

কর্মজীবনের শেষে অবসরকালীন আর্থিক নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিত করতে

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**পূবালী ব্যাংক অ্যাকাউন্ট খুলুন**

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## MPs cannot interfere in upazila polls

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said members of parliament cannot influence or interfere in upazila elections.

"Awami League will not nominate party candidates for upazila elections to keep it open. So, the purpose has to be made successful. Lawmakers cannot interfere in the polls," he said while exchanging views with party leaders and workers of Rangpur division at AL's Bangabandhu Avenue central office.

"On your (leaders and workers) request, the prime minister has brought the scope for you to contest upazila polls in a new way through open competitions," said Quader, also the road transport and



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From left, Kajal Rashid Shahin, Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, Din M Sumon Rahman, and Sohel Hasan Galib with the winners of a book review competition on Abul Mansur Ahmad's writings during an event held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday. Organised by Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad marking the legendary writer's 45th death anniversary, the event featured a discussion on his life and political vision.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Freeing people through social reform was his goal

### Says Prof Serajul Islam about Abul Mansur Ahmad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seeking people's freedom, renowned political figure of the sub-continent Abul Mansur Ahmad blended his political vision with his journalistic and literary thoughts, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

He was one of the greatest satirists of Bangla literature and a pioneer of modern and progressive journalism, the speakers also said.

Abul Mansur Ahmad Smriti Parishad organised the discussion on "Language of Abul Mansur Ahmad's Writings and Distinction of Thoughts" at The Daily Star Centre in the capital, on the occasion of his 45th death anniversary, which was on March 18.

At the event, the organisers also awarded the winners of a "book review competition" on Ahmad's writings that was held earlier.

Charing the discussion, eminent thinker and writer Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury said Abul Mansur Ahmad's political vision was that people should be freed from struggle, and reform in society was required for that.

Abul Mansur Ahmad's political vision was to bring change to society, added Prof Choudhury.

It has become imperative to bring reform to contemporary society now, he said, adding that although the country achieved independence in 1971, the "character of the state" has not been changed but turned out to be "more repressive."

Prof Choudhury also lauded the parishad's initiative in

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## AL tramples opposition voice: Moyeen

UNB, Dhaka

BNP standing committee member Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan

yesterday said the ruling Awami League doesn't allow any opposition voice in the country.

He said this while visiting the family of Rabiul Islam Nayan, jailed member secretary of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal Dhaka Metropolitan South, at his Moghbazar residence.

"Bangladesh has fought for democracy, but it is now absent in the country. In these circumstances how shall we survive?," asked Moyeen Khan.

He said Nayan's wife and his family members are being harassed for his political belief.

"We are urging the government to stop repression of opposition members," said Moyeen.

## Gas supply may improve next week

UNB, Dhaka

Gas supply in the country is expected to improve to some extent from the next week as a floating storage and re-gasification unit (FSRU), known as LNG terminal, is scheduled to resume operation from April 3 after end of its routine maintenance work.

According to official sources, one of the two FSRUs went into maintenance programme last month, leading to a decline in the gas supply to the national grid.

As a result, the country's gas supply came down by 500 million cubic feet per day (MMCFD) to about 2,655 from.

Of the two FSRUs set up in Maheshkhali, one having 650 MMCFD capacity is owned and operated by US-based Excelerate Energy and another, having 500 MMCFD capacity, is owned and operated by Summit Group.

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## GREEN ROAD

# Footpaths under the clutch of extortionists

HELEMUL ALAM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

While there are sidewalks on both sides of the road from Farmgate's Ananda Cinema Hall to Panthapath intersection, they are hardly functional.

The six-foot wide footpaths on Green Road route are instead used for tea stalls, rickshaw garages, vegetable shops, and even restaurants, leaving no room for pedestrians to walk. So they walk on the street despite risk of accidents.

A section of ruling party men are involved behind illegally occupying the footpaths, and the law enforcers continue to turn a blind eye.

Usually, over 300 rickshaws remain parked on the sidewalks beside the 800-metre road.

To get the "parking privilege" on sidewalks, every rickshaw owner must pay Tk 20 per day to a "linemen," a rickshaw puller told The Daily Star. The "parking charge" varies depending on multiple factors.

For example, an owner having 30 rickshaws need to pay Tk 500 daily for the "facility".

It requires further negotiations if anyone wants to keep over 30 rickshaws.

The linemen receives around Tk 6,000 daily as payment from the rickshaw owners.



While the rickshaws cover majority of the sidewalks, small tea stalls or makeshift eateries make up the remaining vacant space.

During a visit to the area, this correspondent talked with a restaurant owner, posing as someone who's looking to set up a new eatery there.

The restaurant owner refused to help at first, but later said he could only help if the correspondent agreed to open a tea stall instead of a restaurant.

"Setting up a shop in the area requires making an initial payment - ranging from Tk 20,000 to 25,000 - to the linemen. Once set up, a daily payment has to be made, ranging



from Tk 300 to Tk 400," said the restaurant owner.

Besides, there are additional fees like Tk 30 for streetlight connections, Tk 10 to Tk 20 for police, and a weekly payment of Tk 1,000, said a tea stall owner on the road.

This newspaper found at least 30 restaurants and tea stalls on the sidewalks of the road as of March 28. As per a rough estimate, the linemen collect at least Tk 10,500 from tea stalls daily.

When asked whom to communicate with to set up a new stall on the footpath, all the vendors pointed towards a person named Sohel.

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## Process to import 40MW power from Nepal nearly finalised

### Says Nasrul Hamid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid yesterday said the process of importing 40 megawatts of electricity from Nepal using India's transmission facility is nearly finalised.

The tariff negotiation is almost completed between the National Electric Authority of Nepal and Bangladesh Power Development Board, he said, adding that the power will be imported through Bheramara sub-station in Kushtia.

Currently, Bangladesh imports around 1,000MW of electricity from India through the sub-station.

The state minister said this while addressing a seminar titled "Pre-event Seminar on the 3rd Nepal Investment Summit -2024" as the chief guest at the Embassy of Nepal in Dhaka.

Bangladesh will invest in the Sunkoshi-3 hydro power project in Nepal which will bring the opportunity to sell electricity to both India and Nepal, Hamid said.

"The feasibility study has been completed and the discussion is going on to build a profitable partnership beyond the boundary by regional cooperation," he also said.

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## An army imposter and his 'fake magistrate' niece

### Two held for conning people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Posing as an army officer and an executive magistrate, a duo used to scam people in Kishoreganj.

Didarul Islam, 30, used to identify himself as a captain of the army's engineering core, while his niece Toposi Rabeya Bosri, 28, posed as an executive magistrate to gain people's trust before embezzling them.

The duo was arrested by Cyber and Special Crime (North) Division of the Detective Branch on Friday during a shadow investigation, said Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner of DB police, yesterday.

Emad Uddin, imam of Pagla Mosque in Kishoreganj, was among those conned by Didar and Toposi. Emad met Didar while buying land in the district, and Didar formed a good relationship with him. At one point, Didar proposed a job for Emad's daughter at Bangladesh Bank, while also making arrangements for his son to go to Australia.

Didar took around Tk 43 lakh in several instalments from Emad for the job, and after taking the money, he started dilly-dallying to keep his promise.

Emad then realised he got conned and filed a case with Hatirjheel Police Station, said Harun.

"Both Didar and Toposi were involved in such fraud activities for a long time. Even police officials got scammed by the duo," said the DB chief.

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Beaten by the heat, Altaf Hossain takes a small break from pulling rickshaw after dropping off a passenger on Dhanmondi's road-3 in the capital yesterday afternoon. The 65-year-old sets off every morning, earning about Tk 200-300 daily for his family of four.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN