in principle that if Jamaat wants to cut ties with the BNP, they will welcome it but make no official announcement.

On Sunday night, the BNP standing committee, the highest policymaking body of the party, in a meeting discussed the Jamaat ameer's statement and many of its leaders expressed happiness, said a meeting insider.

“This statement [of Jamaat ameer] makes our position clear. When the simultaneous movement will start, the alliance will automatically dissolve,” a BNP standing committee member told The Daily Star, wishing not to be named.

Since 2018, the 20-party alliance has not observed any programmes but the BNP went its own way, staging protests and holding a series of meetings with various political parties, except Jamaat.

“The alliance has long been inactive and it will not be active anymore,” said another senior BNP leader, wishing not to be named.

Asked about Jamaat's position on the alliance yesterday, its Publicity Secretary Matiur Rahman Akand said the issue was discussed in the party meeting and “the ameer did not say we have left the alliance”.

The BNP started to maintain distance with Jamaat when the international crimes tribunals began the war crimes prosecutions. The distance widened when BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was sent to jail in 2018 and Jamaat was not found by the BNP's side in protests.

The ties hit an all-time low when the BNP formed Jatiya Oikyafront before the last parliamentary election bypassing the 20-party combine, which angered many of the alliance partners.

“The Jamaat ameer has said everything. We are not observing any programme under the banner of the alliance,” Iqbal Mahmud Tuku, a standing committee member, said, dodging the question of whether they have already cut ties with Jamaat.

“We are holding programmes on our own and everyone will do the same,” he added.

Echoing his view, some other BNP leaders say the party is now more focused on unity among opposition forces, but they believe the Jamaat issue is an obstacle in any attempt to this end.

Ganasanghati Andolon Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki said there are some questions about the forms and strategy of that simultaneous movement as the BNP has not made things clear.

“My observation is that the BNP's walk-alone policy and cutting ties with Jamaat will be a relief for the left

parties,” said Saki, replying to a query.

Al Masud Hasanuzzaman, professor of government and politics department at Jahangirnagar University, said the BNP is waging a movement alone but it is yet to gain momentum.

“To wage a simultaneous and organised movement, proper leadership is required. Time will show how things unfold,” he added.

## Tigers face Afghan

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In the previous nine meetings between the two sides, Afghanistan have won five while Bangladesh won three games, with one match abandoned.

Apart from the spin threats of Rashid Khan, Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Mohammad Nabi, left-arm quick Fazalhaq Farooqi has emerged as the X factor in Afghanistan's pace-bowling department.

The 21-year-old remained instrumental with the new ball against the Lankans as Farooqi bagged three wickets upfront with his lethal swinging deliveries, zipping both ways.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, will be eyeing to regroup under their new leader in Shakib. It will be crucial for the Tigers' think-tank to come up with an effective approach in the flagship event following a string of poor performances in the shortest format of late.

Apart from Shakib, the likes of Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah Riyad are expected to provide vital experience in the line-up. However, players such as Afif Hossain, Mahedi Hasan, Anamul Haque Bijoy and Mohammad Saifuddin will also have to raise their game on the big stage.

## Universal pension

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of Revenue chairman and the Bangladesh Employers' Federation president.

The governing body will hold at least three meetings every year.

## Fuel prices cut by Tk 5

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taking by businesses.”

He went on to call the price adjustment decision “illegal”.

“All the decisions related to petroleum products are supposed to be set by the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission and not by the ministry itself. With this decision, they are trying to justify their earlier decision,” Alam added.

Meanwhile, Nasrul Hamid, the state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, said the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation will continue to count losses despite the generous duty cut.

“We didn't ever think the price of diesel will take this trend,” he told reporters at the secretariat earlier in the day.

On August 26, the price of diesel in the international market was

\$147.62 per barrel, said the energy ministry in a press release yesterday.

After the duty cut, the import cost of diesel comes to Tk 128.61 per litre.

Since BPC is selling at Tk 109, it is racking up losses of Tk 19.61 a litre, it added.

If the price decreases in the international market, the local price will be adjusted again, Hamid told The Daily Star last evening.

Earlier in the day, after a meeting with petrol pump owners, BPC Chairman ABM Azad said that it may take two to three days to know the impact on the price structure due to the reduction in import duty on fuel.

“Diesel still costs \$132 per barrel in the international market. As a result, BPC is losing Tk 9.5 to Tk 10 per litre.”

## DGHS closes 92 healthcare

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Banani, officials found that nurses were transplanting hair on a patient without the presence of any physicians.

The clinic has an operating theatre, but no authorised doctors to run it.

Prof Ahmedul Kabir, additional director general (administration) of the DGHS, told reporters that the clinic was run using the name of an Indian dermatologist who used to visit. The Indian doctor recently stopped visiting.

The clinic was later closed.

In Banani, another clinic named Dhaka Pain and Spine Centre was also sealed for not having its licence renewed, said an official.

Health officials closed Khidmah Lifecare Diagnostic Centre in Lalbagh and Dhaka General Hospital in Chawkbazar for not having authorisation.

Other clinics closed in the capital are: Khilgaon General Hospital, Central Basabo General Hospital in

Khilgaon, Kanak General Hospital in Matuail, and Salman General Hospital in Shaniar Akhra.

Meanwhile, the civil surgeon of Chattogram city closed two private hospitals over various irregularities, reports our correspondent.

The hospitals are: Desh Hospital in Chatteshwari Road area and Treatment Eye Hospital near Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

A team, led by Civil Surgeon Elias Chowdhury, also warned two other hospitals -- Health Home Private Ltd and the Fair Health -- as they found some irregularities.

After a three-month gap, the health directorate resumed its drive against unregistered hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centres countrywide.

The healthcare facilities that have already sought but are yet to get registration will also not be allowed to run, Prof Ahmedul Kabir said while announcing the drive at a press conference on Sunday.