

Step up fight against misinformation

CA urges Meta; UN report on July atrocities by mid-Feb

AGENCIES

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus yesterday asked Meta to take steps to tackle the spread of misinformation and fake news through Facebook in Bangladesh.



The chief adviser made the call when he held talks with Sir Nick Clegg, the head of global affairs at Meta, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum annual meeting in the Swiss city of Davos, Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad Majumder told BSS.

Prof Yunus said oligarchs and politicians linked to the ousted government led by Sheikh Hasina siphoned off tens of billions of dollars from Bangladesh during her 15 years of rule.

"These people are now spending their fortune to spread lies and misinformation about Bangladesh," Yunus told Clegg, who is also a former deputy prime minister of England.

Clegg said Facebook would continue to do fact-checking and digital verification in Bangladesh.

During the half-an-hour-long meeting, Clegg also offered Meta's expertise in drafting a new cyber security law. "We have a lot of experience here," he said.

The meeting was one of the over a dozen engagements

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Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman being adorned with the 17th "Colonel of the Regiment" of the traditional East Bengal Regiment in Chattogram Cantonment yesterday.

PHOTO: ISPR

Army chief adorned with 'Colonel of the Regiment' of the Regiment'

BSS, Dhaka

Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman yesterday urged all the members of the armed forces to be ready to face the challenges of 21st century through modern training.

He said this during his visit to Chattogram Cantonment where he was adorned with the 17th "Colonel of the Regiment" of the traditional East Bengal Regiment.

Colonel of the Regiment is a prestigious military position signifying leadership and guardianship over a specific regiment within the army, often with historical significance, said a release of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

On his arrival at the parade ground, the army chief was also given a guard of honour.

We should focus on narrowing the trade gap

Foreign affairs adviser tells event in China

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain, who is now in China on an official visit, yesterday laid emphasis on narrowing trade gap and fostering regional connectivity with China to promote equitable growth.

He made the remark while delivering a keynote address at a seminar titled "Our Shared Vision for Peace, Stability, and Prosperity" in the Shanghai Institute for International Studies in Shanghai, said a foreign ministry press release.

He outlined a forward-looking vision for global peace, and stressed that economic cooperation is a cornerstone for sustainable development and stability.

Reflecting on global challenges, he noted that peace and security are collective responsibilities that demand inclusive economic frameworks and greater emphasis on empowering



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Tk 250cr assets of Salman F Rahman seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Financial Crime Unit of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has seized assets worth Tk 250 crore belonging to Salman F Rahman, adviser to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The CID said the Beximco Group owner laundered money by exporting goods worth \$260,14,984 to his son's Dubai-based company, RR Global Trading FZE, under the names of Apollo Apparels Limited and Kanchpur Apparels Limited through 21 LCs/Sales contracts between 2020-2024.

A money laundering case is under investigation. Following a court order, approximately 2,000 decimals of land in Dhaka's Dohar and structures built on it have been seized. The current market value of these properties is Tk 250 crore.

The Financial Crimes Unit of CID has filed 17 cases against Salman and his associates for laundering \$83 million to various countries.

Worker dies falling from ladder

UNB, Dhaka

A power company worker died after falling from a ladder while setting up an electric line behind the BSMMU hospital in Dhaka yesterday.

The deceased, identified as Zahid, 35, was employed by Moon Power Company. He was from Jamalpur, said Inspector Md Faruk, in charge of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital Police Outpost.

Zahid was rushed to BSMMU hospital, before being transferred to the DMCH emergency department for advanced treatment at 3:20pm. Doctors declared him dead at 4:25pm, the police officer said.

Woman held for arson in Bangshal

UNB, Dhaka

Police yesterday arrested a woman for allegedly setting fire to a shoe factory in the Ganguli Lane area of Dhaka's Bangshal.

The arrestee, identified as Asma Begum, 28, was held while attempting to ignite a shoe factory. She was detained with a gas lighter around 10:30am, police said.

The fire broke out on the balcony of the second-floor room of Sanjid Shoe Factory. The blaze was brought under control by locals and firefighters, said Talebur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of DMP.

"Shortly after the fire, Asma Begum was found attempting to set fire to another factory in the vicinity. She was detained with the help of locals," Talebur said, adding that four of her accomplices managed to flee the scene.

Efforts are underway to arrest the other suspects, he said. A case was filed.

2 held with 10,000 govt textbooks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested two members of a syndicate involved in stockpiling government textbooks.

Speaking at a press briefing at the DMP Media Centre yesterday, Mohammad Nasirul Islam, joint commissioner of DMP (DB-South), said the two were arrested from the Banglabazar area in Sutrapur on Wednesday.

Acting on a tip-off, the DB conducted the raid and seized two trucks carrying 10,000 textbooks meant for free distribution to primary and secondary school students.

The arrestees are Sirajul Islam Ujjal, 55, and Md Delwar Hossain, 56.

The government provides free textbooks to primary and secondary school students at the start of each academic year.

However, a group has been undermining this initiative by illegally hoarding the free textbooks and selling them on the open market, said the joint commissioner.

The Kotwali Zonal Team of Lalbagh DB also conducted raids in several warehouses in Isphani Lane, Banglabazar, Sutrapur, and recovered the textbooks.

The seized textbooks are valued at around Tk 8 lakh.

These books, published by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), were of various subjects meant for students of classes one to nine.

The DB official said they would continue operations to arrest other members of the syndicate.

ACC offices, special courts in all districts

Proposes reform committee

DIPAN NANDY

The Anti-Corruption Commission Reform Commission has proposed a nationwide expansion of the ACC's activities to strengthen the anti-graft body's operations.

In its report submitted to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on January 15, the commission, led by Dr Iftekharuzzaman, recommended establishing ACC offices in every district and setting up special judge courts.

Currently, 36 regional ACC offices operate across 34 districts, with two regional offices each in Dhaka and Chattogram.

The districts without ACC offices include Rajbari, Manikganj, Netrokona, Natore, Chapainawabganj, Sirajganj, Nilphamari, Gaibandha, Satkhira, Narail, Meherpur, Barguna, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, Khagrachhari, Brahmanbaria,

We hope that if these recommendations are implemented, the ACC will become more dynamic.

DR IFTEKHARUZZAMAN
Head of ACC Reform Commission

Bhola, Feni, Bandarban, Shariatpur, Munshiganj, Sherpur, Jhalokati, Lakshmipur, Magura, Chuadanga, Joypurhat, Rangamati, Panchagarh, and Lalmonirhat.

The commission advised establishing

KEY SUGGESTIONS



➤ Form offices in all districts

➤ Special courts in all districts

➤ Avoid delays in probes

➤ Streamline complaint management

district ACC offices in a phased manner, ensuring each office is adequately equipped with the necessary logistical support.

The commission suggested establishing "special judge courts" in all districts with existing ACC offices.

They also proposed establishing such courts as soon as possible in districts where new ACC offices will be set up.

The report also suggested how to streamline complaint management and minimise delays in ACC investigations and inquiries.

To enhance efficiency, the commission recommended that recommendations from district or divisional review committees should not be re-evaluated by the central review committee of the ACC.

Furthermore, it advised granting district or divisional offices the authority to take post-complaint actions in cases involving offenses below a certain threshold, as determined by the ACC.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, also the executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said, "The reform commission has made several recommendations, including forming offices in all districts, to avoid delays in ACC investigations and inquiries and to streamline complaint management."

"We hope that if these recommendations are implemented, the ACC will become more dynamic."

Historic Mass Upsurge Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The historic Mass Upsurge Day will be observed today to commemorate the 1969 movement against the Pakistani military ruler Ayub Khan, which eventually led to the Liberation War and the emergence of Bangladesh.

On this day in 1969, Matiur Rahman Mallik, a grade-IX student of Nabakumar Institution, and Rustam Ali, a rickshaw-puller, were killed in police firing on demonstrators in Dhaka as the Pakistani rulers tried to suppress the uprising. The killings sparked protests that eventually saw the fall of General Ayub Khan.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus issued separate messages marking the day.

The president said the mass upsurge of 1969 has inspired the people in all democratic movements and struggles, including the July-August student-people-led mass uprising in 2024.

The chief adviser said, "The mass upsurge of 1969 against misrule and exploitation still inspires us."

It is responsibility of all, including the government that came into being as a result of the mass uprising of students, workers, and public, to remain respectful of the values of 1969 in building a democratic social system, he said.

Most people lost trust in interim govt: GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Majority of people in the country have lost trust in the current government, said Jatiyo Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday.

He also questioned whether the current government is capable of conducting a credible election.

"Jatiyo Party is being victimised by neo-fascism. Efforts are being made to exclude us from the election. If elections are held excluding political parties that represent the majority of people, no legitimate government can be formed," he said.

He made the remarks while speaking at a views-exchange meeting with Munshiganj district



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WAR CRIMES

Azharul's review petition deferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday deferred the date for hearing of the review petition filed by Jamaat-e-Islami leader ATM Azharul Islam, challenging the verdict that upheld his death sentence in a war crimes case, to February 20.

A full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed was scheduled to hold the hearing.

But the bench passed the deferment order as a judge of the bench is on a leave, advocate Mohammad Shishir, a lawyer for Azharul, told The Daily Star.

Barrister Abdur Razzaq, Barrister Ehsan A Siddiq and Advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir appeared for Azharul at the court.



A boy rides a bike through a road dug up for drainage work in the Janata Housing area of Adabor yesterday. Despite the project running for over a week, there are no proper safety measures or barricades in place, putting pedestrians at risk.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON