

## Bangladesh has made remarkable strides: Haas

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador Peter Haas yesterday said Bangladesh's economic development over the last 50 years has been remarkable and that the US has been a proud partner in this transformation.

"We look forward to working with Bangladesh over the next 50 years and beyond," he added.

The US envoy said this while delivering the opening remarks at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum Infrastructure Panel titled "Mobilising Infrastructure Investment in Bangladesh and the Indo-Pacific".

For the past 50 years, Haas said the US has partnered with the governments and the people of Bangladesh by providing over \$8 billion to tackle issues like public health, education, energy, environment, food security, natural disasters, and more.

"We're also working with the government through technical

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### SURVEILLANCE TOOLS

## Such move threatens rights: TIB

UNB, Dhaka

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday expressed concern over an international media report on the Bangladesh government's purchase of highly controversial surveillance technology from Israel.

In the absence of specific policies, the use of such technology will pose a serious risk of undermining several fundamental constitutional rights, the graft watchdog said in a statement.

Such a terrible tool was bought with public tax money and people have the right to know the answer to the fundamental question that for what purpose, in what context and in whose interest it will be used, it said.

According to a report by the Israeli media Haaretz, Bangladesh bought surveillance technology from

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This grab taken from AFP video footage shows a member of Ukraine's military looking away as a BM-21'Grad' MLRS 122mm rocket launcher fires on the outskirts of Soledar, Ukraine on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Second batch of classified Biden documents found

REUTERS, Washington

Aides to US President Joe Biden have discovered at least one more batch of classified documents in a location separate from a think tank office he used after serving as vice president, US news outlets reported on Wednesday, citing unnamed sources.

Biden aides have been searching for additional classified materials that might be in other locations since a set of classified documents was found in November at the Washington-based think tank, according to a report in NBC News, which first broke the news, and CNN.

The NBC News report said the classification level, number and precise location of the additional documents was not immediately clear. It also said it was not clear when the additional documents were discovered and whether the search

for any other classified materials Biden may have from his time as vice president is complete.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment from Reuters.

Senator Mark Warner, the Intelligence Committee's Democratic chairman, has asked for a briefing on the first Biden document discovery, he said Tuesday.

A spokesperson for Senator Marco Rubio, the committee's Republican vice chair, said Rubio and Warner had written to Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, asking for access to the classified documents.

The two senators also requested a damage assessment by the intelligence community and a briefing on the retention of classified documents by both Biden, a Democrat, and Republican former President Donald Trump.

The request echoed a similar one sent to Haines on Tuesday by Republican Representative Mike Turner of the House of Representatives Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

The reports came two days after a White House lawyer said classified documents from Biden's vice presidential days had been discovered in November by the president's personal attorneys at the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement think tank.

Biden's attorneys discovered fewer than a dozen classified records inside the office at center, and informed the US National Archives of their discovery, turned over the materials, and said they were cooperating with the Archives and the Justice Department. The president said on Tuesday he and his team were cooperating fully with a review into what happened.

# Empower UGC to take legal action

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conducting investigations if the recommendations are not implemented? If things don't change, UGC officials might lose interest in investigating. Again, people will say that probes are carried out just for show as no actions are taken," Alamgir said.

After conducting several investigations into allegations of irregularities and corruption at universities, the commission found the allegations to be true and recommended taking actions against the vice-chancellors concerned and others. But the recommendations apparently fell on deaf ears as the education ministry has so far let most of those VCs go unpunished.

Over the last two years, the commission submitted at least seven probe reports on corruption and irregularities to Rajshahi University (RU), Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU), Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University (BSMRSTU) in Gopalganj, Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur, Khulna Agricultural University (KAU), Jahangirnagar University and Islamic Arabic University.

The VCs of RU, NSTU, and Begum Rokeya University completed their tenures without facing any punishment even though the UGC recommended taking actions against

them.

Only the BSMRSTU VC resigned in September 2019 in the wake of student protests.

The only actions the education ministry took so far are stopping recruitments to the RU and Khulna Agricultural University after probes found anomalies, education ministry officials told The Daily Star.

"Such inaction against the VCs is disappointing. It sends a wrong signal to the authorities concerned, and it's a kind of impunity," said a UGC member.

Asked about the commission's allegation of inaction, Abu Yousuf Miah, additional secretary (university) of the Secondary and Higher Education Division, refused to comment without seeing the UGC annual report.

"But I can say that the allegation is not true for the period of last six months as I joined my current position six months ago," he added.

The UGC annual report 2021 said that national media carried many news reports on nepotism and corruption in appointment of teachers and staffers to public universities. It tarnishes the image of higher education institutions and the government.

The regulatory body recommended formation of an independent recruitment commission for appointing teachers and staffers

at public universities to ensure transparency.

Speaking at the Dhaka University's 53rd convocation on November 19 last year, President Hamid said, a vice-chancellor is supposed to supervise the administrative and academic activities of a university. "In recent times, sadly, various news reports claim that the main responsibility of some vice-chancellors is to provide jobs to family members and their loyalists, and to take administrative and financial benefits in various ways."

The UGC in the new report suggested forming an implementable policy to appoint VCs, pro-VCs and treasurers from renowned academics on the basis of UGC opinion. Currently, the UGC has no say in the appointment of top administrators to public universities.

A number of private universities don't hold meetings of boards of trustees, syndicates, finance committees and academic councils. Many don't even have VCs, pro-VCs and treasurers approved by the chancellor. Moreover, many do not submit audit reports to the education ministry. As a result, Private University Act-2010 is being violated, said the new report.

The commission also recommended closing evening, weekend and executive courses at public universities as they negatively

impact universities' image.

It, however, said universities can run diploma and short courses and vocational training after taking approval from the UGC and following specific policies.

The report suggested that the government should create an endowment fund to provide education loan to university students, and have a ranking of universities.

The government can take effective steps to formulate a policy to determine the land size for setting up campuses of the newly established universities, it added.

According to the UGC report, the tendency to launch educational programmes without having minimum infrastructure, laboratories and teaching staffs at newly established universities raises question about the quality of higher education. The government and the UGC can take initiatives to formulate a specific policy fixing the time for those universities to start educational activities.

There are 158 universities, including 50 public ones, in the country. Six of the private universities are yet to start academic activities, show UGC data.

There are 44.41 lakh students, including 20.65 lakh females, at the university level. The private universities have 3.10 lakh students, including 95,017 females.

## China FM urges greater African voice in global governance

AFP, Addis Ababa

Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang said Wednesday that Africa should have a greater voice in the UN Security Council and other international bodies, long a demand of the continent's leaders.

Qin made the call in a statement issued as he met the head of the African Union Commission who voiced frustration at what he said was the exclusion of Africa from international governance.

"We should boost the representation and voice of developing countries, especially those of African countries, in the UN Security Council and other international organizations," Qin said at the inauguration of the Chinese-funded headquarters for the African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa.

## Two children drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Two children, who were also cousins, drowned in a pond in Patuakhali's Galachipa upazila yesterday.

Rafia, 4, daughter of Nizam Mridha, and Maryam, 7, daughter of Masud Mridha, both from Sutabaria village, went to play by a pond near their house in the afternoon.

Neighbours and family members later found their bodies floating in the pond and rushed them to Chiknikandi Union Health Service Centre where the doctors declared them dead, said Chonit Kumar Gayen, officer-in-charge of Galachipa Police Station.

The bodies were handed over to their family members without an autopsy upon their request.

## Gold bars worth Tk 2.5 crore seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Border Guard Bangladesh yesterday arrested a man with 20 gold bars worth over Tk 2.5 crore from the bank of Naf river in Teknaf, Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

A BGB team arrested Mohammad Yash Noor, 22, of Uttarpara village, in a drive at Shahparirdwip and seized gold bars weighing 3.32kg, said Lt Col Sheikh Khalid Mohammad Itekkhar, commanding officer of BGB Battalion-2.

Yash admitted he, along with two others, smuggled the gold bars into Bangladesh from Myanmar, he added.

A case was filed with Teknaf Model Police Station against the three people while the police are on the lookout for the other two.

## Israeli forces kill Palestinian in West Bank

AFP, Ramallah

Israeli forces killed a Palestinian in the occupied West Bank yesterday, the Palestinian health ministry said, as the army claimed rocks were thrown at Israeli forces during a raid.

"Samir Aouni Harbi Aslan, 41, was killed after he was wounded by a bullet of the Israeli occupation army that penetrated his chest during the aggression on Qalandia camp" for Palestinian refugees near Ramallah, the ministry said.

The Israeli military said troops fired on people who "hurled rocks and blocks from the rooftops aiming at soldiers operating beneath".

Eighteen people were arrested in overnight raids across the West Bank, the Palestinian Prisoners' Club advocacy group said.

## Government to launch

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Home ministry sources said devices for remote interception of calls, rogue BTS identification, dark and deep web monitoring, and content blocking and filtering have been purchased.

Social media monitoring tools require less time to process data and reveal sources. The OSINT supports collection and analysis of relevant and targeted information for a variety of needs, they said.

Earlier, the NTMC had purchased "Vehicle Mounted Data Interceptor" to help combat militant activities and also beef up security for the country's important persons, according to sources.

**NID JOB UNDER HOME**  
Explaining the logic behind bringing

## Work together

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"Let's work together to have a better future and a better world," she said.

The premier said global recession, crises of food, fuel and fertilisers have added to the rising impacts of climate change making peoples' life unbearable. She said bold, concrete and concerted actions are required at the global level to face these challenges.

Hasina also highlighted before the G20 platform six important points for sustained economic growth and development of the Global South.

"First, global peace and stability must be maintained for the greater benefit of humanity. Second, need a new paradigm that will address inequality in a holistic manner in parallel with SDGs. Third, special financing needs of the most vulnerable countries, including LDCs, climate vulnerable countries, etc. must be met during their transition," she said.

Raising the fourth point, the PM called for bridging the "Digital Divides" to ensure equal opportunities for all, including women. "Take advantage of the 4th Industrial Revolution by investing in young population for which financing and technology transfer support is vital," she said.

In the fifth point, Hasina said all human beings should have equal rights to lead a decent life. "The global community must not forget ensuring return of the unfortunate forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals to Myanmar."

In her final point, the premier stressed the need for strengthening South-South and Triangular cooperation to ensure global human

the jobs related to national identity cards under the home ministry, Asaduzzaman told parliament that the Election Commission has no involvement in the use of NIDs except for polls.

In reply to a query from Gonoforum MP Mokabbir Khan, the home boss said, "The national identity registration process is done under the executive department in almost all countries in the world. In view of the reality, it should be under the executive department in Bangladesh.

"For this reason, the process of bringing it [issuance of NID cards] under the security service department of the Ministry of Home Affairs is ongoing."

development. "Here, support from partners, international financial institutions, private sectors, think-tanks, and other stakeholders are crucial," she said.

Hasina congratulated her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi and the Indian government on assumption of G20 presidency. "I deeply appreciate his strong commitment to make the G20 platform more meaningful by consultative engagement on inclusive development," she said.

She thanked the Indian government for inviting Bangladesh as a guest country to this important summit.

Talking about Bangladesh's recent development, the PM said the country has achieved rapid economic growth ensuring social justice for all.

"We've reduced the poverty rate from 41.5pc to 20pc in the last 14 years. Our per capita has tripled in just a decade. Bangladesh has fulfilled all criteria for graduating from the LDC category to a developing country."

Hasina said the IMF's latest report revealed that Bangladesh is the 35th largest economy of the world in terms of nominal GDP.

She said Bangladesh is ranked as world's fifth best Covid resilient country, and South Asia's best performer.

The Group of Twenty (G20) comprises 19 countries -- Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, United Kingdom and United States -- and the European Union.