

Enjoy Your Golden Years with

**SENIOR CITIZEN PUBALI DEPOSIT SCHEME (SCPDS)**

- ✓ Any Bangladeshi individual aged 59 years and above can open account under this scheme.
- ✓ Attractive Interest Rate / Profit [6 Months FDR rate plus 1% p.a.]



**পূবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি**  
**PUBALI BANK PLC.**

Best Financial Institution  
DHL-The Daily Star Business Awards.

**AAA**  
Rated Bank

**Open your Account from anywhere**

ISO/IEC  
27001:2022

PI Banking-  
a Pubali Bank apps

ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্ণার' পূবালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

Lawyers scuffle during bail hearing of ex-CJ Khairul Haque

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Two groups of Supreme Court lawyers yesterday locked into a scuffle in a courtroom of the High Court centering the hearing of a bail petition of detained former chief justice ABM Khairul Haque in connection with a murder case.

During the incident, some lawyers shouted and asked each other to get out of the courtroom.

The incident created pandemonium in the courtroom of the HC bench of Justice Md Zakir Hossain and Justice KM Rasheduzzaman Raja for around 10 minutes after 3:00pm.

The situation came under control after the HC bench fixed 11:00am on Sunday for hearing of the petition submitted by Khairul Haque on August 7, also seeking a stay on the trial proceedings against him.

Several senior lawyers including MK Rahman, Md Mohsen Rashid, Mohammad Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury, ZI Khan Panna, Qumrul Haque Siddique and Md Motaher Hossain Sazu appeared for SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



Speakers at a seminar titled “Empowering Women Fisherfolk Communities in Bangladesh,” organised by Badabon Sangho at the International Mother Language Institute in Shegun Bagicha, Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Towards a stigma-free, sustainable mental healthcare

SAJIDA Foundation CEO Zahida Fizza Kabir discusses PHWC’s role in reshaping Bangladesh’s mental health landscape in an exclusive interview with *Star*

**JAGARAN CHAKMA**

Inside a modest but modern office in Gulshan, one of Dhaka’s busiest urban enclaves, Zahida Fizza Kabir was speaking with calm demeanour.

“Mental health is not a luxury,” she said. “Rather, it’s a necessity.”

As the chief executive officer of SAJIDA Foundation, one of Bangladesh’s largest non-profits, Kabir is spearheading a quiet but



The aim was to create a credible, self-sustaining model -- one that could be scaled down over time without compromising clinical quality. We’re trying to shift how people think about mental health -- from taboo to tool.

groundbreaking transformation in the country’s mental health landscape.

At the forefront of this effort is Psychological Health and Wellness Care (PHWC), along with a host of other programmes and enterprises.

In a country where therapy is still spoken of in whispers and psychiatric illness is often dismissed as weakness or worse, PHWC has emerged as a rare beacon.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Indigenous rights still ignored despite political shifts

Speakers tell event

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Despite their contribution to the July uprising, the situation of indigenous people in the country remains unchanged, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They noted that neither the interim government acknowledged them as “indigenous” nor observed the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples.

The speakers urged the government to sign the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The discussion, titled “Indigenous Peoples and AI: Defending Rights, Shaping Futures”, was organised by the Bangladesh Indigenous Women Network (BIWN) at the Liberation War Museum auditorium on the occasion of the indigenous peoples’ day.

Presiding over the discussion, BIWN Vice President Lalasa Chakma said, “We thought the new generation who joined the uprising would be progressive, but we have found them rather opposite. We have our own language, culture, food, and traditions, yet we are always deprived of our rights.”

In her keynote paper, BIWN General Secretary Falguni Tripura said indigenous people in Bangladesh have been neglected by the state throughout the British period, the Pakistan era, and even after independence.

“Just as indigenous peoples were ‘betrayed’ after the Liberation War, they were also ‘deceived’ following the July uprising,” she said, noting that persecution, repression, rape of women, killings, and violations of fundamental human rights against them have continued to rise.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Women fishers left in the shadows by gender bias

Says study; speakers urge recognition, support, and policy reforms

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Despite playing a crucial role in sustaining Bangladesh’s fishing communities, nine out of ten female fishers face regular gendered bias and remain largely invisible due to deep-rooted social, structural, and policy barriers, according to a recent study.

Their vital work, ranging from fishing in rivers and canals to net mending and fish drying, is often dismissed as “less important” compared to men’s sea fishing. Frequently labelled as mere “assistants” rather than full-fledged fishers, women are denied the recognition and respect they deserve, the study added.

One of the most pressing hurdles is the difficulty in obtaining National Fisherfolk ID Cards.

An overwhelming 83 percent of women surveyed have yet to receive these essential IDs, effectively cutting them off from government aid programmes such as ration distributions, which disproportionately favour male cardholders.

In the study area, only 1,234 out of 6,695 registered fisherfolk are women, underscoring the gender gap in registration.

Subah Samara, assistant professor of public administration at Jagannath University, shared the findings

**AT A GLANCE**

- Women make up 18% of registered fisherfolk
- 90% women fishers face gender bias
- 83% lack Nat’l Fisherfolk ID Cards
- 57% excluded from safety nets
- 53% never received government support

She highlighted that the lack of fisherfolk ID cards excludes many women from accessing low-interest loans through cooperatives. Instead, most are forced to rely on informal lenders charging exorbitant interest rates of 20 to 30 percent, trapping them in cycles of debt.

The study also revealed that women remain institutionally absent from governance and advocacy platforms, further deepening their invisibility.

Without proper registration, they are excluded from social safety nets, cooperative membership, and leases on state waterbodies, increasing their economic vulnerability.

Additionally, the research highlighted severe health challenges faced by women due to prolonged exposure to saline water -- issues worsened by climate change.

Access to clean water, hygiene products, and healthcare is limited, with local clinics often dismissing women’s symptoms.

Specialised gynaecological services are largely unavailable, and the costs of treatment and

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

yesterday at a policy discussion seminar titled “Empowering Women Fisherfolk Communities in Bangladesh”, organised by Badabon Sangho at the International Mother Language Institute in the capital’s Shegun Bagicha.

CUSTODIAL DEATH OF JONNY HC upholds life term for two former cops

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The High Court yesterday upheld the life imprisonment of two former police officers and reduced another officer’s life term to 10 years imprisonment in a case over the custodial death of Ishtiaque Hossain Jonny, a garment-waste trader from Dhaka’s Mirpur, 11 years ago.

This is the first High Court verdict in a case filed under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013.

The court upheld the life term of Zahidur Rahman, former sub-inspector of Pallabi Police Station, dismissing his appeal against the trial court verdict.

It did not say anything about the life imprisonment of former assistant sub-inspector Qamaruzzaman Mintu, who has been absconding and did not appeal against the trial court verdict, meaning his sentence remains in place.

Both Zahidur and Qamaruzzaman will have to pay Tk 2 lakh each in compensation to Jonny’s family and Tk 1 lakh each as a fine to the state.

Meanwhile, former assistant SI Rashedul Islam’s life sentence was reduced to 10 years in prison. He was ordered to pay Tk 25,000 in compensation to Jonny’s family and

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5



People jump onto a moving train while others wait on the adjacent rail tracks. A serious accident could occur if those boarding fall or if an oncoming train strikes passengers waiting on the tracks. The photo was taken near the Airport Rail Station in Dhaka recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

MALIBAGH HOSPITAL Police probing two mysterious deaths

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Police are investigating the deaths of two men whose bodies were found yesterday inside a car parked in the basement of Sirajul Islam Medical College and Hospital in Dhaka’s Malibagh area.

The victims -- Zakir Hossain, 40, and Mizan, 42, from Gomatoli village in Noakhali’s Chatkhil upazila -- were cousins.

According to Masud Alam, deputy commissioner of Ramna Division Police, officers went to the scene after receiving information and recovered the bodies -- Zakir in the driver’s seat and Mizan in the passenger seat.

It is not yet clear whether the men were murdered, Alam said, adding that CCTV footage and other evidence were being collected. The bodies were sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Police said the white private car entered the hospital parking lot around 5:30am on Sunday.

One person got out of the car at the hospital gate and went away. Since then, the car remained in the parking lot. Police noted that the bodies had already begun decomposing when discovered.

It was later found that the person who got off the car was its owner, Zubair Al Mahmud Sourav, also from Noakhali’s Chatkhil.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1