




FASTBUILD
PROVIDES RODS OF ANY SHAPE AND SIZE AS PER DESIGN

BSRM
building a safer nation



Terminal 3,
Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport

Proud Construction Partner

SHAH CEMENT

Saifuzzaman admits to having wealth in UK, US Denies breaking laws

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saifuzzaman Chowdhury, the immediate past land minister, yesterday acknowledged having assets abroad that were accrued through income generated from businesses outside of Bangladesh.

At a press conference held at the Jatiya Press Club, Chowdhury, the eldest son of Awami League leader Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu, said he did not take money out of Bangladesh to acquire the properties in the UK and the US.



The extraordinary press conference was called in response to a Bloomberg report on February 18 that said Chowdhury owned more than 350 properties in the UK worth about £200 million and at least five properties in the US.

On December 29 last year, The Daily Star reported on a subset of Chowdhury's UK properties after Ittekkharuzzaman, the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Small boats, locally known as Barki, are good for carrying pebbles and sand arrive in Sylhet's Jafiong and Jaintiapur. The photo of craftsmen taking their new boats to local markets on the Chengarkhal was taken last week.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Yunus conviction politically motivated

Clooney Foundation for Justice says in report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The conviction of Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus appears to be "politically motivated", the Clooney Foundation for Justice's TrialWatch initiative said in a report released on Friday.

Based on its review of the proceedings, there are significant grounds for finding that the case against Prof Yunus constitutes an abuse of process, the report said, urging the Labour Appellate Tribunal to overturn the conviction for alleged violations of the country's labour law.

The Clooney Foundation for Justice published a statement on its website in this regard the same day.

The statement says the TrialWatch's report finds that the proceedings against Yunus appear to have been improperly motivated based on a combination of factors – the fraught political climate in which the trial took place; the many other cases brought against Yunus; the statements made by Sheikh Hasina about him; the expedited nature of the proceedings; the apparent selective targeting of Yunus amongst many other individuals at Grameen Telecom arguably subject

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

A 'large' number shot in Gaza aid chaos

Says UN; Israel, Hamas expected in Cairo for truce talks

AGENCIES, Palestinian Territories

A UN team has reported seeing "a large number" of gunshot wounds among Gazans after Israeli troops opened fire near an aid convoy, an incident which highlighted near-famine conditions after nearly five months of war.

Israeli troops opened fire as Palestinian civilians scrambled for food supplies during a chaotic incident in Gaza City on Thursday that the ministry said killed 115 people and wounded more than 750.

The Israeli military said a "stampede" occurred when thousands of Palestinians surrounded the aid convoy, leading to dozens of deaths and injuries, including some who were run over.

An Israeli source acknowledged troops had opened fire on the crowd, believing it "posed a threat".

The Israeli armed forces spokesman, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, said troops had fired "a few warning shots" to try to disperse a "mob" that had "ambushed" the aid trucks.

On Friday a UN team visited some of the wounded from the aid incident, in Gaza City's Al-Shifa Hospital, and saw a "large number of gunshot wounds", UN chief Antonio Guterres's spokesman said, reports AFP.

The hospital received 70 of the dead, and around 200 wounded were still there during the team's visit, spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

He was not aware of the team examining those killed, but said "from what they saw in terms of the

patients who were alive getting treatments is that there was a large number of gunshot wounds".

Hossam Abu Safiya, director of Gaza City's Kamal Adwan Hospital, said all the casualties it admitted were hit by "bullets and shrapnel from occupation forces", a reference to Israel.

Meanwhile, at least 11 Palestinians were killed when an Israeli airstrike hit a tent in Rafah in the Gaza Strip yesterday, the Gaza health ministry said, reports Reuters.

The Gaza health ministry said another 50 people were wounded in the strike next to a hospital in the Tel Al Sultan area of Rafah. One of the dead was a medic at the hospital. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The hostilities came amid uncertainty over whether negotiations on a Gaza ceasefire would resume on Sunday.

Israel and Hamas have been negotiating via mediators including Egypt and Qatar.

Two Egyptian security sources said Israeli and Hamas delegations were expected to arrive in Cairo on Sunday to resume indirect talks.

But an Israeli report cast doubt on this.

There was no immediate comment from Israel or Hamas.

The Egyptian sources said the parties had agreed on the duration of a Gaza truce, as well as hostage and prisoner releases, adding that the completion of the deal still requires an agreement on the withdrawal of Israeli forces from northern Gaza and a return of its residents.

- 11 killed as airstrike hits tent in Rafah camp
- 92 new fatalities in 24 hours
- Total death toll reaches 30,320

the BUSINESS

Bangladesh to enjoy duty benefit until 2029

Bangladesh will keep enjoying duty-free market access for three more years after its graduation to a developing nation in 2026 as the extension was endorsed by 166 members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at its Ministerial Conference that concluded in Abu Dhabi on Friday night.

After an intense negotiation for more than five days, the member countries reached the consensus on the extension of the trade benefits for the LDCs (least-developed countries) that graduate. Bangladesh joined the LDC group in 1975 and is going to leave it on November 24 of 2026.

STORY ON BI

BB RESERVE HEIST NY court allows BB's case to proceed

Court dismissed a few charges against RCBC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The New York Supreme Court has allowed the case filed by Bangladesh Bank concerning the \$81-million cyberheist in 2016 to proceed but dismissed several charges against Rizal Commercial Banking Corp (RCBC).

The appellate division, the first judicial department of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, ruled to dismiss three causes of action – conversion, aiding and abetting conversion, and conspiracy to commit conversion – against the bank and all defendants associated with RCBC, reports the Philippines Daily Inquirer.

It also dismissed the case against four RCBC defendants – Ismael Reyes, Brigitte Capiña, Romualdo Agarrado, and Nestor Pineda – due to a lack of personal jurisdiction.

The Inquirer report said that in a stock exchange filing on Friday, RCBC said it received a decision from the New York Supreme Court on February 29 this year. Now, the company is reportedly considering its next move.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Tiny fish can make sounds as loud as pneumatic drill



INDEPENDENT ONLINE

One of the world's smallest fish discovered only three years ago uses a special drumming mechanism to produce sounds as loud as a pneumatic drill, a new study has found.

The translucent fish – *Danionella cerebrum* – named due to its open skull roof and small brain, is found commonly in small streams along the Bago Yoma mountain range of Myanmar.

Due to its small size, transparent body, and the ease with which it can be studied at the cellular level under a microscope, the fish is widely seen as an emerging model organism in biomedical research.

Since the discovery of the species in 2021, scientists have been perplexed how this fish, measuring less than 12mm in length – just a little longer than a fingernail – could produce sounds exceeding 140 decibels.

Researchers have now found that it possesses a unique sound production apparatus – including a special cartilage, a unique rib, and fatigue-resistant muscle.

CEC urges EC, judiciary, JS to use authority

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal yesterday urged the judiciary, the legislation, and the Election Commission to enforce their power and independence.

"We are independent, we will need to enforce that bravely and we will need to speak with courage, because powerful quarters don't like to see the independence of others," he said while addressing a discussion programme.

The EC organised the discussion as part of the National Voters Day celebrations in its office in the capital.

Habibul said there was some kind of apathy among the voters. "Many didn't turn up for voting [during January 7 national polls] as a large party did not participate."

He added that a major goal of Voters' Day is to encourage voters to express their opinions freely through the ballot, "so that they can elect the candidate of their choice, so that a government of their choice is formed".

He further said the importance of National ID cards has increased. "However, in some cases people try to use it for fraudulent activities like property embezzlement... The number is not high but those who are clever make multiple cards."

The CEC instructed the EC officials to work carefully in this regard.

"We have a zero tolerance against the officials [who facilitate fraud]. We'll hand over such officials to the police."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



A Palestinian child stands in the living room of a building that was damaged during Israeli bombardment in Rafah, on the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

CONFLICT IN MYANMAR Gunfire, blasts heard across the border in Teknaf

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Gunshots and explosions were heard in the Hnila area of Teknaf, Cox's Bazar's, amid fresh fighting between Myanmar junta forces and an armed group called Arakan Army on the other side of the border yesterday morning.

Residents said the gun fighting began around 8:00am and went on for almost four hours, while plumes of smoke were seen on the horizon all day long.

"It looked like entire neighbourhoods were set on fire across the border," said a local named Tarek Mahmud Rony.

Rashed Mahmood Ali, chairman of Hnila Union Parishad, said, "People in the villages are living in fear."

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh are cautious and they will prevent trespassing, said Lt Col Mohiuddin Ahmed, commanding officer of BGB battalion-2.