

FARDIN'S DEATH

Bushra to stay in jail till Jan 8

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Amatullah Bushra, who was arrested following the death of Fardin Noor, a student of Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology (Buet), has to stay in jail till January 8 as a Dhaka court set that date to pass the order on her bail petition.

Judge Tahsin Iftakhar of Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court-7 heard the bail petition yesterday afternoon and set January 8 to pass the order, according to court sources.

On November 10 last year, Rampura police arrested Bushra, a friend of Fardin, from Banasree area after Fardin's father Kazi Nooruddin Rana filed a case against her.

Bushra was sent to jail on November 16 last year after her bail plea was rejected following the completion of her five-day remand.

On December 5 last year she sought bail and a Dhaka court set yesterday's date for the hearing on the bail petition.

Fardin's body was recovered from Shitalakhya river in Narayanganj's Siddhirganj on November 7, three days after he went missing.

After over a month of investigation, the Detective Branch of police and the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on December 11 last year said Fardin died by suicide after jumping off a bridge into the Shitalakhya river.

A day later, Detective Branch chief Mohammad Harun Or Rashid said they did not find Bushra's involvement in the incident.

He also said they would let the court know about this matter.



A child covered in layers of warm clothes, including a beanie with ear-flaps and gloves, takes a ride on a rickshaw with the guardian in the capital's Mohammadpur area. With the cold wave sweeping across the country, temperatures have gone down to an almost unbearable extent. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

TK 582CR GRAFT

HC orders ACC to probe allegations against Poton Traders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to conduct an enquiry into the allegation against Poton Traders, a contracting firm, of embezzling 72,000 tonnes of imported chemical fertiliser for which the government lost Tk 582 crore.

The ACC has also been asked to submit the enquiry report to the HC in 60 days.

The HC also directed the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) chairman to give an explanation about the reported allegations to this court by January 20.

At the same time, the court issued a rule asking the government and ACC to explain in two weeks why their inaction against the

High Court stays bail of Salim Prodhan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed for two months a lower court order that granted bail to online casino kingpin Salim Prodhan in a case filed over amassing Tk 57.79 crore illegally and laundering about Tk 22 crore.

The HC also issued a rule asking Salim Prodhan and the state to explain why the subordinate court's bail order should not be scrapped.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu issued the order and rule following a petition filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) challenging the lower court order that on December 13 last year granted bail to Salim Prodhan.

HC stayed the bail of Salim Prodhan considering the gravity of his offence, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star.

Salim's lawyer Md Shahariar Kabir Biplob opposed the ACC's petition, saying that the lower court granted bail to his client rightly and legally as he has been suffering in jail for more than three years.

Salim, who came to the fore in 2019 when law enforcers conducted drives against illegal casino businesses, allegedly amassed his wealth from online casino businesses and laundered money to Thailand and the US.

Salim was arrested from

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Ensure enabling environment for girls

Speakers tell roundtable



Speakers at the roundtable titled, "How girls are realising potentials: Opportunities and Challenges", jointly organised by Care Bangladesh and UNFPA, in association with The Daily Star at the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There must be an enabling environment for girls so that they can dream big and reach their full potential, and to ensure that, child marriage, early childbearing, and dropping out need to be addressed, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

In addition, parents must know about their daughters' potential, otherwise, the parents themselves may turn out to be a major obstacle for the children, they said.

Besides, girls must have digital and financial literacy, leadership and social skills, and knowledge in science and technology to ensure that they can fulfil their dreams.

They made the remarks at the event, titled "How Girls are Realising Potentials: Opportunities

and Challenges", jointly organised by Care Bangladesh and UNFPA, in association with The Daily Star, at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Sigma Ainul, senior programme manager of Population Council, said society has been rapidly progressing in terms of technology, but girls are lagging behind when compared with boys, which became more evident during the pandemic.

"There had been a huge digital gender divide, which obstructed girls taking part in online classes," she said.

"Besides, girls must have financial literacy, such as the skills of savings, how to open a bank account, or withdraw cash from banks and ATMs," she said.

Mahmudur Rahman Khan, technical coordinator of research at Care Bangladesh, in his keynote

highlighted that in 2000, the net enrolment in primary education increased to 98 percent, but even in 2017, only 31 percent girls enrolled in tertiary education.

And the consequence of dropping out is low labour-force participation, as female youth comprise only 26 percent of the labour force, while it's 54.5 percent for the male youth. This divide can determine wages and freedom in choosing careers, he said.

To achieve their potential, girls need the space to meaningfully participate in dialogues, and prejudices against them need to go away, he mentioned.

At the same time, the perception of "marriage can solve all problems" needs to be eliminated, and the control over sexuality should be

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

GAS, POWER Ordinance to adjust price without hearing placed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The "Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (amendment) Ordinance, 2022" was placed in parliament yesterday, paving the way for the government to adjust the prices of gas and electricity without public hearing.

President Abdul Hamid promulgated the ordinance on December 1 last year amending the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) Act-2003 as parliament was not in session at that time.

The law ministry issued a gazette on the same day announcing the amendment that allows the government to adjust the prices of gas and electricity.

Previously, the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources used to adjust the prices of fuel including diesel, octane, kerosene and petrol without any public hearing. But, the prices of gas and electricity were adjusted by the BERC through public hearing.

With the amendment of the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) Act 2003, the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources will not be required to hold a hearing to decide new prices for gas and electricity.

The BERC is an autonomous body based on the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Act 2003,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Dhaka Lit Fest kicks off

UNB, Dhaka

The 10th edition of Dhaka Lit Fest officially began yesterday, after a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic.

The event -- which showcases world literature and culture with the participation of around 500 writers, poets, performers, intellectuals, journalists and internationally acclaimed prize-winning speakers -- has 170 planned sessions during the four-day event.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid inaugurated the event alongside litterateur and Nobel laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah and Indian writer-literary critic Amitav Ghosh at Bangla Academy's Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisharad auditorium.

DLF directors Sadaf Saaz Siddiqi, Kazi Anis Ahmed, and Ahsan Akbar were also present at the event. Earlier in the morning, the event began with a performance of spiritual songs at the Bangla Academy lawn.

The event will feature winners of the Pulitzer, International Booker, Neustadt International, PEN/Pinter, Prix Medicis, Academy Award, Windham-Campbell Prize, Albert Medal, Waterstones Children's Book Prize, and Aga Khan Award. It is featuring conversations, dialogues, film screenings, art exhibitions, music, cultural shows and much more.

Meanwhile, three writers were conferred Gemcon Sahitya Puroshkar-2023 yesterday.

Poet Kamal Chowdhury won the Gemcon Sahitya Puroshkar 2023 for his poetry "Stobdhata Jara Shikhey Gechey." He was awarded Tk 5 lakh.

Young writer, Sajidul Islam, won the Tarun Kathashahitya Puroshkar for his novel "Shonar Nao Poboner Boitha" and young poet, Sakib Mahmud, won the Kobita Puroshkar for his poetry manuscript "Ghumiye Thaka Bari". Both of them received cheques worth Tk 1 lakh each.

The awards for literature in Bangla were conferred at Bangla Academy's Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisharad auditorium.

Among others, Gemcon Group Vice Chairman Kazi Nabil Ahmed, MP, poet Joy Goswami, Bangla Tribune publisher Kazi Anis Ahmed and editor Zulfiker Rasel were present at the award ceremony.

World's longest cruise to set sail via Bangladesh Jan 13

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The river connectivity between Bangladesh and India will come into sharp focus when a 3,200km luxury cruise, the world's longest, connects the Indian town of Varanasi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Lok Sabha constituency, with Dibrugarh town in Assam with nearly half of the journey through Bangladesh territory, from January 13.

Modi will flag off the cruise that will cover 50 important tourist destinations including the Kaziranga national park in Assam and the



Sundarbans delta, according to Inland Waterways Authority of India.

Named "Ganga Vilas," the cruise, to be operated by a private company, will take 50 days to complete passing through 27 river systems, including two of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Ensuring nutritious, safe food 'Food Frontiers 2.0' looking for innovative ideas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Young entrepreneurs have been invited to participate in the innovation challenge "Food Frontiers 2.0", which aims to ensure supply and consumption of safe, nutritious food.

Food Frontiers is for rising young entrepreneurs

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



PHOTO: COLLECTED

State Minister for the Women and Children Affairs Fazilatun Nessa Indira hands over the Joyeeta award to Momtaj Begum of Shariatpur for her contribution towards education and employment. The Dhaka divisional administration yesterday honoured five women as Joyeeta, a Bangla word for victorious woman, for their feats and contribution to society. The event was held at a programme at Shishu Academy auditorium.

Five women honoured as Joyeeta in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka divisional administration has honoured five women as Joyeeta, a Bangla word for victorious woman, for their feats and contribution to society.

The five women were selected as divisional level awardees for their extraordinary achievements in five categories yesterday. They will move to the national level where they will compete with Joyeetas of other divisions.

Shahida Begum of Faridpur was selected for economic success, while Momtaj Begum of Shariatpur for education

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

PRAYER TIMING
JANUARY 6

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:30 4:00 5:30 7:00
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION