

Bangabandhu’s FOSWAL Literary Award handed over to PM

UNB, Dhaka

The FOSWAL Literary Award, conferred to Father the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was handed over to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

Noted writers and researchers Ramendu Majumdar and Mohidul Haque handed over the award to her at the Gono Bhaban, said PM’s Deputy Press Secretary KM Shakhawat Moon.

At the time, the premier was given a letter and book written by Eminent Punjabi novelist and FOSWAL Founder President Ajeet Cour as well as a centenary-old Phulkari cloth sheet [chadar] as gifts.

On March 26, the Foundation of Saarc Writers and Literature (FOSWAL) conferred ‘Special Literary Award’ to Bangabandhu for his trilogy – The Unfinished Memoirs, The Prison Diaries, and New China 1952.

Press Club decries Prothom Alo report, use of DSA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Press Club has expressed deep concern over the situation arising from “irresponsible and unprofessional journalism of Prothom Alo” while publishing a photocard containing an image of a child with comments from another person on Independence Day.

In a statement issued last night, it also expressed concern over the filing of cases and arresting of journalists under the Digital Security Act.

During a meeting of the club’s managing committee yesterday, it was stated that such unprofessional and mala fide behaviour of a leading daily is not acceptable and is very unfortunate, said the statement.

“Responsibility is inextricably linked to the freedom of newspapers. Everyone expects responsibility from a newspaper like Prothom Alo,” reads the statement.

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A hapless farmer shows his ruined BRRI-28 Boro rice crops as the fungal disease – Blast – has invaded his entire cropland in Sylhet Sadar’s Khadimnagar union. Farmers have claimed that the disease is particularly affecting the BRRI-28 and BRRI-29 varieties of the crop and even spraying medicine is not helping.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Protect overseas jobseekers from frauds, middlemen

PM directs authorities concerned

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed the need for ensuring that overseas jobseekers do not fall prey to frauds and middlemen.

“We always have to consider that these people could go abroad through proper channels and get appropriate jobs. It is very important for us to ensure that these people must not fall prey to fraudulent people and middlemen,” she said.

The PM made the remarks while delivering her introductory speech at the second meeting of the Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Affairs National Steering Committee at the Gono Bhaban.



She asked the authorities concerned to find new destinations for manpower alongside making them skilled through proper training. “Our people are in different countries, but we have to explore

more destinations.”

Hasina said the government has started sending workers to some new places. “But we have to send skilled people. We have taken initiatives to provide them training.”

She asked the authorities concerned to work out which countries need what kinds of skilled manpower. “We will train them accordingly.”

The PM mentioned that sometimes it is seen that people are selling their houses and land to pay the middlemen and fraudsters for jobs abroad.

She also put emphasis on creating public awareness against going abroad for jobs through middlemen.

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Fitra fixed at minimum Tk 115

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Islamic Foundation has fixed this year’s Fitra at a minimum of Tk 115.

The maximum limit was set at Tk 2,640 per person.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the National Fitra Fixing Committee yesterday. President of National Fitra Fixing Committee and Khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque Hafez Maulana Mufti Mohammad Ruhul Amin chaired the meeting.

Fitra is paid to the poor before attending Eid prayers.

Last year, the minimum amount of Fitra was fixed at Tk 75 and a maximum at Tk 2,310 per person.

One killed, three hurt in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A man was killed and three others were injured when a speedy truck hit a battery-run three-wheeler on Bogura-Nagarbari highway in Sirajganj’s Ullapara upazila yesterday noon.

The dead is Abdul Mannan, 32, driver of the three-wheeler. The injured were passengers of the three-wheeler. They were admitted to Ullapara Upazila Health Complex, said Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ullapara Police Station.

Police seized the truck but its driver managed to flee the scene, the OC added.

Abducted Rohingya man found dead in Cox’s Bazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox’s Bazar

The bullet-hit body of a Rohingya man, who also had his throat slit, was found at Balukhai refugee camp in Ukhiya upazila of Cox’s Bazar early yesterday, six hours after he was abducted by a group of criminals.

The deceased, Syed Alam, 40, was a resident of E block of the Balukhai Camp 8, said Sheikh Mohammad Ali, officer-in-charge of Ukhiya Police Station.

Some eight to 10 armed criminals, wearing masks, abducted Alam from his house around 11:00pm on Saturday, the OC said.

Later, locals spotted his body in a field within the camp area around 5:00am and informed the police, he said.

Prothom Alo has the right to get justice

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At yesterday’s hearing, Fida M Kamal told the court that a lawyer filed the case against Matiur Rahman and several others under sections 25, 31 and 35 of the DSA. But there is no element of offences in the report as per these sections.

The sections have been abused through filing of the case, he said, adding that the case was filed in order to harass the Prothom Alo editor and its journalists. A reporter of Ekattor TV has complicated matters by making a report regarding the Prothom Alo report.

The complainant, Abdul Malek Mashiur Malek, said in the case that he remembered the photo of a woman named Basanti in a net published in 1974, Fida told the court.

He then asked how the complainant, who is now 61, could remember the picture after so many years.

Mashiur wrote in the complaint that in 1974, a mentally challenged

woman named Basanti was made to wear a net, and a photo of the woman in that state was published in a newspaper spreading panic over famine.

Fida said the mistake, made by Prothom Alo, was noticed within 17 minutes, and corrections were made.

“How did the Prothom Alo report damage the spirit of independence?” he asked.

Presenting his arguments, ZI Khan Panna said Matiur is a freedom fighter, a progressive man, and a former member of the Communist Party, who was also the editor of an esteemed weekly named Ekota.

Justice Mustafa Zaman said, “We used to read the Ekota.”

Additional AG Mehedi Hassan Chowdhury then argued that Prothom Alo published the false report with a quote of a child who was given Tk 10 to give the quote on Independence Day.

Another journalist of Ekattor TV discovered the falsehood of Prothom

Alo, he said, adding that the Prothom Alo report carried a questionable message.

DAG Sujit Chatterjee told the court that editors like Matiur Rahman, Mahfuz Anam, and Anwar Hossain Manju are institutions in their own right.

“I also read Prothom Alo which is a non-communal newspaper. This is a pro-independence daily.

“But Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman has picked the Independence Day to publish such an irresponsible report in order to tarnish the image of the state and the government and to destabilise the country when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is taking the nation forward amid the fallout from Ukraine war,” he said.

Prothom Alo has admitted its offence, he said, adding that the newspaper is used as a shield.

At one stage of the hearing, the HC bench said his (Matiur) own image was damaged as well.

Additional AG Mehedi Hassan

Chowdhury told the court that the government has not brought any allegation against Prothom Alo.

Making a mistake and then withdrawing the false report is like returning the money after picking someone’s pocket, Mehedi said.

Justice Mustafa Zaman then told him that Prothom Alo withdrew the report after noticing the mistake.

Contacted, Additional AG Mehedi told The Daily Star that he is yet to get any instructions from the government to move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the HC order of bail.

Matiur’s lawyer ZI Khan Panna told reporters that a lawyer has filed the case against his client after being personally aggrieved, but the state’s additional attorney general and deputy attorney general appeared for the complainant, which is unlawful.

Earlier in the day, another HC bench refused to hear the bail petition.

the place, they go away but return again.”

The DMCH authorities have introduced a mobile app so that patients can get ambulances easily, but people are less interested in using it, he added.

The government has cut the import duty on ambulances. The import duty is about 31 percent for the run-off-the-mill ambulances people import. The same vehicle in the microbus configuration has an import duty of about 90 percent.

Mexico regains

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to the underworld and “on its mouth is projected a sequence of three concentric bands, representing the cruciform access to a cavern,” it added.

Although it is not known how and when it was illegally taken from Chalcatzingo, “it is documented that it was made public in 1968, by the archaeologist David Grove in the magazine American Antiquity. From there it is thought that at the beginning of the second half of the 20th century it was already in the United States,” the statement said.

New York authorities recovered the monument, but the press release did not specify where it was found.

As part of the Mexican government’s effort to rescue historical heritage taken from the country, almost 10,000 goods have been recovered since 2018, authorities said.

‘DSA necessary, here to stay’

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The minister was supposed to hold another such meeting on March 30, but it was cancelled. It could, however, be held in the middle of this month.

He said he will see if room for abuse of the DSA could be removed through some rules or an amendment is needed.

Asked, he declined to comment on the case of Shamsuzzaman Shams, saying it was a sub judice matter. He, however, said the government did not file any case against any media

Remittance up

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March’s inflows take the receipts so far this fiscal year to \$16.03 billion, up 4.8 percent from a year earlier.

Remittance inflows usually go up ahead of the two Eids, the biggest festivals in Bangladesh, according to Selim RF Hussain, chairman of the Association of Bankers’ Bangladesh, a platform for the managing directors of banks.

In recent times, the central bank has heightened its monitoring of the foreign exchange market to tackle money laundering, said Hussain, also the managing director of Brac Bank.

Russia intensifies attack

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in a Soviet-era block. She was also not home when the missile struck.

“The internal doors and the front door were blown in. An internal partition wall has broken. There’s not a single window left,” she said.

Meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told US Secretary of State Antony Blinken yesterday it was unacceptable for Washington to politicise the case of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who has been detained and accused of spying in Russia.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said Lavrov told Blinken in a phone call that Gershkovich’s fate would be determined by a court, reports Reuters.

He reiterated Russia’s assertion, for which it has not publicly stated any evidence, that the journalist was caught “red-handed” last week.

“Blinken’s attention was drawn to the need to respect the decisions

house or journalist, but against “wrongdoings”.

Earlier last month, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk stated that the Digital Security Act should be amended.

“I urge that it [the DSA] be amended, as criminal sentences continue to be handed down against those exercising their rights to free expression and belief,” he said while outlining the human rights situations in 40 countries at the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council.

This might have helped in propping up the remittance receipts.

At a meeting with bankers yesterday, BB Governor Abdur Rouf Talukder said the value of imported goods has declined recently but the volume of letters of credit did not drop, Hussain said.

This means the over- and -under-invoicing has narrowed, which had a positive impact on remittances, he said quoting Talukder.

There is a correlation between hundi and over- and under-invoicing as the money launderers chiefly settle their illegal transactions through hundi.

of the Russian authorities, taken in accordance with the law and international obligations of the Russian Federation,” the ministry said.

“It was emphasized that it is unacceptable for officials in Washington and the Western media to whip up a stir with the clear intention of giving this case a political coloring.”

The conversation was initiated by Blinken, the Russian side said.

Russia’s FSB security service said on Thursday it had arrested Gershkovich, accusing him of gathering information about a Russian defence company that was a state secret.

The Wall Street Journal has vehemently denied that Gershkovich was spying. The White House has called the espionage charge, which carries a jail term of up to 20 years, “ridiculous”.