



The Daily Star SECOND EDITION



BUET STUDENT ABRAR MURDER VERDICT

20 students get death

5 others sentenced to life term; all convicts are BCL men

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER, TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI



Twenty Buet students were sentenced to death yesterday for their direct involvement in the murder of a fellow student in a dorm room, an incident that shocked the nation two years ago.

The Dhaka court also sentenced five other Buet students to life imprisonment for their role in the grisly murder of Abar Fahad Rabbi, who was a second year student of the country's premier engineering university.

The five students are also fined Tk 50,000 each, defaulting which would mean one more year in prison. Life imprisonment means 30 years in jail.

Twelve of the convicts were members

of Buet Chhatra League, the student wing of ruling Awami League, while the rest were their followers. Twenty-two of the convicts are in jail and three are on the run.

Abar was a student of electrical and electronics engineering. The convicts began torturing him with skipping ropes and cricket stumps inside a room of Sher-e-Bangla Hall on the night of October 6, 2019. They kept beating him up until early morning even though the 21-year-old threw up, urinated, and pleaded for water.

His battered body was found by several students under the staircase of the dormitory early in the morning. The killing sparked widespread student demonstrations on campuses and other places for justice and

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PHOTO: PRABER DAS

GESTURE OF VICTORY, FACE OF LOSS... Barkat Ullah, father of slain Buet student Abar Fahad, shows the V sign after a Dhaka court delivered the verdict over the murder of his son.



This must not happen to any other child

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

The parents of slain Buet student Abar Fahad said they do not want to see anyone else being killed by fellow students on university campuses like their son was.

They demanded the quick execution of the verdict that sentenced 20 Buet students to death and five others to life imprisonment for killing Abar.

"I am primarily satisfied, but I will be fully satisfied when the verdict will be upheld and executed by the higher courts," Abar's father Barkat Ullah said in a prompt reaction on the court premises.

"Then Abar's soul will be at peace." Barkat came to Dhaka all the way from Kushtia with some relatives to witness the

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HORROR IN ROOM 2011

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

October 6 evening, 2019.

Abar Fahad, a second-year student of electrical and electronic engineering (EEE) department, was studying mathematics inside his room at Buet's Sher-e-Bangla Hall.

He had come back from his home in Kushtia a couple of hours ago and

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Strong message to offenders

Teachers call for end to criminality in the name of student politics

STAR REPORT

The Daily Star talked to several current and former university teachers after a Dhaka court yesterday convicted 25 Buet students, who were also involved with the Chhatra League, for killing their peer Abar Fahad in October 2019.

The teachers observed that the tragic incident of Abar murder is the outcome of the descent into criminality of student politics, which apparently

controls most educational institutions in the country. They also blamed mainstream political parties and even teacher politics for the situation.

ANU MUHAMMAD

Professor Anu Muhammad said both Abar and his killers are victims of corrupt politics on campuses over the years.

"They were all brilliant students... national assets. But when one is killed by others, it becomes

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

TRIAL AT A GLANCE

Murder took place

OCTOBER 7, 2019

Charge sheet filed

NOVEMBER 13, 2019

Charges framed

SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

Convicted 25

(22 in jail, 3 fugitive)

Khaleda Zia again starts bleeding

Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khaleda Zia, now undergoing treatment at the Critical Care Unit of the capital's Evercare Hospital, has started passing blood again, the BNP said yesterday.

"Her condition has become critical. She is bleeding again. There is no technology in the country that can treat liver cirrhosis completely," Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party, said at a programme.

Addressing a human chain in front of the National Press Club, organised by Shikkhok-Karmachari Oikya Jote demanding that Khaleda be allowed to go abroad for treatment, Fakhrul said the BNP chairperson did not get (any medical) treatment

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Inequality rising

1pc of country's population holds 16.3pc of national income

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and ASIFUR RAHMAN

Just 1 percent of Bangladesh's population holds 16.3 percent of the total national income in 2021 and the bottom half 17.1 percent, according to a report -- making it a quintessence of poor and unequal country.

The report, titled 'World Inequality Report 2022', by the World Inequality Lab of Paris did not give any ranking to Bangladesh.

Seeing that neighbouring India -- where 20 percent of the national income is held by the top 1 percent -- topped the list, Bangladesh would rank quite high.

The latest update of the index, published on December 7, showed 44 percent of Bangladesh's total national income is held by only 10 percent of the population.

The figures did not change much from the previous year but showed how income inequality has been rising since the 1980s. In 1981, the share of pre-tax national income of 1 percent of people was 11.8 percent while the bottom 50 percent held 20 percent wealth.

The scenario has been stable in recent years but the number of poor is increasing day by day and also the number of rich, according to economists.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Hasina 43rd on Forbes' most powerful women list

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been ranked 43rd on Forbes' list of the most powerful women in the world.

MacKenzie Scott, Kamala Harris and Christine Lagarde have been ranked first, second and third respectively.

Queen Elizabeth II is ranked 70th.

The American business magazine says Sheikh Hasina Wazed, the longest-serving prime minister in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Ray of hope in eye healthcare

National survey finds rate of blindness declines 35pc over two decades

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The rate of blindness in Bangladesh has dropped by 35 percent over the last two decades, finds a national survey.

Although the rate of blindness has fallen, 19 percent of the population aged 30 and above still suffers from different types of visual impairment. The global rate of such cases are 30 percent, it said.

The study titled 'Nationwide Blindness Survey 2020' also found that more than 80 percent of the blindness cases are avoidable with timely intervention.

Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB), with technical and financial support from the National Eye Care, conducted the survey aimed at finding the prevalence of blindness and visual impairment among the population aged 30 and above and their causes.

Data was collected between November 2020 and January 2021 from 18,810 participants from both urban and rural areas of all 64 districts.

The survey results will be made public today.

- One in every 100 adults aged 30 years or older suffers from blindness in Bangladesh
19% adults suffer from any degree of visual impairment
More than 80% of the blind cases are avoidable with timely intervention
Cataracts are the primary cause and are responsible for 81% of severe visual impairment

According to the report, the prevalence of blindness from cataract was one percent which equates to 534,000 people.

A nationwide survey on blindness conducted in 1999-2000 had found the prevalence of blindness to be 1.53 percent, with a total of 650,000 blindness cases from cataract.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

HELICOPTER CRASH IN INDIA

Defence chief, wife among 13 killed



NEW GERMAN ERA Scholz takes reins from Merkel

AFP, Berlin

Olaf Scholz became Germany's new chancellor yesterday after 16 years with Angela Merkel at the helm, pledging his centre-left coalition would offer a "new beginning" for Europe's top economy.

Scholz was officially named the country's ninth post-war leader by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who urged him to "ensure that the pandemic does not keep

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

AGENCIES

India's Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin C Rawat, his wife Madhulika and 11 other people were killed yesterday when an Air Force helicopter carrying them crashed on a forested hill enveloped in dense fog in Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu.

"With deep regret, it has now been ascertained that Gen Bipin Rawat, Mrs Madhulika Rawat and 11 other persons on board have died in the unfortunate accident," the Indian Air Force said in a post on its official Twitter handle.

The Mi-VH17 helicopter crashed in Katteri-Nanchappanchathram area near the hilly Nilgiris district and went up in flames.

There were 14 people on board the helicopter, including two senior army officers and his other personal staff. Only one male, a captain working at the DSSC, survived the crash, Nilgiris District Collector SP Amrith said. He was being treated for his injuries at a nearby military hospital.



GEN BIPIN RAWAT

The chopper was on its way from Sullur airbase in Coimbatore to National Staff College in nearby Wellington where Rawat, along with Indian army chief Manoj Mukund Naravane, was slated to participate in an event later, the sources said.

The chopper was already making its descent at the time of the crash and

came down around 10 kilometres (six miles) from the nearest main road, forcing emergency workers to trek to the accident site, a fire official told AFP.

An eyewitness at the scene said he had seen passengers falling from the helicopter before the crash, and that one person had crawled out from the wreckage.

The IAF said a Court of Inquiry has been ordered into the accident, involving the chopper that took off from the Sullur IAF Station in nearby Coimbatore.

TV visuals showed the mangled chopper in flames, possibly under the impact of the crash. The helicopter fell at some distance away from a human habitation.

The remains of the ill-fated IAF chopper were strewn along the crash site and rescue personnel were seen carrying bodies in stretchers to waiting ambulances.

It was a horrific scene at the accident site with trees being reduced

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Congratulations Engineer Abdus Sobhan... AUKO-TEX GROUP www.auko-texgroup.com

MYANMAR MILITARY-BACKED BUSINESSES

Meta to ban all firms from its platforms

AFP, Bangkok

Facebook parent Meta will ban all pages and accounts belonging to Myanmar military-backed businesses, it said, expanding its restraints on the country's armed forces.

Myanmar's secretive military has extensive business interests, with tentacles in industries as diverse as beer, tobacco, transportation, textiles, tourism and banking.

Activists and rights groups say they funded crackdowns and abuses even before the February coup that ousted Aung San Suu Kyi and launched a bloody crackdown on dissent.

In late February Facebook removed all accounts linked to the military, also known as the Tatmadaw, citing the junta's use of deadly force against anti-coup demonstrators.

It also banned military-linked firms from advertising on its platforms.

Meta "will now also remove Pages, Groups and Accounts representing military-controlled businesses", it said in a statement on Tuesday.

The decision was "based on extensive documentation by the international community of these businesses' direct role in funding the Tatmadaw's ongoing violence and human rights abuses in Myanmar", it said.

It would use the report from a 2019 UN fact-finding mission into the military's economic interests "as the basis" for its actions, it added.

The pages of Myawaddy Trading Ltd, Myawaddy Bank and Myanma Beer -- all included in the 2019 report -- were inaccessible as of yesterday.

A page for a film production company allegedly run by the daughter of junta chief Min Aung Hlaing was also blocked.



Newly elected German Chancellor Olaf Scholz receives applause during a session of the German lower house of parliament Bundestag to elect a new chancellor, in Berlin, Germany yesterday. Inset, outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel arrives for the session of the German lower house of the parliament Bundestag in Berlin.

PHOTO: REUTERS

MORE NEWS

UK, Australia join US diplomatic boycott of Beijing Olympics

Australia and Britain will join the United States in a diplomatic boycott of the Winter Olympic Games in Beijing, their prime ministers said yesterday, as other allies weighed similar moves to protest at China's human rights record in Xinjiang. The United States has said its government officials would boycott February's Beijing Olympics because of China's human rights "atrocities", just weeks after talks aimed at easing tense relations between the world's two largest economies.

KSA rejects French claim of Khashoggi suspect arrest

French authorities were yesterday seeking to confirm the identity of a man arrested on suspicion of playing a key role in the 2018 murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi after Saudi Arabia insisted the suspect was a victim of mistaken identity. The man, bearing a passport in the name of Khaled Alotaibi was arrested by French border police at Paris's main airport on Tuesday as he prepared to board a flight to Riyadh, police and judicial sources said.



US hits Iran with new sanctions for rights abuses

The United States slapped fresh sanctions on a dozen Iranian officials and entities for "serious" human rights abuses Tuesday, ahead of the expected resumption of nuclear talks with Tehran after they halted last week without any concrete progress. The sanctions announced by the Treasury and State Department targeted government officials and organizations involved in the repression of protesters and political activists, and prisons where activists have been held in brutal conditions.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Omicron spreads to 57 nations

WHO warns hospitalisations set to rise, says existing vaccines should work against the new Covid variant

AGENCIES

The Omicron variant has been reported in 57 nations and the number of patients needing hospitalisation is likely to rise as it spreads, the World Health Organization said yesterday.

The WHO, in its weekly epidemiological report, said more data was needed to assess the severity of disease caused by the Omicron variant and whether its mutations might reduce protection from vaccine-derived immunity.

"Even if the severity is equal or potentially even lower than for Delta variant, it is expected that hospitalisations will increase if more people become infected and that there will be a time lag between an increase in the incidence of cases and an increase in the incidence of deaths," it said.

On November 26, the WHO



declared the Omicron variant, which was first detected in southern Africa, a variant of concern. It is the fifth SARS-CoV-2 strain to carry such a designation, reports Reuters.

The number of reported Covid-19 cases in South Africa doubled in the week to December 5 to more than 62,000 and "very large" increases in incidence have been seen in Eswatini, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia and Lesotho, it said.

The spread of Omicron, coupled with enhanced testing and low vaccination rates may have played a role, it added.

Referring to the risk of reinfection, the WHO said: "Preliminary analysis suggests that the mutations present in the Omicron variant may reduce neutralising activity of antibodies resulting in reduced protection from natural immunity."

Meanwhile, WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan said in an interview on Tuesday: "We have highly effective vaccines that have proved effective against all the variants so far, in terms of severe disease and hospitalisation... There's no reason to expect that it wouldn't be so" for Omicron.

However, Ryan acknowledged that it was possible that existing vaccines might prove less effective against Omicron.

India among top nations in inequality: report

NDTV ONLINE

India stands out as a "poor and very unequal" country, with the top 1 percent of the population holding more than one-fifth of the total national income in 2021 and the bottom half just 13 per cent, according to a report.

The report, titled "World Inequality Report 2022", has been authored by Lucas Chancel, co-director of the World Inequality Lab, and coordinated by several experts, including French economist Thomas Piketty.

It further said India is now among the most unequal countries in the world.

The report pointed out that the average national income of the Indian adult population is Rs 204,200. While the bottom 50 percent earns Rs 53,610, the top 10 percent earns more than 20 times (Rs 1,166,520).

"While the top 10 percent and top 1 percent hold respectively 57 percent and 22 percent of total national income, the bottom 50 percent share has gone down to 13 percent.

"India stands out as a poor and very unequal country, with an affluent elite," it said.

According to the report, average household wealth in India stands at Rs 9,83,010. It observed that the deregulation and liberalisation policies implemented since the mid-1980s have led to "one of the most extreme increases in income and wealth inequality observed in the world". It also said gender inequalities in India are very high.

"The female labor income share is equal to 18 percent. This is significantly lower than the average in Asia," the report said.



Israeli security forces arrest a young woman from a school in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, yesterday, following a reported stabbing attack.

PHOTO: AFP



DECEMBER 9

1961 - Tanganyika became independent within the Commonwealth, with Julius Nyerere as PM; the following year it became a republic. 1987 - The first riots of the intifada, or Palestinian uprising, erupted on the Gaza Strip. 2016 - South Korea's President Park impeached in parliamentary vote.

SOURCE: REUTERS

Biden-Putin talks 'positive'

Says Ukraine amid military buildup on border

AGENCIES

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that a video call between US President Joe Biden and Russian leader Vladimir Putin was "positive".

"I think it is positive that the president of the United States spoke with the president of Russia," Zelensky said, a day after Biden warned Putin of "strong" Western economic retaliation for any Russian attack on ex-Soviet Ukraine.

Speaking at a news conference, Zelensky also hoped that Ukraine and Russia could agree a new ceasefire and prisoner exchanges when their representatives held talks on the conflict in Ukraine's easterly Donbass region yesterday.

"In general, I think it is positive that the president of the United States spoke with the president of the Russian Federation," Zelensky said.

"The most important thing that we see now is that there is a personal real reaction

and personal role of President Biden in resolving this conflict, the war in the east of our state."

Meanwhile, British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss warned yesterday it would be "a strategic mistake" by Moscow to invade Ukraine, amid concern at a Russian troop build-up on the border.

The message, delivered during a wide-ranging speech and question-and-answer session in London, follows similar warnings from Western capitals as tensions on the Ukrainian frontier. Moscow has deployed up to 100,000 troops there in recent weeks, sparking fears of a major war in eastern Europe, reports AFP.

On Tuesday, President Joe Biden warned Russian President Vladimir Putin in a video link call of "strong" Western economic blowback against any attack on Ukraine.

The Kremlin leader demanded guarantees that the Nato alliance keep clear of Russia.

ATTACK IN NIGERIA

23 people burn to death

AFP, Abuja

Gunmen in Nigeria attacked a bus in the country's northwestern Sokoto state, causing a fire that killed 23 people, police and the governor's spokesman said yesterday.

It was unclear why the bus was attacked but heavily armed criminals, known locally as bandits, have for years terrorised northwest and central states in Africa's most populous nation.

"23 people lost their lives," said the governor's spokesman Muhammad Bello.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Chattogram City Corporation. Tiger Pass, Chattogram. www.ccc.gov.bd. Tender Notice-CCC/ADP-1230Cr./2021-22. This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

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FEATURE

The comfort of books amidst wedding lights

Reflections and recommendations for this wedding season's brides and grooms-to-be

ISHRAT JAHAN

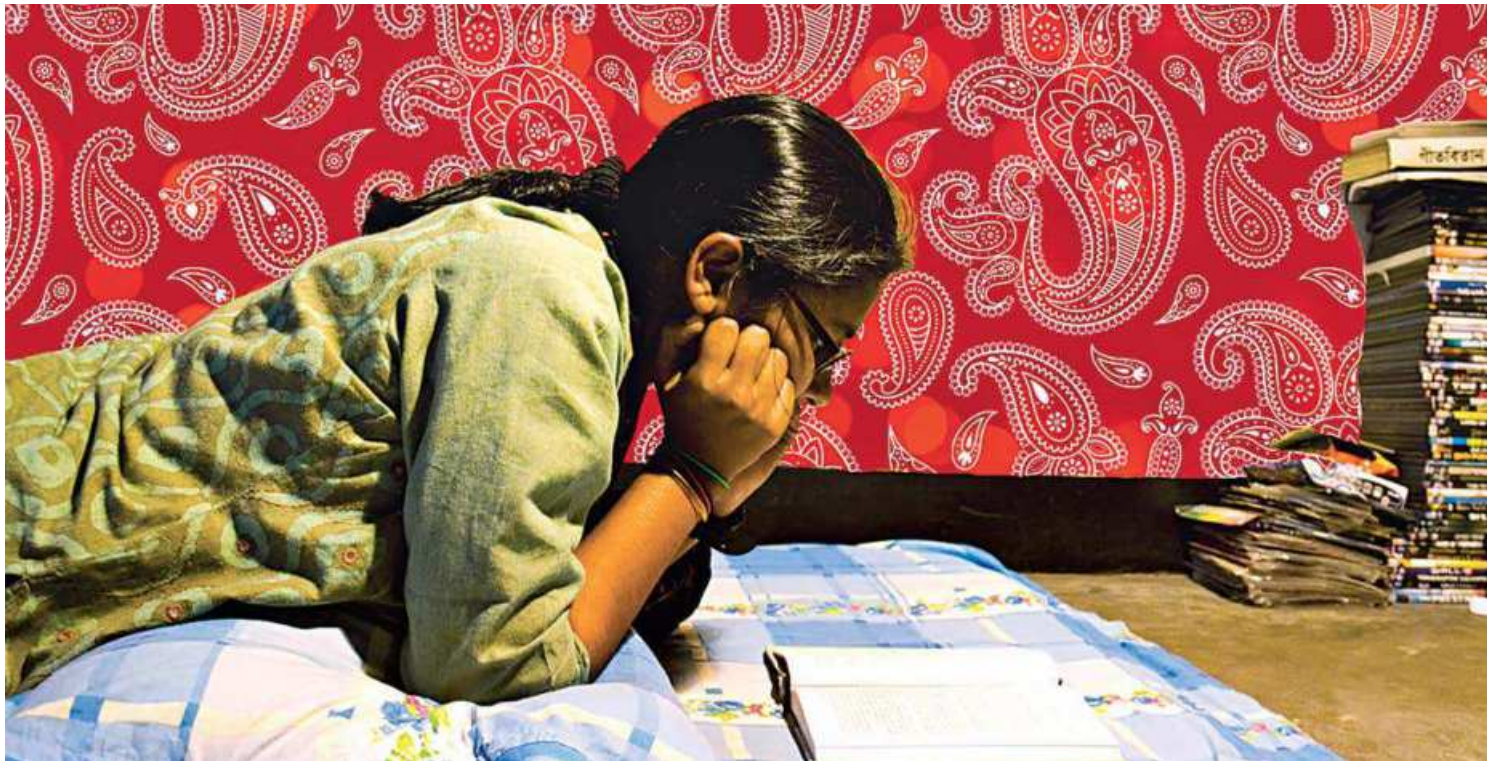
It is December again and as evenings set in, Dhaka becomes brighter than it has been in the past few months. At every alternate street, fairy lights glitter and lanterns float against a dark night—the wedding season is here. Yet, admiring the lights from a distance and being in their midst, in the eye of the storm, are two different worlds. We reached out to the local book-reading community on social media to ask brides and grooms-to-be (of the past and present) how books provided them with comfort and insight while confronting such a major change.

Inhabiting this role often comes with the mental and physical strain of planning a wedding—from deciding the colour of the tiniest cufflinks to overseeing guest lists and venue decorations. Doito Bonotulshi, 27, who is currently in the midst of organising her upcoming wedding events, finds herself reading her childhood favourites on her commutes to shopping malls. “I have been reading Humayun Ahmed and at times Jafar Iqbal because of the ease of language and flow of writing. The characters seem like people I know in real life.”

It is while standing at this exciting turning point that many find themselves unpacking what goes into a marriage. Even in the midst of the chores and chaos, there is a need for introspection.

“More importantly”, she adds, “I always know where the story is heading, even if I don’t remember the exact endings after all these years. So, there is a sense of comfort and control to be found.”

The looming presence of “what if something goes wrong?” waits at the turn of every shopping trip and venue tour, especially amidst



COLLAGE: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

the ongoing pandemic. But with the help of friends, families, and books, there is a sense of relief and happiness to be found when things come together eventually.

Beyond the pressures of organising, one also stands at the precipice of personal changes that will impact all aspects of their lives—from sharing their space with another person everyday, to learning about a new family’s habits and dynamics. Wahida Mashrura, a Bangladeshi marketing and business professional living in New York who got married in 2018, shares the books that she would seek out at the time: *The Blue Castle* (1926) and *Anne’s House of Dreams* (1917) by Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Good Wives* (first published in 1869) by Louisa May Alcott, and

Golpo Guccho by Rabindranath Tagore.

“*Golpo Guccho* is one of my favorite books”, Mashrura shares, recalling with particular fondness short stories like “Hoiomonti”, “Megh o Roudro”, and “Moddhobortini” among others. “For me, the stories reflect how humans and their motivations interact, and it shaped my expectations and tolerance for other people’s perspectives. Marriage brings new people into our lives and as a general rule, accepting that people are different, helps”, she adds.

It is while standing at this exciting turning point that many find themselves unpacking what goes into a marriage. Even in the midst of the chores and chaos, there is a need for introspection. Upoma Rashid, 28, a development professional based in Dhaka who

shared the knot earlier this year during lockdown, shared her experience in searching for more practical advice from books.

“My then fiancé/now husband and I have completely different personalities. I was looking for assurance that despite having so little in common, it’s possible to build a wonderful life together. A bit of browsing directed me towards books by co-writers, John M Gottman and Nan Silver, and I picked up *What Makes Love Last?* (2012). Despite dealing with a topic that can get overwhelming and which has so many factors to account for—because no two relationships are the same—it felt easy to read, provided insights on issues of communication, intimacy, etc.”

Upoma’s reflection points out the

importance of not only remembering to focus on our relationships but also to carve out time to understand, to navigate the changes and challenges of a relationship that is transitioning—be it a love or an arranged marriage.

Getting married comes with a burden of intense social scrutiny—the choices and decisions of a bride and groom-to-be are rarely their own. Looking back at my own experience of getting married, I remember reaching out to books when I felt exhausted by the social expectations of acting and looking like the “perfect” bride. I found myself reaching out for poetry anthologies; I knew that in between verses I would find that inexplicable sense of hope and love, which had led me and my partner to marriage in the first place. Chris Riddell’s illustrated anthology, *Poems to Fall in Love With* (Pan Macmillan, 2019), is one such varied set of poems. It talks about the universal experiences of love, a collection where classic Shakespearean verses sit along with modern ones.

So in the spirit of reaching out for comfort at a time when life visibly rearranges and changes around us, I leave you, dear readers, with a verse. I hope you find joy both in between these lines and in between the celebrations and bittersweet change:

Because there are things you cannot know before you experience them.

Because no study can prepare you for the joys or the trials.

Because nobody else’s love, nobody else’s marriage, is like yours, and it’s a road you can only learn by walking it, a dance you cannot be taught, a song that did not exist before you began, together, to sing.

- *All I Know about Love*, Neil Gaiman

Ishrat Jahan is an early stage researcher who writes in her free time. You can follow her on Twitter @jahani620.

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

Neutrality is an illusion in Katie Kitamura’s ‘Intimacies’

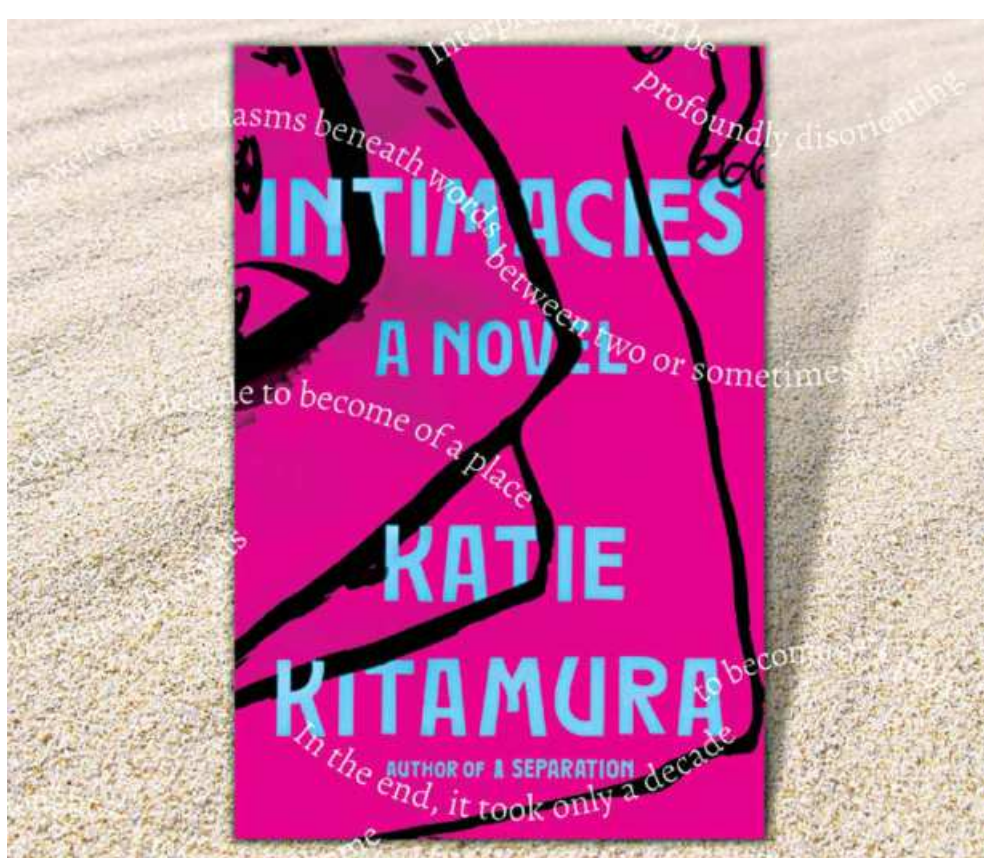
JAHIN KAISSAR

Katie Kitamura’s latest novel, *Intimacies* (Riverhead Books, 2021), is a stunning follow-up to its critically acclaimed predecessor, *A Separation* (2017). In *Intimacies*, Kitamura, once again, shows herself to be psychologically astute, focusing on the moral quandaries that arise from the intimate and intricate relationships that one might have with language, with other people, and with one’s own emotions.

In the wake of her father’s death, the unnamed narrator moves from New York to The Hague, where she takes up a year-long contract as an interpreter for the International Court. Soon after arriving in her new city, she is forced to navigate a series of disquieting situations in her personal and professional life. For instance, she finds out that her Dutch boyfriend, Adriaan, is married. Weeks pass with no words from him once Adriaan departs for Lisbon to divorce his estranged wife. In his absence, the narrator displays quiet interest in the truth behind the violence inflicted upon a newfound friend’s brother, a victim of a brutal street crime. Meanwhile, her professional responsibilities become more demanding and emotionally draining. She is assigned to a high-profile case that requires her to interpret for a former West African president who stands accused of ethnic cleansing and other war crimes.

Kitamura’s main thematic concerns are the power of language and the complexity of interpretation. When the narrator translates in court for a witness testifying about the former president’s war crimes, there is a slippage, a shift in perspective—her “I” merges with the “I” of the witness. In this crucial moment, the act of interpretation becomes achingly intimate, causing the narrator to ponder the moral implications of channeling the voice of someone else. Kitamura also depicts moments outside of the courtroom—at an art gallery, a small dinner party, or a business lunch—when the narrator is forced to interpret the words, demeanour, and intentions of others. Although the narrator’s ability to interpret is her strength, it can prove pernicious, especially when she starts spiraling.

Other themes go hand in hand with the act of interpretation: neutrality and complicity. As a conduit for language, the narrator is required to be neutral. However, over the course of the novel, she realises that neutrality is an



COLLAGE: MAISHA SYEDA

illusion. In a flyer that she receives from a demonstrator, she reads: “This was the true face of neocolonialism, this apparatus of Western imperialism, this Court.” Kitamura thus sheds light on the hypocrisy of the Court and raises profound questions: why is a western judiciary meddling in the affairs of an African country? How can the narrator be neutral if she is working for a biased institution? As a person who works for the Court and as a person from “a country that has committed terrible crimes and atrocities,” is the narrator herself complicit?

The most intriguing aspect of *Intimacies* is the way in which the role of the interpreter is foisted not only upon the narrator but also upon the reader. In describing her job, the narrator states: “Interpretation was a matter of great subtlety, a word with many contexts, for example it is often said that an actor interprets a role, or a musician a piece of music.” Interpretation, then, is not a mechanical, word-by-word translation. It is less a linear process

and more a circuitous journey, made difficult by false turns and dead ends. The tricky nature of interpretation is reflected in the style of Kitamura’s prose: intimate yet distant; subtle yet powerful; sparse and digestible, yet full of insightful observations. Moreover, her deliberate defiance of grammatical conventions—the prolific use of commas and the absence of quotation marks for dialogues—turns reading itself into an interpretive act.

Despite being beautifully written and emotionally searing, *Intimacies* falls into a pit common to slim novels. Kitamura makes subtle and thought-provoking comments on infidelity, gentrification, violence; but many of these ideas remain under-explored.

The novel is, nonetheless, nothing short of a masterpiece. Within a relatively short page count, Kitamura writes an engrossing tale that is interpretive, interior, and intimate.

Jahin Kaiissar is a contributor. Reach her at jahinkaiissar@gmail.com.

BOOK NEWS

National award winner Kajol Ibrahim launches her memoir

MAISHA SYEDA

In an intimate ceremony held at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on December 4, national award-winning dancer, choreographer, and stage performer Kajol Ibrahim launched her memoir, *Nritte Gantha Kotha Mala*, published by Ramon Publishers.

The audience included chief guest, museologist and former Director General of the Bangladesh National Museum, Dr Enamul Haque; and special guests, critic, writer and academic, Dr Syed Manzoorul Islam, and Bangladeshi actor, director, singer, composer, and cultural organiser, Liaquat Ali Lucky, who is the Director General of Shilpakala Academy at present.

The event, organised by Nrityanchal Dance Company in the Studio Theater Hall, commenced and ended with dance performances by young artists, choreographed by Kajol Ibrahim herself. The programme included introductory speeches from co-directors of the school, dancers and choreographers, Shibli Mohammad and Shamim Ara Nipa.

Kajol Ibrahim’s mother, Badrunnessa Abdullah, along with her family were invited to the stage to inaugurate the ceremony. Remembering Kajol’s childhood, Badrunnessa Abdullah amusingly recalled that she had never really seen her daughter hold a pen growing up, so the authoring of the book came as a pleasant surprise.

“It’s not just a memoir, it has become a narrative of her life in the performing

Kantha Math”, a Bangla verse narrative written by poet Jasimuddin; being casted as the lead in a performance with her mentor; working in later years with her co-dancers; memories with her parents; and the picture of Old Dhaka as she knew it.

She is especially grateful to Shamim Ara Nipa, who made sure she remained connected with the world of dancing, as well as her brother and younger daughter, who guided her through the writing process, and the editors who helped compile the manuscript. The author’s only requirement from the editorial process was that her language remain true to her personal style. For her readers and an upcoming generation of dancers, Ibrahim hopes the book will reveal how the government in those days played a vital role in honing the talents of young performers.

At the book launch, Dr Enamul Haque recalled Kajol Ibrahim’s unparalleled contribution to the field of theater throughout the years. “The talent that Kajol has should be utilised by schools and institutions; they need to recruit her in order to educate the next generation of dancers, by exploiting her knowledge”, he said. “It will be a tremendous loss to the performing arts if we are not able to preserve such talent.”

Highlighting his role as an audience member of stage performance, Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam said, “A tradition is created in the future generations of artists commemorating their predecessors. By navigating the harsh tides of our tradition and dedicating ourselves to our art completely, we are able to uphold this tradition and pay the utmost respect to our teachers.”

By representing her life through pictures in her book, Kajol Ibrahim is able to show us her struggles and leave a legacy for the upcoming artists, Professor Islam pointed out.

Distribution rights to the book have not yet been shared. Readers can purchase copies by getting in touch with Kajol Ibrahim personally or through Facebook messenger.

Maisha Syeda is a writer, painter, and a graduate of English Literature and Writing. She is an intern at Daily Star Books.



PHOTO: MAISHA SYEDA

arts”, she said. “I would like to extend my gratitude to all the notable artists, performers, and literary figures present here today who have inspired my daughter”.

The memoir, Kajol Ibrahim tells Daily Star Books, is a snapshot of her life—her first self-composed performance, at the age of 14, to the dramatisation of “Nakshi

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA THURSDAY DECEMBER 9, 2021, AGRAHAYAN 24, 1428 BS

Accident, negligence or murder?

CCC cannot avoid responsibility for deaths from open drains

THE open drains of Chattogram have taken lives before, and this time around, a 12-year-old boy fell in a drain on Monday and disappeared. Fire service personnel are conducting an operation to recover the body of the missing boy. The photograph of the mournful father holding the mug-shot of his missing son that appeared on the front page of this daily is a poignant one, indeed. Ironically, the boy fell in the same drain which had devoured 55-year-old Saleh Ahmed, a vegetable trader, on August 25 this year. And only a month later, on September 28, 19-year-old university student Sehryn Mahbub Sadia met with the same fate. Even earlier, in the month of June, a CNG-run autorickshaw fell in one such drain and the driver died along with a passenger.

The open drains have turned into veritable death traps for the citizens of the port city, and these unfortunate deaths, occurring in quick succession, seem to have failed to stir the conscience of the people responsible for keeping the drains covered anticipating such accidents. These wide and deep drains have been constructed very close to the roads and during heavy rains it becomes difficult to guess where the drains are located. Rescue operations by the fire service department personnel cannot run smoothly because of the filth and sludge in the drain-water.

The main mantra of any construction project is "safety first", but we hardly notice people responsible for the maintenance of safety implementing the slogan as diligently as they should. Following the accidents involving the open drains, citizens have demanded that these be covered with durable slabs. But, no perceptible action has been taken so far to prevent such tragedies. One town planner, almost echoing our concern, told the correspondent of this daily that drains in the city have been left open and accidents are happening because of the sheer negligence of the authorities. He further said that the Chattogram City Corporation cannot avoid responsibility for these accidents. We cannot but agree with him that you need not be an engineer to sense it. Just common sense is enough to understand that leaving drains open may cause accidents.

We notice the same old tendency of passing the buck here as well. When contacted, the CCC mayor, instead of taking responsibility, said the drain in question could not be covered up as the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) has been working on it as part of a mega project to address waterlogging. The mayor has no idea when CDA would hand over the drain to them.

The whole episode smacks of negligence and apathy towards human suffering and human life. It is criminal in nature and needs to be investigated by the government so that no more lives are lost in avoidable accidents.

Weak institutions lead to bad governance

50 years on, why are we yet to develop strong and independent institutions?

DESPITE racking up impressive GDP growth numbers over the years, Bangladesh's failure to establish effective institutions and institutional capacity is very disappointing. At a recent panel discussion, experts expressed their concern regarding how this would affect the country going forward, particularly as it graduates from the least developed country (LDC) category. Bangladesh has had to pay a hefty price already due to its weak institutions. While our economic performance has been admirable, various studies by national and international organisations have revealed on multiple occasions how our economy could have performed better if it weren't for reasons that are ultimately tied to weak institutional capacity—such as widespread corruption and lack of accountability and transparency on part of state agencies.

The rising inequality—both economic and social—is another major problem that we see as a result of feeble institutions. This has also been holding us back from attaining our developmental goals, including the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For years, experts have been harping on the matter, asking politicians and bureaucrats to take it seriously. However, due to the unfortunate fact that weak institutions allow for a lack of accountability and transparency—which in turn can be exploited by people in positions of power—none of them seem to have been listening. As a result, Bangladesh's institutions rank among some of the worst in the world.

If we look at the banking sector for example, we see that the sector has been in perpetual crisis for years—with some fearing that we haven't even seen the worst of it yet—due to the absurd policy-making of the central bank and numerous interventions from the finance ministry in its decision-making. The lack of autonomy of our central bank is a perfect example of how we have failed to build effective and independent institutions. Another such example is the lack of independence of our Anti-Corruption Commission, whose powers have been gradually weakened by policymakers through laws that outright undermine our constitution—by granting civil servants undue privileges.

Throughout the world, there have been countless examples of countries that have failed to make the jump that we are about to, simply because they failed to develop effective institutions that can hold bureaucrats and politicians accountable. Will we turn out to be another such case?

If not, it is high time for our policymakers to recognise the danger we are in, and pursue policies that strengthen the capacity of institutions that are supposed to hold the decision-makers accountable. We have to try and instill the concept of checks and balances in all our state institutions. Otherwise, those in positions of power will continue to do as they please—and exploit state power for personal benefits—instead of acting in the best interest of the country.

Expand space for accountability to control corruption



IFTEKHARUZAMAN

DECEMBER 9 is observed as the International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD). On this day in 2003, the United Nations called upon governments and peoples of the world to mark the adoption of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). IACD is intended to highlight the importance of concrete and collective action against corruption involving all stakeholders.

The Cabinet Division of the Government of Bangladesh decided in 2017 that IACD will be officially observed in the country annually. For Bangladesh, IACD has assumed much greater significance this year as we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the glorious victory of our independence.

terms of nearly every credible indicator of governance and corruption. These include the Rule of Law Index, Regulatory Quality Index, Government Effectiveness Index, Political Stability Index, Voice and Accountability Index, Press Freedom Index, Political Rights Index and the civil liberties index.

According to the Corruption Perception Index 2020, Bangladesh continues to be ranked among countries where corruption is perceived to be most pervasive. Although it has been able to overcome the pains of being at the very bottom of the list as during 2001-05, its current 12th position from the bottom, with a score of 26 out of 100, remains well below the global average of 43, and the second-lowest in South Asia, only after Afghanistan.

Corruption is a crime that undermines and impedes development, social cohesion, political stability and democratic progress everywhere. It is a menace that causes the plundering of resources, destroys level playing field in

controlled corruption, the cost of which is estimated as at least two to three percent of GDP. For the common people, it is a distressing experience that hurts the poor and disadvantaged the hardest. According to the national household survey on corruption released by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in 2018, 66 percent of the surveyed people experienced corruption in the service delivery sectors while 89 percent of those who were victims of bribery were forced to make unauthorised payments as they wouldn't otherwise have access to public services.

Against this backdrop, as we mark the country's 50th victory anniversary, we need to consider the opportunity costs of corruption in terms of our aspirations for sustainable development, democracy, justice and equality. What the UN has identified as the theme of this year's IACD—"Your Right, Your Role: Say No to Corruption"—was much more eloquently and comprehensively articulated by

fortress against corruption."

Given the level of criminalisation of politics and the depth and breadth of corruption, there is hardly any indicator of whether and to what extent Bangabandhu's call inspired subsequent rulers and political leaders, including the party he led before being brutally killed and deprived of the opportunity to lead the transformation needed to realise his vision.

The incumbent head of the government coincidentally echoed the same spirit in the context of the casino scandal and a short-lived high profile drive against ruling party-affiliated youth leaders, procurement lords and casino "dons". She declared zero tolerance against corruption, promised that nobody would be spared and made the ambitious pledge to cleanse "own house" first. The zero tolerance commitment was repeated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the context of Covid-19 pandemic response.

However, hardly anything has been done to effectively implement these pledges. Nowhere in the world can such pledges be translated into reality by the head of a government alone. Ironically, a section of the people—in their official and institutional capacity—who are entrusted to implement the pledge are among the colluders, beneficiaries and protectors of corruption.

The importance of multi-stakeholder participation against corruption has been underscored by Article 13 of the UNCAC, "each State Party shall ... promote active participation of individuals and groups outside the public sector, such as civil society, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations, in the prevention of and the fight against corruption." A State Party to the Convention against Corruption for Bangladesh thus has to be committed to creating space for citizens' participation in the anti-corruption movement.

This is easier said than done in an environment where there are aspirations of monopolising the political space, and where the scope for voice and accountability has been severely restricted by the motivated application of certain provisions of laws that restrict freedom of speech and opinion of civil society, media and common people. For the same reason, nearly every institution of democracy and national integrity system has been rendered politicised and dysfunctional, creating scope for widespread impunity enjoyed by abusers of power.

Enforcement of law and holding the corrupt to account without fear or favour are crucial for corruption control, but equally important is to transform anti-corruption work into a social movement, as stressed by Bangabandhu. Space must be expanded, not restricted, for civil society and media to exercise their rights and responsibilities as enshrined in the Constitution, without which any prospect of holding power-abusers to account will remain only a dream.

Dr Iftekharuzaman is Executive Director, Transparency International Bangladesh.

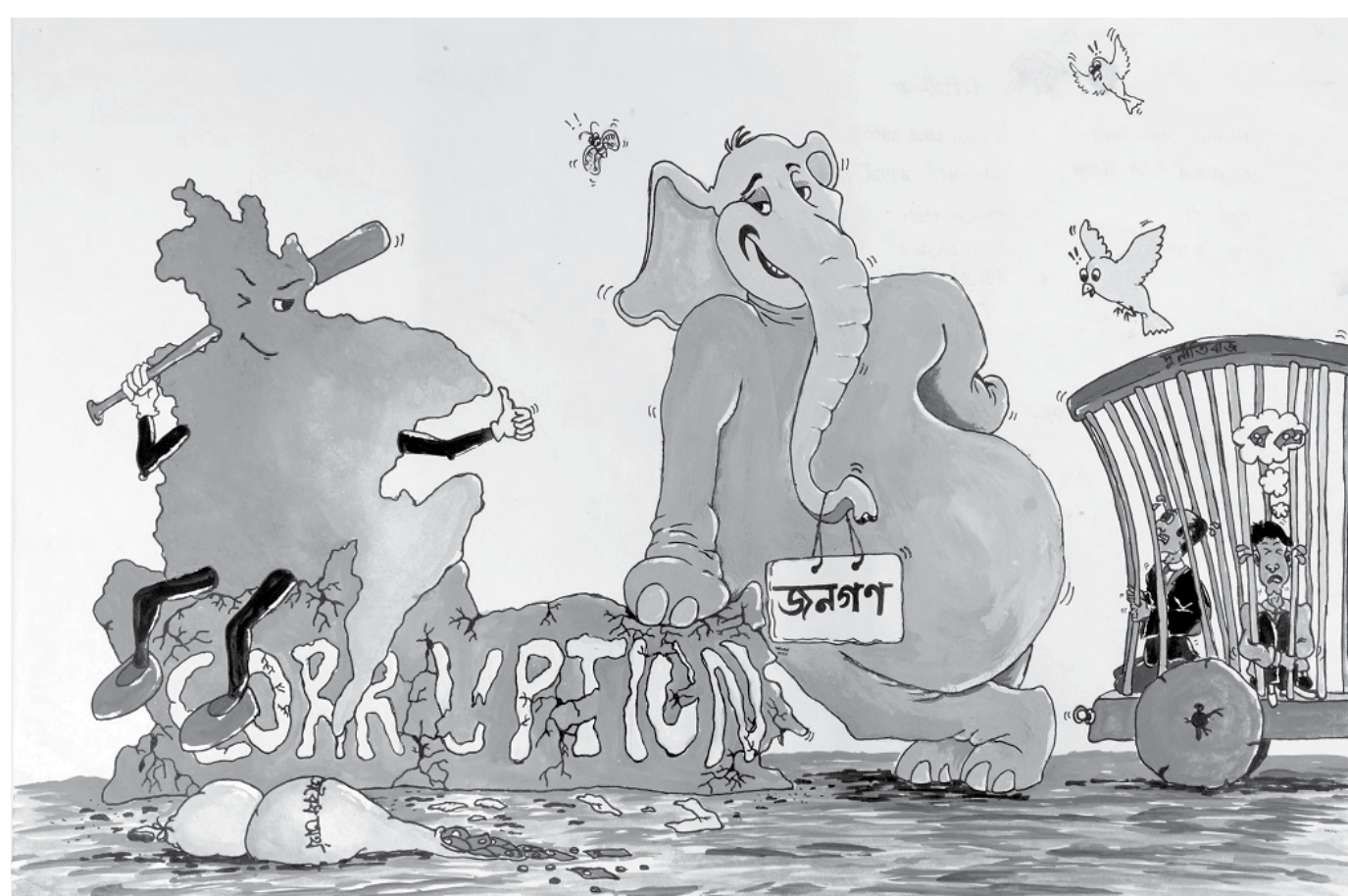


ILLUSTRATION: NAZMUL SAKIB RABIT/TIB

We take pride in our internationally enviable achievements in terms of many socio-economic indicators and now realistic aspirations to become a middle-income country. The country's GDP growth remains consistently high, while in terms of such indicators as Human Development Index, Multidimensional Poverty Index, Gender Development Index, population growth reduction and life expectancy at birth, Bangladesh has been performing better than comparable countries in South Asia and beyond.

However, Bangladesh also anguishes for its contrastingly poor performance in

public contracting, distorts competitive business and investment environment, and erodes trust in government and politics. It increases poverty and income disparity, too. It is a multi-trillion-dollar global scandal that includes illicit transfers of corrupt money, mainly from the developing countries like ours to the developed world. Credible estimates suggest annual illicit transfers from Bangladesh at a rate of USD 10 to 12 billion.

Bangladesh's performance in growth and socioeconomic transformation could have been much better if it had effectively

the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, back in 1975 in a speech on Independence Day, as follows:

"In 1971, I called upon you to create fortresses in every household against Pakistani rulers ... the number one priority today is to root out corruption ... I will enforce the laws, I will not spare anybody ... I need your help ... it has to be a people's movement ... it has to be a movement to socially boycott the bribe-takers and the corrupt. ... Who can do it? Students can do it, the youth can, intellectuals can, the people can ... each household should be turned into a

India-Russia ties in a changing world



PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

A S Russian President Vladimir Putin wrapped up his six-hour visit to New Delhi on December 6, most commentaries on India-Russia relations invariably termed it as the continuation of

decades of romance that first blossomed in the Cold War era—a global geopolitical scenario that is very different from what it is today.

Few have noted the important coincidence that Putin's visit took place on the day India and Bangladesh celebrated "Maitri Divas" at a function held in New Delhi, addressed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, albeit through a recorded video message. After all, it is the Liberation War of 1971, which led to the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation, that added a new depth in strategic ties between India and the then Soviet Union. During that time, the warming of ties between the US and China under the stewardship of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, Pakistan's Operation Searchlight in then East Pakistan, and the grave security challenge posed by the Washington-Beijing tie-up pushed India and the Soviet Union to sign the landmark 1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, which envisaged each other's help in defending their territorial integrity.

The international scenario has, of course, changed since 1971. But one thing that has remained constant between then and now is the flux in that scenario. No wonder that India's ruling establishment, irrespective of their ideological moorings, has not given up any opportunity to gush about how India-Russia ties have been tested through vicissitudes and changing times. The Cold War is long gone. Today, India has moved much closer to the US,

and Russia and China have grown closer in the face of Russia's frayed relations with the US and Europe. But what has not changed is the sustained India-Russia engagement at the summit level—the meeting between Putin and Modi in Delhi on December 6 was the 21st top-level interaction, possibly unprecedented for any two countries.

Three major takeaways from the Putin-Modi summit are in defence and trade.

India already has such military logistics support agreements with a number of countries, including the US. To take defence and diplomatic ties forward, India and Russia have for the first time institutionalised meetings between their defence and foreign ministers, who held their first in-person and delegation-level talks under that format. India and the US already have the same institutional arrangement.

to new areas for long-term cooperation to achieve this. By contrast, India's trade with the US and China are close to USD 100 billion, and Russia's trade with China is pegged at slightly over the same amount. But a robust trade is no guarantee for a burgeoning relationship in other areas. High stakes in trade do not always dampen political and military tensions—India-China, US-China and Japan-China are examples of that.

It is a sign of maturity on the parts of India and Russia that they have not allowed the ties between New Delhi and Washington, and Beijing and Moscow, to come in the way of boosting and diversifying their own bilateral relations. For instance, India has gone ahead with procuring the S-400 Triumf air missile defence system from Russia despite the threats of sanctions from the US. Secondly, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, during the bilateral meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu on December 6, raised upfront the issue of China's combativeness on the unresolved border along the Himalayas. True, Rajnath did not name any names, but his reference to the military tensions in India's northern border with China left little doubt as to whom he had in mind. More importantly, Rajnath used this tension to seek greater military cooperation with Russia considering the "real, immediate and legitimate defence challenges" posed by China, and expressed the hope that Moscow will remain a major partner for New Delhi in these "changing circumstances."

India and Russia are also not entirely on the same page as far as the security scenario in Asia-Pacific—which China considers to be its backyard—is concerned. As both India and Russia seek new allies, the flames of their long-standing ties continue to burn brighter.

Pallab Bhattacharya is a special correspondent for The Daily Star. He writes from New Delhi, India.



Russia's President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of their meeting at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, India on December 6, 2021.

The two countries entered into a 10 year pact on military-technical cooperation, which includes a deal for manufacturing AK203 assault rifles in a factory in India's Uttar Pradesh state. Contrary to expectations, however, the two countries failed to ink an agreement on logistical support for each other's military because, as Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said, there were a "few

On trade, the two sides acknowledged that this front has been somewhat lagging, as the volume of bilateral trade is not commensurate with the depth of the strategic partnership between India and Russia. They set a target of trebling the volume of trade in goods from USD 10 billion at present to USD 30 billion in the next four years, a tall order by any yardstick. The two countries looked

PHOTO: REUTERS/ADNAN ABIDI

What to WATCH

TEN 1

UEFA Europa League
Lyon vs Rangers
Live from 11:45 pm

TEN 2

UEFA Europa League
Napoli vs Leicester

Live from 11:45 pm

West Ham vs Dinamo Zagreb
Live from 02:00 am (Friday)

SONY SIX

UEFA Europa League
Real Sociedad vs PSV
Live from 11:45 pm

Lazio vs Galatasaray

Live from 02:00 am (Friday)
The Ashes

Australia vs England

1st Test, Day 3

Live from 06:00 am (Friday)

T SPORTS

Banglabandhu Gold Cup U17

Rajshahi Division vs Sylhet Division

Live from 12:30 pm

Bangamata Gold Cup U17

Mymensingh Division vs Rangpur Division

Live from 02:30 pm

'No team will want to draw Ajax in CL'

REUTERS, Amsterdam

Ajax Amsterdam coach Erik ten Hag said no team will enjoy being drawn against them in the Champions League round of 16 when the pairings are announced on Monday after the Dutch club won all six of their group stage matches.

Ajax completed a clean sweep of Group C with a 4-2 home win over Sporting Lisbon on Tuesday, with Sebastian Haller becoming only the second player after Cristiano Ronaldo (2017/18) to score in all six group games.

With Liverpool also winning six out of six in their group this campaign, the number of teams to have achieved the feat stands at nine, UEFA said. "It is already difficult to win one match, let alone six

in a row," said Ten Hag, who added that he would not watch the draw for the next round.

"We'll see what comes out. You also know in advance that it will be tough, but we have gained confidence. "We know we can achieve something. No team will enjoy being drawn against Ajax. But we also know that we have to be very good to go to the next round."

Haller, who scored 10 goals in the group, said he was proud of the team's performances. "Of course I feel great, but mainly because of the 18 points from six games," said the French-born Ivory Coast international.



ATLETICO THROUGH AS MILAN CRASH OUT

AFP, Paris

Atletico Madrid won a bad-tempered game in Porto on Tuesday to qualify for the last 16 of the Champions League as Liverpool and Ajax both completed the group stage with 100 percent records.

Diego Simeone's Atletico, who lost to Real Madrid in the 2014 and 2016 finals, needed to beat Porto in Portugal to advance to the knockout phase and they duly triumphed 3-1 in a game which featured three red cards.

Atletico finish second in Group B, a huge 11 points behind group winners Liverpool, who made it six wins out of six in Europe this season by beating AC Milan 2-1 at San Siro despite fielding a virtual reserve side.

Milan had to win to stand a chance of going through and they went ahead midway through the first half through Fikayo Tomori.

Mohamed Salah did start for the visitors and he equalised in the 36th minute before Divock Origi -- who scored a stoppage-time winner in the Premier League at the weekend -- made it 2-1 10 minutes into the second half, heading in after Sadio Mane's shot was saved.

Milan finish bottom of the group in their first Champions League campaign since 2013-14, with Porto parachuting into the Europa League.



REAL MADRID TOP GROUP

Elsewhere, Real Madrid secured top spot in Group D with a 2-0 defeat of Inter Milan at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Both sides had already qualified for the last 16 and Real just needed a draw to top the group. They went ahead through an early Toni Kroos

strike, and Inter had Nicolo Barella sent off just after the hour mark before substitute Marco Asensio sealed Real's victory with a stupendous strike.

"Our objective is to go all the way, not just reach the last 16," said Real coach Carlo Ancelotti.

Moldovan debutants Sheriff Tiraspol had already secured third place before Boban Nikolov's injury-time goal earned them a 1-1 draw at bottom side Shakhtar Donetsk, for whom Fernando had opened the scoring.

MBAPPE, MESSI DOUBLES

Earlier Manchester City, having already clinched first place in Group A, lost 2-1 at RB Leipzig, with Dominik Szoboszlai and Andre Silva on target for the Germans in their first game since sacking coach Jesse Marsch.

Riyad Mahrez pulled one back for City, who had Kyle Walker sent off late on as Leipzig took third place.

Paris Saint-Germain, who finish second in the group, crushed Club Brugge 4-1 with Kylian Mbappe and Lionel Messi both scoring twice.

Mbappe's goals both came inside the first seven minutes and he then set up Messi's first goal, with the Argentinian adding a penalty as he moved on to five Champions League goals in five appearances this season.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN Djokovic on entry list, no Serena

AFP, Melbourne

Men's world number one Novak Djokovic was named among the entries for the Australian Open on Wednesday, following intense speculation about his vaccination status, but women's great Serena Williams was missing.

The Serbian had cast doubt on whether he would defend his Melbourne title next month, refusing to reveal whether he was inoculated against coronavirus, a requirement to play.

But after being named on Tuesday as part of the Serbia team for January's ATP Cup in Sydney that will precede the opening major of the year, he was also listed for the Grand Slam.

Williams, who is marooned on 23 Grand Slam titles -- one short of the all-time record held by Margaret Court -- had been expected to play, but she is not fully fit. The American superstar turned 40 in September and may have played her last Australian Open.

Williams said she had withdrawn following advice from her medical team. "While this is never an easy decision to make, I am not where I need to be physically to compete," she said.

Kings drag Police thru to last eight

SPORTS REPORTER



The quarter finals line-up of Riviera Independence Cup was decided after Bashundhara Kings handed a 3-0 defeat to Chattogram Abahani at Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

Kings emerged Group D champions with maximum nine points from three outings, which meant that Bangladesh Police finished as group runners-up, by virtue of superior goal difference than Abahani and Bangladesh Navy, after playing a 1-1 draw against Navy in the day's first match.

Having confirmed the quarterfinal berth in the previous match, Spanish coach Oscar Bruzon brought eight changes in the Kings eleven.

Even though Kings lacked intensity upfront with a depleted side, Brazilian Robson Da Silva broke the deadlock in the 22nd minute with a drive from top of the box before Rubel Mia failed to place a shot on the open net in the 26th minute to deprive Abahani an equaliser.

Abahani's Nigerian duo Kehinde Yisa Anifowose and Ebimobowe Thankgod came close to striking one minute before the break but Anifowose squandered the opportunity, which could have taken Abahani ahead of Police in terms of greater goal number of goals scored.

After resumption, Kings strengthened their attack with Mahbubur Rahman Sufil, M o h a m m a d Ibrahim and Matin Mia in the second half.

However, Sufil squandered an opportunity despite getting the opponent goalkeeper and afterwards, Abahani goalkeeper Azad Hossain was sent off in 80th minute as he picked up the ball from the

feet of Bosnian striker Stojan Vranjes outside the box.

And following the marching order, Abahani conceded two quick goals. Ibrahim tapped in to double the margin after substitute goalkeeper Saiful Islam stopped a free-kick from Stojan while



Matin wrapped up victory by dribbling past goalkeeper in the 89th minute to ensure that Kings maintain all-win record before their quarterfinal clash against Sheikh Jamal DC on December 12.

In the day's first match, after a barren first half, Police broke the deadlock against national players-studded Bangladesh Navy with MS Bablu beating goalkeeper Shahedul Alam with a low drive outside the box.

However, Police could hold the lead for only 21 minutes as the former national winger Zahid Hossain, coming on as a substitute, mustered a low free-kick from the left which reached home through the legs of Police defenders.

Both Police and Navy aimed for a spot at quarterfinals with an outright win but they had to be content with a stalemate.



The Bangladesh Football Federation yesterday accorded a reception to Swadhin Bangla Football Team in presence of 14 footballers and two officials of that team that played a tremendous role in creating public opinion and raise fund during the war of independence. The team's captain Jakaria Pintu, vice-captain Protap Shankar Hazra, team manager Tanvir Mazhar Tanna and Kazi Salahuddin, member of that team and current president of BFF, were among others, present at the event. Zahid Ahsan Russel, the state minister for youth and sports, also graced the occasion.

PHOTO: BFF

Raikkonen 'wouldn't change a thing'

AFP, Jeddah

While all eyes in Abu Dhabi will be on the headline drama of the title fight between Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen this weekend, another world champion will be making his final appearance in a Formula One car.

Twenty years after making his F1 debut for Sauber at the 2001 Australian Grand Prix, Finnish driver Kimi Raikkonen will start his 349th and final race on Sunday but he says he "wouldn't change a thing" and has

no regrets about stepping away.

"F1 takes up a lot of time but it has never been the main thing for me," the 2007 world champion told AFP.

"My life has always been outside. There are other more important things for me than F1. Today my schedule affects my whole family so I am looking forward to the day I have nothing planned and can do what they want."

Raikkonen also admits that he has not always been the best listener over the course of his career as he forged his own path.

"I think I was given a lot of advice but didn't listen. I always felt you had to live your life in the best way for yourself and not for others.

"At work, if I had an option, I wouldn't do most of what I'm asked, but with your life, how you live your life... you live it for yourself. If you try to live it as someone else wants, you might do it for a year or two but it will not end up very nicely.

"I'm happy I lived my way. Good or bad, I can live with it because it's my decisions.

"I wouldn't change a thing."

GENERAL

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EAST-WEST ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY Govt goes for public-pvt partnership

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and DWAIPIYAN BARUA

The long-awaited elevated expressway from Hemayetpur in Savar to Langolbandh in Sonargaon yesterday got some impetus after the government decided to implement the project under a public-private partnership.

The government will select the partner in the project through tender since several companies expressed interest, said Md Shamsul Arefin, additional secretary of the cabinet division, after the meeting of the cabinet committee on economic affairs, where the decision was taken.

Companies of China, Japan, South Korea are keen to invest in the project, according to officials in the bridge division and PPP office.

Called the Dhaka East-West Elevated Expressway, the project is aimed at creating a vital link between major highways and is expected to increase GDP growth by 0.317 per cent, according to a feasibility study on the project done in August 2017.

The users of the 39.2 kilometre-long expressway, which would pass through Nimtoli-Keraniganj-Ekuria-Janjira-Fatullah-Haliganj Bandar, would have to pay an average toll of \$0.147 per km or Tk 11.5 per km, the study stated.

It would allow traffic to switch highways and skip the congested streets of the capital.

Vehicles on the Dhaka-Aricha highway would be able to speed towards the Dhaka-Chattogram highway with options to go in the directions of Mawa and Sylhet.

In turn, vehicles from Chattogram and Sylhet would be able to bypass the city and head towards Mawa, Aricha and the northern districts of the country.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6



A plane landing at the Saidpur Airport in Nilphamari. Inset: A man making his way through a barbed wire gap in a surrounding wall. Due to lax security measures, people easily pass through the walls to graze cattle, cut grass, and even to watch flight operations. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: EMA ASADUZZAMAN

A runway way too vulnerable

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Vulnerabilities in the boundary wall of Saidpur Airport in Nilphamari have given rise to security concerns as locals regularly enter the facility to graze cattle, cut grass and even for sightseeing.

The country's northernmost airport operates 10-12 flights on the Dhaka-Saidpur route daily and one flight a week on the Chattogram-Saidpur and Cox's Bazar-Saidpur routes. The process to upgrade it to an international airport is underway.

This correspondent on Wednesday visited villages around the airport, built on 136.59 acres of land, and witnessed the vulnerability in different points of the wall and how locals entered the airport illegally.

At Poschimpara, there was no barbed wire on top of 70-80 feet of the airport's boundary wall.

Outsiders can enter using a ladder to cut the grass near the runway or to see planes landing and taking off.

According to locals,

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

SI held over raping of woman in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A sub-inspector of the Detective Branch of Khulna Metropolitan Police was arrested yesterday over raping a woman.

Jahangir Alam allegedly stormed the hotel room of the woman and then raped her in front of her daughter early yesterday.

A Khulna court sent Jahangir to jail after he was produced before it yesterday evening, said police.

Hasan Al Mamun, officer-in-charge of Khulna Sadar Police Station, told The Daily Star that they arrested the SI at the hotel.

The woman was sent to the One-Stop Crisis Centre (OCC) of Khulna Medical College Hospital, he said.

Citing the victim's family, the OC said the victim, along with her ailing daughter, reached Khulna from Mongla Tuesday afternoon to see a doctor.

They rented a room at a hotel adjacent to the city's Shaheed Hadith Park.

Around 2:30am, the SI forcibly entered the room and raped the mother in front of the sick daughter, he said.

Hearing her screams, the hotel manager called in the police who arrested the SI.

The woman filed a rape case yesterday.

BM Nuruzzaman, deputy commissioner of Khulna Metropolitan Police's intelligence branch, claimed that Jahangir was drunk.

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Pakistan accepts truce call of UN

DECEMBER 9, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

UN TRUCE CALL: PAKISTAN ACCEPTS, INDIA REJECTS Pakistan informed the United Nations today that she had "decided to accept" the General Assembly's call for ceasefire and for a withdrawal of hostile troops to their own soil.

In message to UN Secretary General U Thant, Pakistani chief delegate Agha Shahi said, "Under the instructions of my Government, I have the honor to state that even though the resolution fails to take note of the Indian aggression against Pakistan (which has been admitted by India), the Government of Pakistan has decided to accept the call for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of troops contained in that resolution.

"Inasmuch as the resolution provides for an immediate withdrawal of the troops of each party to its own side of the border and thus would stop bloodshed, Pakistan is willing to overlook its inadequacies at this time," he added.

Elaborating on the Pakistani message, a delegation spokesman said that a ceasefire and a withdrawal "cannot be unilateral." This confirmed a Government declaration in Rawalpindi that Pakistan would comply with the Assembly resolution only if India did the same.

On the other hand, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi rejected the General Assembly's truce call. She said that India would "take all steps" to achieve the independence of Bangladesh.

The New York Times reported that the emissary to the United States of the Bengali "secessionists" welcomed signs that

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Petition filed with HC over Murad's JS membership

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A lawyer filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the legality of Murad Hasan's Jatiya Sangsad membership yesterday.

Supreme Court lawyer Md Eunos Ali Akond submitted the petition as a public interest litigation a day after Murad resigned from the post of state minister for information and broadcasting.

The prime minister asked him to resign from his state minister post following a wave of criticism for his derogatory remarks.

Lawyer Eunos submitted the petition saying that Murad violated his oath as a JS member by making the remarks.

He prayed to the HC to pass necessary directives for conducting a judicial inquiry into Murad's obscene comments.

Meanwhile, the cyber and special crime unit of the Detective Branch will

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New telescope to unravel mysteries of black holes



CNN ONLINE

We're about to get a new perspective on some of the most extreme objects in the universe. In the early morning hours of today, Nasa will launch its Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer mission, or IXPE, to measure X-rays released by black holes and neutron stars.

The satellite was scheduled to launch around 1:00 am ET aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Nasa's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Live coverage of the launch will be available on Nasa TV and the agency's website.

The spacecraft, which is the collaborative effort of Nasa and the Italian Space Agency, carries three telescopes. While IXPE isn't as big as Nasa's Chandra X-ray observatory, it is the first space

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Tigers crash to innings defeat

SPORTS REPORTER

In a dramatic fifth and final day of the second Test, a woeful batting display from Bangladesh saw them crash to an innings and eight-run defeat to Pakistan despite the fact that rain had washed out around two prior days of the Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Pin-drop silence and suspense were the defining features of the final 20 minutes of the day as the hosts battled to save the game, with the Bangladesh team in the dressing room perhaps praying for a

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 9

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-15 12-45 3-45 5-19 7-00
JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-00 5-22 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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Complete Islamic Banking services at the new UCB Taqwa Islamic Banking Branch

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Mr. Saifuzzaman Chowdhury MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Land, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh will inaugurate the branch as the **Chief Guest**.

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