## Bangabandhu's FOSWAL Literary Award handed over to PM

UNB, Dhaka

The FOSWAL Literary 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 Mofidul 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 journalism unprofessional 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 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. SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## 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

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

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

## 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 threewheeler 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, officerin-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

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

# Prothom Alo has the right to get justice woman named Basanti was made Alo, he said, adding that the Prothom Chowdhury told the court that the

At yesterday's hearing, Fida M Kamal told the court that a lawyer filed the case against Matiur and several others under sections 25, 31 and 35 of the DSA. But there is no element sections.

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

Mashiur wrote in the complaint that in 1974, a mentally challenged to wear a net, and a photo of the Alo report carried a questionable woman in that state was published message. in a newspaper spreading panic over

Fida said the mistake, made by minutes, and corrections were made.

How ald the Prothom Alo report damage the spirit of independence?"

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

DAG Sujit Chatterjee told the court that editors like Matiur Rahman, Mahfuz Anam, and Anwar Hossain of offences in the report as per these Prothom Alo, was noticed within 17 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

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 nim 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

# 'DSA necessary, here to stay'

The minister was supposed to hold another such meeting on March

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 the Human Rights Council.

house or journalist, but against "wrongdoings".

Earlier last month, United Nations 30, but it was cancelled. It could, High Commissioner for Human however, be held in the middle of this Rights Volker Türk stated that 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

## Remittance up

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.

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.

# Russia intensifies attack

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

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

of the Russian authorities, taken in accordance with the law and international obligations of the Russian Federation," the ministry

"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".

# Patients forced to pay double

20. He spent Tk 5,000 to hire an ambulance.

After a few days, when he went to hire an ambulance from DMCH to return to Noakhali, members of a syndicate there asked for Tk 6,000. As Belal wanted to hire an ambulance

from Noakhali, the members told him

that "ambulances from outside" could

only drop off patients. They cannot pick up patients from there. Over phone, Belal then spoke to an ambulance driver who came to Dhaka from Noakhali with a patient. Its driver asked for Tk 3,000, which is half of what the syndicate at the DMCH asked, but gave Belal the condition that

they would have to get into the vehicle outside the Dhaka University campus. Asked, the driver said the syndicate members would not allow him to take any patient from the DMCH without

paying them their cut. "If you want to hire any ambulance near the hospital area, you will need their nod. They will keep half the fare as commission and thus I will have to charge you double the actual fare,"

Belal quoted him as saying. "We came to Dhaka borrowing money from my relatives. If there were no syndicates, we would have had more money for treatment.' THE SYNDICATE

There are two ambulance owners' associations -- Bangladesh Ambulance Owners' Welfare Association and Metropolitan Ambulance

Owners' Cooperative Association. Dhaka Metropolitan Ambulance Owners' Cooperative Association, the largest one, has about 2,700 members.

Both keep all ambulances across Dhaka Medical College Hospital from the country in their grip and their syndicates in the districts also do not let ambulances of other districts take patients away. They have a set of unwritten rules

regarding who can take which patients and it is mandatory for every hospital unit of the associations to follow. For instance, if an ambulance from Dhaka takes a patient from the DMCH to Rajshahi, that ambulance has to

return empty or pay the syndicate

there half the fare for the vehicle's return journey. When asked about syndicates ripping off patients, Badal Matbar, general secretary of Bangladesh Ówners' Welfare Ambulance Association, tried to justify the

syndicate's activities.

"Members of our organisation have to pay Tk 1,500 monthly parking fees and membership fees of Tk 200 a month. It takes Tk 20-22 lakh to buy an ambulance. If ambulances outside the DMCH are hired, the owners will lose

Asked about the syndicate, Alamgir Hossain, president of Dhaka Metropolitan Ambulance Owners' Cooperative Association, said this was done to protect ambulance owners from incurring losses. The syndicate members at the

outside" ambulances" to pick patients from DMCH, the number of ambulances available there would Wishing anonymity, an ambulance owner of Kushtia told this paper,

"As soon as patients are taken inside

DMCH reasoned that if they allowed

ambulances, we are driven out of the hospital premises by the syndicate members there." While visiting the capital's two other major public healthcare facilities,

this correspondent found syndicates

controlling ambulances there. At Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, ambulance driver Mizan said except the members of their organisation, Bangladesh Ambulance Owners' Welfare Association, no one can take patients from this hospital.

others want to carry patients from

there, they have to negotiate with them. Al Amin, president of Dhaka Metropolitan Ambulance Owners' Cooperative Association's National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases unit, said, "Outside ambulances are not permitted to take patients from here because we cannot do it from other

correspondent in This three locations found most of the ambulances of the syndicates to be bare-bones. They had a gurney and an oxygen cylinder and hardly any other equipment. NO GOVT POLICY

Alamgir Hossain, president of Dhaka Metropolitan Ambulance Owners' Cooperative Association, told The Daily Star, "How will an ambulance run? How much will the fare be? No government policy has been made in this regard."

Talking to this correspondent, DMCH Director Brig Gen Nazmul Haque admitted that an ambulance syndicate is active here. "Whenever I asked the syndicate members to leave the place, they go away but return DMCH authorities have

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