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POLICE ADMIN Retirements, transfers not politically motivated

Says home minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recent retirements and transfers in the police administration are part of the ministry's routine activities and are not politically motivated, said Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed yesterday.

"All appointments, transfers, promotions, disciplinary measures and retirements are being carried out through legal processes," the minister told reporters after a meeting of the National Committee on Coordination, Management and Order of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals at the Secretariat.

On the issue of forced retirements, the home minister said decisions were taken after scrutiny by an

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Commuters endure severe traffic congestion as underground cable installation work by the Dhaka Power Distribution Company Limited narrows the main road in the capital's Shantinagar area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Simplify project approval to boost investment: PM

Assures support for investors in closed state-owned mills, factories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Tarique Rahman yesterday directed officials to simplify the project approval process to attract both local and foreign investment.



He also assured necessary support for investors interested in government-owned mills and factories that have remained closed for years.

The directives came at a meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office at the Secretariat, according to the PM's Press Wing.

The meeting reviewed the current condition of closed mills and factories under the Ministry of Textiles and Jute and discussed steps to reopen them.

Tarique said the government is committed to creating an investment-friendly environment. "To achieve this goal, the existing complexities in the investment process must be removed," he said.

A senior official present at the meeting said the prime minister also stressed easing access to loans to boost private investment in closed government mills and factories, asking the ministers concerned to take swift and effective steps.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMES TRIBUNAL

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

Witness recounts ordeal in 'torture cell' at ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man detained in 2022 told a tribunal yesterday that he was taken to a windowless, black-walled cell measuring about four feet by four feet, where nails were allegedly fixed into the floor, and an electric chair stood in a corner.

"I slightly removed my blindfold and saw the scene. My heart sank. I realised something terrible was coming," said Md Shafiqul Islam while testifying before International Crimes Tribunal-1 as the fourth prosecution witness in a crimes against humanity case.

Shafiqul, 38, a madrasa principal and imam of a mosque in Purbachal, said interrogators in the room demanded that he confess to links with militant groups.

"When I denied it, they beat me with sticks. They threatened to cut me into pieces and dump my body... I was convinced that my end was near," he said.

"Out of fear, I held an officer's feet and pleaded, 'My child is only two months old. Don't make him an orphan. Beat me as much as you want, but don't kill me,'" Shafiqul said, breaking down in the tribunal.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

CASE AGAINST INU

Defence questions credibility of key witnesses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Defence counsel for Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) president and former minister Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday told the ICT-2 that key prosecution witnesses gave contradictory and unreliable statements that do not match documentary and digital evidence.

Senior advocate Monsurul Haque Chowdhury said three witnesses told the investigation officer on June 17, 18 and 19, 2025, that they had heard an alleged audio conversation between Inu and former prime minister Sheikh Hasina on social media.

However, the defence argued the audio was first circulated on August 17, 2025, through a verified Facebook post of a foreign journalist of Bangladeshi origin.

"So, they lied to the tribunal. The three witnesses were tutored by the investigating officer, and their testimonies are not trustworthy," the defence said.

He said only four of the 10 prosecution witnesses were relevant, while the rest were formal or official witnesses. Another relevant witness made no incriminating statement, he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

2018 AKRAMUL KILLING

Justice finally in sight?

Fresh probe challenges 'gunfight' narrative, implicates 10; charges likely soon at ICT

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

In an unverified audio clip, the sound of a gun being cocked is heard, followed by a gunshot and the groans of a man. On the other end of the line, Teknaf municipality councillor Akramul Haque's wife and two daughters scream, pleading for his life.

For eight years, justice for Akramul has remained trapped in that recording.

Now, as investigators move to submit a long-delayed report to the tribunal in a case once buried under an official "gunfight" narrative, Akramul's family -- who could not even file a complaint with police or the court -- are hoping for justice.

"Since my husband's killing, we tried to file a case but could never do so due to intimidation from Rapid Action Battalion," Akramul's widow Ayesha Begum told The Daily Star yesterday.

After August 5, 2024, authorities contacted her and asked her to file a

complaint with the International Crimes Tribunal over her husband's killing, said Ayesha, who had disclosed the audio clips -- which she claimed to have recorded on her phone -- at a press conference in Cox's Bazar five days after the incident.

Ayesha has long alleged that the killing was premeditated, claiming the Rab planted evidence -- including arms

Since my husband's killing, we tried to file a case but could never do so due to intimidation from Rab.



AYESHA BEGUM, widow of Akramul

and yaba -- to justify it.

The force had denied this at the time, saying Akramul opened fire first and that drugs and arms were recovered, citing his alleged involvement in narcotics.

Rab said Akramul was killed in a gunfight with alleged drug dealers on Teknaf Marine Drive, a claim his family

SEE PAGE 9 COL 2

DRIVE AGAINST DENGUE

DSCC declares first Saturday of month as 'cleaning day'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation Administrator Md Abdus Salam yesterday declared the first Saturday of every month as "cleaning day" to prevent Aedes mosquito-borne dengue and chikungunya and keep the city clean.

The first official cleaning day will be observed on May 9 across DSCC areas.

According to the decisions taken at a Nagar Bhaban meeting, all government offices, residential quarters, educational institutions, areas under Rajuk and Rehab, and privately owned premises will carry out their own cleaning drives and destroy mosquito breeding sites.

Salam said up to 70-80 percent of the problem could be solved if all agencies performed their duties properly.

At least four dengue patients died, while 2,535 were hospitalised this year as of yesterday.

Salam instructed DSCC officials to map high-risk areas across 10 zones and 75 wards.

Md Khalilur Rahman, entomologist of the National Malaria Elimination and Aedes-borne Disease Control Programme at DGHS, said current insecticides remain effective but recommended introducing more advanced larvicides such as BTI for large breeding sites.

CTG BAR POLLS NOMINATION

Pro-AL lawyers allege obstruction

STAR REPORT

Pro-Awami League lawyers yesterday alleged that they were obstructed and assaulted by BNP-backed lawyers while trying to collect nomination papers for the upcoming Chattogram District Bar Association election.

The incident took place at the Bar Library entrance in the Bar Association building around 3:00pm when a group of lawyers, led by Abdur Rashid, a presidential candidate from the pro-AL panel, went to collect nomination forms under the banner of "Sadharan Ainjibi Parishad". They were obstructed by pro-BNP lawyers, the eyewitnesses added.

As tension escalated, members of the Bar election commission shut the library doors. Pro-AL lawyers then protested on the spot.

Fakhruddin Javed, a contender for the general secretary post from the pro-AL panel, said, "We were not allowed to enter the Bar Library while attempting to collect nomination papers." "They did not allow us to contest in the last election either," he added.

Kamrul Islam Chowdhury, member secretary of the Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum's Chattogram unit, said the activities of the AL are banned through order.

"In this situation, there is neither the environment nor the opportunity for AL-affiliated lawyers to participate in the election," he said.

Chief Election Commissioner Advocate Roushan Ara Begum said, "We have provided forms to whoever came to us. No one has lodged any complaint with me."

SEE PAGE 9 COL 4



The Daily Star and btj are set to launch the third edition of the "btj-The Daily Star Stellar Women Awards". An MoU was signed in this regard at The Daily Star Centre yesterday, attended by Md Tajdin Hassan, chief business officer of The Daily Star; Aysha Siddiqua, executive director (brand and communications) at btj; Mashrur Hasan Mim, executive director (marketing) at btj; and Ahaduzzaman Chowdhury, head of digital business at The Daily Star, among others.

PHOTO: STAR

'btj-Star Stellar Women Awards' returns with third edition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star and building technology and ideas (btj) Ltd are set to launch the third edition of the "btj-The Daily Star Stellar Women Awards", continuing their joint initiative to recognise emerging women for their contributions to society and nation-building.

The announcement came following an MoU signing ceremony at The Daily Star Centre, attended by Md Tajdin Hassan, chief business officer of The Daily Star;

Aysha Siddiqua, executive director (brand and communications) at btj; Mashrur Hasan Mim, executive director (marketing) at btj; and Ahaduzzaman Chowdhury, head of digital business at The Daily Star, among others.

Launched in 2023, the Stellar Women initiative aims to honour women making impactful contributions across diverse sectors, particularly those who remain



SEE PAGE 9 COL 3