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## BANK COMPANY ACT Janata Bank exempted so it can lend more to Beximco

MD MEHEDI HASAN

State-run Janata Bank has been partly exempted from the Bank Company Act-1991 so that it can lend money to Beximco Group, a loan defaulter.

Bangladesh Bank had done this with the government's consent so that the workers of the conglomerate get three months' salary, said Mohammad Shahrar Siddiqui, director of the Banking Regulation and Policy Department-1 at the central bank.

The BB issued a notification with immediate effect on December 12, stating that the Janata Bank had been exempted from part of sections 26 and 27 of the act.

As per the sections, Beximco, the largest borrower from Janata Bank, is not eligible to get more loans because it's a defaulter and it has borrowed over 25 percent of Janata's capital.

Beximco has so far borrowed Tk 23,328 crore from the Janata, and  
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Construction work is going on at the Panthakunja Park near Sonargaon intersection in the capital. Bangladesh Gacch Rakkha Andolon demonstrated at the park yesterday demanding cessation of the construction work for an elevated expressway ramp that they said would destroy park.  
 PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Unite to build a fair, inclusive Bangladesh

Says Tarique; Fakhru  
hopes for polls soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said his party aims to build a democratic, fair and inclusive Bangladesh through the united efforts of everyone.

"Let us all unite to build a democratic Bangladesh with a non-discriminatory, inclusive and liberal society," he told a views exchange meeting with a group of physically disabled individuals at the LGED auditorium in the capital's Agargaon.

Tarique, who attended the meeting virtually, pledged that if BNP comes to power, his government will ensure equal rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities, treating them with the same sincerity as all other citizens of the country.

He said his party is committed to taking concrete steps to improve the quality of life of the people with special needs, focusing on ensuring their economic independence, social empowerment and human dignity.  
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## US, regional diplomats meet to discuss Syria crisis Arab FMs urge support for 'peaceful' transition

REUTERS, Aqaba

Top diplomats from the United States, Turkey, the European Union and Arab nations met in Jordan yesterday for talks on Syria as regional and global powers scramble for influence over whatever government replaces ousted President Bashar al-Assad.

Outgoing US President Joe Biden's administration has begun engaging with the victorious rebel groups including Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which led a lightning assault that ended in the capture of Damascus on Sunday.

Biden sent Secretary of State Antony Blinken to the region this week to seek support for principles that Washington hopes will guide Syria's political transition, such as respect for minorities.

Meanwhile, Syria's northern neighbour Turkey has for years supported Syrian opposition forces looking to oust Assad and is poised to play an influential role in Damascus.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said on Friday that his country's embassy in the Syrian capital would resume work soon after Turkey's intelligence chief visited this week.

The embassy opened yesterday after a 12-year closure, a week after rebels toppled longtime leader Bashar al-Assad. Representatives of the rebels' transitional government were present at the ceremony at the embassy in the capital's Rawda district, which also hosts other diplomatic missions.

Syria's neighbour Jordan was hosting the gathering in Aqaba. Russia and Iran, who were Assad's key supporters, were not invited.

Blinken, UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pederson,  
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## POLITICAL REFORMS Rizwana's comment misleading, incorrect Says Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday criticised recent comments of Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan on political reforms, and termed those "misleading" and "incorrect".

Speaking to reporters after paying homage at the Martyred Intellectuals Memorial in Mirpur yesterday, Rizvi said Rizwana's remarks hinted at depoliticisation and could strain the relationship between politicians and the civil society.

"This statement by the adviser is wrong and misleading. All reforms have been carried out through the parliament. Various demands raised by the people were implemented in parliament, and politicians played a significant role in this process," Rizvi said.

On Friday, Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan had questioned the  
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## Intellectuals failed to organise consent for a democratic republic

Salimullah Khan tells *Star* discussion on  
Martyred Intellectuals' Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Salimullah Khan yesterday said the task of intellectuals is to realise consent for the state. They constitute the civil society while the organ functioning as political society realises coercion.

"Intellectuals constitute civil society, which is another name for ideological state apparatuses. In Bangladesh, intellectuals failed to produce that consensus or that ideological persuasion in favour of the ruling class ever since gaining independence as a sovereign republic," he added.

"What I'm trying to point out is the two pillars on which the edifice of the state stands are civil society and political society – one being the pillar of consent and the other of coercion. When a state runs on the basis of consent, it constitutes a republic, a democratic state."

He observed that a state cannot run solely on coercion. It needs to operate on public consent, especially if it claims to be a democratic republic. Intellectuals are a vital cog in this process; they enable the state to function based on public consent.

Khan, a professor of General Education Program at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, was speaking at a discussion  
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titled "the role of intellectuals in reforming the state".

The Daily Star organised the discussion to mark the Martyred Intellectuals' Day, and also as part of storytelling sessions on the sidelines of an exhibition titled "36 Days of July – Saluting the Bravehearts" at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Salimullah Khan, a leading academic of the country, said the history of the last 53 years in Bangladesh is a history of the "failure of intellectuals to organise consent of the ruled for the ruling class, and that is what made an event like the July-August revolution not only likely but real."

"Therefore, as the old generation of intellectuals failed them, the new generation of students had perforce to lead an upsurge as harbingers of a new generation of organic intellectuals."

Khan said the Pakistanis killed intellectuals just ahead of Bangladesh's victory as they understood they (intellectuals) had made people conscious about the neocolonial rule of the Pakistanis during the independence struggle.

He described a section of intellectuals as "traditional" ones who are conservatives, if not outright reactionaries ... who comprised  
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## Man dies after 'cops pushed him off bridge' Police claim he jumped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A man was killed after being allegedly pushed off a bridge by police personnel in Kushtia's Bheramara upazila on Friday evening.

Rafiqul Islam Dudu, 44, was the owner of a tea stall in Chandipur under Chandgam Union. He was the younger brother of Mostafizur Rahman, general secretary of the union's Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal unit.

Denying the allegation, police said Dudu jumped off the bridge to escape the law enforcers.

Locals and witnesses said a five-member police team led by Bheramara Police Station's Sub-Inspector Salauddeen went to Chandipur around 7:00pm.

Four of them stood near Bridge-4 of the Ganges Kobadak project while the other one went to Dudu's tea stall, which was around 50 metres away.

When Dudu went to the bridge, he got locked in altercation with the cops. At one stage, the policemen started beating him up.

The Daily Star correspondent talked to at least two persons who claimed that they witnessed the incident.

Seeking anonymity, one of them told The Daily Star that he saw a policeman pushed Dudu off the bridge. Then, the team went below the bridge to get Dudu. He was taken to a local health complex.

Contacted, Bheramara Upazila Health  
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## AL leader Siraj 'abducted, freed after payment of ransom'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Misbah Uddin Siraj, former organising secretary of Awami League central committee, was allegedly abducted, assaulted, and then released after payment of ransom early Friday in Sylhet, said sources in his family.

Siraj, a resident of the city's Shamimabagh area, was abducted by a group of men on bikes near Fazil Chistha area when he was going to a relative's house on an auto rickshaw late Thursday night, they said.

They beat him up and took him to an unknown place and later called his family for ransom, according to family members who wished to remain unnamed. They said there were a negotiations between them and the abductors over ransom.

The family members, after negotiations, paid the ransom. Following the payment, Siraj was dropped off in the city's Sagor Dighir Par area around 3:00am on Friday, they said.  
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SELLING LIKE HOT CAKES...A sure sign of winter's arrival is the sight of people of all ages lining up at street vendors for traditional rice cakes. The photo shows customers crowding a roadside cake stall to indulge in these seasonal delicacies fresh off the stove in the capital's Farmgate area yesterday.  
 PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Won't spare anyone, even if it's Prof Yunus Says Sarjis about those who'd betray spirit of the July uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sarjis Alam, general secretary of the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation, yesterday said they would spare no one who would betray the ideals of the July mass uprising.

"From our position, we want to request everyone – police, the army, and the interim government – that we are not power hungry or blind agents of anyone. If we feel that you are betraying the spirit of the mass uprising, we will not spare anyone, even if you are Professor Muhammad Yunus," he said.

He was addressing a programme at Rajshahi Zila Parishad auditorium, organised by the July Shaheed Smriti Foundation to provide financial assistance to families of those killed in  
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