

DHAKA THURSDAY OCTOBER 17, 2024

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXIV No. 265

KARTIK 1, 1431 BS

www.thedailystar.net

RABIUS SANI 13, 1446 HIJRI

16 PAGES PLUS CAMPUS: TK 15.00

STUDENT PROTEST ON SC PREMISES

12 HC judges barred from judicial work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed barred 12 High Court judges from all judicial activities after over a thousand students besieged the HC premises demanding removal of "pro-Awami League fascist judges" yesterday.

"The 12 judges will not be given benches for now, which means they will not be taking part in judicial activities when the court reopens on October 20," Supreme Court Registrar General Aziz Ahmed Bhuiyan told the protesting students around 4:00pm.

The agitating students then postponed their demonstrations until Sunday.

Aziz, however, did not disclose the names of the HC judges.

"We will publish the cause list on Sunday without the names of the 12 judges, and you will understand who those judges are."

Aziz Ahmed Bhuiyan,
Supreme Court Registrar General



Students under the banner of Anti-Discrimination Student Movement demonstrate on the High Court premises yesterday afternoon demanding resignations of "pro-Awami League fascist judges". A group of lawyers also joined the demo.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

PALTRY SAFETY NET COVERAGE FOR THE POOR A widow gets Tk 550 a month!

PROGRAMME	ALLOWANCE (TK)	BENEFICIARY (LAKH)	TOTAL SPENDING (CRORE TK)
Old Age	600	60.01	4,351
Widow & Destitute	550	27.75	1,844
Physically Challenged	850	32.34	3,322
Hijra Community	600	0.13	12
Bede Community	500	0.11	9.52
Tea Labourer [yearly one time]	5,000	0.6	36

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

Maleka Begum, 70, carries the weight of nearly five decades of widowhood on her shoulders. Since her husband Abul Hossain Gazi died in 1972, her life has been a constant struggle.

As long as her health permitted, she worked as a housemaid or a construction worker to raise her son, her only child. The grueling work took its toll on her body, which was failing as she grew older. She had been looking for some support.

Then, after years of pleading with local officials and elected representatives, the Patuakhali woman got a widow allowance card under the government's social safety net programme about a decade ago.

It was Tk 300 per month then; it's Tk 550 now.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



MATIA CHOWDHURY
1942-2024

A firebrand politician falls silent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A firebrand student leader who had become a national political figure even before graduating, Matia Chowdhury was a rare exception in Bangladeshi politics, which had been plagued by opportunism, corruption, and at times, crime.

A former agriculture minister, Matia was the deputy leader of the recently dissolved 12th parliament and a presidium member of the Awami League.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



Asked about it later on, he said, "We will publish the cause list on Sunday without the names of the 12 judges, and you will understand who those judges are."

Asked about several online media outlets publishing names of the 12 judges in question, Aziz said he does not know what they have published or how they got the information.

The development came over two months after then chief justice Obaidul Hassan and five other judges of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court stepped down amid students' demonstrations demanding their resignations following the fall of the Hasina-led government.

On August 10, when the SC judges were forced to resign, the students also demanded resignations of "pro-Awami League High Court judges".

When a BNP delegation met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus for a political dialogue on October 4, the party placed several demands including the removal of "partisan judges" from the HC.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin on October 8 appointed 23

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A hill being cut to make space for houses in Jahangirnagar of Sylhet Sadar upazila's Tukerbazar union. At least six hills in the area have already been cut. Despite complaints by locals, the environment department and district administration have remained silent over the issue. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

8 nat'l days including March 7 cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has cancelled eight national days, including the one commemorating the historic March 7 speech of Bangabandhu and the national mourning day.

The historic March 7 commemorates Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's pivotal speech, March 17 celebrates the birthday of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the National Children's Day, August 5 marks the birth anniversary of Shaikh Hasina's brother Sheikh Kamal, August 8 is the birth anniversary of Hasina's mother Bangmata Fazilatunnesa Mujib, October 18 recognises Sheikh Rasel Day, August 15 is observed as the national mourning day marking assassination of Bangabandhu, November 4 as National Constitution Day, and December 12 recognises Smart Bangladesh Day.

The information was first divulged via the verified Facebook page of the chief adviser of the interim government yesterday. Later, the Cabinet Division issued a circular cancelling these national days.

Harris mocks Trump after rally turns into dance session

AFP, Washington

Kamala Harris went after her US presidential election rival Donald Trump's mental state and fitness for office Tuesday after the 78-year-old Republican's

Philadelphia was standard fare ahead of the November 5 election, as Trump took friendly questions from supporters on the economy.

But a pause for two medical emergencies in the crowd turned



televised town hall veered into a surreal, impromptu music session.

Three weeks ahead of the US election, Harris's campaign has begun to focus aggressively on Trump's health and mental stability, and was quick to weigh in, saying the ex-president appeared "lost, confused, and frozen on stage."

For about half an hour, Monday's event in Oaks near

into a bizarre 39 minutes of music and dancing as Trump abandoned the discussion of the election to put on his favorite hits, swaying awkwardly on stage.

"Who the hell wants to hear questions, right?" he said, bringing the Q&A section to an abrupt end and telling his people to crank up the volume.

Trump has made a brief, jerky

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PUBLICATION OF FALSE AND BASELESS REPORTS AGAINST MEGHNA GROUP OF INDUSTRIES

False and defamatory allegations published in some of the news outlets owned by a malicious group on October 9, 2024 have come to the attention of Meghna Group of Industries (MGI). It is apparent that these publications are part of a calculated attempt to malign the reputation of MGI and undermine its standing in the business community for ulterior motives. These reports are entirely fabricated and misleading, and MGI expresses strong resentment and denial of such news.

These reports have not only misrepresented the facts, but have also been disseminated without any communication or clarification from MGI, which grossly violates the principles of ethical journalism.

It is imperative to highlight that these false accusations may be motivated by an ongoing legal dispute with the malicious group. In 2019, MGI filed a defamation lawsuit of 1000 crore taka against this group due to its false, fabricated and defamatory allegations against MGI and its Chairman. It appears that these recent accusations are part of its retaliation and continuous efforts to tarnish the good standing of MGI. The malicious group appears to be using its own media outlets as a platform for wrongful gain.

MGI has consistently been a pillar of Bangladesh's industrial growth, having invested thousands of crores of taka into various sectors and creating employment for over 50,000 people. Its operations are fully compliant with all government regulations, and hold all requisite certifications from relevant authorities. Last year alone, MGI contributed almost Tk 5000 crore in revenue to the government exchequer. These fabricated allegations of tax evasion, financial misconduct, and under-invoicing are not only absurd but a deliberate attempt to mislead the public and disrupt the company's business operations.

MGI, like other large companies, imports goods at internationally negotiated prices. Leveraging on its reputation and business history, MGI ensures the most economical purchase. The customs authorities have established Assessment Value designated for each product which may vary from actual imported price. This Assessment Value is applicable for all importers, and like all importing companies, MGI's imports are assessed as per laws set by the customs authorities. To imply under-invoicing by MGI is deceptive and dishonest reporting and a futile attempt by reporters to misguide and manipulate the public.

Additionally, the claim that MGI has misappropriated bank commissions and violated insurance policy is entirely unfounded. All vehicles of MGI are insured and operate as per the guidelines and rules set by the government and all bank commissions are processed in accordance with well-established banking policies. Any suggestion of embezzlement is a gross distortion of facts.

MGI has also been accused of illegally acquiring land in Narayanganj when all land purchases were conducted transparently and legally, with full permission and documentation from the relevant authorities. MGI and the malicious group have industrial operations in the same region, and any generic accusations leveled against MGI regarding conducting business in the area is applicable to that malicious group itself, yet MGI is being singled out for baseless allegations without any merit.

MGI has an exemplary financial record and has never in its history defaulted on any obligations- all banks both local and foreign can attest to its impeccable financial record.

The slanderous and defamatory news by the malicious group owned agencies seek to undermine MGI's substantial contributions to the nation. Such false information, which distort the facts, is damaging not only for MGI's reputation, but also for the broader business community of Bangladesh.

We urge the malicious group and its affiliated Media entities to refrain from such dishonest and corrupt journalism.

