



**Textile millers face chronic gas crisis**



**A 'magic carpet' for bookworms**



**Enlightening Pabna for 134 years**



**Expected exodus sees onus on locals grow**

## PROBE INTO S ALAM SC voids HC suo moto order

**Says ACC, CID, BFIU can launch their own enquiry**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday discharged the High Court Division's suo moto rule that had ordered an investigation into S Alam Group's wealth abroad.

However, the apex court said the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unity (BFIU) can take legal steps on the matter on their own.

A six-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan delivered the verdict. Other five

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PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

The vibrant green and blue belie the shocking extent of pollution and encroachment afflicting the Karatoya. Once the lifeline of Bogura, this river now is a narrow canal, thanks to its constricted flow. The murky water that runs down the channel now is mostly sewage from municipality drains. The photo was taken recently near Bhatkandi bridge.

## FIGHTING IN MYANMAR

# Blood spills on this side of border

**Bangladeshi, Rohingya die as mortar shell explodes in Ghumdhum; 106 BGP men now in Bangladesh**

STAR REPORT

A Bangladeshi woman and a Rohingya man were killed as a mortar shell fired from Myanmar exploded in Bandarban's Ghumdhum union yesterday.

Heavy fighting continues in Myanmar between the junta forces and rebel group Arakan Army since early Sunday. A total of 106 members of Myanmar border police close to Tumbru border area took refuge in Bandarban until yesterday.

Amid such a security situation, additional BGB troops have been deployed on the border and they are on high alert, Cox's Bazar BGB Regional Commander Brig Gen Morshed Alam said at the Ghumdhum border.

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

**Members of Myanmar boarder guards take refuge at a Bangladesh boarder guard outpost in Bandarban yesterday.**

## 'US trade sanctions likely off the table'

**Says Kugelman of Willson Center's South Asia Institute**

The US democracy promotion policy in Bangladesh worked against its strategic interest of countering growing Chinese and Russian influence in the region, said Michael Kugelman, director of the Washington-based Willson Center's South Asia Institute. "It emboldened Beijing and Moscow, giving them opportunities to make Washington look bad by accusing it of meddling in Bangladesh's internal affairs. And the policy caused friction with New Delhi, Washington's top partner in South Asia," he told The Daily Star in an interview.

FULL INTERVIEW ON PAGE 9.

# End extortion on highways

**PM orders stern action to curb price hike of essentials during meeting with secretaries**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the authorities to take stern action against extortionists on the highways, identifying it as a major contributor to the price hike of essential commodities.

Her instructions came at a meeting with secretaries of all ministries and divisions at the Prime Minister's Office.

Hasina had a firm tone when she was giving out the directives about putting an end to extortion of goods-laden vehicles, The Daily Star has learnt from several secretaries who spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak candidly on the matter.

The meeting, which marked her first interaction with the secretaries since assuming office, discussed various issues including the price spiral before Ramadan, food storage, agriculture, law and order and inflation.

Hasina outlined a set of instructions at the meeting saying that all have to work so that inflation does not surpass GDP growth.

She urged everyone to exercise austerity in spending government funds and explore new export markets for agricultural, leather and jute goods.

The PM called for monitoring law and order and controlling the market prices, Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain briefed reporters after the meeting.

"She specifically highlighted the issue of extortion on roads during the transportation of goods, instructing all concerned to take stern action to prevent it from occurring anywhere."

The instructions provided by the premier were aimed at monitoring the market, Hossain added.

Hasina emphasised assisting the Myanmar Border Guard Police seeking refuge in Bangladesh following international norms, according to meeting sources.

Simultaneously, the foreign secretary was instructed to repatriate the BGP personnel through diplomatic channels.

The PM reiterated her zero-tolerance policy against corruption, asking all secretaries to actively contribute from their respective positions towards this end.

Her instruction came when the Anti-Corruption Commission Secretary Mahbub Hossain sought instructions from her on expediting efforts to prevent corruption, according to sources.



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## SUBARNACHAR RAPE

# Ten to die for 2018 election night rape

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Noakhali court yesterday sentenced 10 people, including the prime accused, to death and six others to life imprisonment in a case filed over the rape of a homemaker in Subarnachar upazila on the night of the 11th parliamentary election on December 30, 2018.

The court also fined those sentenced to life in prison with Tk 50,000 each, in default of which they will have to serve two additional years in jail.

The verdict marks a significant milestone in the pursuit of justice for rape victims, particularly in addressing cases of post-election rape incidents.

The death row convicts are Ruhul Amin, Hasan Ali Dulu, Sohel, Swapan, Ibrahim Khalil, Abul Hossain Abu, Salauddin, Jasim Uddin, Murad, and Jamal alias Henchu.

On the other hand, those who were sentenced to life are Md Hanif, Md Chowdhury, Badsha Alam alias Basu, Mosharruf, Mintu alias Helal, and Md Sohel.

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# Lives sucked into an abyss of trauma

NILIMA JAHAN and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

Before she was raped, Joba (not her real name) lived the life of a regular homemaker and bore the identity of a wife, a mother and a woman of her own volition.

She would spend her days as any homemaker in a village does – getting engaged in household chores, exchanging casual conversations with neighbours, attending social gatherings, and spending time with her family and friends.

But since December 30, 2018, she has been known as "Joba the rape victim" – an identity that altered her life forever. Her home – once known by her husband's name – is now called the "home of Joba the raped woman".

A mother of four in Noakhali's Subarnachar upazila, Joba was raped on that day by a group of men.

These men were allegedly ordered to do so by Ruhul

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## 21<sup>st</sup> Death Anniversary



**Late Shah Rafiqul Islam (Titu)**  
Death: 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2003

This day in 2003, we lost our beloved & honorable Director **Late Shah Rafiqul Islam (Titu)**. We mourn his pre-mature death. With our distressed heart, we pray to Almighty Allah for his eternal peace. May Allah bless him. Ameen.

All Employees

ABUL KHAIR GROUP

In 2003, on this very day, you left us at the will of Almighty Allah the Beneficent. Your pre-matured departure has made us and many of your relations overwhelmed with grief. It is straining that you are not in this mundane world with us. But we are feeling your existence by remembering the tender-aged days of your life.

We pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of his departed soul and request all friends, relatives, well-wishers to pray for him from the core of heart.

May Allah the Beneficent bless you with the eternal bliss of paradise. Ameen.

Bereaved members of the family