

## Shaila Anwar gets key post in Senate of Canada

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shaila Anwar, a Bangladeshi-origin Canadian, has been appointed as the new Clerk of the Senate and Clerk of the Parliaments in Canada on March 15, effective from May 6.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau welcomed the appointment which has been made in consultation with the Senate.

Shaila, raised in Ottawa, holds a Bachelor's in English and Political Science from Carleton University. With over 15 years of Senate experience, she had various leadership roles in the Red Chamber, ranging from Principal Clerk, Deputy Principal Clerk, and Procedural Clerk of the Senate Committees Directorate.

Granddaughter of Poet Jasimuddin, Shaila's recent role was Clerk Assistant of Senate Committees.

Shaila will manage day-to-day operations of the legislative process, advise the Speaker, oversee the swearing-in of new senators and ensure stewardship of legal archives in her new role.

Shaila began her journey at the Senate Committees Directorate in 2007 as a Procedural Clerk.



PHOTO: STAR

## Watermelon price beyond consumers' reach

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Despite a good supply of watermelons in Patuakhali markets, consumers are not able to buy the seasonal fruit due to high price. It is one of the most sought after fruits during Ramadan.

This year, watermelon has been cultivated on 22,398 hectares of land in Galachipa, Rangabali, Baulal, Kalapara, Dasmina, Dumki and Mirzapur upazilas of Patuakhali, said Nazrul Islam, deputy director of the Department of Agricultural Extension in the district.

Visiting different markets in Patuakhali district, including New Market and Hetalia Bandhghat Bazar, this correspondent saw retailers selling the fruit at Tk 60-90 per kilogramme, after buying it from wholesalers at an average of Tk 350 per piece.

The small sized watermelons weigh around 4-5 kg, medium sized ones weigh 7-8 kg and large watermelons weigh 9 kg or more.

"If we don't sell watermelons at per kg rate, we incur losses. If a watermelon costs Tk 150-200 for small size, Tk 250-300 for medium size and Tk 400 or more for large ones, buyers don't buy it. But if it can be sold at per kg rate, many buyers show interest," said Bashir Gazi, a retailer at Hetalia Bandhghat Bazar.

Retailer Anwar Hossain said, "Watermelons have just hit the market so the price is a bit higher. The wholesalers



are also charging high prices so we are compelled to sell it at a higher price."

Abdus Salam, a resident of Moukaran village said, "Watermelon is a refreshing fruit so it has good demand during Ramadan. But the price is out of my reach." Other customers echoed him.

Meanwhile, watermelon farmers are largely deprived by wholesalers due to unfair pricing.

Growers said the wholesalers are buying their produce at only Tk 30-35 apiece, while those are later sold to retailers at Tk 250-400 apiece.

Farmer Julhas Mia said, "I harvested 250 watermelons from my 3 bighas of land and sold those to wholesaler for a total

of Tk 75,000. But these are being sold to retailers at significantly higher prices."

Patuakhali deputy commissioner Noor Qutubul Alam during a meeting at the DC's Office recently discussed the efforts to keep market prices stable during Ramadan, where the high price of watermelon was discussed.

At the meeting, DC Noor Alam instructed all concerned to take steps to ensure that watermelons are sold per piece instead of per kg rate in the retail market.

Contacted, Shoib Miah, assistant director of Patuakhali Consumer Rights Department, said disciplinary action will be taken against those who violate the instruction.

## When speaking

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"I got punished for speaking up against injustice," he added.

He said he joined as professor in February 2022 and was suspended in May 2023, meaning he still had time to meet the requirements.

"I also failed to enroll in a university for PhD programme in fall semester last year due to the suspension order," he added.

Teachers said authorities filed a general diary with the local police station, alleging Mehedi and unknown others were involved in the poster publication and distribution process.

The police later sought a Patuakhali court order to investigate the matter, but the court on June 18 last year rejected the request saying "allegations made in the GD were not found to be true primarily".

PROBE AT SNAIL'S PACE

The university authorities formed a three-member probe committee on August 7, 2023 to probe the allegation against Mehedi,

asking for a report within 17 working days.

Two members -- Prof Fazlul Hoque and Prof Md Kabirul Islam -- of the three-member probe committee, are teachers from the soil science department, where the allegations of recruiting irregularities occurred in 2018. The probe is still ongoing, teachers said.

Probe committee convener Fazlul Hoque said their probe got delayed as the court was involved and there were other internal issues. "We'll submit the report in a week or two."

Prof Jahed Parvez, president of PSTU teachers' association, said, "Suspending Prof Mehedi was an intentional decision. The administration showed partiality in this incident."

Registrar Prof Santosh Kumar Bose said, "We formed a probe committee, and a decision will be taken following its report."

Vice Chancellor Prof Swadesh Chandra could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts throughout last week.

## Beware of what

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to Canada with his family in 2011.

He reminisced about those days in an interview with The Daily Star.

MV Abdullah, a Bangladeshi vessel with 23 crew members, was hijacked in the Indian Ocean on March 12 by around 50 Somali pirates.

"I came to know about the hijacked ship from international media. It is unfortunate and worrisome," he said.

The media should also be careful of what they publish, he added.

He called upon the ship's crew and their family members to have patience.

Based on his past experience, he said the Somali pirates often behave rudely with the hostages and force them to send messages to family members back home to compel the ship's authority to pay the ransom promptly.

"It is wise for the ship's crew to behave well with the pirates in the present circumstances to avoid any untoward incident," he said.

"The Somali pirates hijack ships for ransom

money. After taking a ship and its crew hostages, they often employ a lawyer as a mediator to discuss the matter with the ship's authority in two or three days. Nothing much can be done until then," he also said.

"That was the case with MV Jahan Moni. The mediator lawyers will contact the ship's owners to discuss ransom and other terms," Captain Farid said.

"There is no certainty as to how long the crew will have to remain hostages. So, it is necessary to use the ship's stored food, water, and fuel responsibly during this time. The crew would have to do rationing to last longer with the food and water," Farid continued.

"Sometimes, the pirates may bring in food from the mainland after anchoring the ship, but restocking fresh water for consumption is difficult once the ship's stock becomes exhausted," he said.

"Also, if the ship's fuel runs out, that may bring much suffering to the ship's crew. So, it is necessary to exercise caution to this end," the captain added.

## Working to control

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of 29 essential commodities.

"The Department of Agriculture Marketing has its committees at the district, upazila, and central level. Our responsibility will be to monitor the prices of products from producer level to wholesale and then to retail level," he said.

Now the DAM, Directorate of Consumer Rights Protection Affairs, UNOs, and DCs will all coordinate together to bring down prices of daily necessities. Hopefully, the price will come down to a logical level, he pointed out.

Amid soaring prices of commodities, the government has fixed prices of 29 essential products, including onion, broiler chicken, mutton, beef, and eggplant, at retail, wholesale, producer and production levels.

In a circular issued on Friday (15 March), the Department of Agricultural Marketing requested the authorities concerned to sell the products at the newly fixed rates.

## Pirates yet to make

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Media Adviser Mizanul Islam.

"We are ready to negotiate," he added.

Meanwhile, with each passing day, the family members of the crewmen are getting more anxious.

The wife of a crew member, said she got the last message from her husband on the day of the hijack before pirates took away his cellphone.

Since then, she has

gotten no message or call from her husband, said the anxious wife.

She said the officials of the owning firm assured the family of taking all necessary actions for the safe return of the crew.

Bangladesh Merchant Marine Officers' Association (BMMOA) General Secretary Shakawat Hossain said there is very little to do for the owning firm until the pirates make contact.

## Abul Mansur Ahmad's

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the editor of the Ittehad.

A very successful politician, Abul Mansur Ahmad played a key role in the formation of the Awami Muslim League. He served as vice president of the organisation from 1953 to 1958.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was the author of the famous Ekush Dafa (21-point programme) election manifesto of Jukta Front in the 1954 election through which the Muslim League was ousted from power.

The Ekush Dafa was the first comprehensive articulation of the political, economic and cultural demands of the Bangalees of the then eastern part of Pakistan.

He was elected a member of East Bengal Provincial Assembly in that election, and served as health minister in the United Front cabinet under Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq. In 1955, he was elected a member of Pakistan Constituent Assembly.

He was the minister for education in the United Front government of East Pakistan in 1956 and the minister for commerce and trade in 1956-1957. After the promulgation of martial law by Ayub Khan in 1958, he was imprisoned and subsequently released in 1962.

He then retired from politics.

Abul Mansur Ahmad was known for his strong stand in favour of regional autonomy of East Pakistan. He also made remarkable contributions to industrialisation of the long neglected East Pakistan.

He always propagated secularism in a manner unparalleled in the forties, fifties and sixties.

Ahmad's publications include great satires like "Aina", "Asmani Purdah", "Gulliverer Safar Nama" and "Food Conference". He also penned insightful works on social and political history of Bengal such as "Bangladesher Culture". He has two autobiographical writings -- "Atma Katha" and "Amar Dekha Rajnir Panchash Bachar".

Abul Mansur Ahmad was born in 1898 in Dhanikhola village of Trishal, Mymensingh.

Bangla Academy has published Ahmad's writings which are available in four volumes now.

## LAND for SALE

69.42 decimal land with boundary wall for sale at Kharajora, near High-tech park, Kaliakoir, Gazipur. Interested person may call on cell 01780-053490 for more details.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Divisional Forest Officer  
Social Forest Division, Faridpur.

**Invitation for Tender (OTM)**

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following Works given below:

Sl No	Tender ID & Package No.	Description and Name of the Package	Publication Date & Time	Closing & Opening Date & Time
01	960956 & SFDF/Charmuguria EP/2023-2024/WD-11	Construction of Sanitation and Water Supply (Fresh Water Supply System) at Char Muguria Eco Park in Madaripur Sadar Upazila, Madaripur.	19-Mar-2024 10:00 AM	02-Apr-2024 12:00 PM
02	960957 & SFDF/Charmuguria EP/2023-2024/WD-12	Constructions of Extended Electrical Works (200-250 KVA), Transformers 80-100 KVA, Generators, Outside Lights, Solar Electric Lights, Garden Lights, Electric Wires and Electric Rooms at Char Muguria Eco Park in Madaripur Sadar Upazila, Madaripur.	19-Mar-2024 10:00 AM	02-Apr-2024 12:00 PM

This is an Online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline hard copies will be accepted.

(Mohammad Golam Qudus Bhuiyan)  
Project Director  
Modernization of Existing Char Muguria Eco-Park under Madaripur Zilla and  
Divisional Forest Officer,  
Social Forest Division, Faridpur.

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গনপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
নিবাহী পরিচালকের কার্যালয়  
শিশু-মাতৃ স্বাস্থ্য ইনস্টিটিউট  
মাতুয়াইল, ঢাকা-১৩৬২

Ref No. ICMH/Admin/2023-24/e-tender/1362 Date: 16/03/2024

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This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/ Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>), For more details, please contact support desk contact numbers.

e-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) by Hasrat Jahan, Joint Director, Institute of Child & Mother Health, Matuail, Dhaka-1362 for the Procurement of;

Tender Id	Name of Goods	Tender/Proposal Publication Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing/Opening Date & Time
961648	Procurement of Medical Equipment's for the F.Y 2023-2024.	18-Mar-2024 12:00	01-Apr-2024 16:00	02-Apr-2024 12:00
961649	Procurement of Office Equipment's for the F.Y 2023-2024.	18-Mar-2024 12:00	01-Apr-2024 16:00	02-Apr-2024 12:00

e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for pursuer.

e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list; accepted tenders will be opened online immediate as stated in above list.

(Professor Dr. M A Mannan)  
Executive Director  
Institute of Child & Mother Health  
Matuail, Dhaka-1362.

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