

USF to confer posthumous doctorates on Limon, Bristy

Bristy's body to reach Dhaka on May 9



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University of South Florida (USF) has decided to award posthumous doctoral degrees to Zamil Ahmed Limon and Nahida Sultana Bristy, the two Bangladeshi PhD students who were brutally killed by Limon's roommate in Florida.

The decision will be formalised during the university's spring convocation on May 8, according to a Facebook post by Golam Mortuza, press minister at the Bangladesh Embassy in the United States.

Citing an official communication
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A local influential group is illegally trading sand after occupying a portion of the Bangshi river in the Nayarhat area of Savar, on the outskirts of Dhaka. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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Dhaka seeks Beijing's support in Teesta project

China FM says Sino-Bangla ties don't target any third party

AGENCIES

Bangladesh yesterday formally sought China's involvement and support in the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project (TRCMRP) as the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening their comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership, reports BSS.

The issue came up during a bilateral meeting between Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, at the Diaoyutai State Guest House in Beijing, according to a joint press release issued after the meeting.

Khalilur travelled to China on a three-day visit at Wang's invitation, marking his first official trip since assuming office. He arrived on May 5.

During the meeting, the two sides held in depth discussions on bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest, reached broad consensus, and reaffirmed their firm commitment to supporting each other's core interests and addressing major concerns.

Family Card to cost Tk 1,34,000cr over four years

Govt plans to include 2cr families

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The social welfare ministry has drawn up an ambitious plan to implement the Family Card programme, a major electoral pledge of the new government, involving an outlay of Tk 1,34,000 crore over four years.

As per the plan, 2 crore families would be brought under the Family Card scheme within four years by surveying 4.1 crore households. To run the programme, the ministry has proposed recruiting 4,061 additional staff and appointing two social workers in each union.

For fiscal 2026-27, the ministry plans to distribute 41 lakh Family Cards and has sought Tk 13,740 crore.

At a meeting chaired by the finance minister on April 28, concerns were raised about distributing 41 lakh Family Cards in the upcoming fiscal year before preparations are complete.

Pilot testing of 35,000 cardholders revealed anomalies of up to 18.1 percent. Beneficiaries of TCB smart cards, the Food-Friendly programme, or the Vulnerable Women Benefit scheme are not eligible for Family Cards, yet some were found among pilot beneficiaries.

Feedback on the social welfare ministry's plan is expected in today's meeting of the cabinet committee on social safety net.

The committee will also decide whether to include five other electoral pledges – monthly honorariums for families of martyrs and the injured in the July uprising, Farmers' Card, allowances for mosque and other religious institution workers, canal excavation, and tree plantation programmes – in social safety net programmes.

However, questions have been raised about whether canal excavation and tree plantation, both development projects, should fall under social security.

Currently, the social security budget covers 95 programmes, of which 39 are identified as pro-poor, benefiting nearly 8 crore people.

About Tk 117,000 crore has been allocated for social net programmes this fiscal year.

Questions remain over whether certain programmes should be included in the safety net budget, with issues such as non-poor beneficiaries and mistargeting persisting.

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New cyber law remains repressive

Say speakers at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recently passed cyber security bill is still a repressive and vague one, and its use to arrest for social media content is a matter of concern, speakers said yesterday.

A sharp divide exists between the legislative intent of the new cyber law and its practical application by law enforcement, paving the way for widespread abuse, they told a discussion on "Cyber Security Legislation, Freedom of Expression, and Platform

government.

During the discussion, Supreme Court lawyer Priya Ahsan Chowdhury criticised the law for retaining vague provisions such as "spreading chaos" and "spreading anxiety", which are subjectively interpreted and frequently abused.

She pointed out that while non-consensual sharing of intimate images is criminalised under the act, police often discourage or refuse to record complaints from female victims, yet eagerly file random defamation cases.

During the discussion, Supreme Court lawyer Priya Ahsan Chowdhury criticised the law for retaining vague provisions such as "spreading chaos" and "spreading anxiety", which are subjectively interpreted and frequently abused.

Governance in Bangladesh".

The programme was jointly organised by Drik, Nagorik Coalition, and Unesco at Gulshan's Lakeshore Hotel.

Nabila Idris, a member of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, said seven people – ranging from a 16-year-old student to a 35-year-old housewife – were picked up across the country in just 29 days over social media posts.

She noted that while the sections of the law might seem fine on paper, their application is highly problematic, with people being arrested merely for making "distasteful remarks".

The cyber security bill was passed by parliament on April 10, adopting an ordinance issued by the interim

Fahim Mashroor, co-coordinator of the Nagorik Coalition, mentioned that the initial draft of the cyber security ordinance was "very draconian", but it was softened to a "less draconian one" following repeated objections from civil society.

However, Rehan Asif Asad, the prime minister's adviser on posts, telecommunications, and information technology, said that despite reviewing the ordinance multiple times, the government passed it in parliament without changing a single word.

Highlighting the country's cybersecurity landscape, the adviser revealed that during the election period, 60 to 70 percent of total online social traffic in Bangladesh is bot-generated,

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Teacher accused of child rape sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrokona

The madrasa teacher accused in a case for raping and impregnating an 11-year-old girl was sent to jail in Madan Upazila yesterday.

Earlier in the day, a Rapid Action Battalion-14 team detained



the accused, Amanullah Mahmudi Sagor, who had been absconding, from Mymensingh's Gouripur.

He was handed over to Madan Police Station in Netrokona in the afternoon. After completing necessary legal procedures, police produced him before the Senior Judicial Magistrate Court in the evening.

The court then rejected his bail petition and ordered that he be sent to jail.

Confirming the matter, Mohammad Tarik Islam, officer-in-charge of Madan Police Station, said, "We have applied for a seven-day remand of the accused. However, the remand

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Urban primary healthcare moves to DGHS

192 facilities to transfer from LGD

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

In a major policy shift, the government has decided to take primary healthcare services in 12 city corporations and 23 municipalities from the Local Government Division and give them to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

While the health ministry is responsible for primary healthcare nationwide, the LGD has been providing the services in the city corporations and the municipalities under the Urban Primary Healthcare Services Delivery Project (UPHCSDP) since 1998.

One of the major challenges in our health service delivery, particularly in urban health, has been governance. The health ministry oversees almost everything except urban health. Bringing this under the ministry would improve coordination and implementation."

Aminul Hasan, member secretary of the UHC Forum

The project was initiated to improve the delivery structure of essential primary healthcare services for urban residents, particularly women, newborns, and children, and to ensure access for the poor.

In a meeting on April 22, the Cabinet Division decided to transfer 192 urban primary healthcare centres under the areas to the health department to enhance coordination and service delivery, according to official documents.

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