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FIFA urges WC nations to 'focus on football'

REUTERS

FIFA has written to World Cup teams urging them to focus on the soccer in Qatar and not let the sport be dragged into ideological or political "battles", British media reported on Thursday.

The letter from FIFA president Gianni Infantino and the governing body's secretary general Fatma Samoura follows a number of protests made by World Cup teams, on issues ranging from LGBTIQ rights to concerns over the treatment of migrant workers.

"Please, let's now focus on the football!" Sky News quoted Infantino

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A 4.5km stretch of the bus rapid transit will open to traffic tomorrow. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader is expected to inaugurate the two Dhaka-bound lanes. The photo was taken in the capital's Uttara recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

It wasn't
achieved
in a day

JS Speaker says on
the constitution's
50th anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unauthorised amendments undermined the fundamental philosophy and spirit of the 1972 constitution, Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury said yesterday.

Much of the constitution was later restored by ratifying the 15th amendment, she added.

"The constitution wasn't achieved in a single day of activism; rather it took decades of sacrifice and bloodshed from millions of people and numerous conflicts," she said.

The speaker made the remarks as the chief guest at a discussion organised by the Supreme Court administration to commemorate the

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'Make childhood playful'

Sierra Leone minister speaks of 'values not found in textbooks' during his visit to Bangladesh



PORIMOL PALMA

When he was young, teachers used to tell him off for being "too playful". Despite getting good grades in school, he was considered not ready to be made a class prefect.

"You are so playful David! You cannot possibly be a prefect", they said.

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Jahangir 'spent on' events that never happened

Probe hints ex-GCC mayor pocketed Tk 1.57cr

SHARIFUL ISLAM and
ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE AKAND

Suspended Gazipur City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Jahangir Alam may have pocketed at least Tk 1.57 crore from the city corporation fund in the pretext of celebrating Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary in 2020, according to an internal investigation by the city authorities.

The funds were withdrawn to pay for different programmes to mark the occasion, although no programmes were held due to Covid restrictions, the report said.

The report has been prepared for an LGRD ministry probe body, which is looking into allegations of corruption and irregularities against Jahangir.

Documents show two cheques – one amounting to Tk 46 lakh and another Tk 45 lakh – were encashed on March 4, 2020. This was said to be advance payments for different discussions and events, including cultural programmes, on Rajbari Ground on March 17, the birthday of Bangabandhu.

Another cheque of Tk 29.79

lakh was issued on April 14 the same year to Golden Construction Company for decoration for the Rajbari programmes.

None of these programmes or decoration work actually happened, the investigation found.

Gazipur city Ward Councilor Asadur Rahman Kiron, who has been serving as acting mayor since Jahangir's suspension, said no programme was held as there was Covid 19 restrictions.

Gazipur City Awami League President Aznot Ullah Khan, acting general secretary Md Ataullah Mondal, Cultural Affairs Secretary Asadulla and local lawmaker Shamsunnahar Bhuiyan also confirmed this to The Daily Star.

Similarly, a cheque of Tk 23.91 lakh was issued to a London-based art firm for creating a giant portrait of Bangabandhu for display on March 17. It was not on display.

Another Tk 12.45 lakh was withdrawn from the GCC account on February 24 last year for printing posters. Documents show the posters were printed from Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory

(BMTF). But BMTF informed the GCC that it did not do any such work.

Nurul Alam Azad, manager of Sonali Bank's Gazipur Court Building branch, said no cheque issued to BMTF was encashed from Gazipur City Corporation account in February last year.

The investigation also found some dates on bills and vouchers were inconsistent with the dates of events. Records show bill adjustment was approved on April 17, 2020. But some vouchers are dated April 12, five days before the approval.

This is inconsistent and suspicious, said the report.

The cheques of different banks were issued jointly by the then mayor Jahangir and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Aminul Islam.

All government programmes and their budgets must be approved by a committee, but in this case no committee was formed, meaning there was no approval for these spendings, the report said.

Two cheques amounting to Tk 91 lakh were issued in the name of former GCC secretary Mostafizur Rahman and ex-chief revenue officer Rezaul Bari. They were encashed by GCC temporary staffers, according to documents

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Fireworks can cause stress to birds in the wild



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Fireworks can cause stress to birds in the wild, a study of Greylag geese in Austria suggests.

Researchers fitted temporary transmitters to 20 wild Greylag geese at Almsee, a lake in Upper Austria which is close to villages that hold midnight fireworks displays to mark the new year.

The transmitters record the birds' heart rate and body temperature, which are measures of physiological stress.

The study, led by Dr Claudia Wascher of Anglia Ruskin University, recorded that the average heart rate of the geese increased by 96 percent, from 63 to 124 beats per minute, in the first hour of New Year's Day, from midnight to 1:00am.

Their average body temperature increased by 3 percent (from 38°C to 39°C) in the same time period.

Between 1:00 am and 2:00 am, after the fireworks had ended, the geese's average heart rate was still 31 percent above normal while the average body temperature remained 3 percent higher than normal.

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Jama'atul Ansar gave KNF Tk 17 lakh to buy arms Says Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

New militant outfit -- Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya -- gave Tk 17 lakh to separatist group of Chattogram Hill Tracts Kuki Chin National Front (KNF) to buy weapons, said Rab.

The outfit also sent over Tk 50 lakh to different places through banking and mobile banking channels over the last eight to nine months for conducting organisational activities.

At a press briefing, Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab's legal and media wing, shared the information with reporters at its media centre in the capital yesterday, hours after four members of Jama'atul Ansar were arrested at Cumilla's Laksam upazila.

Two books on extremism, a training syllabus, nine leaflets, a diary containing accounts of the organisation and four other books were recovered from the arrestees on Thursday night.

The arrestees are: Muntashir Ahmed alias Bachchu, chief financial coordinator of the outfit, Ismail Hossain and Abdul Quader, "hijrat" affairs coordinators, and Helal Ahmed Zakaria, third-in-command of its military wing.

With the latest arrest, 26 leaders and operatives of the new militant outfit have been arrested while Rab disclosed the identities of 55 who left home to join the outfit. Three KNF members have also been held.

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Two riders on their horses in the capital's Mouchak-Malibagh flyover. Although horse riding was once common in Old Dhaka, such a scene has become rare nowadays. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

JCD leader dies in crash while fleeing attack

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A Chhatra Dal leader, who was hit by a microbus while trying to escape an attack allegedly by Jubo League men on Thursday night in Narayanganj, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The victim, Amit Hasan, 18, was the vice-president of Chhatra Dal's ward No 5 unit of Kanchan municipality in Narayanganj's Rupganj upazila.

Chhatra Dal is the pro-BNP student body, while Jubo League is the youth front of the ruling Awami League.

Nahid Hasan, president of Chhatra Dal's Rupganj upazila unit, said they brought out a torch procession on Thursday night, protesting the recent arrest warrants against BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman in a corruption case.

Amit took part in the programme that began around 8:00pm from the upazila's Bhulta intersection area.

"After the programme ended,

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