



SIGNBOARDS IN BANGLA

HC order widely ignored

It's a lack of inner urge, says Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury



DIPAN NANDY and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Buildings on either side of Satmasjid Road between Jigatala and Shankar in the capital's Dhanmondi are teeming with signs and hoardings of different sizes and colours, mostly in English.

A few of the signs, however, are emblazoned with businesses' names written in both Bangla and English, but the Bangla letters are so small that it is quite difficult to read those.

Visiting the area on Friday, this newspaper found at least 20 signs of businesses, mostly eateries, in just one building, are all written in English.

English signs, displays, and brand logos is a very common sight in many other parts of the capital, including Baridhara, Gulshan, Banani, Paltan, Science Laboratory and Arambagh.

This situation has been prevailing even 70 years after the historic Language Movement. A law -- Bangla Bhasha Procholon Ain -- was enacted in 1987 for ensuring compulsory use of Bangla in all spheres of life.

Also, the High Court in February 2014 directed the government to ensure use of Bangla in signs, billboards, and banners.

But the authorities are yet to make any significant progress in this regard.

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A student lays a wreath at the foot of a Shaheed Minar in Babudying village of Rajshahi's Godagari upazila on International Mother Language Day yesterday. Students of Babudying Adivasi School built the memorial with earth and bamboo and adorned it with flowers to show respect to the Language Movement martyrs.

PHOTO: RABIUL HASAN

EVIDENCE ACT

Both sections questioning victims will be amended

Says law minister

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the government will amend both the relevant sections of the Evidence Act in order to block all avenues of questioning the character of rape victims in court.

"We have already finished the work to amend sections 155(4) and 146(3) of the Evidence Act, 1872. The proposed amendments will be placed before the next cabinet meeting, and I hope a bill will be passed in the next parliament session," he

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Senior secretary pulled strings

Sharif Uddin says about his firing

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Sacked ACC officer Sharif Uddin said the senior secretary of a ministry, who had links to the land acquisition scammers in Cox's Bazar, used his influence to get him fired from his job.

The sacked deputy assistant director of Anti-Corruption Commission told The Daily Star yesterday that he found in his investigation that Cox's Bazar Municipality Mayor Mujibur Rahman

played a key role in a syndicate that stole Tk 78 crore from government projects through forgery.

Involvement of top administration and police officials in the district was found in the investigation.

The senior secretary was linked to the aforesaid individuals, Sharif said, adding that the bureaucrat made sure that officials working at the ACC on deputation slowed down his investigation.

Sharif said the senior secretary who is from a southern district

previously served as the secretary of Election Commission.

The land acquisition scammers have the senior secretary's blessings, said a local lawmaker, adding that the secretary, who may retire this year, wants to take part in the next national election as an Awami League nominee.

Sharif said the secretary used his power to make officials concerned approve forged documents of

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RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3

BUSINESS

A group of investors linked with Nagad Ltd, a mobile financial service (MFS), has been desperate to obtain a licence to run non-bank financial institution, MFS and microcredit operations.

STORY ON BI

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There is a big ... difference between just the best and the world's best!

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3 children burned dead in a locked house

2 men killed in gas cylinder blast in separate incident

STAR REPORT

Both Sumon Mia and his wife Modina Begum were at work when a fire ravaged their home in Seedstore area of Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila on Sunday night, killing all their three children on the spot.

The fire originated from a gas cylinder explosion in the kitchen of one of their neighbours around 9:15pm. It spread to five adjacent tin-roofed houses, including that of Sumon, said Al Mamun, senior station officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence in Bhaluka.

On information, firefighters rushed to the spot and brought the flames under control after around two hours. Later, they recovered the charred bodies of Radia, 2, Raihan, 3, and Khadeja, 5, he said.

Mamun said both parents were at

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11 ZEBRAS' DEATHS High nitrate levels in grass linked: probe

STAR REPORT

High levels of nitrate in the grass led to zebra deaths at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park in Gazipur was linked to the deaths of 11 of the animals last month.

A member of the probe committee investigating the deaths revealed this information yesterday after the probe report was submitted on Sunday. The environment, forest and climate change ministry on January 26 formed the probe committee, led by Sanjay Kumar Bhowmik, additional secretary of the ministry.

Dr Noor Ali, the committee member and a professor of the pathology department of the veterinary science faculty at Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), said the samples of the zebras were tested at the university's pathology and pharmacology departments.

Noor Ali, also the director of BAU Research System, said the park authorities had asked the contractor to supply "tender" grass instead of "mature" grass for zebras since December 18 last year.

The presence of trace amounts of nitrate was higher than the normal limit in the tender grass, resulting in nitrate poisoning of the zebras, he said quoting the probe report.

In many cases, the cultivators of the grass use excess doses of urea for rapid growth and in those cases, they have to wait for a few days so that the concentration of nitrate naturally decreases, he said. Since the park authorities wanted tender grass for the zebras, they possibly did not wait long enough, he added.

Another member of the committee said nitrate was not the single cause of the deaths; the concentration of nitrate weakened the immune systems of the zebras, leading to the

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In an unknown location, Ukrainian soldiers taking part in military exercises, shows this handout picture released yesterday by the press service of the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

PHOTO: AFP

UKRAINE PEACE SUMMIT PLAN

Russia pours cold water

Says it's 'premature' to organise Biden-Putin meeting; UK claims Russia's plan to invade has 'already begun'

AGENCIES

The Kremlin warned yesterday there are no concrete plans for a summit between the Russian and US leaders, as diplomats scrambled to head off the threat of a Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The idea of a meeting between presidents Vladimir Putin and Joe Biden has been championed by France and cautiously welcomed by Ukraine as a way to avert a catastrophic war in Europe.

But Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "It's premature to talk about any specific plans for organising any kind of summits" adding that no "concrete plans" had been put in place.

France's President Emmanuel Macron called Putin on Sunday and afterwards his office said that both the Russian and Biden were open to the idea.

The summit would go ahead, however, only "on the condition that Russia does not invade Ukraine."

"There is a diplomatic hope," France's minister for European Affairs Clement Beaune told LCI television.

"If there is still a chance to avoid war, to avoid a confrontation and build a political and diplomatic solution, then we need to

take it," he said.

But in Washington, a senior US administration official told AFP: "Timing to be determined. Format to be determined. So it's all completely notional."

Visiting Brussels, Ukraine's foreign minister welcomed the French effort. "We believe that every effort aimed at a diplomatic solution is worth trying," Dmytro Kuleba said.

Kuleba also said the European Union had agreed "in principle" to set up an advisory military instructor mission in Ukraine, but the details have yet to be thrashed out.

Defence Minister Oleksiy Reznikov said there was no sign of Russian forces withdrawing from the border, and that Moscow-backed rebels continue to shell Ukrainian positions.

"Since the beginning of this day, as of 09:00, 14 attacks have already been recorded, 13 of them from weapons prohibited by the Minsk agreements," he told reporters in Kyiv.

Ukraine yesterday firmly denied Russian claims that Russian forces had killed five Ukrainian "saboteurs" who allegedly crossed the border to stage an attack.

Putin told his security council it was

necessary to consider an appeal from the leaders of two breakaway regions in eastern Ukraine for Russia to recognise them as independent.

Putin also said in televised remarks yesterday that the threat to Russia would substantially increase if Ukraine were to join Nato.

In recent weeks, according to US intelligence, Moscow has massed more than 150,000 troops and sailors around Ukraine's borders in Belarus, Russia, Crimea and the Black Sea, reports Reuters.

A spokesman for UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson told a media briefing yesterday that intelligence reports suggest Putin intends to launch an invasion of Ukraine, reports BBC.

"The intelligence we are seeing suggests that Russia intends to launch an invasion and that President Putin's plan has already begun," the spokesman said.

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said yesterday intelligence suggests any Russian invasion of Ukraine would employ a particularly brutal strategy to "crush" the civilian population.

The foreign ministers of the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will travel to Ukraine this week, officials said.

Man's death sparks protest Family says he was tortured in custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A man's death sparked protests in Shantiganj, Sunamganj, amid allegations that he was tortured in custody at a police station.

Wazir Mia, 40, of Shatrurmadan area, died at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital yesterday, 10 days after he was released on bail.

Grieving family members said he died because police tortured him at Shantiganj Police Station after arresting him in the early hours of February 10.

Villagers later blocked Sunamganj-Sylhet road at Pagla Bazar for three hours, demanding justice for Wazir.

Police said Wazir was arrested on charges of stealing cows.

His brother Dalim Mia said, "He was severely tortured. He was released on bail the next day, but fell ill. We took him to the hospital in critical condition."

Superintendent of Police in Sunamganj Mizanur Rahman said there will be an autopsy and actions will be taken if evidence of torture is found.

College student dies in garage collapse

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A college student working at the garage of Gangachara upazila nirbahi officer got killed yesterday after the ceiling collapsed on him.

Police said Dipak Roy, 23, who was a student of Gangachara Government College, was painting the garage.

He died at the scene around 10:30am, said Sushanta Kumar Sarkar, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Election officer suspended for bribery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An election officer has been suspended for allegedly taking Tk 4 lakh in bribes from a man running for membership in a union parishad of Rangpur's Mithapukur.

Abdul Hannan was suspended by the Election Commission Secretariat after the leaked audio clip of a phone conversation said to be between him and the man went viral on Facebook, officials said.

In the clip, Hannan is heard making promises of providing the caller with 300 ballot papers in exchange for Tk 5 lakh. They eventually settle for Tk 4 lakh.

Both sections questioning

FROM PAGE 1

told The Daily Star.

In the proposed amendments, section 155(4) will be repealed and a proviso will be incorporated into section 146(3) so that none can question the characters of the witnesses, including the rape victims, in court, he said.

The draft recently submitted to the High Court, proposing to amend only section 155(4), was not "final or effective", he added.

Contacted, Supreme Court lawyer ZI Khan Panna, also an eminent rights activist, said he

was satisfied with the government's move to stop all scopes for questioning a rape victim's character.

"I must congratulate and appreciate Law Minister Anisul Huq for his sincerity in taking steps to amend sections 155(4) and 146(3) of the Evidence Act. Such provisions formulated during the British period against the prestige and dignity of women cannot be in effect in Bangladesh ..."

Panna, a trustee member of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and former chairperson of Ain O

Salish Kendra (ASK), said the government can issue a circular, urging courts to stop the use of 155(4) and 146(3) for a temporary period before the parliament passes the bill on the amendments.

According to section 155(4), "When a man is prosecuted for rape or an attempt to ravish, it may be shown that the prosecutrix was of generally immoral character."

"Explanation: A witness declaring another witness to be unworthy of credit may not, upon his examination-in-chief, give reasons for his belief, but he may be

asked his reasons in cross-examination, and the answers which he gives cannot be contradicted, though, if they are false, he may afterwards be charged with giving false evidence."

Section 146(3) allows the imposition of questions that may injure the character of the witness in order to verify their credibility.

According to it, "When a witness is cross-examined, he may, in addition to the questions hereinbefore referred to, be asked any questions which tend to shake his credit, by injuring his character,

although the answer to such questions might tend directly or indirectly to criminate him or might expose or tend directly or indirectly to expose him to a penalty or forfeiture."

The government on February 17 submitted a draft proposal for the amendment of only section 155(4) to the HC through the attorney general's office in compliance with its November 16 directive.

On February 20, the HC fixed February 22 for hearing the writ petition by BLAST, ASK and Nari Pakkho seeking the cancellation of both sections.

3 children burned dead

FROM PAGE 1

work, and the house was locked from outside.

Sumon is a day labourer while Modina works at a garment factory. They are from Netrakona's Kalmakanda area. They moved to the house only a month ago. They had locked it from outside for the children's safety, he also said, quoting locals.

The children were buried in Netrakona's Dhitpur Sunoi village yesterday,

Mamun added.

Kalmakanda UNO Mohammad Sohel Rana handed Tk 30,000 to the family as financial support on behalf of the Netrakona district administration.

In another incident, two men, who sustained critical burns after the gas cylinder of a truck exploded in Narayanganj Sadar's Aliganj area around noon on Sunday, died at a hospital in Dhaka yesterday.

Alam, 45, passed away

around 12:30am and Joy Mia, 45, around 8:00am at the Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery, said Partha Sanker Paul, a resident surgeon at the institute.

At least 10 people sustained burns in the incident. Six were admitted to the institute in a critical state.

[Our correspondents in Mymensingh and Narayanganj contributed to this report]

Senior secretary pulled strings

FROM PAGE 1

land ownership and pay money to individuals who did not actually own the lands acquired by the government.

The ACC recently launched a fresh investigation into the land acquisition scam. Contacted on February 19, Jahurul Haque, commissioner (investigation) of the ACC, said he could not remember why a fresh investigation was being done in the case.

Sharif, whose investigations often made headlines, was sacked on February 16 without prior notice. His termination caused much speculation, especially since he filed a general diary mentioning threats over his life just days before he lost his job.

Sharif said the senior secretary, Mayor Mujibur, and a former deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar met ACC Commissioner (enquiry) Mozammel Haque Khan several times to get him sacked.

Several ACC officials in the capital said they saw the aforesaid individuals meet Mozammel at his office.

Sharif said some of the individuals found involved in his investigation met Mozammel on February 12 in Chattogram where Mozammel went to attend an event organised by Bangladesh Scouts.

This correspondent yesterday called Mozammel several times and texted him, asking for his comment on the allegations. He neither received the calls nor replied to the text.

Contacted over the phone around 6:00pm yesterday, Mayor Mujibur said he would call back this correspondent regarding the allegations after a meeting he was at.

Mujib switched off his two phone numbers after the meeting ended around 7:00pm.

This newspaper published several reports in 2020 and 2021 on the land acquisition scam

in Cox's Bazar where the government has acquired thousands of acres of land. The scammers stole around Tk 78 crore from three projects with forged documents of land ownership.

In June, 2021, the senior secretary lodged complaints with the ACC, accusing Sharif of obstructing the implementation of government projects.

Unicef stipend for Afghan teachers

REUTERS, Kabul

The United Nations children's agency would pay Afghan teachers a monthly stipend for at least two months, the organisation said, with salaries unpaid for months as the country is plunged into economic crisis due to sanctions on the Taliban administration.



The Shaheed Minar still stands as a symbol of the right to expression and resistance against all injustice. Imbued with the spirit of Ekushey, people from all walks of life paid tributes to the fallen heroes who earned them the right to their mother language. The photos were taken from the capital's Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.



PHOTOS: RASHED SHUMON, PRABIR DAS

Simplify scientific terms in Bangla

Urges PM for students' benefit

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for simplifying the use of scientific terminology in Bangla to attract more students to study science.

"I think that no nation can step forward without flourishing science-based education," she said while inaugurating a four-day programme of the International Mother Language Institute at Shegunbagicha to mark Amar Ekushey and International Mother Language Day.

"We have to pursue technological education. We can't advance without it," she said. "Research in every sector, like health, education, science and even in industry, is of utmost importance," she said.

Regarding the uses of scientific terminology, she said use of a tough terminology in Bangla might not be understandable for all.

"Widely used words and internationally accepted words can be used as it is, we have to accept the word that is used widely in the international arena," she said.

In this connection, she said using tough terminology could bring forth a non-understandable situation and that should be avoided. "I do not believe in using terminology or translation everywhere," she said.

The PM said in science, there are many words inducted from many languages including English and French.

She also said about 8,000 foreign words have been inducted into Bangla.

"We should not be so much conservative in this regard. The commonly used scientific terms can be used in Bangla for easy learning of science."

Hasina said to transform the country from developing to developed, practice and research in all subjects including language, literature, culture and science is urgently needed.

At the outset of the programme, one minute silence was observed to show respect to the Language Movement heroes for their sacrifice.



PRAYER
TIMING
FEB 22



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5-20	12-45	4-30	6-03	7-30
Jamaat	5-55	1-15	4-45	6-07	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Aglow with the Ekushey spirit

DIPAN NANDY

As scores of people placed floral wreaths on the pedestal of Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, they also thronged the nearby Ekushey book fair, which commemorates the sacrifice made in 1952 through literature.

Many tagged along with their family and friends, adorned in black and white clothes with Bangla alphabets printed on top. Faces of little ones were seen covered in the alphabets too.

The spirit of Ekushey was emphasised further by the music playing on speakers and speeches from the stage.

Yesterday was the fair's longest day, opening from 8:00am and continuing all till 9:00pm. Throughout this period, there were long queues at the gates.

However, all this didn't exactly translate into great sales for the publishers. Monirul Haque, proprietor of Ananya, said, "But this is not a problem. February 21 is more about carrying on the spirit of Ekushey."

Pushing through the crowd, Soumik Biswas and Afroza Nazneen from Indira Road could be seen with their sons Praty and Priyam. Praty said he bought Humayun Ahmed's "Best of Misir Ali", Imdatul Haque Milon's "Best Ten Novels" and Zaheer Raihan's novel "Arek Falgun", while little Priyam bought a book on birds.

He, however, said he was more happy with the tattoo he got as a gift for buying the book.

A total of 224 new books were published yesterday.

'We can't trust them'

Say ACC officials on high-ups as job uncertainty grips them following termination of Sharif Uddin



The incumbent commission took charge in March last year. In the last 11 months, over 100 officials were show-caused, and departmental procedures (DP) were initiated against around 30.



ACC sacked Sharif Uddin On February 16.

WHAT OFFICIALS SAY

- Of top 12 ACC posts, 10 filled by current, ex-bureaucrats, who don't look after officials
- An investigation officer is burdened with 40/50 inquiries, investigations
- Current commission putting irrational pressure on them
- Officials face repercussions when investigation report goes against will of DG, high-ups
- They are being asked to submit 3 reports each month
- In many cases, high-ups ask officials to go slow, change case priority
- Frequent issuance of show-cause, DP damaging work environment

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Officials of Anti-Corruption Commission are having a hard time keeping their faith in the high-ups, and job uncertainty has gripped them, following the instant termination of one of their colleagues.

Out of fear, ACC officials have united, and for the first time in history, have formed ACC Service Association to press home their demands for welfare.

After former ACC deputy assistant director Sharif Uddin, who came into the limelight for unearthing massive corruption in Cox's Bazar, was terminated without any explanation under section 54(2) of the corresponding service rule, their fear has intensified.

Section 54(2) of Anti-Corruption Commission (Service) Rule, 2008 empowers ACC to terminate an official without showing any explanation.

The incumbent commission took charge in March last year. In the last 11 months, over 100 officials were show-caused, and departmental procedures (DP) were initiated against around 30.

"We don't have any representation in the top tiers. Of the top 12 posts, 10 are filled by former and current bureaucrats. They don't look after us," said an ACC official, preferring anonymity.

"We can't trust them. That's why we've united to raise our demands," he said, adding that the full-fledged committee of the association will be declared within a day or two.

According to ACC's organogram, there is a three-member commission comprising the ACC chairman. The ACC secretary works under the commission, and there are eight director generals under the secretary.

On February 20, ACC officials gave a letter to the chairman through the secretary.

"Recently, we're seeing a tendency of magnifying our small mistakes and seeking explanations on each incident," reads the letter. "DPs are being initiated, saying that our explanations are unsatisfactory, which is abnormal."

So far, five commissions have completed their tenure, and this is the sixth commission. "The

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Name-only job agency busted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers claimed to have arrested seven persons for running a racket that duped people by promising jobs. In only the last six months, they defrauded more than 700 job seekers.

A team of Rab-1 carried out a raid at their office, Sinthiya Security Service Limited, in Dhaka's Uttarkhan on Sunday and made the arrests, Abdullah Al Momen, commanding officer of Rab-1, told a press conference yesterday.

The arrestees are managing director Shamsunnahar Maya, general manager Jewel Mia, deputy general manager Kamruzzaman, Farhana Yeasmin, Mehedi Hasan, Al Mamun and Tajbir Hasan.

They used to lure job seekers by publishing advertisement for body guards, house managers, caretakers, security supervisors and guards, taking Tk 12,500 from each applicant as security deposit and other costs.

The Rab official said the gang used to promise jobs with monthly salaries of Tk 10,000-15,000. However, they'd later refuse to get them jobs or pay the money back.

BNP against spirit of Bangla, Liberation War

Says Hasan Mahmud

BSS, Dhaka

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday said BNP is destroying the spirit of the Liberation War, Bangla and Bangalee.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government is working to establish Bangla's dignity across the globe, while BNP keeps ruining the spirit of Bangla, Bangalee and the Liberation War," he told reporters while paying

tribute to the language martyrs with Awami League leaders at the Central Shaheed Minar.

In reply to a query, he said all the country's achievements came under the AL leadership.

On the other hand, BNP joined hands with anti-liberation forces, against the Liberation War's spirit, said Hasan, also Awami League's joint general secretary.

The minister urged all to remain alert against those who are patronising anti-liberation forces.

AL destroying the Language Movement spirit

Alleges Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday accused the Awami League government of destroying the spirit of the Language Movement.

"This is our bad luck that now there's a government in power which has distorted the spirit of Amar Ekushey. It has snatched the right to vote and freedom of speech," said BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

Talking to reporters after paying homage to language martyrs by placing wreaths at the altar of Central Shaheed Minar, he also said the current government is crippling the country's economy.



Back from the morning procession at Shaheed Minar, many walked right into the Boi Mela yesterday. A large number of children were seen browsing through the stalls and pavilions with their parents, dressed in clothes that reflected the spirit of the day.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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We can't trust them

FROM PAGE 3
current one is putting irrational pressure on ACC officials," it added. "We're being asked to submit three reports each month. The frequent issuance of show-cause and DP is damaging the work environment."

"An investigation officer is burdened with 40/50 inquiries and investigations. On top of that, the irrational pressure of submitting three reports each month is affecting us both mentally and physically," the letter reads.

Referring to the investigation report goes against the will of a DG or high-up. Sometimes, we're asked not to press charges on a particular person."

Pointing out little progress in the BASIC Bank scam, he said, "In many cases, we're asked by high-ups to go slow or change our case priority. Later on, when we give our explanation regarding the cases, they are not accepted, and we're show-caused."

In the letter, the association requested ACC chairman to withdraw the revision appeal on the removal of section 54(2).

At a press conference on Sunday, ACC Secretary Mahbub Hossain said the commission will not apply the section in a wholesale manner.

"We're assuring them that it will not be applied on everyone," he said, adding that officials need not be afraid.

8,000 books gone

FROM PAGE 5
"We took the idea," he said, adding that in this journey, students of different schools joined them.

They held their first book fair in 2021 at the

same spot, where they distributed some 3,000 books.

During the fair, they also distributed books among children of the city's slum areas.

The first bastion

FROM PAGE 5
few politically conscious students of DMCH spontaneously decided to build the minar. Immediately, they got down to planning it. The first issue was getting a design, but this was soon sorted.

"Ekushey'r Prothom". His mother was the first to lay down a garland of marigold there, while late Professor Emeritus Dr Anisuzzaman's mother Syeda Khatun was the first to donate her gold ornaments for it.

Today, along with the aforementioned dispensary, the spot is taken up by a staff union office and food shops.

Language Movement researcher Ghulam Quddus told The Daily Star, "The Shaheed Minar has become more than just a monument. It's a symbol of our nation's existence, and a symbol of one's love for their mother tongue. To preserve the memory of the first, a replica could be erected at the same spot or beside the Central Shaheed Minar."

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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল
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E-mail: eebar@rhd.gov.bd
স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.০৬৫১.৪০৩.০৭.০১৯.১৯-৫৪১ তারিখঃ ২০/০২/২০২২খ্রিঃ

ফেরিঘাটের ইজারা কোটেশন আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি (১১তম আহবান)

০১। ইজারা কোটেশন নং	০৯ (ইজারা)/বিআরডি/২০২০-২০২১
০২। ইজারার বিবরণ	বরিশাল সড়ক বিভাগাধীন বরিশাল (দিনারপুর)-লক্ষীপাশা-দুমকী সড়কের ৪র্থ কি.মি. এর নিকটবর্তী কাটাদিয়া বাস টার্মিনাল সংলগ্ন কাটাদিয়া ফেরিঘাটের টোল আদায়ের জন্য ইজারা প্রদান।
০৩। ইজারা চুক্তির মেয়াদ	৩ (তিন) অর্থ বছর (১০৯৬ দিন)
০৪। ইজারা কোটেশনের সিডিউল মূল্য	টাঃ ১,০০০.০০ (এক হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
০৫। জামানতের টাকার পরিমাণ	উক্ত মূল্যের ১০% (শতকরা দশ ভাগ) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার আকারে।
০৬। ইজারা কোটেশন বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৮/০৩/২০২২ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
০৭। মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় ইজারা কোটেশন গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৯/০৩/২০২২ খ্রিস্টাব্দ তারিখ দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
০৮। ইজারা ডাকে অংশগ্রহণের যোগ্যতা	ভ্যাট ও আয়কর সনদস্বামী প্রতিষ্ঠান/নাগরিক, সরকারি/বেসরকারি/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত সর্ব প্রকৌশলীর ঠিকাদার।
০৯। যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন প্রদানের জন্য পাওয়া যাবে	বিভাগীয় কমিশনার, বরিশাল/জেলা প্রশাসক, বরিশাল/নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল/জেলা/আলাউল্লাহ/পিরোজপুর/প্রানিং বিভাগ-১, সড়ক ভবন, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা/উপ-বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ-১/২, বরিশাল।
১০। যে সকল কার্যালয়ে ইজারা কোটেশন মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় গ্রহণ করা হবে	(ক) বিভাগীয় কমিশনার, বরিশাল। (খ) অতিরিক্ত প্রধান প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, বরিশাল জোন, বরিশাল। (গ) তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক সার্কেল, বরিশাল। (ঘ) নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল। (ঙ) জেলা প্রশাসক, বরিশাল।
১১। ইজারা কোটেশন খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	স্থানঃ নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল। তারিখঃ ০৮/০৩/২০২২খ্রিঃ। সময়ঃ ০৩:০০ ঘটিকা।
১২। ইজারা কোটেশন আহবানকারী যে কোন সময় কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন কোটেশন/সকল কোটেশন বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	

মাসুদ মাহমুদ সূমন
পরিচিতি নং-৬০২১৬৫
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল

জিডি-৩৪৪

জমি বিক্রয়/ভাড়া
ভানুকা-ময়মনসিংহ হাইওয়ে থেকে ১০কি.মি. ভিতরে ৪৪০ বিঘা এলাকা/সি উপযোগী জমি বিক্রয়/ভাড়া হবে।
যোগাযোগ: ০১৩০২১৩৪১৯

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College Education Development Project (CEDP)
IDG Sub-Project
Ananda Mohan College, Mymensingh
Email: anandamohan1908cedp@gmail.com
Memo No. AMC/CEDP-IDG-135
Date: 20-02-2022

e-Tender Notice: CEDP/AMC/2021-2022/001
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following package:

Sl. No.	Re-Tender ID No.	Name of supply	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	664189	Procurement of furniture & fixture at Ananda Mohan College (Goods) G-14	07 March/2022 11:30pm	07 March/2022 12.30:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to 06 March/2022. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Professor Md. Aman Ullah
Principal
Ananda Mohan College, Mymensingh
Phone: 091-66769
E-mail: anandamohan1908cedp@gmail.com
GD-342

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
District Primary Education Office
Satkhira
http://dpe.satkhira.gov.bd
Memo No. dpeo/satkhira/nngps/-287
Date: 16.02.2022

e-Tender Notice No. 01/2021-22
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of following works:

Sl. No.	Name of scheme	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Tender/proposal document last selling/ downloading date & time	Tender/ proposal closing date & time	Remarks
1.	Goods, Supply of Furniture for additional classrooms and Teacher's rooms of Newly Nationalized Government Primary School's Constructed under NBIDNNGPSP-1 Project of ASASUNI, KALIGONJ, TALA, DEBHATA & SHYAMNAGR Upazila under SATKHIRA District FY-2021-2022	649526	e-Tender/ NBIDNNGP SP1/SAT/20 21-22 G1-01	15-Mar-2022 17:00	16-Mar-2022 12:00	OTM
2.	Goods, Supply of Furniture for additional classrooms and Teacher's rooms of Newly Nationalized Government Primary School's Constructed under NBIDNNGPSP-1 Project of ASASUNI, KALIGONG, TALA, DEBHATA, SHYAMNAGR & SADAR Upazila under SATKHIRA District FY-2021-2022	649527	e-Tender/ NBIDNNGP SP1/SAT/20 21-22 G1-02	15-Mar-2022 17:00	16-Mar-2022 12:00	OTM

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. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for tender/proposal document to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Ruhul Amin
District Primary Education Officer
Satkhira
Ph: 0471-63439
Email: dpeosatk@gmail.com
GD-339

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়
সামাজিক বন বিভাগ, রাজশাহী
www.forest.raishahi.gov.bd

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

০১। মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	: পরিবেশ, বন ও জলবায়ু পরিবর্তন মন্ত্রণালয়।
০২। এজেন্সি	: বন অধিদপ্তর, বাংলাদেশ।
০৩। দরপত্র আহবানকারী	: বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা, সামাজিক বন বিভাগ, রাজশাহী।
০৪। দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম ও পদবী	: মোঃ রফিকুজ্জামান শাহ, বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা, সামাজিক বন বিভাগ, রাজশাহী।
০৫। কাজের নাম	: রাজশাহী/নাটোর/নওগাঁ/টাঙ্গাইল/বাবুগঞ্জ জেলার বিভিন্ন উপজেলায় সামাজিক বনায়নের খাড়া গাছ, ঝাড়পড়া ও বিভিন্নভাবে আহরিত/জন্মকৃত এবং গত নিলামের অবিক্রিত কাঠ বিক্রয়।
০৬। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর ও তারিখ	: ০৬ অব ২০২১-২০২২ তারিখঃ ২০/০২/২০২২খ্রিঃ।
০৭। দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	: উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র।
০৮। দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ	: ২০/০২/২০২২খ্রিঃ।
০৯। দরপত্র প্রদানের শেষ তারিখ	: ১৩/০৩/২০২২খ্রিঃ।
১০। দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের স্থান	: বন সংরক্ষক, সামাজিক বন অঞ্চল, বগুড়া ও রেঞ্জ কর্মকর্তা, পাইকবান্দা রেঞ্জ/সাপাহার রেঞ্জ এবং ভারপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা, পবা/চারঘাট/নাটোর/ বাগাতিপাড়া/টাঙ্গাইল/বাবুগঞ্জ/নাচোল/নওগাঁ/নিয়ামতপুর এস.এফ.এন.টি.সি এর দপ্তর হইতে (ছুটির দিন ব্যতিত) অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে।
১১। দরপত্র জমাদানের স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	: বন সংরক্ষক, সামাজিক বন অঞ্চল, বগুড়া/জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, রাজশাহী/নাটোর/টাঙ্গাইল/বাবুগঞ্জ/নওগাঁ ও বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা, রাজশাহীর দপ্তরে রক্ষিত দরপত্র বাঞ্ছ। তারিখঃ ১৪/০৩/২০২২ সময়ঃ সকাল ১০.০০টা হইতে দুপুর ১.০০টা পর্যন্ত।
১২। দরপত্র বাজ্ঞ খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	: বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, সামাজিক বন বিভাগ, রাজশাহী। তারিখঃ ১৫/০৩/২০২২, সময়ঃ সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা।
১৩। দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	: প্রকৃত কাঠ ব্যবসায়ী/বেধ 'স' মিলের মালিক/বেধ ফার্নিচার মার্ট মালিক/ সামাজিক বনায়নের উপকারভোগী সদস্য।
১৪। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি সম্পর্কে বিস্তারিত তথ্য	: রেঞ্জ কর্মকর্তা, পাইকবান্দা রেঞ্জ/সাপাহার রেঞ্জ এবং ভারপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা, পবা/চারঘাট/নাটোর/ বাগাতিপাড়া/টাঙ্গাইল/বাবুগঞ্জ/ নাচোল/নওগাঁ/ নিয়ামতপুর এস.এফ.এন.টি.সি এর দপ্তর হতে (ছুটির দিন ব্যতিত) অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে জানা যাবে।
১৫। কাজের বিবরণ	: সংশ্লিষ্ট দপ্তরে রক্ষিত কাজের তফসিল।

১৬.০২.২০২২
মোঃ রফিকুজ্জামান শাহ
পরিচিতি নং-১৩২৫৫
বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা
সামাজিক বন বিভাগ, রাজশাহী
ফোন নং-০২-৫৮৮৮৬২৫০০
ই-মেইল নংঃ divisionalforestraj@gmail.com
জিডি-৩৩৮

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ এর কার্যালয়
সড়ক বিভাগ, শরীয়তপুর
ফোন - ০৬০১-৬১৪০৬/ই-মেইলঃ esar@rhd.gov.bd
তারিখঃ ২০/০২/২০২২

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the below works.

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of work/package description	Last selling date & time	Opening date & time	Remarks
663661	e-GP/25/EE/SRD/2021-2022	Strengthening with Carpeting & Seal Coat Work at Ch. 4+700 to 5+100 & Ch. 5+500 to 6+500 of Naria-Pathanbari-Nayan Madbar Kandi-Dogri-Shawra (Z-8607) Road under Shariatpur Road Division, during the year 2021-2022.	08-03-2022 16:00am	09-03-2022 14:00pm	Only online tender
663653	e-GP/26/EE/SRD/2021-2022	Strengthening with Carpeting & Seal Coat Work at Ch. 3+400 to 4+600 of Naria-Pathanbari-Nayan Madbar Kandi-Dogri-Shawra (Z-8607) Road under Shariatpur Road Division, during the year 2021-2022.	08-03-2022 16:00am	09-03-2022 14:30pm	Only online tender
663644	e-GP/27/EE/SRD/2021-2022	Widening Road by Rigid Pavement (One Side) at Shariatpur-Gonganagor-Mongalmazirghat Road at Ch. 10+900m to 11+150m & Ch. 14+600m to 15+100m under Shariatpur Road Division, during the year 2021-2022.	08-03-2022 16:00am	09-03-2022 15:00pm	Only online tender

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

Bhuiya Redwanur Rahman
ID No. 602254
Executive Engineer (c.c.), RHD
Road Division, Shariatpur
জিডি-৩৪৩

Ctg observes Feb 21 at makeshift Shaheed Minar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time in 60 years, Chattogram residents paid tribute to the language martyrs by placing floral wreaths at a makeshift monument built at Chattogram Municipal Model School and College Ground yesterday.

The Central Shaheed Minar at KC Dey Road is under renovation, for which a makeshift monument was opened on February 5 by mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury.

The government took a project worth Tk 232 crore to establish a cultural complex in the area in 2018. The mayor expects the renovation works will be completed in 9 months.



At the very same spot of Dhaka's first Shaheed Minar, stands a DMCH dispensary. No semblance of the monument can be found there at present, to remind people of the location's significance.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The Language Movement did not just come to be. Behind the historic movement, that brought about a turn of events for Bangladesh, are a million stories – of people, of premises, of places. In this 10-part series, we explore some of the places and premises vital to the movement. Establishments that we've lost to time, buildings that today bear no sign of the glories they once played host to. For the last part of the series, we take you to Dhaka's first Shaheed Minar, erected at DMCH on February 23, but demolished only three days later.

MOHSIN COLLEGE Two BCL factions clash over placing wreaths

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two factions of Chhatra League at Hazi Mohammad Mohsin College of Chattogram clashed yesterday over placing floral wreaths on the campus Shaheed Minar.

The incident took place around 11:30am.

"On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. No one was hurt in the incident," said OC Ferdous Jahan of Chawkbazar Police Station.

DIPAN NANDY

The bloodstains on the streets were still fresh. All of East Pakistan was boiling over the massacre of February 21. In a spontaneous move, students of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) built the city's first Shaheed Minar to immortalise the martyrs.

The monument was demolished by police after just three days. But what they could not erase was its place in history.

Unfortunately, today, a dispensary of DMCH stands at the same place, with no signs or memorials to remind us of its significance.

It can be known from history that the minar was completed on February 23, 1952, a result of a night's labour of the students. It was known as the Shaheed

The first bastion of hope and strength



Smriti Stambha. At the request of DMCH Chhatra Union VP Golam Mawla and GM Sharfuddin, its design was done by Dr Badrul Alam.

The next morning, it was first inaugurated by language martyr Shafiur Rahman's father Mahbubur Rahman. Two days later, it was officially inaugurated by "Azad" editor Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, the first to resign from the East Pakistan Parishad in protest of February 21's events.

Right after its completion, it became a bastion of hope and strength for the protestors. Afraid of the power it posed, the government moved to demolish it on February 26. On the same day, poet Alauddin Al Azad wrote the piece "Smriti Stambha" in protest.

Language veteran Ahmad Rafiq said a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

8,000 books gone in 4.5hrs

ANWAR ALL, Rajshahi

A huge crowd of readers gathered at Rajshahi's Circuit House yesterday, amid a sea of books. The book fair – Pustak Poth – did not expect that it would have to welcome so many people.

This whole arrangement was the initiative of a group of school students, who collected 8,000 books from others in the last month to distribute them among residents for free.

And those very books vanished in just four and a half hours.

Hundreds of residents, young and old, stood in long queues to get their books. Not only volunteers, but police also had to help manage the overflowing crowd.

"We're happy to witness the overwhelming response to our idea,"



said Md Hasin Anjum, one of the organising students.

Everyone was allowed into the fair, but the visitors were asked to collect a maximum of two books and a magazine.

The fair started at 11:00am and was scheduled to end at 5:00pm, but organisers had to end it at 3:30pm, after running out of books.

Four students of different schools – Hasin, Tasnia Jahim Ahona, Sindid Ahmed and Naima Tasneem Ava – launched a Facebook group, Mind Castle, in the middle of 2020, when they had to stay indoors due to the pandemic.

"Our initial goal was to read books and bring out an English magazine," Hasin said, adding that they have so far published seven issues of their magazine.

They learnt that there was a spot in Canada, where people leave books for others to collect.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Principal
Thakurgaon Polytechnic Institute, Thakurgaon
Phone: 0561-61400, Email: thakurgaonpolytech@gmail.com
Ref. No. Thak-PI/Tender/2021-22/2022/95 Date: 20.02.2022

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods describe below:

Sl. No.	Tender ID/Reference No.	Name of tender	Last date and time for tender/proposal security submission	Publishing date & time Closing date & time
1	663642, 57.03.9400.301.18.22-93 17.02.22	Procurement of office equipment	08-Mar-2022 16:00	22-Feb-2022 12:00:00, 09-Mar-2022 12:30:00
2	663612, 57.03.9400.301.18.22-92 17.02.22	Procurement of computer equipment	08-Mar-2022 16:00	22-Feb-2022 12:00:00, 09-Mar-2022 12:30:00
3	663587, 57.03.9400.301.18.22-91 17.02.22	Procurement of furniture	08-Mar-2022 16:00	22-Feb-2022 12:00:00, 09-Mar-2022 12:00:00
4	663521, 57.03.9400.301.18.22-90 17.02.22	Procurement of educational equipment	08-Mar-2022 16:00	22-Feb-2022 12:00:00, 09-Mar-2022 12:00:00

1) This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
2) To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.
3) The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal to be deposited through any registered bank's branch.
4) Further information and guidelines are available in National e-GP System Portal helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd

20.02.2022
Engr. Md. Maksudur Rahman
Principal
Thakurgaon Polytechnic Institute
Thakurgaon

GD-337

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.
Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal

INVITATION FOR TENDER (OTM)

01.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Shipping				
02.	Agency	Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal				
03.	Procuring Entity Name	Commandant, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal				
04.	Procuring Entity Code	-				
05.	Procuring Entity District	Barishal				
06.	Invitation For	Supply of Goods and related service mentioned below				
07.	Invitation Ref. No.	18.24.0651.001.07.002.2021-22				
08.	Date	20-02-2022				
09.	Procurement Method	National Open Tendering Method (OTM)				
10.	Procurement Nature	Goods and service				
11.	Budget & Source of Fund	GOB				
12.	Development Partner(if applicable)	N/A				
13.	Project/ Programme Code	N/A				
14.	Project/ Programme Name	N/A				
15.	Tender Package No.	Package No-OTM-05/2021-22				
16.	Tender Package Name	As mentioned at Serial No. 29 and in the Tender Schedule.				
17.	Tender Publication Date	On 22-02-2022 or before.				
18.	Tender Last Selling Date	06-03-2022 (office hour).				
19.	Tender Closing date and time.	07-03-2022 on 12.00 Noon.				
20.	Tender Opening date and time	07-03-2022 on or after 12.30 pm.				
21.	Name and Address of the office for Selling tender documents	Admin Office, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal.				
22.	Name and Address of the office for receiving tender documents	Admin Office, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal.				
23.	Name and Address of the office for Opening tender documents	Admin Office, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal.				
24.	Place/Date/Time of pre-tender Meeting	Conference room, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal. Date: 27-02-2022 Time- 11.00 am.				
25.	Eligibility of tenderer	All eligible persons/Contractors/ Firms who have fulfilled the qualification criteria stipulated in the tender data sheet and other conditions of the tender documents with experience.				
26.	Brief Description of goods or works	As mentioned at Serial No. 29 and in the Tender Schedule.				
27.	Brief Description of Related Services	As mentioned at Serial No. 29 and in the Tender Schedule.				
28.	Tender Document Price	Schedule price mentioned below, non-refundable DD/PO in favour of the Commandant, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal (Drawable Sonali Bank Ltd, Barishal University Branch) is to be submitted.				
29.	Lot	Identifications of Lot Location Tender Security (DD/PO, Re-fundable) Schedule Price (DD/PO, Non re-fundable) Completion Time in days/m onths				
OTM-05/2021-22	Lot-1	Vehicle Rental Services for Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal (Re-tender) Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal	70,000.00	1000.00	30 Days	
	Lot-2	Supply of text books for cadets	-Do-	5,000.00	500.00	30 Days
	Lot-3	Supply of manpower through outsourcing	-Do-	50,000.00	1000.00	30 Days
	Lot-4	Supply of gift items	-Do-	12,500.00	500.00	30 Days
30.	Name of official Inviting Tender	Capt. S M Atiqur Rahman, BN				
31.	Designation of official Inviting Tender	Commandant.				
32.	Address of official Inviting Tender	Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal, Barishal-8254.				
33.	Contact details of official Inviting Tender	Commandant, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal. Ph-01324241700, e-mail- commandant.bmab@gmail.com				
34.	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.					

GD-341

Commandant
Bangladesh Marine Academy, Barishal

Why English?

Official letters sent to tea workers in language they can't even understand

MINTU DESHWARA

For a group of people whose most members haven't even gone to school, many tea workers of the country are forced to maintain official communication with their employers in English.

As bizarre as it may sound, this is happening in most of the tea gardens, for decades. Understandably, this language barrier has become a major issue for the workers.

Currently, over 1.40 lakh workers are employed across 166 tea gardens in the country. Most of them are in Moulvibazar, Habiganj and Sylhet, according to the statistical handbook on Bangladesh Tea Industry 2019.

Most of these gardens were established way back during the colonial period. As the then employers were British, they used to communicate in English. But even after 75 years of their exit and 50 years of Bangladesh's independence, the practice is still here, said workers and researchers. Whenever tea garden authorities issue any official letter, order or directive to workers, they are written in English. But as almost all workers are unfamiliar with the language, the documents end up not serving their purpose.

In case a response is needed, the workers take the documents to someone who knows English and have them read it for them and write its response. "This leads to a loss in privacy. When someone gets an official letter stating something personal, like termination or wage negotiations, the information ends up spreading to everyone," said Nipen Paul, acting GS of Cha Sramik Union.

If the letters are issued in Bangla, at least some of the workers' family members would be able to read and explain it to them. Asked, Golam Mohammad Shibly, chairman of the Sylhet chapter of Bangladesh Cha Sangsad, a platform of tea garden owners, said, "We have already asked all garden authorities to issue letters in Bangla."

Researcher Philip Gain raised questions about the very legality of such letters in English, citing that the original Labour Act-2006 is in Bangla.

Mahbubul Hasan, DIG of department of inspection for factories, said none has so far filed any complaints in this regard. "If anyone does, we will take necessary measures."

In case a response is needed, the workers take the documents to someone who knows English and have them read it for them and write its response.



Iqbal Ahmed, Shaheen Samad, Minakshi, Lata and Sadya Afreen Mallick during Chhayanaut's celebration of Independence Day at the Central Shahid Minar.

From prisoner of war to CULTURAL ICON

Ekushey Padak awardee Iqbal Ahmed relives his wartime story



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

"They recorded with sophisticated instruments, as I sang 'Amar Shonar Bangla' and 'Biplob er Rokte Rangano'. Little did I know that it was heard throughout the interrogation center with their powerful speakers."

In 1970, a young Rabindra Sangeet singer caused a sensation, when his rendition of "Jani Jani Tumi" made its way to number one rank on the country's best-selling chart. This feat shattered the general assumption that Rabindra Sangeet was not "commercially viable". Only a year later, he was imprisoned and tortured by the Pakistani Army, formally accused of "inciting the people with nationalistic and revolutionary songs".

Iqbal Ahmed's legacy, however, started in the late 1960s, when he led spirited groups of activists in favour of our Independence movement—not with weapons, but with the power of Gono Sangeet (patriotic songs for the masses) and Rabindra Sangeet. A student of the Department of Economics at Dhaka University, the cultural secretary of DUCSU (Dhaka University Central Students' Union), and a leading member of Sangskritik Sansad, a progressive cultural body of DU, Iqbal Ahmed would play a role in the mass uprising of 1969 with his deep, roaring voice.

His fearless presence in the cultural arena, which extended to just days before West Pakistan launched a genocide upon us, had brought him in their crosshairs. In fact, he had delivered memorable Gono Sangeet performances on television only two days prior to the military operation. He also created an impact in the programme titled "Nobin er Aloke", where his powerful speech about oppression and economic deprivation of Bengalis, inspired many watching the programme.

"At three in the morning sometime in May, they (the Pakistani army) knocked on our door, asking for me and my brothers," said Iqbal Ahmed, speaking with The Daily Star at their family residence in Gulshan, remembering the day on which he was

arrested. "Who is Wahidul Haque?" demanded an officer from the Field Interrogation Unit (FIU), when Iqbal was brought in for questioning. "Did you go to India with him?"

Iqbal, also a student of Chhayanaut's third batch, and later an instructor there, was mentored by the likes of Sanjida Khatun, Wahidul Haque, Zahidur Rahim, Sheikh Lutfor Rahman, Altaf Mahmud, and Kalim Sharafi. He, alongside his troupe of singers, was the central figure of the cultural activities of the Sarbadaliya Chhatra Sangram Parishad (All Party Student Action Committee) and its programmes, delivering patriotic slogans and singing their hearts out at jump-packed venues like the Paltan *maydan* and the Shahid Minar.

Alongside other cultural activists and students, they would go around the city in places like New Market, Azimpur, Gopibag, Farmgate, Sadarghat etc, in open defiance of the administration.

"As they interrogated me, I understood that they had been monitoring me, as Wahid bhai did ask me to go to India to lead a Gono Sangeet group there," asserted the singer. The brutal atrocities and tortures committed in the camp, over 7 months in 1971, left him traumatised.

"Where do I even start? The day I was transferred to the 'prisoner of war' camp, they had asked us (the prisoners) to do a 'frog jump' across the field. I was obviously not accustomed to this. I faltered after two steps. As a soldier started thrashing me with the butt of his rifle, I somehow crawled through," said Iqbal. "I felt like I had received an electric shock. It turned out that he had kicked me on my spine, with full force."

On the same day, the captors once took the singer to an empty spot in the field, and asked him to shout "Iqbal Gaddar!" (Traitor Iqbal!) "Before I could understand what was going on, one of them took a hold of me, as if to hug me. The other thrashed me so hard, so mercilessly, that I sustained internal injuries," he said. "As I tried to get up, bleeding from the ears, I felt like my head was exploding. He noted that even after undergoing

purpose of documenting evidence against him.

"They recorded with sophisticated instruments, as I sang 'Amar Shonar Bangla' and 'Biplob er Rokte Rangano'. Little did I know that it was heard throughout the interrogation center with their powerful speakers," reminisced Iqbal. "I was so weak from the beatings they gave me, that I could barely sing. However, at that point, I was instilled with pride—it was a unique experience."

Unbeknownst to him, all the prisoners at the center had heard him, and had derived courage from his voice. The incident had been narrated and documented by a Bengali CSP officer, who was interrogated in the same building, at that time.

"Towards the end of October, I was transferred from the army prison camp in the cantonment, to the Dhaka Central Jail. I don't know why, but life changed for the better from then on," he said. "As the end came near, we used to hear the sound of bombing by plane, and rumours would float around that the end of the Pakistani oppression was near. We heard flares and gunshots, and knew that we were nearing victory. However, a fear still lurked, whether or not they would kill us before the Mukti Bahini could reach us?"

On December 16, the jailor let the prisoners know that Pakistan had officially surrendered at the Race Course field.



Iqbal Ahmed with Qayyum Chowdhury, during an album launch ceremony in 2003.

"We got out on December 17, and as the Mukti Bahini supposedly tore through the gate, I saw some of the jailors change into a convict's uniform, in order to escape scrutiny!"

As Iqbal Ahmed walked free after eight months of inhuman torture, not knowing where exactly his parents were living, the singer went to his aunt's residence in Dhanmondi. His parents picked him up later that afternoon. "After an emotional reunion, we went home to many visitors, who had come to rejoice with us. Suddenly, a microbus belonging to a television channel came by, and out emerged Mustafizur Rahman, Sakhina Akhtar and another producer."

"They informed me that they were about to start Bangladesh Television, and wanted me to participate in its first musical programme. When I reached the station, I met Babu bhai (Zahidur Rahim) and Bilkis Nasiruddin, two of my mentors, and they wanted me to take the lead," smiled Iqbal. "Your mentors asking you to take the lead in their presence, there is nothing quite like it."

After our independence, the eminent singer represented Bangladesh in important delegations, including 1972's "Maitree Mela" held in Kolkata, and the Berlin Youth Festival in 1973, after receiving blessings from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman himself. In 1973, he received the Ford Foundation Scholarship to study in Cambridge University, from where he obtained his PhD in Economics.

The many renditions of Rabindra Sangeet and Gono Sangeet recorded in his voice still endure as an exemplary mix of power and grace, as evident in his HMV records in 1970, and CDs published by Bengal Foundation and Asia Foundation in later years.

For all of Iqbal Ahmed's talent, contribution, and sacrifices, his Ekushey Padak this year only cements the fact that the artiste is not only a musical force, but also a cultural icon who showed courage and fought for our country, when it was most needed.

Interviewed by **Mahfuz Anam**, Editor & Publisher, The Daily Star, and **Sadi Mohammad Shahnewaz**

'Amar Bhashar Chalachchitra 1428' kicks starts at TSC

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The 20th edition of 'Amar Bhashar Chalachchitra 1428', organised by Dhaka University Film Society (DUFS), starts today. The will take place at the TSC premises of Dhaka University and will end on February 26.

The largest festival of Bangla language films will commence on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, with the screening of Satyajit Ray's "Agantuk". The day will also feature the screening of Giasuddin Selim's "Monpura" Masud Hasan Ujjal's "Unonchash Batash", and Abdullah Mohammad Saad's "Rehana Maryam Noor".

Nineteen contemporary and classic feature films, and one documentary, including "Nonajoler Kabbo", "Raat Jaga Phool", "Lal Moroger Jhuti", "Mujib Amar Pita", and "Chandrabati Kotha", will be screened at the five-day festival. The tickets will be available at the venue.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

'Payer Tolay Mati Nai' to screen in six international film festivals

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

After screening in the 26th Busan International Film Festival and 52nd Goa International Film Festival, the film "Payer Tolay Mati Nai" will be previewed in six international film festivals in three countries (Japan, India and Nepal).

They are—17th Osaka Asian Film Festival, 13th Bengaluru International Film Festival, 20th Pune International Film Festival, 6th Orange City International Film Festival, Latur International Film Festival, and 5th Nepal International Film Festival.

Produced by Abu Shahed Emon, it is Mohammad Rabby Mridha's debut directorial. Beginning from March 3, the film will be showcased in these festivals, during the entire month.

In association with Impress Telefilm and Batayan Productions, the film is presented by Box Office and produced by Golpo Rajjo Films.

The film stars Deepanwita Martin, Mostafa Monwar, and Priyam Archi among others.

Beshi Joss Customs launches their first signature guitar series

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Beshi Joss Customs recently launched their first signature series guitar. 'KFA Lunatic Series' of Kazi Faisal Ahmed from Artcell, who is also the first endorsed artiste for 'Reuben Custom Guitars' by Beshi Joss Customs.

Beshi Joss Customs is the only local musical instrument manufacturer company, that endorsed an artiste from Bangladesh.

"Seeing Faisal bhai play our guitar on stage is the proudest moment for my team and me," the founder of Beshi Joss Customs Nafeez Al Amin expressed.

Kazi Faisal Ahmed from Artcell and Shakib Chowdhury from Cryptic Fate were present at the launching ceremony. Beshi Joss Customs hosted the launching event in collaboration with Music Point. Primarily, the guitar will be available in four colours: white, black, bumblebee yellow, and blood red. It is priced at BDT 27,000.



(L) Iqbal Ahmed (Centre) plays the harmonium, singing Gano Sangeet on a truck. (R) An article highlighting Iqbal Ahmed's rendition of 'Jani Jani Tumi', reaching number one rank on the national chart.



arrested. "My uncle and aunt were visiting us at the time. I thought of escaping, jumping off the second floor balcony, but saw numerous soldiers stationed around the house, pointing their guns at us."

Iqbal's father, Dr M Ishaque, was the director of the Jute Research Institute, where they lived. "They showed respect to him at first, making it seem like a routine check. An officer even pretended to my father that it had to be some kind of a mistake, and they would soon let us go," he recalled.

The army took Iqbal, his two brothers, his uncle and a male house help, but later released the others after several days of long, targeted questionings. "When I heard one of them shout 'Yeh saala gaddar hain' (This man is a traitor), I instantly knew that the arrest was not random," said the singer.

Iqbal spent the night in an army "safe house", and was later imprisoned with more than 350 others at a war prisoners' camp in

medical treatment and surgery in Switzerland, years after the war, he could not fully recover.

One day, Iqbal recalls, he caught a lucky break when, before a torture session, he was assigned to kitchen duty.

"As they were about to take us there, a soldier came and asked for a 'clean' person, who could carry water back and forth from the kitchen. I was picked, and while I was carrying the heavy jerrycans, he asked me why I was imprisoned. To my utter shock, he told me that we were doing the right thing," said Iqbal, who initially thought that it was a trap.

"I think that person actually saved me from a lot of torture on that particular occasion; but to this day, I don't know why he did it. I think he belonged to the Baloch regiment."

Perhaps the most poetic moment of the singer's imprisonment came when he was taken to the Field Interrogation Center (FIC), and was asked to record some songs for the

UN TOP COURT Myanmar hits out at Rohingya genocide case

AFP, The Hague

Myanmar yesterday hit out at a genocide case brought against it by The Gambia for alleged persecution of Rohingya Muslims, urging the UN's highest court to drop the claim on legal grounds.

Banjul dragged Myanmar before the International Court of Justice in 2019, accusing the predominantly Buddhist country of genocide against the Rohingya Muslim minority after a bloody 2017 military crackdown.

When the case opened in December 2019 Aung San Suu Kyi personally represented Myanmar at the Hague-based ICJ, but she was ousted as the Asian country's civilian leader in a military coup last year.

"Myanmar is... not seeking to impede the judicial process of the court," its agent Ko Ko Hlaing told the judges in the imposing courtroom at the Peace Palace in The Hague.

"On the contrary it is seeking to answer the proper administration of justice," Myanmar's international cooperation minister said. Both Hlaing, who was in court and Myanmar's attorney general Thida Oo, who was attending virtually, have been hit with US sanctions over the coup.

Christopher Staker, another lawyer for Myanmar, said the ICJ did not have the jurisdiction because it was not a case brought by two states, as required by the ICJ's statutes. "The court lacks jurisdiction and... the application is inadmissible because the real applicant in these proceedings is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation," Staker said.



Demonstrators gather at the White House to protest against the rising tensions between Russia and Ukraine in Washington, DC on Sunday. Attendees called for US President Joe Biden to take a stronger stance on deterring Russia from invading Ukraine and demanded the end of Russia's occupation of Crimea.

PHOTO: AFP

Pak clamps down on fake news

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's government has introduced a new cybercrime law that could see social media users jailed for up to five years for posting "fake news" about the military, judiciary or public officials.

Critics say the legislation is the latest example of creeping restrictions on freedom of expression in the nation, already ranked among the world's most dangerous for media workers.

It was approved by Prime Minister Imran Khan's cabinet and swiftly adopted into law by President Arif Alvi over the weekend, an official in the presidential office said yesterday.

UKRAINE INVASION THREAT

Russia plans to target dissidents, US tells UN

AFP, Washington

The United States has warned the United Nations it has information that Russia has lists of Ukrainians "to be killed or sent to camps" in the event of an invasion, according to a letter sent to the UN rights chief and obtained by AFP Sunday.

The letter, which came as Washington warned of an imminent invasion by Russian troops massed near the Ukrainian border, said the United States is "deeply concerned" and warns of a potential "human rights catastrophe."

The United States has "credible information that indicates Russian forces are creating lists of identified Ukrainians to be killed or sent to camps following a military occupation," the letter said.

"We also have credible information that

Russian forces will likely use lethal measures to disperse peaceful protests or otherwise counter peaceful exercises of perceived resistance from civilian populations," said the message, addressed to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet.

The note, signed by Bathsheba Nell Crocker, US ambassador to the UN in Geneva, warns a Russian invasion of Ukraine could bring with it abuses such as kidnappings or torture, and could target political dissidents and religious and ethnic minorities, among others.

Russia has placed more than 150,000 troops near Ukraine's borders in recent weeks, the United States and Western

allies have estimated. Moscow denies it plans to attack its neighbour, but is seeking a guarantee that Ukraine will never join Nato and that the Western alliance will remove forces from Eastern Europe, demands the West has refused.



INDIA HIJAB ROW Amit Shah prefers school uniforms

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's home minister said he favoured students wearing uniforms in school rather than any religious attire, but that his position might change once a court decides on the merits of a ban on the hijab in schools in the state of Karnataka. The ban imposed by Karnataka on February 5 has sparked protests by Muslim students and parents, and counter-protests by Hindu students, forcing authorities to close schools there earlier this month. Home Minister Amit Shah told Network18 that he would accept any court verdict on the matter. "It is my personal belief that people of all religions should accept the school's dress code," Shah said.

Taliban aiming to create 'grand army'

AFP, Kabul

The Taliban are creating a "grand army" for Afghanistan that will include officers and troops who served the old regime, the official tasked with overseeing the military's transformation said yesterday. Latifullah Hakimi, head of the

Taliban's Ranks Clearance Commission, also told a news conference they had repaired half the 81 helicopters and planes supposedly rendered unserviceable by US-led forces during last year's chaotic withdrawal. He said Taliban forces took control of more than 300,000 light arms, 26,000 heavy weapons and around 61,000 military vehicles during their lightning takeover of the country.

Afghanistan's armed forces disintegrated last summer in the face of a Taliban onslaught ahead of the August 31 US-led force withdrawal -- often abandoning their bases and leaving behind all their weapons and vehicles. The Taliban have promised a general amnesty for everyone linked to the old regime.



Dhaka, Delhi

FROM PAGE 12

commerce, customs and home affairs in March and April. Then, there will be the Joint Consultative Commission meeting in Delhi.

"These are all parts of preparations for the prime minister's visit to Delhi," said a foreign ministry official, adding that this visit could be in September or October.

During his visit to Bangladesh in March last year, Indian PM Narendra Modi invited Hasina to visit India this year.

High nitrate

FROM PAGE 2

animals being infected with pneumonia, which resulted in their deaths.

"We had suggested to supply mature grass to the animals after drying it for a day, and there has been no report of any problem since January 29," said Noor Ali.

He also informed that 25 zebras were brought to the park in 2013 and after breeding, the number increased to 50 until 2017. But 32 zebras died since then, including the 11 in January this year.

The probe report also made some recommendations to the ministry.

Stating the park is running with inadequate number of staffers, the report recommended that number of staff be increased. It also recommended installation of CCTV cameras, and that the chief conservator of forest be informed instantly if there is any problem.

Unsustainable projects

FROM PAGE 12

countries in the Indian Ocean region, including Bangladesh, are becoming economically better off. Therefore, peoples' aspirations for opportunities and infrastructure development are going up.

However, he said, those countries, say for example Bangladesh, neither have money nor technology. Though the countries like Japan and India are helping with infrastructure development and Lines of Credit, alternatively China comes up with "basket of money and aggressive proposals, affordable proposals".

"And then we have a problem. What to do?" he said, adding that Bangladesh needs more funding from the development partners but the funding from the

The seized leaflet

FROM PAGE 12

there, we ran through the medical college and arrived at the shed-12.

At that time there was a press called Capital Press in front of Dhaka Central Jail. Mohammad Shafi Khan was the owner. I had an acquaintance with him. He was not involved in politics. During the Language Movement, he helped us a lot by printing leaflets for free.

I don't remember the exact date, may be on the 25th or 26th of February we were holding a meeting at the medical college hostel. Police suddenly

development partners like the World Bank, IMF and ADB is declining. Also, they come with lots of strings attached. He then said Bangladesh is trying to get funds from others, as development process is ongoing and then asked, "Now, is there any way out?"

In response, Jaishankar said, "Look, international relationship is competitive. Every country will look for opportunities and see what it can do. But while doing so, it is in their own interest to be prudent about what they are getting into, to do the due diligence."

In an oblique reference to Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port developed with Chinese funding, he said there are examples including in South Asia where countries became saddled with large debts and projects

arrived there. Although they surrounded almost all sides, they were not present on the side of the nurses' quarters. Toaha, Oli Ahad and I entered the nurses' quarters. The nurses provided shelter to us.

At that time a leaflet was to be printed about the background of the movement. I wrote the leaflet. While it was being printed in the Capital Press, Shafi Khan came and informed that the police were coming. I left the press immediately. Later, when I was arrested, the manuscript of the leaflet was produced by

became commercially unsustainable.

Jaishankar said, "There are projects saddled with large debts, we have seen projects which are commercially unsustainable, airports where aircraft doesn't come, harbours where ship doesn't come."

"So, I think people would be justified enough, asking themselves -- what am I getting into. And, it is obviously in the interest of the country concerned, but also in the interest of the international community because bad, unsustainable projects don't end there.

"Then comes debt ... and debt becomes equity and that becomes something else. So, there are real concerns there, so I think it is important for all of us to make informed decisions, but of course, very competitive decisions."

the police. However, the handwriting was not mine. It was my wife's handwriting. We were not married yet. But I used to take her help in copying such things.

Mahbub Jamal Zahedi was the joint secretary of SM Hall Union during the Language Movement. Source: This is an abridged version of Mahbub Jamal Zahedi's interview published in *Bhasha Andolon Prasanga: Katipay Dalil* (Ed. Badruddin Umar, Bangla Academy, 1995). Translated by Shamsuddoza Sajen

Massive

FROM PAGE 12

obvious to anyone who ran their names through a search engine.

The new disclosures are bound to intensify legal and political scrutiny of the Swiss banking industry and, in particular, Credit Suisse.

"I believe that Swiss banking secrecy laws are immoral. The pretext of protecting financial privacy is merely a fig leaf covering the shameful role of Swiss banks as collaborators of tax evaders," the whistleblower said in a statement.

Credit Suisse denies any wrongdoing in its business practices.

Many of the accounts in the leak date back decades to a time when laws, practices and expectations of financial institutions were very different from where they are now, the bank said in a statement.

Bangla

FROM PAGE 12

will have to attend online or TV classes, officials said.

"Covid-19 safety protocols will be followed strictly and all the schools have almost completed their preparation in this regard," said Prof Nehal Ahmed, director general of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE).

He said there are 1.28 crore students from grades six to 12 and about 1.27 crore already have received the first vaccine dose, while 80 percent of them received the second. "We hope that rest will get their second dose within a week."

In person classes at primary schools will resume on March 2.

Human brain

FROM PAGE 12

The task apparently involved distinct processes, like mental speed, decision caution and the time involved in actually pressing a button.

Using mathematical models, the researchers of the German university were able to estimate the speed

at which participants completed each part of the process.

They found that while the average time to complete the overall task got worse after the age of 20, the mental speed of processing information did not start to slow until 60, the BBC report adds.

The findings of the study suggest that people under 18 were least cautious and were most willing to forgo accuracy for speed.

Caution around decisions increased between ages 18 and 65.

Older people took longer to press the relevant button.



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Center of Excellence in Higher Education

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

North South University (NSU), the first private university in Bangladesh, seeks applications from candidates with required qualifications and experiences for the following position:

Deputy Director (Public Relations) : 1 (one) position

Please read the full job description carefully to see if you have the skills, knowledge and experience that we are looking for. Only eligible candidates will be contacted by NSU for interview.

Job Description:

- Word processing, Graphic designing, Desktop Publishing (DTP)
- Assisting in content development for NSU website
- Assisting management of social media for NSU
- Contributing in the planning and producing NSU branding related materials
- Any other task assigned by Director PR

Qualifications:

- At least 10 (Ten) years' of experience in the field of Public Relations
- At least a Masters in Arts of Social Science
- Exceptional interpersonal skills
- High level of written and oral communication skills in English and Bangla
- Good rapport with media and communication sector

Age: Ideally 30 – 40 years.

Remuneration: An attractive salary package, with Festival Bonuses, Group Insurance, Provident Fund, Gratuity and in-house medical services is on offer.

Other Terms and Conditions:

- Willingness to work on holidays and after hours as necessary.
- Third division/ class/ equivalent GPA of the candidates in any educational level will not be accepted.

NSU reserves the right not to appoint anyone if suitable candidates are not found

Candidates should apply from his/her own e-mail address with a complete CV, photograph, copies of certificates, transcripts, and writing sample (Bangla/English) by 20 March 2022.

Director (Administration)
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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

ICJ's fresh hearings into Rohingya case

The world must come together for the cause

WE welcome the International Court of Justice's initiative to start a fresh round of hearings into the Rohingya genocide case filed by the Gambia over two years ago. The hearings will be held in two rounds starting from today. The Gambia, on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), filed the case in November 2019 with an aim to bring Myanmar to account for its genocidal actions against the Rohingya. The court, after holding a preliminary hearing, found the claims to be substantial and ordered Myanmar to take provisional measures to prevent further acts of genocide in the Rakhine State. Two years have passed since then, but Myanmar has not taken any such measures yet. It has not taken any initiative to grant citizenship or ensure other basic rights of the Rohingya.

According to Fortify Rights, in October 2016 and in August and September 2017, the Myanmar military deployed more than 11,000 soldiers who, along with police and civilian perpetrators, systematically massacred Rohingya men, women and children, raped Rohingya women and razed several hundred villages in all three townships of northern Rakhine. In August and September 2017 alone, some 750,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh and joined some 300,000 others who had fled waves of violence since the 1980s in Rakhine. The UN Independent Fact-Finding Mission also made a confidential list of more than 100 individuals suspected of being involved in genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. However, the UN Security Council failed to take any actions against Myanmar.

Against this backdrop, the case filed by the Gambia was seen as a big achievement. But the proceedings could not get momentum due to various reasons. The Suu Kyi-led government in Myanmar had raised objections early last year over the eligibility of the Gambia in filing the case. But later, after the country's military seized power, the National Unity Government led by Suu Kyi withdrew all preliminary objections to the case and accepted the jurisdiction of the ICJ for hearing the allegations. In fact, the NUG is now trying to gain international recognition by cooperating with the ICJ. Reportedly, it has many secret documents proving the military junta's genocidal intent, which can establish the genocide case in the ICJ.

Therefore, the start of fresh hearings into the case gives us hope for justice. According to experts, the Myanmar military is now under serious international pressure, and even the ASEAN is not including it in its meetings. So, we think this is the right time for the international community to work together for the case of Rohingya justice, their citizenship and repatriation.

Lifting Covid restrictions doesn't mean lowering our guards

We urge caution and clarity

THE government's decision to lift all Covid-19 restrictions, however poorly implemented, comes as a relief as it means resuming, with greater confidence, what has been a frequently halted journey back to normalcy. After two years of living with varied degrees of restrictions—like maintaining social distancing, no congregation, no school or college, no public train/bus service, work from home, and so on—people are set to feel the taste of unrestricted life. However, the rule of wearing masks outside home will remain as a safety precaution.

The government decision comes following a steady decline in coronavirus transmission, with a 7.82 percent positivity rate recorded on Sunday. We're hopefully seeing an end to the Omicron scare which saw cases shoot up since early last month. It makes sense then that instructions have been given to reopen schools (secondary and higher) from today and primary schools on March 1. Understandably, all higher educational institutions will follow suit and all offices, both public and private, will go back to their pre-restriction routine. This will provide the citizens with the opportunity to rebuild their economy and education sectors, the two worst affected areas after public health.

True, there has been widespread criticism over the government's handling of the Covid crisis since its outbreak in early 2020, but its response after the emergence of the Omicron variant, especially the ramping up of the vaccination drive, has been largely satisfactory. So far, 10.25 crore people, or around 86 percent of the target population, have been vaccinated with the first dose. The government has already introduced booster doses, initially for senior citizens and frontline workers, and is mulling vaccinating children under 12. The latter move, once underway, will help pre-teen students get back to their classrooms.

The danger, however, is not over, far from it actually. Although the positivity rate has fallen, people are still vulnerable to infections and attendant health challenges. A total of 21 Covid patients died in the 24 hours till 8 am on Sunday, raising the total number of Covid fatalities to 28,965. This is a time when we, all of us, need to be careful to make sure the declining positivity rate is not turned around. The media must play its role to increase vaccine awareness. The public must continue to wear masks and follow other health guidelines with due seriousness. And equally importantly, the government must bring all citizens under the vaccination coverage as soon as possible—thereby increasing the immunisation rate—and send a clear message about the importance of continued mask-wearing and social distancing. Letting our guards down before the virus is fully eliminated may prove to be perilous.

Can ACC salvage its self-inflicted reputational damage?



Dr Iftekharuzzaman is the executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN

SINCE its creation in 2004, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has always faced trust and credibility issues. The key question is whether it can genuinely and consistently deliver its legally and institutionally entrusted mandate of effectively controlling corruption—going beyond chasing petty corruption of the small fries to hold accountable the “big fish” behind grand corruption. While the ACC may have become used to its credibility deficit by now, never before has it taken as deep a nosedive in its self-image as around the dismissal of one of its own investigation officers, Deputy Assistant Director Sharif Uddin, on February 16, 2022.

According to the media and other trustworthy sources, Sharif Uddin took upon himself the challenge of investigating and taking legally entrusted actions against some key perpetrators of grand corruption within his Chattogram and Cox's Bazar jurisdiction. He has been efficiently and courageously involved as a key person in investigating and taking action against some very powerful corrupt syndicates. He brought into his net dozens of corruption cases in which syndicates of politically influential people—including public representatives and mid-to-senior-level public officials including members of the law enforcement agencies—were involved as key actors. The amount of money estimated to have been illegally usurped runs into thousands of crores of taka.

His actions, unsurprisingly, made him a target of vengeance of these powerful groups, some of whom not only lodged motivated complaints against him to the ACC but also threatened his job and life. Such risks for conducting a genuine investigation into grand corruption are not unusual in Bangladesh, but what has shocked everyone is that the duty that Sharif was discharging—as per his job description, and with courage, commitment and professionalism—apparently also made his employer itself so uncomfortable that he had to be dismissed.

Instead of acting against the threats against him and ensuring his safety, the ACC opted to apply a controversial provision of its service rules whereby his appointment was terminated without any reason shown. The issue of the

legality of the provision 54(2) of the ACC service rules 2008 is pending in the court. Even if one assumes, for the sake of argument, that the court verdict goes in favour of ACC's jurisdiction to retain such a provision, whether or not this can be applied to Sharif's case will remain debatable.

The underlying justification and

“grievances” of those investigated by him, which is, clearly, an issue of conflict of interest.

Be that as it may, no one is above unaccountability, and hence, as efficient and courageous as he may be, if Sharif is found guilty of misconduct in the due process, he should face disciplinary action proportionate to the offence, if established in the due credible and unbiased process. The question is: since the ACC claims it to be a disciplinary issue, why did he have to be dismissed without being allowed the mandatory right to self-defence?

According to credible sources, Sharif Uddin's annual performance assessment was consistently of high-grade. But this took a U-turn when his investigations raised eyebrows within the ACC, which also raises the question whether it was part of a design to victimise Sharif and whether there are vested quarters at the higher management level in ACC who are amongst the protectors of the politically and administratively linked sections of the corruption syndicate whose impunity Sharif proceeded to challenge.

A sense of job insecurity among a large section of the ACC staff following Sharif's dismissal led to an unprecedented act of protest which has subsequently taken the course of organising themselves to establish their job-related rights. This speaks volumes about the extent of management weaknesses within the ACC—a matter of grave concern for the organisational effectiveness of this organisation.

The dismissal comes as an acid test for the commission. A critical question that ACC needs to ask itself is what it means by “reputational damage”. Even if all the reported allegations against Sharif were proved valid, and actions duly taken, any potential harm thus caused would be peanuts compared to the huge reputational gain that the ACC could have achieved if it could take action on the basis of the progress he made towards holding to account the powerful syndicates of grand corruption.

What the people would like to know is, while it was expected of the ACC to stand by Sharif and ensure his full protection in the discharge of his duties, why has the commission taken the course of outright dismissal and thereby put at risk their reputation and credibility in the eyes of the public? Was the ACC afraid that if it didn't get rid of Sharif, and if it allowed the accountability process against the said powerful syndicate to continue, the higher-ups in the ACC could also be a target of vengeance of the same powerful forces within or outside the ACC?

It remains to be seen if and how the ACC tries to salvage its self-inflicted reputational damage.



Corruption will be harder to combat if ACC officials are not empowered to do their job.

ILLUSTRATION: COLLECTED

A sense of job insecurity among a large section of the ACC staff following Sharif's dismissal led to an unprecedented act of protest which has subsequently taken the course of organising themselves to establish their job-related rights.

standard organisational practice of such a provision of termination, without the mandatory requirement of issuing show cause, are that it can be applicable on a “no foul, no harm” basis usually warranted by compulsions like budgetary constraints or organisational restructuring causing the redundancy of the relevant position of the staff. The ACC has not given any indication that such factors could be in play.

After an initial reluctance to disclose why the dismissal took place, when the ACC decided to do so in the face of media pressure and public expectations, it moved the goal post and conveyed the message that there were complaints against Sharif that could cause reputational damage to the ACC. But again, it didn't disclose any specifics nor the process adopted to address those complaints, and whether Sharif was given his right to self-defence. Note that while the ACC may not need to allow the right to self-defence if clause 54(2) is applied, it does become mandatory under 40(6) of the same service rules if the dismissal occurs on the ground of accusations brought against him. By ACC's own admission, the claim that the termination took place under 54(2) was thus made untenable, because it is no longer a case of 54(2) but one of disciplinary action on unsubstantiated grounds.

By the time the ACC was constrained to further open up on this, over a dozen complaints were mentioned on each of which, according to media reports, Sharif had specific grounds of self-defence which were not heard. In addition, many of the allegations against Sharif were reportedly drawn upon the

Unlearning helplessness



Tobias Bunde, Director of Research and Policy at the Munich Security Conference, is a researcher at the Hertie School's Centre for International Security and co-editor (with Benedikt Franke) of *The Art of Diplomacy: 75 Views Behind the Scenes of World Politics*.

TOBIAS BUNDE

THERE was little cause for geopolitical optimism in 2021, and this grim trend has continued at the start of 2022. Almost every month over the last couple of years, a fresh emergency has dominated the news, contributing to a sense of a mounting tide of crises that threatens to overwhelm us.

The world is struggling to cope simultaneously with the seemingly endless COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of illiberal forces in many countries, the failure of international interventions that were supposed to stabilise conflict-ridden regions, rising great-power tensions, and military buildups in key territories. Beyond these immediate concerns, the impact of climate change, a major long-term threat to humanity, has become all too tangible—and political leaders have yet to mount a sufficiently forceful response. Who could be blamed for feeling overwhelmed?

In the eyes of many citizens, politicians seem far from getting a grip on today's urgent problems and steering the world away from catastrophe. And the seemingly endless series of crises threatens to erode the public's confidence that they and their political leaders can shape a better future.

The current malaise arguably resembles “learned helplessness,” a phenomenon first described by the psychologists Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania and Steven Maier of the University of Colorado in the 1960s. In an experiment, Seligman and Maier were surprised to find that

dogs that were conditioned to expect an electric shock after hearing a tone did not try to escape it, even when, in a later setting, they could do so by jumping over a small barrier. The animals, the psychologists reasoned, had learned that no matter what they did, they could not control their fate. So, they just gave up—despite having the chance to escape.

Seligman and his colleagues compared the dogs' behaviour to the symptoms exhibited by depressed people, and suspected that clinical depression results from a real or perceived lack of control over the outcome of a situation. The same may be true of groups. Smaller or larger groups of people, and perhaps even whole societies, may collectively come to believe that they are unable to effect positive change and, as a result, stop trying.

If so, the recent sequence of crises, and political leaders' apparent inability to cope with them, may be fostering a form of collective learned helplessness. According to new data from the Munich Security Index 2022, based on public-opinion surveys in the G7 countries and the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), those who agree with the statement that they feel helpless in the face of global events constitute the largest group in all the countries polled. In the democracies surveyed, the “helpless” are in the majority: 57 percent of respondents agree with the statement, while only 12 percent disagree. China is the only country among the 12 in which more than a quarter of respondents (27 percent) disagree with the statement. Similarly, although the figures are in general slightly lower, majorities or pluralities of respondents in all 12 countries agree that their countries have no control over global events.

Of course, one might ask why anyone should believe that they or their countries can steer global events. But the promise of control, even if an illusion, has been a

crucial element of politics in the modern age, when human beings, rather than God or fate, are supposed to be pulling the strings.

This helps to explain why the widespread perception of a loss of control, and a longing to regain it, are key political themes of our time. Slogans such as “take back control,” “America first,” “strategic autonomy,” and “European sovereignty” all reflect the same underlying impulse.

The danger is that a widespread feeling of collective helplessness risks preventing the world from addressing the most important crises until it is too late. Societies overwhelmed by a wave of emergencies may end up meekly accepting what happens to them, even though they have the tools and resources to change it. In many countries, for example, people do not believe that the international community can successfully mitigate climate change, or do not trust others to do their fair share.

But while today's challenges are huge, our ability to cope with them will depend to a significant degree on our self-perception. Do we really believe that we are collectively helpless? Or are we willing to use our collective resources and intensify international cooperation because we believe we can turn the tide?

Above all, political leaders need to show that we can collectively “unlearn helplessness.” Despite—or perhaps because of—the challenges liberal democracy faces, leaders need to inspire a new sense of confidence at home and abroad that they can tackle the crises in front of us.

And there is a silver lining. Notwithstanding all the angst about the future of democracy, Munich Security Index data also show that people still think democracies are better able than undemocratic countries to solve the problems of the future. Now they need to prove it.

While today's challenges are huge, our ability to cope with them will depend to a significant degree on our self-perception. Do we really believe that we are collectively helpless? Or are we willing to use our collective resources and intensify international cooperation because we believe we can turn the tide?

The tragedy of a fallen remittance fighter



NAJRUL KHASRU

Najrul Khasru is a British-Bangladeshi barrister and a part-time tribunal judge in England. He sends remittances to Bangladesh on a monthly basis and considers himself a remittance fighter.

"It will not be fair to look at the migrants only as economic actors. They have to be treated as human beings. They should enjoy the same rights and privileges as other citizens."

— Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

JOHURUL Islam of Gaibandha was a remittance fighter. He was barely 18 when he left Bangladesh to work as a construction worker in Malaysia. In the initial years, he would frequently send money to his family and visit home at regular intervals. There came a time when his parents passed away. This coincided with his legal status in Malaysia coming to an end. Thereafter, he never returned to Bangladesh, afraid that he would not be able to go back to Malaysia. He tried unsuccessfully to regain his legality, did any work that he could find and was still sending remittances whenever he could. It is to be noted that expatriates rarely lose their legal status through their own fault—they are often victims of unscrupulous officials, agents and employers.

Away from family and friends and not having access to proper healthcare, his physical and mental health deteriorated. He last spoke to his niece, Rumana, in early October, 2021. He said he had severe fever and abdominal pain but told her not to worry and that he would recover soon and send some money for her family. That was his last contact with his relatives. On October 21, 2021, he died a lonely death in a hospital in Ipoh, about 200 km north of Kuala Lumpur. A remittance fighter, who sacrificed all his adult life for the economic liberation of his country, fell on the battleground at the age of 55.

Johurul Islam had no proper identification documents when he died. As a result, his relatives in Bangladesh became aware of his death much later when a picture of his dead body circulated on social media. A London-based organisation, Voice for Global Bangladeshis, requested its representative in Malaysia to seek the High Commission's assistance. The High Commission was extremely sympathetic but its position was that, as Johurul Islam had no legal status in Malaysia when he passed away, the government of Bangladesh would not be able to bear the repatriation costs. This was also confirmed in a newspaper report (*Naya Diganta*, November 2, 2021) quoting an anonymous official of the High Commission.

Johurul Islam's relatives unsuccessfully contacted the officials in Bangladesh for financial help to bring back the body. Having no means, they sent a request to the hospital authority in Malaysia to bury him there. Being aware of this sad predicament, the diaspora in Malaysia raised funds for the repatriation costs. While they received support from the High Commission, the bureaucratic process in Bangladesh took a painfully long time for the preparation of the relevant paperwork. Finally, on January 1 this year, his body arrived at Dhaka. The government offered BDT 35,000 which was gratefully received by the bereaved relatives. His janaza was attended by hundreds of villagers.

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment has come a long way since its inception in 2001. It is committed to ensuring the welfare and rights of over one crore expatriates in 174 countries of the world. The ever-growing remittance flow in the country even in difficult times—USD 25 billion in the year 2020/2021—is an indictment of not only the hard work and patriotism of the remittance fighters worldwide, but also the visionary policies of the ministry. Indeed, Minister Imran Ahmed and his team have gained widespread respect, especially for their empathy and helpful policies during the difficulties of the Covid-19 pandemic.

While this article applauds the ministry and, indeed, acknowledges it as one of the most successful ministries of the current government, it highlights the case of Johurul Islam to illustrate a grave concern that the ministry should consider addressing urgently.

The Overseas Employment and Migrants Act is the primary legislation that deals with migration and related issues. However, neither the legislation nor any relevant rules directly addresses the issues of the duty of the ministry regarding the death of an expatriate worker. There appears to be a policy, narrated in the annual report of 2020/21, indicating that the ministry ensures that the employer of the deceased pays for the repatriation of the body, subject to the wishes of the relatives. It also states that where such an employer is not found, the Wage Earners' Welfare Board, a branch of the ministry, takes the responsibility for such expenses.

A worker, illegal at the time of his death, would unlikely have an employer willing to financially assist in any way. These workers are also unlikely to have family back home who would be able to bear the cost of their body being sent home. It also seems that the Board provides assistance regarding body repatriation only to those with legal status.

This situation appears to be morally and legally unsustainable. The legality issue of an individual abroad should not affect their rights as a citizen of



ILLUSTRATION: SUSHMITA S PREETHA

It is to be noted that expatriates rarely lose their legal status through their own fault—they are often victims of unscrupulous officials, agents and employers.

Bangladesh. Discriminating between two citizens abroad on such grounds breaches the equal treatment rights guaranteed by the constitution. It could be the case that the ministry is failing in its statutory duty by denying responsibility in relation to such deceased persons. Furthermore, from a moral point of view, this particular group of remittance fighters is the most vulnerable and, therefore, deserving of extra help and respect from the state.

It is hoped that the ministry would look into this carefully and rectify its policy so that hundreds of families each year, like Johurul Islam's, do not have to

go through the trauma of uncertainties. Indeed, as I pen this article, I receive the news of another fallen remittance fighter with "irregular documentation". Salim Bhuiya died in late January 2022, following a heart attack in Maldives. His body lies in the hospital morgue, while his family appeals for help to the Bangladeshi diaspora, who are trying to raise the money to return Salim Bhuiya's body to Bangladesh. These fallen remittance fighters and their families deserve to be treated with more dignity and respect by the government of Bangladesh.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Ref No. 57.03.5100.300.99.815.22-86 Date: 20.02.2022

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of goods.

Tender ID	Package No.	Name of package	Last selling date & time	Closing and opening date & time
663459	LPI.2021-22.EMET.GR4	Procurement of Electrical Engineering Materials & Machine.	09 March 2022 15.00	10 March 2022 12.00
663778	LPI.2021-22.ECET.GR3	Procurement of Engineer Materials Electrical Circuit Lab	09 March 2022 15.00	10 March 2022 13.00
663880	LPI.2021-22.RMOS.GR6	Procurement of Raw Materials & Spare Parts	09 March 2022 15.00	10 March 2022 13.00
663950	LPI.2021-22.LMOS.GR7	Procurement of Learning Materials & Furniture	09 March 2022 15.00	10 March 2022 15.00
663951	LPI.2021-22.LMOS.GR8	Procurement of Goods & Office Furnishing	09 March 2022 15.00	10 March 2022 15.00

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. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Joydeb Chandra Saha
20/02/2022
Principal
Lakshmipur Polytechnic Institute
Lakshmipur

GD-334

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Center of Excellence in Higher Education

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

North South University (NSU), the first private university in Bangladesh, seeks applications from candidates with required qualifications and experiences for the following position :

Assistant Officer, Office of Admissions (Registrar's Office) : 1 (one) position

Please read the full job description carefully to see if you have the skills, knowledge and experience that we are looking for. Only eligible candidates will be contacted by NSU for interview.

Academic Qualifications: Candidate must have Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degree in Computer Science or related field from any reputed university with good academic background. Skills and expertise in student admission web portal systems, result processing, and knowledge of university rules and regulations, acts, statutes and policies will be considered as an added qualification.

Job Description:

- Experience with PHP, C++, Java, JavaScript and Excel automation.
- Candidates should have at least 2 to 3 years of practical work experience in any large organizations/educational institutions.

Age : Ideally 25 - 30 years.

Monthly Salary : An attractive salary package, with Festival Bonuses, Group Insurance, Provident Fund, Gratuity and in-house medical services is on offer.

Other Terms and Conditions:

- Proficiency in English and good communication and interpersonal skills.
- Willingness to work in shifts and holidays, if required.
- Third division/ class/ equivalent GPA of the candidates in any educational level will not be accepted.
- NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any application without citing any reason.

Candidates should apply from his/her own e-mail address with complete CV, photographs, copies of certificates, transcripts and other credentials by 20 March 2022.

Director (Administration)
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
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Email: nsuhr@northsouth.edu, Website: www.northsouth.edu

Chittagong University of Engineering & Technology
Chattogram-4349

Memo No. CUET/PROC/REV/88/2021-2022 Date: 20/02/2022

e-Tender Notice

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Package name	Tender closing date	Tender notice publication date
663979	RG-18 (Re-Tender)	Procurement of Desktop Computer Laptop and Laser Printer for Department of BME Lab.	09/03/2022 12:00hr.	
663193	RG-28	Procurement of Double A (Original) A4 Size 80GSM Offset Paper.	09/03/2022 12:30hr.	
663235	RG-29	Procurement of Laserjet Toner.	09/03/2022 13:00hr.	
663456	RG-31	Procurement of Lab Muffle Furnace, Teflon Lined Hydrothermal Synthesis Autoclave Reactor for Risk Assessment of Radionuclides Radiation in the Soil and Woody Plant Species at the Hilly Forest Area Razon and Rangunia Upazila by Gamma Ray Spectrometry Research Project DRE, Department of NE CUET.	09/03/2022 13:30hr.	22/02/2022
663244	RG-32	Procurement of Chemicals and Lab Equipment for Department of Chemistry CUET.	09/03/2022 14:00hr.	
663238	RG-33	Procurement of BSL Ultimate System for Department of BME CUET.	09/03/2022 14:30hr.	

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. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for last selling/downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to date & time (08-Mar-2022 16:00hr). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

=Signed=
Registrar (Add. Charge)
Chittagong University of Engineering & Technology
Chattogram-4349

GD-340



YOUTH IN ACTION

A guiding light for the visually impaired

“I thought the university helps them with exams somehow. But during my first-year final exams in 2018, I saw some visually impaired students searching for stenographers while everyone else focused on their exams,” says Masrur

AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

Masrur Ishraq founded Third Eye in 2019 to help the visually impaired students at his educational institution, University of Chittagong (CU). For his efforts, he won the Joy Bangla Youth



PHOTOS: COURTESY
Third Eye was founded to help the visually impaired students at CU.

Award for social inclusion in 2021. So far, Third Eye has helped over 400 visually impaired students with audiobooks, recording lectures, and

stenography during exams.

“I knew about the visually impaired students when I enrolled in CU,” says Masrur. “I thought the university helps them with exams somehow. But during my first-year final exams in 2018, I saw some visually impaired students searching for stenographers while everyone else focused on their exams.”

When Masrur approached the visually impaired students after his exams were over, he was quite shocked to know that they had to find their own stenographers, as well as helpers for recording study materials.

As a result, he wanted to create a team that would help the visually impaired students with audiobooks and exam hall stenography.

With this aim in mind, Masrur posted his idea in several internal online groups of CU via Facebook, Messenger, and WhatsApp. At first, many responded to his call. However, only eight people appeared in the first team meeting of Third Eye in January 2019.

Today, the platform has expanded outside the campus of CU, reaching five districts of the country.

They have over 550 active volunteers in Chattogram, Dhaka, Jashore, Feni, and Rajshahi. A 31-member executive committee is selected every six months, based on work performance to lead the organisation.

They follow rules like stenographers cannot be from the same department as the visually impaired students, and one stenographer cannot give multiple exams for the same visually impaired student.

Third Eye also involves visually impaired individuals in their work.

“As a volunteer and visually impaired student, Third Eye has been helping me with my studies since their inception,” says Faisal Mohammad Ibrahim, former head of marketing and promotion of the organisation. “It is a harmonious platform, where we can work together with our sighted friends.”

Currently, Third Eye offers debate, computer and pronunciation training for the visually impaired, alongside other vocational and personal skill development projects.

During the lockdowns in 2020, the platform utilised online content writing, workshops, and YouTube videos to raise awareness.

“In 2020, I became a certified trainer with Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBT&A) from Bangladesh Technical Education Board, in hopes to establish a vocational training centre, which could help bear the management costs of Third Eye,” reveals Masrur.

“CBT&A also included lessons on how to teach individuals with special needs, which I integrated into plans for Third Eye.”

Masrur hopes for the day when no visually impaired person will feel like an outcast in society.

The author is a freelance journalist. Email: akhlakurrahmancharles@gmail.com.

INTERVIEW

Building a space-sharing marketplace

SHANIZ CHOWDHURY

CHAYA is a novel space-sharing marketplace in Bangladesh, launched by Farhia Tabassum and Mehraab Anwar. Unoccupied and unused spaces can be listed by their owners on CHAYA’s website, for users to browse and find what they need. Farhia is one of the entrepreneurs in the Dhaka Hub Global Shapers 2021 Cohort. The Global Shapers are a community of young leaders and change makers, aged between 20 and 30, curated by the World Economic Forum. The Dhaka Hub was founded in 2014. In an interview with The Daily Star, Farhia talks about the vision behind CHAYA, and more.

What was the first step to starting CHAYA?

In early 2019, while searching for a place to arrange a photoshoot for a friend’s company, we noticed a gap in the market. Locations and customers existed, but there was no middle man to connect them with each other.

Mehraab and I came up with the idea that we could use other people’s homes the same way we use our friends’ houses for shoots.

In October 2019, we opened an Instagram page and reached out to friends, parents, and restaurant owners in the hope that they will open up their spaces. In a month, we expanded our business to a multi-purpose space-sharing platform.

What were some challenges you faced in the early stages of the business?

It was the typical ‘chicken and egg’ problem – do we get people to list their properties first or do we ensure we have some customers?

Eventually, we decided to focus on the supply side first, although it was difficult as we had no traction or customers.

Fortunately, after we got the initial four to five spaces, we found customers with appropriate demands.

What is CHAYA currently focused on?

We are concentrating on housing for bachelors as they are immensely underserved. Single women, in particular, struggle to find proper housing in this country. We aim to access a network of housing that fulfills the needs of people who are struggling to find reliable housing in safe areas.

As a woman building a business, what has your experience been like?

Sometimes in meetings, people are quick to assume that I am an intern. Even when they know that I am one of the co-founders of CHAYA, they don’t consider me as their equal. However, thankfully, there are mentorship programmes connecting us to other female entrepreneurs. In our culture, there is a pre-existing notion that women are inferior, so I always feel the need to work harder than my male counterparts.

The author is a student of BRAC University, and a freelance journalist. Email: shanzaychowdhury@gmail.com.



Farhia Tabassum.
PHOTO: COURTESY

GUIDES

Fun bookish activities for February

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Reading, despite being a solitary practice, becomes fun when it is accompanied by other activities. February brings along the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, which is not only a tradition for our country, but also a commemoration of language and literature. Here are some fun bookish activities to try out this month.

Go on Boi Mela tours

To begin with, this month calls for some Boi Mela hangouts. Whether you are visiting the fair for a book haul, or just strolling across the stalls, get together with friends and celebrate your love for reading. While it is good to have



ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

Read-alongs are an interactive way to pull yourself out of a reading slump. For this activity, select one book that pleases everyone’s reading taste.

fun, please be cautious about the health protocols being maintained.

Conduct Read-alongs

Read-alongs are an interactive way to pull yourself out of a reading slump. For this activity, select one book that pleases everyone’s reading taste. It could be a new release or a classic. Go slow with the flow and keep discussing updates with your group.

Exchange books

Ask your friends to pick a book that they enjoyed and would like to pass along. Tell

them to wrap the book and write a few phrases that describe it. Exchange these surprise packages amongst yourselves, based on those descriptions. This would help you explore a variety of genres.

Create a book journal

Maintain a book journal where you can jot down mini-reviews of the books. It could be a quote that hit you differently or a character you resonated with. In a few years, you would be going through this journal and cherishing these memories.

Start social media challenges

Participating in social media challenges is another great way to engage in literary discussions. To start off with, some ideas are pictures of your Boi Mela hauls, favourite covers, or talking about a new release every other day.

The author is a freelance journalist who likes reading, scribbling, and blogging. Email: mislammonamee@gmail.com.

EXPERIENCE

Aiding learners’ high school transition

SARWAR UDDIN AHMED

School kids are just beginning to learn what they want their identities to be. At this age, they look toward the future and see a world filled to the brim with possibilities.

However, the transition from high school to college or university entails many challenges, and is often stressful for both students and parents. It is a crucial period when students face significant changes in their lives, with a new sense of autonomy to make their own choices.

On the one hand, some parents may feel their ability to help their children develop into better decision-makers are diminishing. Meanwhile, other guardians tend to overpower and blur students’ minds with additional information, queries, and advice.

The high expectations to get accepted into good colleges and universities can further add to the pressure for students. As a result, they tend to focus entirely on doing well rather than actually learning something of value.

Although studying abroad opens up new horizons, it comes bearing drawbacks such as higher costs, cultural barriers, and uncertainty. Universal College Bangladesh (UCB) brings the benefits of international education to students here.

UCB is Bangladesh’s premier transnational education institute and Monash College’s exclusive partner in providing a pathway to Monash University degrees, from Bangladesh. It is the only Ministry of Education approved



PHOTO: COURTESY OF UCB

international education provider in the country.

The academic team of scholars and counsellors at UCB is dedicated to help students with their international education degrees, from Bangladesh.

The institution offers the Monash University Foundation Year and Monash University first year equivalent programmes. Monash University was ranked 55th in QS World University Ranking 2021 and earned the first place in Australian REUTERS’ Most Innovative

Universities In Asia-Pacific 2019.

Upon successful completion of the pathway programme, UCB students may gain entry into Monash University in Australia or Malaysia directly in the second year.

To nurture young students into visionary leaders and innovators, UCB brings opportunities that will allow them to excel in all fields.

The author is Dean of Academic Affairs, UCB.

Cricketers victim-blamed over pitch issue

SPORTS REPORTER

Behaviour of the typical low and slow pitches in Bangladesh have been on the receiving end of a barrage of criticism, and remained near the centre of discussion among players.

The poor nature of surfaces had raised fingers on the curators and their ability to produce sporting pitches was repeatedly questioned. The Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, especially, brought Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) head curator Gamini de Silva under the radar of scrutiny as the Sri Lankan has been in charge for some time now.

Interestingly, the chairman of the BCB's grounds committee and influential board director Mahbulul Anam, who was in Chattogram ahead of the ODI series against Afghanistan, pointed fingers at the cricketers and defended the curators instead, saying that good players can score runs on all surfaces.

"When questions arise over lack of runs on the pitch, I think the problem is on the players and not the pitch. Those who can play well are able to



score runs in all sorts of pitches," Mahbulul told the media yesterday.

"Cricket is a game of uncertainty, which comes through the pitches, and there won't be any excitement if it was absent," the BCB director added while reiterating that the onus is on the players to 'develop their skills in different pitches' as the 'behaviour of the pitch depends on the weather'.

However, Mahbulul ended up mentioning that Chattogram has always produced sporting tracks and the upcoming three ODIs at the port city will have everything for a good cricketing contest.



Tamim set to return to dance floor

SPORTS REPORTER

Following a long gap of over seven months since Bangladesh played their last ODI series against Zimbabwe in July last year, the Tigers ODI captain Tamim Iqbal is set to return to international stage with the upcoming three-match ODI series against Afghanistan, starting from tomorrow.

A finger injury after that Zimbabwe series led to Tamim missing in action in five Tests and 24 T20Is for the Tigers up until now. It surely became the longest inactive period, during which Tamim had to remain out of international cricket, ever since the dashing lefty made his debut for Bangladesh back in 2007.

Criticisms over his batting approach in the shortest format of the game played a role in Tamim opting to stay out of the ICC World T20 World Cup selection and last month, the 32-year-old announced his decision to continue his break from T20Is for another six months.

Although Tamim was reluctant to clarify the exact reason behind his sabbatical from T20Is, sources close to the cricketer confirmed that the experienced batter did not take the criticism over his batting approach lightly.

Tamim, however, went on to display his class in the recently-concluded Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League.

He remained among the top three run-getters in the tournament, scoring 407 runs in nine games with a strike rate of 132.57, striking a hundred and four fifties.

So, all eyes will be on Tamim as he makes a comeback to national colours in the favoured ODI format after an extended pause. Given the type of character Tamim

With the upcoming ICC ODI World Cup slated next year, it will be a challenge for the experienced campaigner to prepare accordingly. Tamim himself mentioned that taking the baton from Mashrafe, who has been the most successful captain for Bangladesh, demanded big shoes to fill for him.

has showcased over the years, it is safe to assume that the highest run-getter for the Tigers across all formats will be hungrier than ever.

Interestingly, many might have forgotten that Tamim scored a hundred in his last international game in Zimbabwe, during

the third ODI in Harare, as Bangladesh whitewashed the hosts and clinched the series 3-0 under his leadership.

The upcoming three-match series against Afghanistan is somewhat a new beginning for Tamim but the fact is the experienced campaigner has very little to prove as a batter.

Whereas, on the leading front, it will be a big challenge for Tamim, who took over the ODI captaincy last year from Mashrafe Bin Mortaza. Since then, the Tigers lost to New Zealand in the three-match series but went on to seal series victories against Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe under Tamim's captaincy.

With the upcoming ICC ODI World Cup slated next year, it will be a challenge for the experienced campaigner to prepare accordingly. Tamim himself mentioned that taking the baton from Mashrafe, who has been the most successful captain for Bangladesh, demanded big shoes to fill for him.

It is not just because of Mashrafe's performance as a captain on the field but also the legacy that the talismanic cricketer has left as a leader off the field, something Tamim would be aware of.

But then again, for someone like Tamim, it will be important for the left-hander to enjoy his comeback in the national colours more as a batter, so that the Tigers benefit and grow stronger as a team under his leadership.

Munim rewarded for BPL performance

SPORTS REPORTER

National selectors, led by Minhajul Abedin, wasted no time in bringing in young opener Munim Shahriar to the national side as the right-hander was included in the 14-member squad for the upcoming two-match T20I series against Afghanistan.

Munim showed glimpses of his talent during the recently-concluded Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) by providing Fortune Barishal several flying starts, the likes of which the selectors have been searching for some time now.

And it was none but Bangladesh premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan who praised the 23-year-old opener, terming him as a future prospect. With one fifty in six games, Munim scored 178 runs at a staggering strike rate of 152.13.

The selectors also recalled another uncapped batsman Yasir Ali Rabbi, who was impressive in the BPL for Khulna Tigers, scoring 219 runs in 11 matches with a strike rate of 139.49.

Top-order batters Najmul Hossain Shanto, Saif Hasan, all-rounder Shamim Hossain Patwary, wicketkeeper-batters Nurul Hasan Sohan and Akbar Ali and leg-spinner Aminul Islam Biplob are the six players who have been dropped from the previous squad that featured against Pakistan towards the end of last year.

Both matches of the T20I series against Afghanistan will be played in Mirpur on March 3 and 5, respectively, following the completion of the three-match ODI series in Chattogram.

SQUAD: Mahmudullah Riyad (Captain), Liton Das, Munim Shahriar, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Afif Hossain, Sheikh Mahedi Hasan, Yasir Ali Chowdhury, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, Nasum Ahmed, Shohidul Islam and Naeem Sheikh.



BOA planning long-term training

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) is planning to run a long-term training camp by emphasising on individual disciplines, which will be featured in July-August's Commonwealth Games, August's Islamic Solidarity Games and September's Asian Games this year and the 2023 South Asian Games.

Although the training is going to be organised as part of preparation for the three Games, the ultimate target of BOA is to produce better results in the SA Games, which are supposed to take place in Pakistan in early 2023.

"We are thinking of starting the training for individual disciplines from early March, so that the athletes can produce good results in the 2023 South Asian Games though they will also take part in three more Games this year. Nothing has been finalised yet as the technical and training committee will place its proposals within a couple of days before the BOA secretary general for approval," said a technical and training committee member, seeking anonymity.

Bangladesh will participate in athletics, swimming, boxing, gymnastics and wrestling in the Commonwealth Games before taking part in 11 disciplines in the Islamic Solidarity Games.

Though Asian Games will feature 42 sports, Bangladesh will then go on to take part in 17 disciplines, out of the 42 featured, in the Asian Games.

Tuchel fights to rekindle Chelsea fire

Villarreal welcome Juventus

AFP, London

Thomas Tuchel admits Chelsea are fighting to "survive" as the spluttering Champions League holders prepare to face Lille in the last 16 first leg tonight.

Tuchel's side have won their last five games in all competitions, but there was little joy on the German's face when he reflected on Saturday's 1-0 victory at Crystal Palace.

The honeymoon is definitely over for Tuchel as he approaches the business end of his first full season as Chelsea boss.

In just five months in charge last term, Tuchel led Chelsea to the Champions League crown and the FA Cup final, as well as a top four finish in the Premier League.

When Romelu Lukaku was signed from Inter Milan for a club record £97 million (\$131 million), it was expected the Belgian striker would help Chelsea enjoy a period of sustained dominance.

Chelsea were tipped to emerge as serious challengers for the Premier League title and in the early weeks of this season it seemed they might live up to the hype.

But in the grip of a windswept winter in Britain, Tuchel has found it increasingly tricky to keep Chelsea from being blown off course. The first signs of discontent behind the scenes emerged when Lukaku went public with complaints about the way

he was being deployed by Tuchel.

Forced to apologise, Lukaku has cut a disconsolate figure ever since and remains without a league goal since December.

Lukaku was completely anonymous against Palace and had only seven touches — the lowest by a player over 90 minutes since Opta started recording the statistic in 2003-04.

That victory at Palace was only Chelsea's third in their last nine league games, a dismal run that effectively shattered their title hopes. Chelsea are 13 points behind leaders Manchester City, making retaining the Champions League their main goal for the rest of the season.

Meanwhile, Juventus made a splash in the January transfer window when they snatched hot prospect Dusan Vlahovic and Switzerland midfielder Denis Zakaria, but their arrival has yet to provide the hoped-for boost ahead of Tuesday's Champions League visit to Villarreal.

Massimiliano Allegri's side travel to Spain as the only Italian side with a realistic hope of making the last eight after Inter Milan were beaten 2-0 at the San Siro by Liverpool on Wednesday.

However they go into the first leg of their last 16 tie in unsure form, with results and above all performances that have left fans unsatisfied with Allegri's first season back in black and white.



After bagging the Club World Cup title recently, defending champions Chelsea will be full of confidence when they host Lille in a Champions League last-16 first-leg clash tonight. (Inset) Meanwhile, Dusan Vlahovic will want to show his prowess on the European stage when Juventus travel to Villarreal.

PHOTO: TWITTER

CAP 10 OF THE STEEL INDUSTRY

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Dhaka, Delhi getting ready for PM's India visit this year

PORIMOL PALMA

Dhaka and Delhi have begun preparations for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India later this year.

This visit is expected to further accelerate the friendship between the two countries that are celebrating the 50 years of diplomatic relationship this year.

Following the Bangladesh-India Friendship Dialogue from February 18-20 in Shimla, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen will be holding a bilateral meeting with his Indian counterpart Harsh Vardhan Shringla during his two-day visit from tomorrow.

He may also meet Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

According to foreign ministry officials, Dhaka and Delhi will be holding a series of bilateral meetings including the secretary-level talks on water,

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



A READER IN THE MAKING... Two-year-old Safrin brimming with excitement after purchasing a book on her first visit to the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela with her mother at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Bangla, English mandatory for 2022 SSC, HSC

In-person classes resume today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As secondary schools and colleges partially resume in-person classes today, education boards have decided that SSC and HSC candidates of 2022 will need to sit for Bangla and English exams besides three optional subjects.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to hold the Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary Certificate exams in mid-June and mid-August respectively.

All the exams will be held with curtailed syllabuses and fewer marks, Professor Gazi Hasan Kamal, chairman of Mymensingh education board, told The Daily Star.

The syllabuses were revised and marks curtailed as schools and colleges were shut down for long due to Covid-19, he said.

Prof Md Moshuazzaman, member of National Curriculum and Textbook Board, said they have already prepared a short syllabus for all subjects and notified all concerned regarding the matter.

Last year, SSC and HSC candidates took the tests only in three optional subjects with a shortened syllabus and the fewer marks, due to the pandemic.

SCHOOLS REOPENING

Only students with two doses of Covid-19 vaccines will be allowed to attend in-person classes, which resume partially today after a month-long closure due to the pandemic. Students with only one dose

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

Star HEALTHLINE

Human brain remains 'SHARP TILL 60'

STAR HEALTH DESK

Contrary to popular belief, a recent study has found that the human brain remains sharp till advanced age.

The study result by researchers of Heidelberg University in Germany is challenging the idea that the human brain's functioning speed declines from the age of 20-30, reports BBC.

The scientists used an online task to estimate the decision-making times of 1.2 million people, aged 10 to 80, according to the study published in Nature Human Behaviour.

The study found that the mental speed of those aged between 30 and 60 remained relatively stable.

However, caution tended to grow with age, the BBC report adds.

The scientists showed participants a series of images and asked them to place them in two categories—good or bad—pressing different buttons to do so.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 6

Hyginex
spray
Instant hand sanitizer with alcohol

BEACON
Pharmaceuticals Limited

Massive leak piles pressure on Swiss banking practices

STAR REPORT

An extraordinary leak from one of the world's iconic private banks, Credit Suisse, has exposed the hidden wealth of clients involved in torture, drug trafficking, money laundering, corruption and other serious crimes.

Among the people listed as holding amounts worth hundreds of millions of dollars in Credit Suisse accounts were King Abdullah II of Jordan and the two sons of the former Egyptian strongman Hosni Mubarak.

The other account holders included sons of former Pakistan intelligence chief Akhtar Abdur Rahman Khan, who helped funnel billions of dollars from the US and other countries to the mujahedeen in Afghanistan in the 1980s and Venezuelan officials ensnared in a long-running corruption scandal.

A human trafficker in the Philippines, a Hong Kong stock exchange boss jailed for bribery, a billionaire who ordered the murder of his Lebanese pop star girlfriend and executives who looted Venezuela's state oil company, as well as corrupt politicians

from Egypt to Ukraine, were unmasked in the leak.

One Vatican-owned account in the data was used to spend €350m (£290m) in an allegedly fraudulent investment in a London property that is at the centre of an ongoing criminal

Corruption Reporting Project, and 46 other news organizations around the world, including The New York Times, Guardian and Le Monde.

The data covers accounts that were opened from the



trial of several defendants, including a cardinal.

A self-described whistleblower leaked data on about 30,000 Credit Suisse clients, collectively holding more than \$100 billion, to the German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung.

The newspaper shared the data with a non-profit journalism group, the Organised Crime and

1940s until well into the 2010s but not the bank's current operations.

The leak points to widespread failures of due diligence by Credit Suisse despite repeated pledges over decades to weed out dubious clients and illicit funds.

Accounts were opened for people whose problematic backgrounds would have been

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

UP member hacked to death in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Criminals hacked a union parishad member to death over leasing of a water body in Jashore's Chowgachha yesterday evening.

Victim Thandu Mia, 48, son of Sirajul Islam of Patibila village, was a member of Patibila Union Parishad, said Saiful Islam Sabuj, officer-in-charge of Chowgachha Police Station.

The criminals hacked Thandu when he was having tea at a stall in a local bazar, leaving him critically injured. He was rushed to Jashore Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead, said locals.

They added that Thandu had an altercation with his rivals several days ago over leasing of a water body named Marzad Baor.

OC Saiful said they already visited the spot.

He added that they were investigating the incident to identify the killers.

'Unsustainable projects lead to debt traps' Says Jaishankar in a veiled dig at China

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT



In an oblique reference to the Chinese way of funding infrastructure projects in other countries, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has warned of unsustainable projects that can lead to debt traps.

"We have seen countries, including in our own region, being saddled with large debts, we have seen projects which are commercially unsustainable, airports where aircraft doesn't come, harbours where ship doesn't come," he said.

Jaishankar was responding to a question of Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen at a panel discussion at the Munich Security Conference on Saturday night. Jaishankar was at the panel along with counterparts from Australia, Japan and France, among others.

The exchange took place at a time when India-China rivalry is high. Besides, Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, an informal grouping of the US, Japan, Australia and India, is considered to be countering rising global economic power China in the Indo-Pacific.

There is also a competition between China and India over influence in the South Asian countries.

From the audience, Momen said many

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

LANGUAGE MOVEMENT: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The seized leaflet

MAHBUB JAMAL ZAHEDI

During the Language Movement in 1952, I was not a member of the Communist Party. I was a member of Youth League, and as a member of the organisation I worked in close collaboration with the Communist Party. Shahidullah Kaiser used to contact the students on behalf of the Communist Party. I had a contact with him.

I was present at the meeting of the All-Party State Language Action Committee held on February 20 at the Awami Muslim League office in Nawabpur. Seeing no possibility of taking any decision in favour of violating section 144, I left the office. I was not present during the voting.

Later, we went to SM Hall and informed students about the decision of the committee. Students asked us to inform the committee they would not abide by the decision.

Next day, the meeting had started already when Mawla and I arrived at the meeting place. During the actual firing, Oli Ahad, Matin and I were all inside Modhur Canteen. From



SEE PAGE 7 COL 2



Mohammad Totamia selling saplings of flowers, fruits and vegetables on his boat near Khulna's Jaikhana Ghat area. He runs his floating shop throughout the week after bringing in the saplings from Barishal's Banariapara. He earns around Tk 4,000 during the time. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN