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Questioning settled issues not wise

Says Dr Kamal Hossain on Liberation War; urges unity to end political instability

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Acknowledging the need for constitutional changes, Gono Forum leader Dr Kamal Hossain has said questioning the settled issues of the Liberation War will hinder Bangladesh's progress.

"Amending or updating the constitution to meet public aspirations, as time necessitates, is an ongoing process for the state today," said Dr Kamal, chairman of the committee that drafted the 1972 constitution.

"However, if the achieved and settled Liberation War issues are questioned, it will hinder the establishment of an advancing Bangladesh. It is all of our duty to act responsibly on this matter," he added.

He made these remarks in a statement read out on his behalf at a press conference organised by the Gono Forum yesterday to announce its full central committee and discuss the current political situation.

Dr Kamal said political unity is the only way to end the ongoing political instability in Bangladesh. The foundation of this unity is rooted in the national

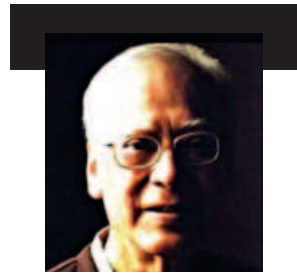


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Bangladesh Railway yesterday conducted a trial run with trains running at full speed -- 120km per hour -- on the Jamuna Railway Bridge from the east end (Bhuapur, Tangail) to the west end (Sirajganj Sadar upazila). The authorities said the bridge would be inaugurated soon if everything goes well with the trial.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL



Economist Prof Anisur Rahman no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Anisur Rahman, economist and member of the country's first Planning Commission formed after independence, died at a hospital in the capital yesterday at the age of 91.

He passed away at around 1:15pm while undergoing treatment for pneumonia at United Hospital, said MM Akash, a former professor of economics at Dhaka University.

"He was our role model," said Prof Akash, a student of Prof Anisur. "He used to tell us that Bangladesh's

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Prabir Mitra passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Legendary actor Prabir Mitra passed away at 10:15pm last night at the capital's Square Hospital. He was 81.

The news of his demise was conveyed to The Daily Star by his son, Sifat Islam.

The veteran actor, whose career spans more than 400 films, had been suffering from multiple health complications.

Battling oxygen deficiency and other ailments, Prabir was admitted to a private hospital on December 22. His health had continued to decline over the past two weeks.

His first namaz-e-janaza will be held today after Zuhr prayers at the premises of Bangladesh Film Development

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Tulip lived in flat gifted by Hasina ally

Reports The Sunday Times

AGENCIES

UK's Treasury Minister Tulip Siddiq, responsible for tackling financial crime, lived in a Hampstead flat gifted to her family by an ally of her aunt Sheikh Hasina, the recently ousted prime minister of Bangladesh, reports UK-based newspaper The Sunday Times.

The development came as Tory MPs renewed the pressure on the MP from Hampstead and Highgate to quit after allegations emerged that she had lied about receiving a London flat as a gift.

The Sunday Times found that Moin Ghani, a Bangladeshi lawyer who represented Hasina's government, transferred the property on Finchley Road to Tulip's younger sister, Azmina, in 2009. Land Registry documents show the transfer was made "not for money or anything that has a monetary value."

Azmina, who was 18 in 2009, sold the flat in 2021 for \$650,000.

Tulip used the property as her address on official documents during her time as a director of the Working Men's College and a trustee of various non-profits between 2012 and 2014. Her husband, Christian Percy, also listed the flat as his address until 2016. By then, Tulip had become the Labour MP for Hampstead & Kilburn, reported The Sunday Times.

Tulip's spokesperson told The Sunday Times that she



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Rokeya univ suspends 56 students

Their links to Abu Sayed killing, attacks on demo cited as reason

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

The authorities of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) yesterday suspended 56 students for various terms over alleged attack on fellow students and involvement in the killing of Abu Sayed during the quota reform protests in July last year.

Additionally, the university also endorsed a recommendation by its disciplinary committee for legal action against 15 former students for their role in the violence.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Shawkat Ali announced the decisions at a press conference after presiding over the 109th syndicate meeting of the BRUR.

Out of the 56 students, 33 were suspended for two semesters, while 23 others for one semester.

VC Shawkat said the

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Six banks send MDs on leave

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six crisis-hit banks are sending their managing directors (MDs) on three-month leave as the central bank commissions forensic audits into the lenders.

The banks are: First Security Islami Bank, Social Islami Bank, Global Islami Bank, Union Bank, Exim Bank and ICB Islamic Bank.

The lenders, except for ICB and Exim Bank, were heavily controlled by S Alam Group, a big beneficiary of the Awami League regime. Exim Bank was led by Md. Nazrul Islam Mazumder, a close ally of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The move to send the MDs on leave came in a meeting yesterday between the Bangladesh Bank and representatives of the six Shariah-based banks at the BB headquarters. BB Governor Ahsan H Mansur presided over the meeting.

The move to send the managing directors on leave came in a meeting between the Bangladesh Bank and representatives of the six Shariah-based banks at the BB headquarters yesterday.

The issue was first discussed in a meeting between the central bank and the board members of the six banks on January 2.

The decision was taken centring the forensic audit that started yesterday, The Daily Star has learnt from BB officials informed with the proceedings.

The forensic audit is being conducted on more than a dozen banks with the help of the Asian Development Bank.

Initially, six banks that are saddled with huge loan irregularities and scams following the 15 years of Awami League rule would be looked into.

Ernst & Young would be conducting forensic audits into Exim,

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EXTORTION CHARGES SC upholds scrapping of 4 cases against Tarique

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday upheld the High Court verdicts that scrapped four extortion cases filed against BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman during the rule of the military-backed caretaker government in 2007.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division led by Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam dismissed four separate leave to appeal petitions filed by the state challenging the HC judgements.

A section of pro-BNP lawyers, including Zainul Abedin, AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, Md Bodruddoza Badal, Kayser Kamal, and Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal, appeared for Tarique while Additional Attorney General Aneek R Haque represented the state during hearing of the petitions.

After the SC passed the orders,

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BGB detains 36 Rohingyas for trespass

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Border Guard Bangladesh yesterday detained 36 Rohingyas, who illegally entered Bangladesh through the Bay of Bengal.

The Rohingyas arrived at the Teknaf shore in Cox's Bazar yesterday afternoon after crossing the Bay of Bengal on a fishing boat, BGB officials said, adding that they are now in custody and will be sent back to Myanmar.

Among the Rohingyas are five women, 10 children and 21 men, they said.

Lt Colonel Ashiqur Rahman, commanding officer of BGB Battalion-2 in Teknaf, said the 36 Rohingyas illegally entered Bangladesh through the Munderdale beach around one kilometre north of the BGB Khurermukh checkpoint around 1:40pm yesterday.

"The process of sending them back is underway."

Mohammad Salim,

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A BGB official stands guard next to 36 Rohingyas, who were detained after illegally entering Bangladesh through the Bay of Bengal yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Broadband tariffs set to drop 20pc

Telecom ministry okays BTRC proposal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The broadband internet tariffs at the consumers' end are set to decline by up to 20 percent after the telecom ministry recently signed off on the internet regulator's proposal to that end.

On December 3 last year, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission sent the proposal to bring down the internet tariff at the end-user level to the telecom ministry for the preapproval, a prerequisite for the commission to approve key decisions, documents show.

"We have sent the proposal to the finance ministry for final approval," Nahid Islam, the adviser for Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology to the interim government, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Approval from the finance ministry is necessary to change tariffs.

Now, a 5Mbps broadband internet connection would cost Tk 400 a month, down from the Tk 500 fixed by the BTRC in 2021.

For 10 Mbps, the rate would be Tk 700, down from Tk 800. For 20 Mbps, the tariff would be Tk 1,100 instead of Tk 1,200.

BTRC Chairman Emdad ul Bari, who assumed the role in September last year, repeatedly emphasised the need to bring down the internet prices. Accordingly, the BTRC began a comprehensive analysis of the entire internet supply ecosystem.

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