



YOUR RIGHT  
TO KNOW

SECOND EDITION

THE DAILY

Star

ON FRIDAY

DHAKA FRIDAY MARCH 31, 2023

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXIII No. 76

CHAITRA 17, 1429 BS

www.thedailystar.net

RAMADAN 8, 1444 HJRI

16 PAGES PLUS TOGGLE : Tk 15.00



**B1**  
Private credit  
growth slows  
further



**P11**  
Indian Premier  
League begins  
today



**P7**  
Melting  
Antarctic could  
impact oceans  
'for centuries'



**P3**  
A haunting  
reminder of the  
tragic past

"Russia has to withdraw  
from every square  
meter ... There should  
be no misinterpretation  
of what the word  
withdrawal implies."

Ukrainian Foreign Minister  
Dmytro Kuleba



# Shams sent to jail 35hrs after being picked up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly 35 hours after he was picked up from home, Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams was yesterday produced before a Dhaka court that sent him to jail in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

The uncertainties over his whereabouts came to an end when he was taken to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court premises around 8:30am.

Around six hours later, law enforcers brought Shams out of the prison cell on the court premises and walked him to a courtroom for a hearing on the case. He was wearing a blue polo shirt at the time.

Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiur Rahman, an unnamed photographer and unnamed others are also accused in the case.

Around 4:00am on Wednesday, he was picked up from his home in Ambagan area near Jahangirnagar University in Savar allegedly by the Criminal Investigation Department. Until yesterday, neither the CID nor any other law enforcement agencies admitted taking him.

At the court yesterday, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Tofazzal Hossain rejected Shams' bail petition and sent him to jail.

Around 3:30pm, Shams, a staff correspondent of the newspaper based in Savar, was then taken to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

The case drew widespread condemnations from journalist associations, rights and professional bodies at home and abroad.

However, ministers and Awami League leaders continued to criticise

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Police are walking Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams to a courtroom from a prison cell on the premises of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka. Since he was picked up by men in plainclothes around 4:00am on Wednesday, there were uncertainties over his whereabouts until he was brought to the court premises after nearly 35 hours. He is accused in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

DSA CASE AGAINST MATIUR

## Noab, editors, rights bodies voice worries

STAR REPORT

Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (Noab) has termed the filing of cases against some journalists under the Digital Security Act over the last few days unacceptable.

"We think the use of sections of the Digital Security Act especially against Prothom Alo Editor and former Noab president Matiur Rahman is tantamount to harassing him and muzzling the bold journalism his newspaper does," Noab said in a statement yesterday.

It said the increasing use of the DSA against journalists is concerning. "We conveyed our reservations to the government high-ups about the DSA at different times."

Such a law is not consistent with the freedom of expression and free journalism, and it is also against the dream and system of building a progressive society, said Noab.

"We demand immediate withdrawal of the case against Matiur Rahman

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

SULTANA'S DEATH IN RAB CUSTODY

## Family won't file case, looks to HC

Enquiry cell quizzes 11 Rab-5 officials

ANWAR ALLI, back from Naogaon

The family of Sultana Jasmine, who died in Rab custody, said they would not go for any legal move seeking justice.

Her son or her sisters or brothers would not speak about the incident in public or talk to the press for at least six months, said Sultana's maternal uncle Nazmul Haque Montu yesterday.

"We didn't file any case and we don't want to lodge any."

Sultana, an office assistant of Naogaon's Chandipur union land office, died in the custody of Rab on March 24, two days after she was detained when she was on her way to work.

Her death triggered criticism from human rights groups and the High Court questioned under what authority Rab detained her when she was not accused in any case.

Meanwhile, Rab headquarters' enquiry cell yesterday called in 11 officials of Rab-5 to the battalion headquarters from its Joypurhat camp

for questioning.

The officials include a major and an assistant superintendent of police, said Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of legal and media wing of Rab.

The Daily Star correspondent talked to Montu in a parking garage in Naogaon town on Tuesday.



Montu said, "You will not hear a word from her [Sultana] son or any other family members other than me in six months. I'm unable to tell you the reason [behind this decision of not talking]. You must understand this."

"I heard that a proceeding began in the High Court. Our only hope of justice lies with the High Court proceedings."

Asked again yesterday evening, Montu said they were not even thinking about filing of any case.

Montu, who served 27 years as a ward councillor of Naogaon municipality, described their ordeal after Sultana's detention and events leading up to

SEE PAGE 7 COL 7

## DSA misused in case of Sultana

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the Digital Security Act was misused in the incident of detaining Sultana Jasmine who died in Rab custody on March 24.

"I can clearly say that the woman was not facing any case filed under the Digital Security Act when she was picked up," he said.

The minister was replying to a query from a journalist at the Secretariat.

"The law is being misused in one or two incidents, and we are taking action," Anisul said.

Sultana, 41, an office assistant at Chandipur union land office in Naogaon, was detained on her way to the office by a patrol team of Rab-5 on March 22.

She died at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in Rab custody two days later.



RAPE, DEATH OF 12-YR-OLD

## A poor family's cries for justice go unheeded

A year on, no culprit identified or arrested

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI and CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

"I will not work at this house anymore. They torture me. I will come back to you." This was what Iti Akter said to her mother Sarkis Akter in her last phone call in the evening of January 28 last year.

Sarkis was informed the next day that her daughter was being taken to Better Life Hospital in the capital's Rampura.

Sarkis, who is a domestic worker in the Rayerbazar area, then rushed to the hospital only to find her daughter dead.

"I saw my daughter in a white body bag. As I was crying and asking what happened to her, the people around me said my daughter had hung herself with a scarf," said Sarkis.

"But after seeing her body, I was convinced that something very bad had happened to my daughter who was as pure as a flower."

The 12-year-old was working as a domestic help at the flat of a lawyer couple, Rajin Ahmed and Iflat Jahan Chowdhury, in the East Hajipara area of Rampura in the capital. Rajin's father Kamal Uddin Ahmed, a retired bureaucrat, is the owner of the house.

According to a report at Better Life Hospital, the girl was dead when she was brought to the hospital at 4:50pm on January 29, 2022. "A case of hanging as described by the landlord, Kamal Uddin Ahmed; hanging mark on throat."

She died around 80 minutes before she was brought there, according to a police inquest report.

The police report also said her rectum was abnormal, suggesting that she had been raped.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

PROTHOM ALO

## Ministers, AL leaders keep blasting it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ministers and ruling party leaders yesterday continued to blast Bangla daily Prothom Alo for an online report on March 26.

Coming down heavily on the paper, Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud said the base of the state was hit and the country's independence was mocked by the report.

"Circulating this kind of news against the state, society and Liberation War, according to everyone, is a digital crime. [committing] crime and journalism are not the same thing. If someone commits a crime, will he or she not be punished?" he said while speaking at a views-exchange meeting with journalists at his ministry in the Secretariat.

Replying to questions from reporters after attending an event at a city hotel, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam, said, "The Liberation War of Bangladesh, Language Movement and the sacrifices of 30 lakh people are not trivial matters that can be compared to anything. We all need to be responsible."

"No matter what, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government will take Bangladesh forward in the coming days ... And these comments, statements

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3



The rail line leading to the Padma Bridge near the Mawa Railway Station. Bangladesh Railway is expected to go for a trial run on the Mawa-Bhanga section on April 4 as the laying of rail line was completed on Wednesday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

**'BORROW MORE FROM NON-BANKS'**

Bangladesh Bank said the government will have to borrow more from non-banking sources to finance its expenditures in a bid to contain higher inflation as the latter's bank borrowing surged. The government's domestic borrowing soared 72.3 percent year-on-year to Tk 42,717 crore in July-January of this fiscal year, with a major portion coming from banks.

**BUSINESS**

**STORY ON BI**

**BRITISH COUNCIL**  
IELTS Coach Course

**Make the most of Ramadan with our flexible IELTS preparation course**

Our IELTS Coach courses are designed to help you personalise your study plan. With our flexible booking options, you can choose your lessons, teacher, and study time - and never miss a class. Hurry and join now!

Book a free consultation  
call: +88 09666 773377  
Our campus: 5, Fuhur Road, Dhaka, Bangladesh