

**পূবালী ব্যাংক থেকে রেমিট্যান্স গ্রহণ
মাত্র দুই মিনিটে...**

যে কোনো শাখা থেকে পিন নম্বর এর মাধ্যমে রেমিট্যান্স গ্রহণ করলে সরকার নির্ধারিত ২.৫% প্রমোদনার সাথে পাবেন আরও ২.৫% পূবালী ব্যাংক প্রমোদনাসহ মোট ৫% প্রমোদনা।

সাথে আরও আছে নিশ্চিত আকর্ষণীয় পুরস্কার



পূবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি
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ব্যাংক
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পাই ব্যাংকিং (PI Banking) -
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পূবালী ব্যাংকে সক্ষয় করুন, নিরাপদে থাকুন



Protect public safety, resist evil moves

PM tells Ansar, VDP members

UNB, Gazipur

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the members of Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party (VDP) to stand with courage and sincerity to resist any ill attempt to ensure public security.

"As the largest force in the country, you have to rightly perform the duty bestowed upon you. You will have to resist any evil move to protect public safety. You should do it with honesty, courage and sincerity," she said.

The prime minister made this call while addressing the 44th national rally 2024 of Bangladesh Ansar and VDP at Bangladesh Ansar-VDP Academy in Shalipur, Gazipur.

She said it is a sacred duty of her government to ensure security to the people and uphold peace.

ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT DU teacher sent on three-month leave

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University authorities have sent Prof Naadir Junaid on a three-month leave to investigate the sexual harassment allegations brought against him by a female student of the university.

The authorities took the decision yesterday afternoon in the face of students' movement.

The development was confirmed to The Daily Star by Prof Abul Mansur Ahmed, chairperson of DU's Mass Communication and Journalism department.

A letter from the Registrar's Office was received by Prof Mansur and he read it out before the protesting students.

Prof Mansur informed the students that Prof Naadir of the department has been placed on a three-month leave, preventing him from all academic and administrative activities.

Students of the department boycotted classes until yesterday, the second consecutive day since Sunday, demanding an investigation into the allegation. At the same time, they demanded that the teacher be exempted from all academic activities.

Prof Mansur said they will raise the issue at the next DU syndicate meeting.

On Sunday, the student lodged a written complaint with the university's vice chancellor against Naadir for sexually harassing her.



Engrossed in literary verses, two young minds enjoy reading a book at the Ekushey Boli Mela in the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Trapped through TikTok

2 girls trafficked to India by syndicate members

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

"We are in danger. Please save us!" Siam* received a phone call via IMO on January 29 night.

The voice sounded familiar. It was his sister 15 year-old Sabrina.

"Some unidentified people have confined us to a bordering district after kidnapping us from Dhaka. They will traffic us abroad. They are torturing us," she cried.

And then, Sabrina abruptly disconnected the call. Just before the call ended, Siam heard a male voice shouting, "Hang up now."

This was the last time Sabrina's family heard from her. They don't know if she is dead or alive.

Sabrina's childhood took a dark turn when she joined TikTok four years back.

In TikTok, she met Shaon, a human-hauler driver by profession, who was around 20 years old. Soon, they developed a relationship and got married. She was 13 at that time.

Within a year, she gave birth to a boy, who is now nine months old.

The story of Sabrina's friend Sejuti, 14, is almost similar. She also married a boy named Sabuj after meeting him through TikTok at the age of 12. They got separated within a year.

On January 23 this year, Sabrina and

Sejuti left their Dhaka homes but they never returned. They were leaving to make video contents, according to their parents.

Meanwhile, Sabrina left her son to her mother before leaving.

Little did they know that a syndicate of organ traffickers had laid out a perfect trap for them. The two were taken to a bordering area.

The minors were preyed on by a transnational trafficking gang who has trafficked at least over a 100 underaged girls to India via Satkhira.

Sabrina's mother Sharmin filed a case with Hazaribagh Police Station on January 29, the last time the family heard from her.

While investigating the case, the Ramna division of the Detective Branch of police arrested a trafficker -- Kabir Hossain -- on February 6.

Sabrina and Sejuti are not alone.

The minors were preyed on by a transnational trafficking gang who has

trafficked at least over a 100 underaged girls to India via Satkhira within a year.

What's more perplexing, their organs were sold to Middle Eastern countries.

The Daily Star on February 9 published a report on the issue, headlined "They trafficked people for organs".

The organs of minors are always in high demand for its sustainability, and hence children are being targeted by this group, said an investigator.

NOT RESCUED YET
Police have failed to make any breakthrough about Sabrina and Sejuti's whereabouts.

Muhammad Fazle Elahi, an additional deputy commissioner of DB (Ramna division), told The Daily Star yesterday, "We have got details of five to six members of the trafficking syndicate. We are now conducting drives to arrest them."

"Once the gang members are arrested, we can trace the victims," he said.

Gang members primarily lure girls with promises of better job opportunities on social media and online platforms such as TikTok before trafficking them abroad, said police.

FAMILIES WAIT IN ANGUISH

Tears fell like unspoken prayers in both homes.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'It's about saving our heritage'

Say speakers on GI tag of products; blame lack of coordination for Tangail sari debacle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Due to a lack of coordination among government departments, alongside pre-emptive measures and planning, the country could not claim geographical indication (GI) tag of many of its heritage, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

GI has multifaceted implications, including commercial and traditional, which may prove costly in future if it is ignored, they also said.

Speakers made such remarks at a discussion on the recent Tangail sari GI issue and its implications for Bangladesh, organised at the initiative of The Daily Star at its office in the capital's Karwan Bazar.

Supreme Court lawyer Sarwat Siraj Shukla said, "India applied for the GI tag for Tangail sari in 2020. But after they got it in 2024, we woke up."

"A lack of coordination between government departments prevails in our country. We don't have any comprehensive list of our heritage in different sectors," she added.

Dr Fahmida Khatun, executive director of Centre

India applied for the GI tag for Tangail sari in 2020. But after they got it in 2024, we woke up.

SARWAT SIRAJ SHUKLA
Supreme Court lawyer

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Steps underway to increase metro frequency

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said steps are underway to increase the frequency of metro rail trains in view of commuters' growing dependence on its service.

Talking to reporters at his office, Quader said the coach numbers could not be increased due to technical reasons but steps have been taken to run one train every eight minutes while the current frequency is one every 10 minutes.

Quader also said increasing the number of metro coaches depends on technical matters.

There is no metro rail having more than five coaches anywhere in the world but the metro rail in Bangladesh has already been running with six compartments, he said.

Referring to the soaring prices of essential goods, he said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already directed the authorities concerned to take effective steps to check the price hike.

"But the market cannot be controlled overnight. Many things depend on global situation. The government is working to this end considering public interest," he said.

'We're yet to achieve self-sufficiency'

Says agri minister on jute seed production

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Abdus Shahid yesterday said Bangladesh has not yet achieved self-sufficiency in jute seed production and still relies on imports from India.

"Reducing dependence on imported jute seeds and boosting domestic production is a key priority. The government is working on a priority basis to increase jute production with less land," he said at a seminar organised by the Bangladesh Jute Research Institute in Dhaka.

"In 2015, the country produced 51 lakh bales of jute. It rose to 84 lakh bales in fiscal year 2022-23. Out of this, about 43 lakh bales of jute and jute products have been exported," said the minister.

Export of jute and jute goods have earned Tk 8,000 crore in foreign exchange, he said.

"While jute was Bangladesh's main cash crop in the 1980s, providing 75 percent of export earnings, the ready-made garment sector has now taken over as the top foreign exchange earner," he said.

The government has recognised jute as an agricultural commodity, he added.

Addressing jute researchers, Shahid said, "To fully utilise the genome sequencing establishment, you must work with sincerity and determination and maintain a more focused research approach."

Abdul Awal, director general of BJRI, and Dr Mosaddek, research coordinator of the Genome Research Department, also spoke at the event.



Traders set up stalls, selling bricks, sand, cement and other construction materials, taking over half of the capital's Basila road. The trucks parked on the side, usually used to transport the materials after sale, also crowd the road round the clock. The road was widened to ease vehicular movement. However, its extended portion remains encroached while the authorities turn a blind eye to the menace. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

PRAYER TIMING
FEBRUARY 13

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:15	5:52	7:15
JAMAAT 6:05	1:15	4:30	5:56	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION