



SOYBEAN OIL PRICE

Slipping out of reach

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

A crisis of edible oil, particularly soybean oil, has hit the domestic markets amid retailers and wholesalers stocking up and refiners slowing down delivery, as prices of essential commodities keep climbing in the international market.

Over the last several days, many consumers have returned from stores without being able to buy the essential ingredient as retailers have had their shelves empty.

Even with oil canisters available, consumers are told that those are not for sale. Wholesale stores are seeing similar scenes as traders are out to make a quick buck.

Customers are being compelled to pay higher than the government fixed prices.

Low-income customers are suffering the most.

Residents of Bhasantek and Damalkote slums in the capital claim that loose edible oil has been scarce for low-income groups.

Shafiqul Islam, a scavenger who earns an average of Tk 200 daily to feed his five-member family, said he had to buy loose palm oil for his family as soybean oil was unavailable.

"If I want to buy half a litre of soybean oil, I will have to spend half of my daily income and compromise on other essentials."

Yesterday, loose soybean oil was barely available in Dhaka's kitchen markets, while whatever was available sold for Tk 170 per litre, according

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"I used to buy a litre of soybean oil every week. Now I can only buy one-third of that ... I don't know whom to complain to ... Nobody seems to care about us." -- Md Milon, a 72-year-old fruit trader in Dhaka.



Ukrainian troops assist a wounded person as they evacuate the city of Irpin, northwest of Kyiv, during heavy shelling and bombing yesterday, 10 days after Russia launched a military invasion on Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

9 YEARS OF TAQI MURDER

A charge sheet taking forever

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SANAD SAHA

Almost a year after the brutal murder of Tanwir Muhammad Taqi, the draft of a Rab probe report got leaked in the media, revealing the involvement of 11 people, including Ajmeri Osman, in the killing.

Ajmeri is the son of late Jatiya Party lawmaker Nasim Osman and nephew of ruling Awami League MP Shamim Osman.

According to the probe findings, Ajmeri not only masterminded the murder of the bright teenage boy in Narayanganj, but also directly took part in it.

At his directives, his accomplices followed Taqi and forcefully took him to his "torture centre" at Winner Fashion on Allama Iqbal Road on March 6, 2013.

Later that night, Ajmeri and his cohorts beat and strangled the seventeen-year-old boy to death. His body was then put into a sack and taken to Charargop area in Ajmeri's car.

From there, the killers took the body to Kumudini Jora Khal in a boat and dumped it in Shitalakkhya sometime between 1:00am and 1:30am on March 7.

Taqi's body was recovered from the river the next day, according to the findings, reported by various media outlets.

Also, a day before Taqi's first death anniversary, Col Ziaul Ahsan, the then additional director general of Rab, claimed they had cracked the murder mystery.

He told the media they had evidence on the involvement of 11 people, including Ajmeri. He also insisted the charge sheet in the case would be submitted any day.

That day, however, has yet to come, even after eight long years, lingering Taqi's parent's agonising wait for justice and highlighting the authorities' unwillingness to end it.

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Sailors on their way home

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The 28 Bangladeshi crew members, rescued from a ship that was attacked at a Ukrainian port, were being brought back home.

"They will be brought back at the earliest," Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told reporters at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Last night, an official of the Bangladesh embassy in Romania told The Daily Star that the Bangladeshis were evacuated from Ukraine yesterday, and they were scheduled to reach Romania today.

The Banglar Samridhi, owned by Bangladesh Shipping Corporation, came under attack on March 2 night. Third engineer Hadisur Rahman, one of the 29 crewmen, was killed in the attack.

The ship had been anchored in Ukraine's Port Olvia since February 23. Russia has regretted the death but said the Russian side was not behind the attack. However, it said it would determine the circumstances and let Bangladesh know.

On Thursday, the 28 crewmembers and the body of Hadisur were transferred to a safe place in Ukraine. They were initially supposed to be transferred to Poland, but the authorities later decided to take them to Romania and then to Bangladesh.

Hadisur's body, kept in a refrigerator in Ukraine, will be sent to Bangladesh at a convenient time later, said an official of the Bangladesh embassy in Poland.

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Russia announces, violates ceasefire

Kyiv delays evacuations from key port city accusing Moscow of continuing shelling; Putin warns against no-fly zone

AFP, Kyiv

The Ukrainian port city of Mariupol postponed a planned evacuation of residents yesterday, blaming Russian forces for breaking their temporary ceasefire to allow civilians to flee one of the war's fiercest battles.

Russia has laid siege to the strategic city, which proudly resisted Moscow-backed rebels during a 2014 conflict, cutting off electricity, food and water in the dead of winter.

"The Russian side does not adhere to the ceasefire and has continued shelling both Mariupol itself and its environs, and for security reasons, the evacuation of the civilian population has been postponed," city officials said in a social media post.

Negotiations were underway "to establish a ceasefire and ensure a safe humanitarian corridor", Mariupol authorities added.

An evacuation had been seen as a prelude to a final assault that, if successful, would see the Russian army push north from occupied Crimea and link up with their forces from the east and take control of Ukraine's coast on the



Sea of Azov.

After Russia's defence ministry declared the ceasefire, officials announced that the port city's 450,000-strong population could begin to leave by bus and private cars.

The siege came as more Russian forces inched closer to the capital Kyiv, encountering stiff resistance in the western suburbs and the northern town of Chernihiv. Dozens of civilians have been killed in shelling, missile attacks and air raids, and now those remaining live among the town's ruins and in craters.

AFP reporters who visited the

town yesterday saw scenes of devastation -- despite Moscow's insistence it is not targeting civilian areas.

Fears are rising in Kyiv that the capital will suffer the same fate once Russian missile artillery is deployed within range.

Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksiy Reznikov alleged Russia had changed tactics after encountering tough resistance.

Ukraine, he said, had defeated Russia's plan to quickly storm major cities and overthrow President Volodymyr Zelensky's government, forcing Moscow to

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ACC couldn't probe money launderers in five years

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The High Court five years ago allowed the Anti-Corruption Commission to conduct enquiries and investigations into any type of corruption and take necessary action against the offenders, but the graft watchdog failed to bring the Bangladeshis, who deposited money in overseas banks and purchased properties abroad, to book.

The ACC even could not put forward any findings or information to the HC about those who bought properties in different countries, including Canada and Malaysia with laundered money, despite its repeated directives.

The commission keeps telling the HC that it has limitations with regards to tracing and putting the money launderers on trial under the relevant law.

On January 27, the ACC submitted a report to a HC bench, containing the names of 61 Bangladeshis and seven organisations mentioned in the Panama Papers and Paradise Papers as money launderers.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman is scheduled to hold a hearing on this issue today.

Meanwhile, the ACC has requested the government to make necessary amendments to the money laundering prevention act in order to empower the commission to conduct enquiries and investigations into money laundering.

On March 24, 2017, an HC bench in a verdict allowed the ACC to carry out enquiries and probes into any type of corruption and take necessary actions against the offenders.

"If we consider the above aims and objects of the Anti-Corruption Commission as completed in section 17, in particular 17(ga) and 17(ta) of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004, we have no hesitation to hold that to prevent corruption/corrupt, the commission has got unfettered power to make any enquiry, investigation and to take necessary actions/steps in accordance with law as it thinks fit and proper in any form of corruption," the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Shahidul Karim observed in the verdict.

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Children playing on the rail tracks near Khilgaon level crossing, oblivious to the dangers that may befall them. No one seems to have warned them to steer clear of the rail lines. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Delhi keen on inking comprehensive FTA

Bangladesh, India plan to reopen border haats soon, ensure trade via Benapole-Petrapole 24/7

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Bangladesh and India have decided to conduct a feasibility study on a comprehensive bilateral free-trade agreement covering goods and services, reopen the border haats and operationalise the busy Benapole-Petrapole trade point round the clock.

The decisions came at a commerce ministry-level meeting in Delhi on Friday.

However, going by the statement issued yesterday by the Indian commerce ministry on the outcome of the meet, no timelines were set for the tasks mentioned above except the words "soon" and "at the earliest."

Noting a major jump in the volume of the bilateral trade in recent years -- with Bangladesh being India's 6th largest trade partner -- India is understood to have emphasised the early conclusion of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which is more than mere FTA in goods by

including the services keeping in mind the sensitivities of the two sides.

The CEPA with Bangladesh is one of the agreements India is pursuing with priority as it was a key announcement in the joint statement signed during Indian PM Narendra Modi's visit to Dhaka in March last year.

Despite the pandemic, bilateral trade grew 14% from \$9.46 billion in the year 2019-20 to \$10.78 billion in 2020-21.

It is expected to lower non-tariff barriers on the two-way movement of goods between the two countries, opening the potential for more goods to be traded.

But Indian and Bangladeshi officials said much will depend on how the two sides incorporate safeguards in the proposed CEPA to protect their domestic industries against sudden surge in supply of certain goods.

Trade has been one of the key pillars of India-Bangladesh ties and India is going for CEPA at a time when it is also pursuing similar arrangements with the European Union, Canada, Australia and the Persian Gulf countries.

Despite the pandemic, bilateral trade grew 14% from \$9.46 billion in the year 2019-20 to \$10.78 billion in 2020-21.

India and Bangladesh currently have 10 border haats, but all of them had to be shut down due to Covid-19.

With the infection rates considerably low on both sides, the Friday meeting agreed that all border haats, located in the north-eastern Indian states of Tripura and Meghalaya, would be reopened soon.

Another important decision taken was the 24x7 operationalisation of the Petrapole-Benapole Integrated Check Post considering the huge volume of goods traded through this point, the daily backlog and the considerable delay in cross-border

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TCB starts selling essentials to 1cr families

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The sale of some basic commodities by the state-owned Trading Corporation of Bangladesh starts in Dhaka today in the first phase to deliver the items to one crore low-income families at subsidised prices.

Goods will be sold from 150 trucks both in Dhaka north and south city corporation areas on all weekdays but Friday until March 24, the TCB said in a statement yesterday.

The sale in the second phase will continue in the capital from March 27 to April 15.

Each consumer can buy two kgs of sugar at Tk 55 per kg, two kgs of lentil at Tk 65 per kg, two litres of soybean oil at Tk 110 per litre and 2.5 kgs of onion at Tk 30 per kg.

13 die from Covid in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen people died from Covid-19 and 368 others tested positive for the virus in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, said the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With this, the total number of Covid deaths in the country rose to 29,077 and the total number of cases went up to 19,46,737.

The current daily positivity rate is 2.11 percent and the overall positivity rate is 14.41 percent. The mortality rate now stands at 1.49 percent.

A total of 17,463 samples were tested in laboratories across the country in the 24-hour period.

Man held over molesting college girl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was caught red-handed by a mob over molesting a college student in the capital's Shahbagh area yesterday.

The mob beat up Saddam Hossain, 32, a vagabond from Kishoreganj, before handing him over to police, said Moudut Hawlader, officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station.

The OC said the girl, an eleventh grader, was walking in front of a flower shop at Shahbagh around 11:00am. All of a sudden, Saddam grabbed her from behind.

As the girl screamed for help, locals rushed to the spot and caught Saddam.

1 arrested for helping Rohingyas get NIDs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police on Friday arrested a former temporary data entry operator of the Election Commission from Cox's Bazar's Matarbari over helping Rohingya refugees obtain Bangladeshi national identity cards.

A Chattogram court placed arrestee Md Bayan Uddin, 28, on two-day remand yesterday after police produced him before it in a case in this regard, said Faruk Ul Hoque, deputy commissioner of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

CTTC sources said former temporary EC office assistant Joynal, now on bail in the same case, told investigators that Bayan Uddin used to work as data entry operator and helped them get NID cards for Rohingyas in exchange for money.

Slipping out of reach

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to data of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh. A week before, the price hovered around Tk 160.

The price of a 5-litre bottle was as high as Tk 830, while the government-fixed rate is Tk 795.

Md Milon, a 72-year-old fruit trader in the capital, said, "I used to buy a litre of soybean oil every week. Now I can only buy one-third of that ... I don't know whom to complain to ... Nobody seems to care about us."

Traders and insiders said the crisis is the result of the stocking tendency within the supply chain after the refiners demanded the commerce ministry increase the price of edible oil to Tk 180 per litre from March 1, up by Tk 12 from the government-fixed price.

Refiners have demanded a hike in the price in a bid to shift the burden of increasing import costs on the shoulders of the consumers, as the international markets also saw a rise in prices due to dry weather in Argentina and Brazil -- two major producing and exporting countries.

Supply concerns in the international market also stem from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

The prices of palm oil and sunflower oil have also surged.

The average price of soybean oil was \$1,596 per tonne in February -- up from \$1,470 the previous month, according to The

World Bank Commodities Price Data.

The quarterly average price of soybean oil was \$1,169 per tonne in January-March last year, it said.

In a letter to the commerce ministry on February 27, edible oil refiners, however, said prices of soybean oil ranged between \$1,700 and \$1,725 per tonne in the international market.

Bangladesh has to depend on the international market to meet 90 percent of its edible oil demand as the country produces only a small quantity of oilseeds.

"The demand for loose edible oil has increased so much that we are having difficulty catering to our regular customers," said Md Monir Hossain, owner of Monir Enterprise at the Karwan Bazar kitchen market.

He hung a notice at his store reading, "No soybean oil here".

Mohammad Raju and Mamun Hossain, also traders in Karwan Bazar, said their purchase orders placed with refiners were not being met.

Mofizul Islam, owner of Arif General Store in Mirpur's Shewrapara, said, "This is the first time in 15 years that I am having to wait for sales representatives to come and take my purchase order ... It has been a week and no one has come."

However, Biswajit Saha, director of corporate and regulatory affairs of City

Group, a leading importer and processor, claimed his group did not reduce supply volumes. "We are delivering 2,000 tonnes of edible oil daily," he said.

Didar-Mohd Dabirul Islam, head of finance and accounts of Bangladesh Edible Oil Ltd, said, "We are supplying to the markets but are failing to have any control there as traders are aware about prices being hiked in the international market."

The prices would be somewhat come down if the revenue authorities exempt the 15 percent VAT on edible oil. At present, customers have to count Tk 30 VAT for each litre of bottled soybean oil, he added.

In the face of rising demand, supershop Shwapno has said it would not sell more than one 5-litre soybean oil canister to each customer.

"With a shortage in soybean oil supply compared to the recent increased demand in the market, we have set a quota of one bottle per customer to stop panic-buying and to serve a higher number of customers," said Sabbir Hasan Nasir, executive director of ACI logistics and operator of Shwapno.

With soaring demands and losses created due to the current market prices, manufacturers have also reduced their number of deliveries.

"We could not provide soybean oil in 30 of our outlets on Thursday [March 3], he said.

British journo shot and wounded in Ukraine

AFP, London

A British television crew was ambushed outside Kyiv earlier this week, leaving one journalist wounded, their employer Sky News said.

Stuart Ramsay, chief correspondent at Sky News, was hit by a bullet in the lower back on Monday as they drove towards the Ukrainian capital.

Sky News showed footage of the attack late Friday.

Two bullets hit a camera operator's body armour. The five-person crew escaped their car and was later rescued by Ukrainian police.

A Russian saboteur reconnaissance squad is suspected of carrying out the attack, Sky News said.

"Bullets cascaded through the whole of the car, tracers, bullet flashes, windscreen glass, plastic seats, the steering wheel, and dashboard had disintegrated," Ramsay said in a written account.

The news crew is now safe and back in the UK, while their Ukrainian producer is with his family in Ukraine.

"The point is we were very lucky," Ramsay said.

"But thousands of Ukrainians are dying, and families are being targeted by Russian hit squads just as we were, driving along in a family saloon and attacked."

A charge sheet taking forever

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"We don't know the wait will ever be over. The government keeps protecting the ruling party men linked to the murder," a frustrated Rafiur Rabbi, Taqi's father, told The Daily Star on Thursday.

He said the investigators showed their competence by identifying the killers within a year, but they could not submit the charge sheet due to political pressure on the investigation agency.

He hoped justice for Taqi would be done someday and that the Awami League government would be "put in the dock for blocking the murder trial".

Taqi went missing after he left his Shaista Khan Road home in Narayanganj for Sudhijon Pathagar, a local library, around 4:00pm on March 6, 2013.

A day after his body was found, his A-level results were out, which showed he got the world's highest mark in physics in that exam, obtaining 297 out of 300.

According to the Rab report, Ajmeri Osman killed Taqi as his father Rafiur Rabbi, a left-leaning leader and a cultural organiser, along with his supporters actively campaigned for Selina Hayet Ivy ahead of the Narayanganj City Corporation election.

The report clearly mentioned the role of each of the 11 accused in the murder.

The other accused are Yusuf Hossain Liton, Sultan Shawkat alias Bhromor, Tayebuddin Jaky, Rajib, Kalam Shikder, Mamun, Apu, Kajol, Shipon, and Jamshed Hossain.

Rab had arrested Liton, Bhromor, Jaky and two

other suspects -- Rifat Bin Osman and Salah Rahman Simanta. All of them are now out of jail on bail.

Liton and Bhromor made confessional statements before courts under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in July and November 2013, narrating details from the murder planning to the execution.

Bhromor, however, appealed to the magistrate concerned later, seeking withdrawal of his statement.

A few months after Taqi murder, Rab members raided Ajmeri's Winner Fashion office and seized a pair of blood-stained jeans, a pistol butt and items for yaba consumption. Officials also found numerous bullet marks on the walls, almirah and sofa there.

The Rab report also mentioned that the force recovered the truncheons used to torture Taqi to death.

Besides, Taqi Mancha, a platform demanding justice for the murder, claimed on several occasions that Winner Fashion was one of the six "torture cells" identified by it.

Despite all this, Taqi's killers are still at large, as a top AL leader is defending the influential Osman family in Narayanganj, alleged Rafiur Rabbi.

He also alleged that his son's murder probe got stalled after that top leader, while speaking in parliament on a condolence motion on the death of Nasim Osman in June 2014, claimed propaganda was being spread against the Osman family.

For comments, The Daily Star repeatedly called Ajmeri

over the phone on Friday, but he did not respond.

The probe report said another reason for the murder was that Rafiur Rabbi led a massive movement against transport owners' bid to hike bus fare on the Dhaka-Narayanganj route.

Rabbi recently said the bus owners were subservient to Shamim Osman.

The day Taqi's body was found, he filed a murder case with Narayanganj Kotwali Police Station. Later, on March 18 that year, he submitted a complaint to the superintendent of police against seven people, including Shamim Osman, and 8-10 unnamed others.

Shamim could not be reached over the phone for comments yesterday.

The home ministry on June 20, 2013, handed the case to Rab upon a High Court order following an appeal by Rafiur Rabbi.

Contacted on Thursday, Rab-II Commanding Officer Lt Col Tanvir Mahmud Pasha said the investigation was still going on and completing it would take a long time.

"There are no barriers or pressures on anyone. Cracking mysteries in some complex cases takes time... the probe [in Taqi murder] will be over at the right time."

Refuting the allegation that the investigation agency was under political pressure, he said Rabbi was making such allegations because he is the father of the victim.

The Rab CO also said, "We have solved many clueless murder cases. But we want no innocent person to be accused ... I hope you will

see something over this case soon."

Asked about the then Rab top official's comment in 2014 on submitting the charge sheet "any day", Tanvir said there was no scope of filing it before the investigation ended.

As his attention was drawn to the matter, Omar Faruk, professor at the Department of Criminology and Police Science at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University in Tangail, said, "The state has to take the responsibility as the criminal justice system itself has become questionable here."

Sailors

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Foreign Minister Momen said the government was verifying a video clip of five Bangladeshis, who claimed that they were stranded at a camp there and being used as human shields by the Ukrainian soldiers.

Meanwhile, some 600 Bangladeshis were evacuated to Poland, but others were still in some pockets of Ukraine, officials said.

Momen said Dhaka was in talks with the Indian embassy in Ukraine for their rescue.

Asked about Bangladesh's neutral position at the UN General Assembly voting on a resolution that reprimanded Russia, he said Dhaka continues to have the same stance.

"We want peace, stability. If there is instability anywhere, we will also be affected."

He said Bangladesh is deeply concerned over the war in Ukraine and wants a solution to it through dialogues.



Tamanna Yesmin left her post at Harishankarpur level-crossing in Kushtia to join fellow temporary railway gatekeepers for their “fast unto death” programme, which enters its 8th day today. “We’ve been serving the railways for so long, do we not deserve some return?” a tearful Tamanna told journalists, demanding permanent status of their jobs.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Victims of administrative TOPSY-TURVY

Bureaucratic tangles keeping railway gatekeepers from getting permanent jobs

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Tamanna Yesmin, a temporary railway gatekeeper, was supposed to be working at Harishankarpur level-crossing on Kushtia section to ensure safe passage of trains.

But along with two-three hundreds of her fellow gatekeepers, Yasmin has been in the middle of a “fast unto death” for the last six days, demanding permanent status for their jobs.

But the railway authorities, for whom they have been working for more than four years, haven’t felt any obligation to visit the spot in front of Dhaka Divisional Railway Manager’s office beside Kamalapur Rail Station – where they’re fasting – to check up on them or provide them with assurances.

The protesting gatekeepers mentioned that their colleagues have been working extra hours to keep train operations normal.

“We’ve been serving the railways for so long, do we not deserve some return?” Tamanna told this correspondent yesterday, in a choked voice. She is one of 1,889 gatekeepers appointed under two railway projects that Bangladesh Railway (BR) took up to rehabilitate and improve level crossings.

They were appointed in early 2018 and provided Tk 14,450 (Tk 500 more for workers in metropolitan areas) as monthly salary without any rise in last four years. But the gatekeepers have been demanding that their jobs be



Over the last seven days, more than 100 temporary railway gatekeepers participating in the “fast unto death” have fallen ill, with six of them in critical condition.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

brought under BR’s revenue budget, claiming that the prime minister gave such directive at an Ecneec meeting.

Over the last seven days, more than 100 workers have fallen ill, with six in critical condition, said Al Mamun, a leader of the platform that organised the demonstration.

On the first day, Jahangir Hossain,

general manager (east) of BR, came to the spot and asked them to withdraw their programme, saying that a process is underway but it’s going to take time, said Mamun. However, the workers decided to continue as the GM didn’t provide a deadline.

While visiting the spot, this correspondent found around 200

workers present there. Some of them were sleeping, while an ambulance was seen taking two of them to hospital.

Tamanna, one of the 325 female gatekeepers, joined the demonstration on February 28. “Working as a railway gatekeeper is difficult for women. We tried to do our best, but now we’re passing uncertain days under open sky.”

WHAT IS BR DOING?

Around 70 percent of 1,412 authorised level crossings do not have dedicated staffers, according to recent BR data. Besides, there’s another 1,149 unauthorised level crossings which have no gatekeepers at all.

In June 2015, BR took up two projects – for its east and west zones – with a provision to hire 1,889 gatekeepers by outsourcing the recruitment process to an external company, sources said.

But as the project came across an Ecneec meeting, it directed BR to appoint the gatekeepers instead of hiring them through outsourcing as “sincerity and accountability is required for this job”.

After this, BR moved to appoint the 1,889 gatekeepers and completed all infrastructure-related work for it.

But when BR sent a proposal to bring them under the revenue budget, the public administration ministry rejected it – citing a 2004 finance ministry circular that prevents bringing project workers to the revenue budget.

In July 2020, the railways ministry re-sent the proposal. But the public

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Polls the only way to come to power Says agri minister

STAR REPORT

Agriculture Minister and Awami League presidium member Mohammad Abdur Razzaque yesterday said if BNP wants to come to power, they will have to join the polls.

“They must be elected by people. If people elect them [BNP], Awami League will leave power and welcome them,” he said.

The minister made the remarks while exchanging views with journalists at the council of Delduar upazila unit of AL on the upazila parishad premises, reports our Tangail correspondent.

Replying to a question on the price of daily commodities, the minister said price of coarse rice has remained stable and the price of fine rice is still a bit high. And the price of edible oil has risen a lot in the international market. “We have to meet the demand by importing edible oil,” he added.



Even darkness must pass Says Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said their party leaders and followers have been subjected to enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and various repressive acts.

“When I go to court, I don’t see any other people rather than the ones from our party. Many of them aren’t even our leaders. They’re only our supporters,” he said.

Jatiyatabadi Help Cell arranged the programme at Dhaka Reporters’ Unity (DRU) to provide financial assistance to the family members of some victims of enforced disappearance.

Besides, “Shaheed Nurul Alam Stipend” was

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‘All should have right to water’ Says Dipu Moni on Teesta

STAR REPORT

Education Minister Dipu Moni has expressed hope that Bangladesh and India would resolve the Teesta water-sharing issue.

“Our past and future are integrated and cannot be seen in isolation. As we understand each other deeply, if there is any problem in future, we will solve it on our own,” she told reporters in Kolkata on Friday.

She was speaking at an event commemorating the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh’s independence and the birth centenary of Bangabandhu at the 45th

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PRAYER
TIMING
MAR 6



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5-15	12-45	4-30	6-05	7-30
Jamaat	5-50	1-15	4-45	6-10	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Visiting Sundarbans just got costlier

Local, foreign tourists and forest-dependent population to pay double fees

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

The government has revised fees in the Sundarbans after a decade, doubling it for both local and foreign tourists and for people whose livelihoods depend on it.

The decision came into effect from February 26 for the world’s largest mangrove forest, a Unesco declared world heritage site which tops the list of tourist attractions for its rich biodiversity.

The environment, forest and climate change ministry in a gazette notification informed of the decision, taken to increase revenue collection following approval from the finance ministry on December 26 last year.

In a revised decision, the per-day fee for local tourists in places except sanctuary is set at Tk 150 while the previous fee was Tk 70. Foreign tourists will have to pay Tk 2,000, from what used to be Tk 1,000.

The per-day fee for local tourists in

each three sanctuaries of the Sundarbans has been set at Tk 300, which would be Tk 3,000 for foreigners. Local tourists will have to pay Tk 300 per day for each camera, while foreigners will have to pay Tk 500.

Apart from this, the fee for unregistered tourist trawlers has also risen. It is now Tk 1,000 for a three-day package on unregistered trawlers and Tk 300 for the registered ones. Every boat or trawler will have to pay Tk 300 for a day’s stay in the Sundarbans.

The fee for collecting Sundori, Pashur, Kakra, Kaora, Bain, Geoya, Dhundol wood have been fixed based on their width. For example, collecting per quintal of golpata will cost Tk 60, which was Tk 25 earlier.

Forest-dependent population used to pay Tk 1,200 per quintal of sea bass. The cost has now doubled to Tk 2,400 per quintal. The revised fee for crab

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Debris, such as rocks and discarded materials, that have slipped within railway sleepers can lead to grave danger as speeding trains rush over them. To avert accidents of this kind, workers have been hard at work at the Tejgaon rail crossing, cleaning each section of the line with caution. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Russia announces



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়
ঠাকুরগাঁও
thakurgaon.police.gov.bd



মুভ 100
সহযোগী

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০৩/২০২১-২০২২

স্মারক নং-৫১৮/ই

তারিখঃ ২০-ফাল্গুন-১৪২৮বঙ্গাব্দ
০৫-মার্চ-২০২২খ্রিস্টাব্দ

দি শ্রাবণিক প্রতিক্রিয়াসহ রোগেশন ২০০৮ ও তৎপরবর্তী সংশোধনী মোতাবেক ঠাকুরগাঁও জেলা পুলিশের নিম্নলিখিত পূর্ত মোরামত ও সংরক্ষণ প্রকল্পসমূহ চলাতি ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থ বৎসরে বিভাগীয়ভাবে বাস্তবায়নের দক্ষতা সীলপত্রসমূহ নামে প্রকৃত যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন পূর্ত মোরামত ও সংরক্ষণ কাজের ত্রিকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিম্নটি হতে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক খোলা দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

০১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ঃ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।	
০২	সংস্থা	ঃ	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।	
০৩	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর প্রধান	ঃ	পুলিশ সুপার, ঠাকুরগাঁও।	
০৪	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর জেলা/সংস্থা	ঃ	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ঠাকুরগাঁও।	
০৫	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি স্মারক নং ও তারিখ	ঃ	স্মারক নং-৫১৮/ই, তারিখঃ ০৫/০৩/২০২২খ্রিঃ।	
০৬	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	ঃ	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।	
০৭	ব্যাঙ্কেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	ঃ	রাজস্ব ব্যাঙ্কেট খাত।	
০৮	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	ঃ	০৬/০৩/২০২২খ্রিঃ।	
০৯	দরপত্র সিভিল সর্বশেষ প্রারম্ভ তারিখ	ঃ	২৭/০৩/২০২২খ্রিঃ।	
১০	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	২৮/০৩/২০২২খ্রিঃ তারিখ ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।	
১১	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	২৮/০৩/২০২২খ্রিঃ তারিখ ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা দরপত্রজমা বা মনোনীত প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি থাকে)।	
১২	দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	০১/০৪/২০২২খ্রিঃ তারিখ ১৩.০০ ঘটিকা।	
১৩	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী অফিস ও ঠিকানা	ঃ	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ঠাকুরগাঁও।	
১৪	দরপত্র প্রারম্ভ স্থান	ঃ	ডিআইজি, হংপুর রোড, হংপুর এবং পুলিশ সুপার, ঠাকুরগাঁও/নিম্নলিখিত/গম্বস্তাঃ।	
১৫	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	ঃ	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ঠাকুরগাঁও।	
১৬	দরপত্রজমা করার যোগ্যতা ও দরপত্রের সহিত যে সকল কাজ জমা দিতে হবে	ঃ	জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, হালনাগাদ পূর্ত ত্রিকারী লাইসেন্স (গণপূর্ত বিভাগ/স্থায়ী সরকার প্রকৌশল বিভাগ/জেলা পরিষদ/অনুল্পন সরকার বা স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রকৌশল বিভাগ কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত), ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, আয়কর সনদ, ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ, সাপ্তাহিক ব্যাংক সলভেলি স্যাটিফিকেট (সেটটমেন্টসহ) সর্বপ্রাপ্ত কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা সনদ, নিজ জরিপ/ত্রিকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের মালিকানা সনদসহ হস্তাক্ষর।	
১৭	দরপত্র আহবান কর্তৃপক্ষের নাম	ঃ	জনাব মোহাম্মদ জাহাঙ্গীর হোসেন, পুলিশ সুপার, ঠাকুরগাঁও।	
১৮	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী ও ঠিকানা	ঃ	পুলিশ সুপার, ঠাকুরগাঁও।	
১৯	কাজের নাম			
ক্রম নং	প্রকল্পের নাম	সিভিলসের মূল্য (অনুসরণযোগ্য)	দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ	কাজ সম্পন্ন করার সময়
১.	রাষ্ট্রাশ্রয়িতা থানার অবশিষ্ট ৪৩০ মিটার সীমানা প্রান্তির উন্নয়ন ০২ ফুট স্ট্রাকচারসহ সার্বিক মোরামত ও ওয়েলার কোর্টকরণ কাজ।	১,০০০/-	২৭,০০০/-	৩০/০৬/২২খ্রিঃ এর মধ্যে
২.	পুলিশ লাইসেন্স অভ্যন্তরে গেলাধর থেকে এমটি সেকশন পর্যন্ত (৩০০'x১৫') বিটুমিনাস কাণ্টোনিং করণ	৫০০/-	৮,৪০০/-	
৩.	পুলিশ লাইসেন্স অভ্যন্তরে রিজার্ভ অফিসের সামনে রাস্তা (১১০'x১৫') বিটুমিনাস কাণ্টোনিং করণ	৫০০/-	৩,০০০/-	
৪.	পুলিশ লাইসেন্স অভ্যন্তরে এমআই ডবল মোরামত কাজ।	৫০০/-	৩,৪০০/-	
৫.	ঠাকুরগাঁও সদর থানার অভ্যন্তরে পুলিশ ক্লাব মোরামত কাজ।	৫০০/-	১১,৩০০/-	
৬.	ঠাকুরগাঁও থানার ৩ ইউনিট এসএসআই কোয়ার্টারের সফল ওয়াশকর ও রাস্তার টাইলস কবরপহ সার্বিক মোরামত কাজ।	৫০০/-	৮,২০০/-	
৭.	বালিয়াডাঙ্গী থানার অভ্যন্তরে ১ ইউনিট এসএসআই কোয়ার্টার (১) এর রাস্তাঘর টাইলস কবরপহ সার্বিক মোরামত কাজ।	৫০০/-	৩,০০০/-	
৮.	বালিয়াডাঙ্গী থানার অভ্যন্তরে ১ ইউনিট এসএসআই কোয়ার্টার (২) এর রাস্তাঘর টাইলস কবরপহ সার্বিক মোরামত কাজ।	৫০০/-	৩,০০০/-	
৯.	পাঁচগঞ্জ থানার ১ ইউনিট এসএসআই কোয়ার্টার মোরামত কাজ।	৫০০/-	২,৭৫০/-	
১০.	পুলিশ লাইসেন্স অভ্যন্তরে মটির প্যারেজ এর অফিস ও ওয়াশকর টাইলসকবরপহ সার্বিক মোরামত কাজ।	৫০০/-	৩,৪০০/-	
১১.	বালিয়াডাঙ্গী থানার অভ্যন্তরে অফিসার ইনচার্জ কোয়ার্টার মোরামত কাজ।	৫০০/-	৫,৩০০/-	
২০	বিশেষ জ্ঞাতব্যঃ			
ক.	বাতি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্বত্বাধিকারীর সীল ও স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত প্যাকেট আবেদনপূর্বক অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত দরপত্র সিভিল সফ্রহ করতে পারবেন।			
খ.	দরপত্র সংরক্ষণ অন্যান্য তথ্যাবলি দরপত্র সংগ্রহকালে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর কাগজীয় হতে জানা যাবে।			
গ.	পিশিআর আইন/২০০৬ ও পিশিআর বিধিমালা/২০০৮ তৎপরবর্তী সংশোধনী এবং সিভিল সফ্রহ সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।			
ঘ.	নির্ধারিত তারিখ ও সময়ের পর সিভিল সফ্রহ বিক্রয় এবং দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।			
ঙ.	দরপত্রের শর্ত সমূহের কোন ব্যাখ্যা নিয়ে বিমত সোবা দিলে পুলিশ সুপারের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।			
চ.	কর্তৃপক্ষ সর্মিয়ন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করতে বাধ্য নহেন এবং কোন কারণ দর্শালে ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ কিংবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।			



০৫/০৩/২০২২

মোহাম্মদ জাহাঙ্গীর হোসেন

ফোন নং-৭৪০৫১২২২৫৬



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



Empty since mid-2020, jute mills across the country have become eerily similar to ghost towns. As many workers have been driven out of their quarters, the residential areas replicate that same, empty feeling. While almost no temporary and substitute workers are yet to have their dues cleared, even some permanent workers bear the same fate because of identification mistakes on their official documents.

Nat'l Jute Day NOT FOR WORKERS

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Nilufa Akhter is a 36-year-old single mother of two who lost her husband six years ago.

For most of this time, she managed to provide for her family with her job at Khalishpur Jute Mill, though this was no easy task. Throughout this duration, her wages were often delayed, but she persisted, for her family.

But on July 1 last year, the mill shut down completely, and so began her days of misery.

While a few relatives stepped up to support her initially, it soon started running dry, to the point that Nilufa was having difficulty putting food on the plate.

Coronavirus made the situation worse, as Nilufa and women like her couldn't just go and work as house help.

She had no choice but to take up the harder life of a day-labourer, all for her 16-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son.

Her daughter was supposed to sit for SSC exams, but Nilufa can't even bear her educational expenses anymore. "All day long, all I can think about is how to manage food for the family," she told this correspondent.

In the 20 months since the mills closed, she has received no money, which includes six bills due from last year, racking up around Tk 2.5 lakh in arrears.

Nilufa is among over 22,000 jute workers from seven state-owned jute mills in the Khulna and Jashore industrial belt, all of whom have plunged into dire straits after the mills closed.

The government assured them of clearing their dues within two months of the closure, which the textile and jute ministry announced at a press conference, but none of that money has come by yet.

The notice issued by Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) at each mill gate around the start of the closure added further uncertainty to their lives. Not mentioning closure, all the notice said was that the mills were "stopping production".

At the aforementioned press conference, the minister also said the mills will be reopened within three months after modernising their fixtures, in joint venture, PPP, or G2G agreements, but that has not materialised as well.

Besides the mills in Khulna and Jashore, there's another 18 mills across the country. In total, more than 50,000 permanent, substitute and temporary workers have been laid-off.

Visiting at least four jute mills of Khalishpur including Platinum and Crescent yesterday, this correspondent found the areas are mired in silence. But before the closure, these were some of the

most populous and crowded places in Khulna city.

According to BJMC and ministry sources, a decision has been taken up to lease the mills out for a period of five to 20 years through an open bidding system. They said five of them have already been leased to private entities.

After the independence in 1972, 77 jute mills across the country were first brought under state ownership. Over the years, they were gradually privatised again as per suggestions by IMF and the World Bank.

But leading up to the national polls in 2008, the to-be elected Awami League's manifesto featured the aim to take back the mills under state-ownership and make them profitable. In 2009, the new government reopened two closed mills and de-privatised another three.

But then on July 1, 2020, the government closed all state-run jute mills citing heavy losses and excessive production costs.

While most of the 25,000 permanent workers of the mills have received their wages and other benefits, the temporary and substitute workers have been left



SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

At a time when price of essentials is getting out of hand again, the food directorate's subsidised rice programme is bringing some relief to life in the port city. But to access the department's pick-ups, from where the rice is sold, people of all ages are having to stand in long queues, withstanding the scorching heat. This photo was taken yesterday from Anderkilla area.

Stand up for migrants in int'l arena

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said Bangladesh needs to make sure the rights of its migrants abroad are being ensured and protected.

They said the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) will be held in May this year, where Bangladesh needs to address migration-related gaps strongly.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Inclusive dev needed to ensure benefits for all

Speakers tell CPD-YPSA dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Speakers at a dialogue in the port city yesterday said inclusive development is a requirement to ensure benefits for all citizens.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) jointly organised the dialogue, titled "Chattogram Dialogue: Commitment for National Development – Education, Value-added Employment Opportunity and Gender Equality" at a city hotel.

Speaking at the dialogue, Dr Fahmida Khatun, executive director of CPD, said inclusive development means people-centred development.

While presenting the keynote, Avra Bhattacharjee, joint director, dialogue and outreach at CPD, said the term "commitment for development" talks about what political parties commit in their election manifestos.

The present Awami League government announced a bunch of commitments in their election manifesto for the national polls in 2018, he said.

While many of those have been implemented, many are under implementation while many more are yet to even get going, Bhattacharjee added.

For Chattogram, the pace of releasing funds for major development projects is slow, he observed.

This has delayed many projects which were supposed to be completed by 2021.

Dr Jyoti Prokash Dutta, president of Bangladesh Economic Association, Chattogram chapter, putting emphasis on inclusive development said not a single government hospital has been established in Chattogram in the past 50 years but around 20 five-star private hospitals have been established here.

"Can it be termed true development?"

Arifur Rahman, executive director of YPSA, said more than 20 percent people in the country are left out of major development programmes, adding that they must be brought under mainstream development programmes.

Among others, Awami League lawmaker and member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Finance Mostafizur Rahman Chowdhury was present as special guest.

Not a single government hospital has been established in Chattogram in the past 50 years but around 20 five-star private hospitals have been established here. Can it be termed true development?



Those who worked in these mills for 15-20 years are now being turned away over spelling mistakes. It is painful to bear.

Ruhul Amin
Krishak-Sramik-Chhatra-Janata
Oikya Parishad leader

Owners of land plots are invited to discuss their proposals

Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Banani, Old DOHS, Uttara, Banasree, Kalabagan, Pallabi, Mirpur DOHS, Shyamoli, Monipuripara, Green Road, Wari, Bashundhara, Shantinagar, Moghbazar, Eskaton, Segunbagicha, Paribagh, Indira Road, Mohammadpur, Lalmatia, Khilgaon, Malibagh, Bashabo & Siddheswari.



Please Call
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College Education Development Project (CEDP)

IDG Sub-Project
Ananda Mohan College, Mymensingh
Email: anandamohan1908cedp@gmail.com

Memo No. AMC/CEDP-ID

Date: 05-03-2022

e-Tender Notice: CEDP/AMC/2021-22/G-15/03

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.	669697	Supply and Installation of Air Conditioner for ICT Lab & Teachers Conference Room (G-15)	22 March/2022 01:15pm	22 March/2022 02:15:00pm

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-435



Mosharraf Karim in 'Mukhosh'.

The audience will decide if they like 'Mukhosh': Mosharraf Karim

When I am playing a character, I tend to get into it, and forget about the surroundings.

ZAHID AKBAR

Mosharraf Karim, Pori Moni and Ziaul Roshan starrer "Mukhosh" released this week in 38 cinema halls. The film is Eftakhar Suvo's debut directorial. The Daily Star caught up with the actor, as he spoke about his expectations towards the film and more.

You were not spotted at the promotions of "Mukhosh". Why so?
Due to my busy schedule, I could not participate physically in any promotional

activities. However, I did promote the film through social media. I will say that I did the best I could, within the limited time that I could spare.

How did you like the film?
It is the audience that will ultimately judge the film. My ultimate focus is always to put in the best performance that I can.

I will say that I am satisfied and happy with my work in this project.

Why do you think the audience should watch the film?
I think the story is very intriguing, and this

is why the audience will be attracted towards the film. Although it is the director's debut film, he has shown that he is extremely skilled in his craft.

Filmmakers often complain that you are unreachable over the phone. How would you explain that?

When I am playing a character, I tend to get into it, and forget about the surroundings. I hope that people will understand the fact that most of the time, it is not possible for me to keep in touch, as I do my duties with utmost concentration.

'No Dorai' director Angshu's debut web series in the works



Khairul Basar, Ziaul Hoque Polash and Tanim Rahman Angshu.

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

National Award-winning filmmaker Tanim Rahman Angshu's debut web series "Tirondaj" is in the works.

Under the banner of Alpha i, the five-episode show will feature Ziaul Hoque Polash and Khairul Basar along with Rothshi Siddika.

"The story focuses on the world of showbiz," says the "No Dorai" famed director.

"It is about two emerging artistes who fall into a professional trap. It also showcases the bond between journalists and artistes."

Polash will play a fashion world mobster, while Khairul Basar will play a journalist.

The show is expected to air exclusively on Bioscope around the last week of March.

Alia Bhatt takes cinemas by storm with 'Gangubai Kathiawadi'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Alia Bhatt's latest film, "Gangubai Kathiawadi", directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, is soaring high at the box office. It was released on February 25, 2022.

The success of the film is also a win for Bollywood itself, which is attempting to return cinemas to glory after a two-year struggle with the pandemic.

In a week, "Gangubai Kathiawadi" managed to make Rs 68.93 crore, becoming the third highest-grossing first-weekend film during post-pandemic times in India. "Sooryavanshi" has the top spot in this regard with Rs 120.66 crore, while "83" earned Rs 71.87 crore.

On March 4, the official Instagram account of Bhansali Productions shared a poster of "Gangubai Kathiawadi", and said that the film has grossed Rs 108.3 crores worldwide.

COUNTRYWIDE

Inefficiency in road renovation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Carpeting got damaged of a paved road stretching from Bijaya of Joychandi union in Kulaura upazila to Kapnapahar Road of Juri upazila even before the completion of the work.

Locals stopped the work alleging the use of substandard materials in the renovation work.

Locals Sirajul Islam and MI Murshed said works on the road started just days ago. Due to use of low-quality materials, part of the carpeting is being rubbed off.

According to Moulvibazar Roads and Highways (RHD) office, the length of the road from Gazipur-Vijaya-Clevedon in Kulaura to Kapnapahar in Juri upazila is 15-km. The road remained in a battered condition with big potholes for long.

Contractors Kamruzzaman Shyamal and Akbar Ali were given the work order for repairing 1400 metres of the 15-km road at a cost of around Tk 45 lakh. Work started on February 8, and is



PHOTO: STAR

expected to be completed within a month.

Abdul Ahad said the potholes of the road were being filled with low-quality bitumen.

Local residents Abdul Gaffar and Enamul Islam said, "We informed the men employed by the contractor. But they didn't pay heed to our words and continued to work with sheer negligence."

"So, we got upset and told the workers not to dump the mixture of stones and bitumen on the road. Later, the contractor's men stopped the work and took away the equipment," they said.

Asked about this, Kamruzzaman Shyamal, contractor of the work, said the work was stopped due to the objections of the locals.

Roads and Highways Department Moulvibazar office executive engineer Zia Uddin said the engineer in charge has given me a report about the work. The work has gone bad due to the mistakes of inexperienced workers in engineering work. No leniency will be shown on the quality of work.

"If the work is poor quality, the contractor is bound to do the work again. The contractor has been strictly instructed to do the work properly," he said.



Hired labourers cutting off topsoil using excavator from a cropland at Badda village in Tangail's Kalihati upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Topsoil removal from cropland goes unabated

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Cutting of topsoil from croplands is still going on unabatedly at different places in Tangail, leaving a harmful impact on fertility of land.

A section of greedy earth traders is cutting off the topsoil from the farmlands after buying the top layer from the land owners.

The syndicate has been selling the earth mostly to the brick kiln owners and also to others for different purposes, including filling of low lands and constructing earthen roads.

The ill practice is damaging the fertility of the lands as well as destroying environment and ecological balance.

Fertility of cropland is reduced to a great extent and production declines due to cutting the top layer, agriculturists said.

Shakil Ahmed Shuvo, an agriculture entrepreneur and also a masters' student at Bangladesh Agriculture University, said usually our crops root depth is 15cm where all essential nutrition elements remain.

"Once the topsoil is removed from the cropland, it puts adverse effect on productivity of the land," Shuvo said.

However, the illegal activity is going on in all the 12 upazilas of the district, defying the law.

Moreover, the earth traders are also flattening hillocks of red soil at many places in Ghatail, Mirzapur and Sakhipur upazilas and destroying the precious natural asset.

They are also cutting off soil from the banks of different rivers, increasing risk of erosion during the monsoon.

Alongside decline in crop production, local environment is being polluted by the dust.

Meanwhile, rampant movement of earth-laden heavy vehicles is also causing damages to the rural roads.

Local people cannot resist the ill practice learning consequence from the earth traders as most of them are influential people having political clout.

A section of public representatives is also involved with them, locals alleged.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw labourers were

cutting off topsoil using excavator from a cropland at Badda village in Kalihati upazila to send the earth to local brick kilns.

Moreover, workers were cutting off earth from a hillock in Moricha Paikpara area in the upazila, changing class of the land.

Locals informed that earth traders, backed by a member of local union parishad, cutting off the highlands.

Sources at Agriculture Department Office said the district has 2, 43,647 hectares of croplands. Of the land, several hundred acres are being damaged every year due to removal of topsoil.

Besides, more than 250 brick kilns are currently running operations in the district and most of those are at Mirzapur and Ghatail upazilas.

Cutting earth from the croplands and hillocks for producing bricks is prohibited in Burning of Bricks Control Act 1989 (Revised in 2013).

In order to get the license, brick kiln owners have to submit an affidavit to the Deputy Commissioner (DC), mentioning

the places from where they would collect earth. But, due to lack of proper monitoring, earth is being collected from different places, including croplands.

Agriculturist Abu Adnan, also a training officer at Agriculture Department, said the surface soil layer, up to 15cm, contains organic materials, while the high fertile land contains microorganism.

Deputy Director at Tangail Directorate of Environment (DoE) Jamir Uddin said permission from the local administration is a must for cutting earth for brick kilns.

Mirzapur Assistant Commissioner (Land) Jubayer Hossain said there are 258 villages in the upazila and it is very difficult to monitor the illegal practice.

Shoyeb Mahmud, an upazila agriculture officer, said after the topsoil is removed from croplands it took about 20 years to get the fertility back.

Firoz Haider Khan, president of Tangail brick kiln owners' association, said they face various problems for collecting earth and they need a good solution for it.

As of March 5, 0900 GMT

Explosions/strikes*

Fighting*

On March 4, 2000 GMT

Zones under Russian control

Zones claimed by Russia

Any movement in this direction (no-fly zone over Ukraine) will be considered by us as participation in an armed conflict by that country.

Russian President Vladimir Putin

100 km

Map data: OSM

AFP

Rescuers work at the scene where several houses have been damaged by an explosion, following an air strike in Bila Tserkva, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine; and an unexploded bomb is pictured on the outskirts of the city of Chernihiv, Ukraine.

PHOTO: REUTERS, AFP

UKRAINE WAR
Developments

AFP, Kyiv

CEASEFIRE IN 2 CITIES
Russia's defence ministry announces a ceasefire to allow civilians in the besieged port city of Mariupol and the town of Volnovakha to evacuate.

NUCLEAR PLANT FIRE
A fire at Europe's biggest nuclear power station at Zaporizhzhia is put out, with Ukraine accusing Russia of "nuclear terror" in shelling the plant.

MORE TALKS PLANNED
One of Ukraine's negotiators says a third round of talks with Russia on ending the fighting is planned this weekend. Russian President Vladimir Putin in a phone call with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz says Moscow is ready for dialogue over Ukraine if all its demands are met.

JAIL THREAT TO JOURNALISTS
Award-winning Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta says it will stop reporting on the war and the BBC says it is suspending the work of its journalists in Russia as President Vladimir Putin signs a law imposing harsh jail sentences for the publication of "fake news" about the invasion.

LONG WAR FEARS
US Secretary of State Antony Blinken warns that the war in Ukraine "may not be over soon" and that the US and European allies must sustain tough pressure on Russia until it ends.

MORE SANCTIONS
G7 foreign ministers warn that Russia will face further "severe sanctions" for its invasion, and call on Moscow to stop its attacks near nuclear power plants.

ZELENSKY SLAMS NATO
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky lashed Nato for ruling out a no-fly zone over his country.

'NUMEROUS RAPES'
Ukraine's foreign minister claims there have been "numerous cases" of Russian troops raping Ukrainian women and calls for an international tribunal on war crimes.

1.2 MILLION FLEE
More than 1.2 million people have fled Ukraine into neighbouring countries since Russia invaded last week, the UN says.

HUNGER THREAT
The United Nations' World Food Programme warns about a looming food crisis in Ukraine in conflict areas, while disruptions in production and exports could lead to food insecurity globally.

Moscow's plan A fails, now what?

INTERNATIONAL DESK

When, on early hours of February 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a "special military operation" to "demilitarise and de-nazify" Ukraine, he surely didn't expect it to last this long. Political analysts believe his goal was to change the pro-western regime in Kyiv in days and install a pro-Russian puppet government there to protect Moscow's interests.

Since then, Russian forces have marched well inside and across the country, but clearly failed to meet Moscow's objectives. The factors on the ground - the resistance of the Ukrainian people against the invasion and perceived low morale of Russian troops due to poor logistics and inept leadership - indicate that this might be a protracted war. The fighting in Kyiv has echoes of Russia's long and brutal struggle in the 1990s to seize and largely destroy Grozny, the capital of Chechnya.

So far Russia has refrained from indiscriminate bombings and airstrikes on civilians, as it might encourage more united response from Ukrainians. It will also complicate the post-war reconciliation efforts. But Moscow can't afford this war to drag on for months. It might

have to step up airstrikes and shelling and risk incidents like the strike on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station in Ukraine - the largest in Europe. Whatever restraint Russia shows on the ground, incidents



of mass civilian casualties might draw nuclear powers to clash on the borders of Europe and beyond.

Highlighting this risk, Ukraine on Friday said forty-seven died in a Russian air strike in the northern Ukrainian city of Chernihiv. The report comes on the same day when Putin told German Chancellor Olaf Scholz that Russia was not bombing Ukrainian cities and civilians. Unlike Iraq or Afghanistan, mass killings in Ukraine,

might trigger demands for actions, both from public and politicians, other than sanctions in the western world.

Any protracted war also may force Putin to expand the conflict beyond Ukraine.

properties may also make Kyiv to seek a compromise. In fact, amid this bombings and sufferings, officials from Ukraine and Russia have met twice in seven days and another meet is scheduled on the weekend. The meetings held on the Belarus-Ukraine border failed to halt the fighting, but the sides have agreed in principle to at least allow humanitarian corridors for civilians to escape.

But Russia is unlikely to compromise on its ultimate redline - a Nato membership for Ukraine. The invasion is surely an act of aggression and it breaks international treaties. The sufferings of the Ukrainians are deplorable in any sense. However, aside from Russia's disputed claim that Nato agreed not to expand into Eastern Europe, Moscow surely can't afford to have a Nato base inside its belly. Russia may not be a global power anymore, but it surely has the right to defend its national security and interests.

Till now all the options are on the table - a short war, a protracted war, regime change in Ukraine or even in Moscow, a diplomatic solution or the beginning of third world war. Let's hope diplomacy and humanity win as soon as possible.

West keeps weapons' pledge
Ukraine receiving missiles, armoured vehicles and even rations for troops

AFP

On a runway near the Ukrainian border, 14 wide-body aircraft arrive on average each day -- a carefully calibrated operation mounted at top speed to deliver tons of Western military assistance to Kyiv.

General Mark Milley, the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, inspected the site on Friday -- its location is being kept secret for security reasons -- where the Pentagon is coordinating the activities of 22 donor countries.

A handful of journalists accompanying Milley were allowed to observe as personnel prepared about 100 Javelin anti-tank missiles for delivery to the border. Pictures were forbidden.

Men in civilian clothes used forklifts to move the missiles, which were stacked on pallets and only covered in plastic.

On the runway, the cargo hold of a US Air Force C-17 transport plane has just been shut -- the delivery was complete. At the same moment, another C-17 was landing.

The missiles did not stay in one place for long: they were quickly taken by land to their final destination, military officials said.

As many as 18 deliveries have taken place in a single day at the site. Only about four or five a day are American.

The operation is coordinated by a mix of soldiers and civilians, mainly from Nato member countries, who have come



This photo shows wreckage of a suspected Russian Sukhoi Su-25 assault aircraft outside the city of Volnovakha, Ukraine, on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

to support Ukraine in its battle against a Russian invading force that is bigger and better equipped.

Beyond assistance from Washington, which has unblocked more than \$1 billion in military aid to Ukraine over the past year, several European nations are providing Kyiv with an array of materiel -- anti-tank missile launchers, Stinger surface-to-air missiles, armoured vehicles, fuel, munitions, assault rifles and even rations for their troops.

The United States has already delivered two-thirds of the arms it promised in late February to Ukraine, which says it has been able to effectively slow the Russian advance,

North Korea fires ballistic missile

AFP, Seoul

North Korea fired a suspected ballistic missile yesterday, Seoul's military said, continuing this year's record-breaking blitz of weapons tests with a launch just days before South Korea's presidential election.

From hypersonic to medium-range ballistic missiles, Pyongyang test-fired a string of weaponry in January and last week launched what it claimed was a component of a "reconnaissance satellite" -- although Seoul described it as another ballistic missile.

Tokyo confirmed the launch, saying the missile had flown "at a maximum altitude of approximately 550 kilometres and a distance of approximately 300 kilometres," Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi said. The North's sabre-rattling comes just four days before South Korea votes for a new president.

Haqqani leader shows his face

AFP, Kabul

One of the Taliban's most secretive leaders, whose only picture on US "most wanted" lists is a grainy semi-covered profile, was photographed openly for the first time yesterday at a passing-out parade for new Afghan police recruits.

Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, who also heads the feared Haqqani Network, has previously only been photographed clearly from behind -- even since the hardline Islamists seized power last August. The United States has offered a reward of up to \$10 million for information leading to Haqqani's arrest, saying he was responsible for a string of terror attacks.

Pak shia mosque blast toll hits 62

AFP, Peshawar

The death toll from a suicide attack at a Shia mosque in northwest Pakistan rose to 62 overnight as police yesterday said they would try to identify the bomber from two severed feet found at the scene. Police also released CCTV footage of Friday's attack showing a man dressed in a traditional shalwar kameez tunic shoot two policemen as he entered the mosque in the Kocha Risaldar area of Peshawar, around 190 kilometres from the capital Islamabad. He then detonated a suicide vest packed with ball bearings that ripped through the building. The Islamic State group have claimed responsibility for the attack. It was the deadliest attack since July 2018, when a blast at an election rally killed 149 people.

POST-COUP MYANMAR
Junta revokes citizenship of key NUG members

AFP, Bangkok

Myanmar's junta has revoked the citizenship of several members of an opposition government dominated by Aung San Suu Kyi's toppled administration, it said yesterday.

Ousted lawmakers formed the "National Unity Government" weeks after the military's power-grab last year, and have vowed to overturn the coup.

The NUG has since been declared a "terrorist" organisation by the junta.

Those stripped of citizenship include spokesman Sasa -- who goes by one name -- minister for foreign affairs Zin Mar Aung, home minister Lwin Ko Latt and human rights minister Aung Myo Min.

The group had "violated the existing laws of the State and... found to be committing acts that could harm the interests of Myanmar," according to a junta notice in state newspaper Global New Light of Myanmar.

Writer Ei Pencilo and prominent activists Min Ko Naing and Ei Thinzar Maung had also had their citizenship revoked, it said.

"Similar perpetrators will be identified and prosecuted," the notice from the military added.

The NUG holds no territory and has not been recognised by any foreign government with many of its members in hiding or exile.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the coup and a subsequent military crackdown on dissent that a local monitoring group says has killed more than 1,600 people.

Keep nuclear plants out of war

Russia should remember the Chernobyl tragedy

THE attack by Russians on a nuclear power plant in Ukraine on Friday has raised questions as to why President Putin would go for such an extreme action. We are sure a veteran statesman like him has a clear idea what a damaged nuclear power plant can do to the entire region's population and biodiversity. Putin and his military commanders must be aware of the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster that took place in 1986 and its tragic aftermath. It too was located in Ukraine. Besides causing deaths to hundreds of citizens, it spread deadly radioactive contamination across Europe.

We are, therefore, shocked at the Russian decision to target the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant which caused a fire in a part of the building. The people in charge there, with the help of Ukrainian soldiers, have been able to extinguish the fire, and so far there has been no report of radiation leakage. It surely was a close call that otherwise could have been of nightmarish consequences. We are further alarmed by the news that Russian forces have seized control of the power plant after a battle with Ukrainian troops on the ground. Ukraine's nuclear establishments have been a major point of concern since the Russian invasion of the country. And the fear of damage to one of these establishments came true on Friday.

The Ukrainian president termed the attack as an unprecedented "nuclear terror" and his allies in the West accused Moscow of endangering millions of lives by launching a full-blown war on Ukraine. Many of them called upon Putin to withdraw all troops and engage in diplomatic efforts to resolve the issues. But as the latest developments indicate, there is no sign of Russian forces withdrawing from any place under their occupation. Rather, they are carrying on with their offensive on multiple fronts and targets. Meanwhile, the number of civilian deaths is mounting, while refugee numbers have crossed over 1.2 million already. Bangladesh also condemns the unprovoked rocket attack on one of its commercial ocean liners, while left one of the crew members dead and the ship badly damaged. We are, however, relieved to learn that the rest of the crew members have been taken to a safe zone.

While we strongly condemn the Russian action on the nuclear power plant in Ukraine, we insist that all nuclear sites everywhere be kept safe and secure so that no disaster like Chernobyl can happen ever again. With the memory of some tragic nuclear disasters still fresh in our minds, we urge President Putin and President Zelensky to give peace a chance by starting a dialogue sitting across the table.

Why is old survey being used to calculate food inflation?

BBS data underestimates the actual condition of the poor

IT is deeply troubling that official inflation figures in Bangladesh do not reflect the actual situation in the country, as a recent study has found out. The study, done by the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), reveals that food inflation faced by the poor is more than twice what the official data claims. This is mostly because the state-run Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) still calculates inflation based on the old Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) of 2005-06, which is really surprising given that the latest data of HIES 2016 has been available since 2017. Because of using data from the old base year, the stress that economically marginalised households are suffering in the wake of price hikes remains underestimated.

According to the BBS, in January this year, food inflation in the urban and rural areas was 4.85 percent and 5.94 percent, respectively. But the SANEM study found that it was actually 11.36 percent in urban areas and 11.21 percent in rural areas. The study has found that the food consumption baskets of the selected marginalised household groups are concentrated on much smaller items than the food baskets used by the BBS. The consumption patterns of the households calculated by the BBS were derived from the HIES of 2005-06—in which 422 commodities were included in the urban consumer basket, while the rural basket consisted of 318 food and non-food items. But the meal patterns of people have changed a lot since 2005-06.

The SANEM study also found that the average food consumption is 61.13 percent of the total consumption expenditure of urban marginalised household groups, and 65.36 percent of the total consumption expenditure of rural household groups. These are much higher than the food shares used by the BBS in their CPI (Consumer Price Indices) calculation: 45.17 percent for urban areas, and 58.54 percent for rural areas.

The danger of such inaccurate and exaggerated data cannot be overestimated, as official response almost always depends on the BBS data. It also means that while the pandemic has been continuously affecting people's income and employment, creating new poor and increasing their vulnerabilities, the poor are having to struggle with huge inflationary pressure. This is totally unacceptable. We urge the government to undertake proper assessment of the market's demand and supply situation. Also, the government's social protection coverage needs to be expanded to include all old and new vulnerable segments of population in its schemes.

Can rising interest rates really tame inflation?



AN OPEN DIALOGUE

Dr. Abdullah Shibli
is Senior Research Fellow at the US-based
International Sustainable Development
Institute (ISDI).

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

RUSSIA'S military attack on Ukraine has unquestionably thrown the global economy off balance. Newspapers are full of stories about the long-term impact of this war. Obviously, I share many of the dire predictions being made, but for this article, I choose to address another equally burning and long-term issue: the role of rising interest rates. In simple terms, it revolves around the question: "How high does the interest rate have to rise to dampen inflation?"

We know that the interest rate determines the price of holding or loaning money. Banks pay an interest rate on savings to attract depositors. Banks also receive an interest rate for money loaned from their deposits. When interest rates are low, individuals and businesses tend to borrow more from banks, thereby increasing the money supply. As a consequence, inflation goes up. On the other hand, higher interest rates tend to lower inflation.

While this is a very simplified version of the relationship, it highlights why interest rates and inflation tend to be inversely correlated.

There is growing concern among economists that the rate of interest that borrowers pay is soon going to shoot through the roof and short-circuit the post-pandemic economic recovery. So, why is the interest rate going up? How does it affect other macroeconomic variables, particularly the price level? Can rising interest rates really curb inflation? I cannot answer all these questions here due to space limitations, but hope to pique the interest of readers so as to enable them to pursue the riddle in greater depth over time.

A central bank can use interest rate variations as a tool to battle inflation. It does so by setting the short-term borrowing rate for commercial banks—known as the repo rate in Bangladesh—and then those banks pass it along to consumers and businesses. That rate influences everything from interest on credit cards to mortgages and car loans, making borrowing more expensive. On the flip side, it also boosts rates on savings and certificates of deposit (CD), and encourages savings.

During a period of inflation, a central bank aims to make borrowing more expensive so that consumers hold off on purchases, thereby cooling off demand



▲
Treating inflation with high interest rates is like treating cancer with chemotherapy. You have to kill parts of the economy to slow things down.

ILLUSTRATION:
COLLECTED

is under increasing pressure to raise the bank rate again. The US Federal Reserve is expected to begin raising the benchmark rate, known as the Funds Rate, at the next meeting of the Board of Governors on March 15-16. The European Common Bank might raise rates selectively, and it is a foregone conclusion that countries in Asia will follow suit, although there might be a slight lag.

What's new about this upward trend is that many central banks in North America and Europe had brought down their respective interest rates to near-zero levels in an effort to achieve the targets of maximum employment and price stability. Unfortunately, inflation has recently reached a high level in the wake of rising demand and supply chain bottlenecks. The central banks have now decided to apply the brakes on aggregate demand and money supply to dampen inflationary pressures.

The critical question here is whether the observed movement in the two variables—interest rate and inflation—exhibit any causality, or is it merely a coincidence? Of immediate relevance is the question: Will merely raising the interest rate bring down the rate of

inflation? In addition, how high and how fast does the interest rate have to rise to make an impact on inflation? For instance, if needed, can the Fed raise interest rates to 5 percent, 10 percent, or as in the 1980s, to 20 percent? Is this even calculable or predictable in advance? The answer to these questions is no.

Raghuram Rajan, former chief

economist at IMF and governor of the Reserve Bank of India, dismissed interest rate as a "blunt" tool in a situation where the real culprit is the creaky supply chain. Interest rate is a blunt tool also because aggregate price indices alone don't tell us specifically which prices are changing, for what reasons, or to what effect.

"The government should take action to protect the poorest through stronger price caps and direct financial support, while increasing investment in green projects to end our exposure to volatile fossil fuel prices, and dampening demand among those who can afford it through wealth taxes," Rajan adds.

Of course, it will take some time for any action a central bank takes to impact the economy and curb inflation. That's why the policy-making groups need to carefully watch economic data to decide how much and how frequently to raise rates.

And the biggest challenge is to find the optimal level of interest rate increases without pushing the economy into a slump. Treating inflation is like treating cancer with chemotherapy, as an expert said. "You have to kill parts of the economy to slow things down. It's not a pleasant treatment."

What Ukraine needs



Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze
is chair of Ukraine's
Parliamentary Committee on
Integration of Ukraine to the EU.

IVANNA KLYMPUSH-TSINTSADZE

ALTHOUGH Ukraine's armed forces are outnumbered by those of Russian President Vladimir Putin invading our country, we take heart from the growing support we are receiving from friends abroad. Nobody should forget that this is not just an unprovoked invasion of Ukraine; it is an assault on the free world.

Putin has been at war with the free world for decades. He has ordered the assassination of Russian exiles on foreign soil, in democratic countries such as the United Kingdom. He has interfered in democratic elections, both in the United States and across Europe. He and his cronies have looted Russia and laundered the cash abroad. He has propagated disinformation worldwide, and crushed dissent at home. In 2008, he sent Russian forces into Georgia, where they continue to occupy large swaths of that country. And most recently, he has occupied Belarus—now a launchpad for his war on Ukraine.

In Ukraine, Putin's forces have exhibited appalling cruelty, bombing apartment blocks, hospitals, schools, and other essential civilian infrastructure that is critical to urban civilian life. The bombing of Freedom Square in Kharkiv and the use of cluster munitions in cities are unambiguous examples of war crimes. Russian troops are committing acts of genocide against the Ukrainian people. Because Putin's troops have overrun



▲
A blast is seen in the TV tower, amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine on March 1, 2022.

PHOTO:
REUTERS

Putin's objective extends beyond Ukraine. He wants a return to the 1945 Yalta Conference, when world leaders carved up post-World War II Europe according to Western and Soviet spheres of influence. Just last week, the Kremlin spokesman issued direct threats against Sweden and Finland—two countries that, like Ukraine, are European but not members of NATO.

The free world has begun to wake up to the magnitude of the threat Putin poses. For too long, the global response amounted to too little, too late. But by barring several Russian banks from the SWIFT financial messaging system, freezing a significant share of Russia's foreign-exchange holdings, and supplying

us with advanced military hardware, the free world is helping Ukraine drive Putin back.

We are grateful to Poland and other Western neighbors for doing all they can to accommodate Ukrainian refugees—though we now understand that Russia is deploying paratroopers to terrorise these people and to close our western borders.

To resist Russia and save Ukraine, we need more help immediately. For starters, Western powers could enforce a no-fly zone over Ukraine to prevent the continued aerial bombardment of civilian population centres. Second, other countries must impose an oil and gas embargo on Russia, to cut off its primary revenue source. Third, governments should expel Russian diplomats, deny Russia landing rights, and ban all Russian media channels. And, finally, Russia's veto at the United Nations Security Council should be revoked, followed by a special war-crimes tribunal to prosecute Putin and other culpable officials for the crimes against humanity that have become a staple of Russian policy in Ukraine.

Putin's terrorist army may inflict horrific damage on our cities, but it will never take control of Kyiv, our Ukraine's capital and spiritual home. He can try to erase our city from the map with bombardments, but we will never capitulate.

As I sit here on the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukrainian politicians of all stripes have rallied together with civil society leaders and foreign parliamentarians to counter Putin's outrageous attack on our country.

While our brave armed forces and citizens are resisting Putin's criminal invasion in the cities and forests of Ukraine, we will continue doing what we can to defend ourselves. We know that we have truth and freedom on our side. All free countries must know that the fight Putin has forced upon us is not ours alone.

Boi Mela is bringing kids to books. We can take this further.



Laila Khondkar is an international development worker.

LAILA KHONDKAR

“DURING school holidays, my coaching centre is closed. I encourage students to read books, play or do things they really enjoy. But most parents enrol them in some other coaching centres during their break,” says a schoolteacher in Dhaka.

Most parents in Bangladesh view success in exams to be the most important thing in their children’s lives. This is not conducive to their holistic development. Children are also spending a disproportionate amount of time online. Many are developing problems with their eyesight and experiencing delayed speech development. It has become common that parents are often busy with smartphones and hardly have time to pay attention to children even when they need it. In this context, it is a welcome relief that children are visiting the Ekushey Boi Mela with their parents and buying books.

Reading books is essential for developing children’s imagination, analytical skills, concentration, communication, etc. It can also be a joyous experience. Parents should start reading books to children when they are a few months old. Giving books as gifts during birthdays and festivals helps in developing reading habits from a young age. Children should be given the opportunity to read books that they are interested in, instead of being influenced to read texts of specific genres. Once they find reading to be a pleasurable activity, they will explore other genres of their own

accord. Any questions a child may have about books should also be encouraged and entertained.

Parents decide all aspects of their children’s lives including food, clothing, toys, leisure activities, etc. Hence, it is their responsibility to provide guidance to children on the optimum usage of electronic devices. In addition to reading, parents should engage children in sports and creative activities which will ensure the latter’s holistic development. Moreover, parents and adult family members must limit their own use of electronic devices. Children should receive uninterrupted attention from parents, without the interference of smart devices.

A lot of experimentation is going on worldwide with the size, shapes, illustration and overall production of children’s books. Some are being printed on soft cloth to help babies and toddlers become familiar with the experience. Traditional fairy tales are also being rewritten to make them more appealing to the children of today.

Some parents living in Dhaka have said that while their children read English books, they are not at all interested in Bangla books, as their content and quality fail to attract them. While it is important to read good-quality books published in other languages, we should ensure that children read books in their mother language as well. Children of different ages think and feel differently, and their reading speeds vary, too. New issues in society should be considered while writing books for children, so that they find them relevant and enjoyable. As such, books should be categorised by age. In addition to the content, the illustration and print must be of high quality. Children already have access to a lot of visual products, and books have to compete with digital imagery to appeal



▲ We should not have to wait for Boi Mela to promote children’s books.

PHOTO: STAR/PRABIR DAS

to them. Writers, illustrators, editors and publishers thus have to perform effectively to create good-quality content. Though a few publishers are trying to improve the quality of their products in Bangladesh, many children’s books are of compromised quality.

Once publishers invest in improving the quality of children’s books, parents must be willing to buy those. These days, many parents are spending a lot on their children’s clothes, food, on eating out or for travelling. Why should they also not have a monthly budget for buying books, then? The right books can be just as rewarding and entertaining as a video game or a trip outdoors.

There are opportunities to make our Ekushey Boi Mela more child-friendly. Stalls’ layouts should be done in a way that children are able to browse through the books easily. There should be facilitators who will engage children

properly. The decoration of the stalls could also be done more creatively to appeal to them. Activities could be organised so that they can interact with their favourite and new authors.

The Boi Mela should offer a space to facilitate activities that will help children begin to love books. Events should be conducted where children can participate in writing and illustration activities, take part in storytelling, etc. They can also dress up like their favourite characters. But we should not have to wait for Boi Mela to promote children’s books. Storytelling sessions and interesting activities centred around books should be organised in bookshops and other academic, social and cultural venues all year round if we are to create readers for our future. School- and community-based libraries could also play a vital role in developing children’s love for lifelong reading.

Watch out for trouble in southeast Bangladesh



Lt Gen Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman, PhD, is a retired officer of Bangladesh Army.

MOHAMMAD MAHFUZUR RAHMAN

THE southeast part of Bangladesh shares border with the Mizoram state of India and the Rakhine state of Myanmar. This part is covered with extensive hills ranging from 300 to 1,000 meters or even higher, with hardly any modern communication facilities in the tri-border area. It is also covered with a dense forest of mainly bamboos, making observation from ground and air fairly restricted. This is a perfect geophysical condition for insurgents—who can hide away quickly—and hence can be a nightmare for regular forces.

In this region, insurgents and separatist groups are hardly impacted by the borders recognised by Bangladesh, India and Myanmar. It’s also interesting that these three countries operate from differing political viewpoints: one being a democracy, another being a struggling democracy, and the third being a military autocracy. So, reaching a political consensus is challenging. However, the separatist groups can collaborate with each other or peacefully coexist, and take advantage of the porous border when facing pressure from security forces at home or the host countries.

This tri-border area is sparsely populated with various ethnic communities who primarily survive on

shifting cultivation. They are generally antagonistic or indifferent to the administration. In his book “Troubled Periphery,” Indian journalist Subir Bhaumik writes that the young boys here are absorbed in 3Gs (Girls, Guns, Guitars). Though India claims to have a peace deal with the separatist groups in Mizoram and Tripura—bordering the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh—it’s not all that peaceful. And it’s the same in case of Bangladesh where, though a peace deal has been in place with the PCJSS since December 1997, there are now PCJSS, PCJSS (Reformist), and UPDF armed groups.

In the Chin and Rakhine states of Myanmar, there are also groups like the Chin National Army and the Arakan Army. A peace deal was signed in Myanmar too, but now the Arakan Army is significantly powerful and thus a serious headache for the junta. The Arakan Army runs a parallel administration in most parts of Rakhine, while the junta mostly controls the cities. Having a relation with one may antagonise the other. Above all, there are geopolitics of the regional powers and global powers involved. So, how Bangladesh should navigate this murky water is a complex question.

What are the chances of traditional threats (overt military challenges) to Bangladesh in its southeast region? Of its two neighbours, traditional threats from India are not expected for various reasons. However, traditional threats from Myanmar junta cannot be ruled out, especially to chase their separatist groups. The junta has been accusing Bangladesh of harbouring its separatist groups

To address all traditional and non-traditional security issues in the southeast, Bangladesh should be able to foresee what is coming and prepare accordingly, rather than “fire-fight” events when they occur.

for long. The purpose of any military engagement would be to achieve a political aim, and Myanmar has exhibited her political aim quite clearly. So, it’s very important to identify what the “political end state” of Myanmar is.

What could be a non-traditional threat? What we are seeing now is a complicated combination of risks. Bandarban is the only district of Bangladesh that shares border with two countries. It is also possibly the only district where poppy and marijuana are cultivated with the patronage of groups operating there. Teknaf is the emerging hub of drugs. In addition, there are scopes for violent extremism and terrorism. However, these kinds of non-traditional security issues do not take place in a vacuum. Interestingly, they have the potential to destabilise bilateral relations and turn into traditional security threats.

Are there any threats lurking around the corner? The traditional and non-traditional threats to Bangladesh emanating from the secured environment in southeast are fairly easy to comprehend, as various agencies are more or less preparing to avoid surprise. It can be said that they are preparing based on what is happening now, and possibly not on what is lurking around the corner. There are more than 460,000 children growing up in the Rohingya camps inside Bangladesh without proper education, hopes and dreams. They have seen unimaginable horrors in their short lives. In 2017, many of them saw their mothers being violated. For them, there is no bottom line. By 2030, most will be adults—homeless, with trauma in their minds and hatred in their hearts.

Without education, hopes and dreams, it is unthinkable what monsters they might turn into if exploited, and if this issue is not addressed.

There are two options for us: we can address it now, or wait for it to be addressed later when it turns into a full-blown security situation. As a student of security studies, I understand that it is coming, and it is not going to be only Bangladesh’s problem. It will have regional and global ramifications.

So what are the choices for Bangladesh? To address all traditional and non-traditional security issues in the southeast, Bangladesh should be able to foresee what is coming and prepare accordingly, rather than “fire-fight” events when they occur. The situation in southeast, especially the Rohingya issue, should not be taken in a business-as-usual manner. A dedicated meritocratic specialist team should be designated to handle issues with Myanmar, because the Tatmadaw—Myanmar’s military—is a cunning, smart and meritocratic organisation. We have to read the military and political end state of Myanmar and devise appropriate courses of action.

India has its own interests that may not align with ours. So, jumping on the bandwagon with India may be counterproductive. Then, there are the geopolitical dimensions involving China and Quad. Maintaining a balance is equally important to ensure the synergy of all lines of operations—i.e. diplomatic, economic, political, cultural and military. In the military line, military diplomacy and developing a credible deterrence could be stabilising factors against the Tatmadaw’s misadventure, if any.

QUOTE
Quote

Emily Dickinson

American poet (1830 - 1886)

Fame is a fickle food upon a shifting plate.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Boars' mates

5 Soccer legend

9 Partridge's cousin

11 Dead duck

12 City on the Mohawk River

13 Church feature

14 Maximum amount

15 Cable ride

17 Straight course

19 Atlantic fish

20 Essays

21 Finger count

22 Armistice

24 Compete

26 Main roles

29 Junior, to senior

30 Fleet owner

32 Special phone connection

34 Unmindful

35 Exemplary

36 Not napping

38 Cavalry stations

39 Soft drink buy

40 Muscle quality

41 Egg holder

DOWN

1 Young pigeon

2 Factory store

3 Loud lamenter

4 Attack command

5 Survey

6 Tempt

7 Apply pressure to

8 Misspoke

10 Less motivated

11 Stare in disbelief

16 Pancreas product

18 Lo-cal

21 Blue hue

23 Breakfast choice

24 Haitian practice

25 Hospital worker

27 Widen

28 Medusa's hair

29 Computer key

30 Isn't well

31 Bring to bear

33 Overdue

37 Take the title

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9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

T E A S A G O D E S
U R S L A H E R O
B A S S P L A Y E R S
T H E M E
H U L A P A L E
D O N E B E H A V E
E N D C A D P E A
C O U P O N L E N T
R E A L M E L T
C O C O A
B A S E R U N N E R S
O M A R R E T A I L
G Y M S S T O R M Y

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

I'M HERE TO SEE GENERAL HALFTACK

HE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE YOU

BUT I NEED TO SEE HIM!

SHHH... HE DOESN'T WANT TO HEAR YOU, EITHER

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

0000-0000-000-000

SEE? THAT'S THE NOISE I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT

HEY SEARCH! WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN YOUR WASHER STARTS MAKING STRANGE NOISES?

IT USUALLY MEANS THAT THE WARRANTY JUST RAN OUT

WORLD HEARING DAY

Don't let your struggle GO UNHEARD

Hearing loss and related ear problems can be treated if detected early and treated appropriately. People who are at risk of hearing loss should have their hearing examined on a regular basis.

STAR HEALTH DESK

The World Health Organisation (WHO) observes March 3 as World Hearing Day. It aims to increase awareness about how to avoid deafness and hearing loss, as well as to promote ear and hearing care around the world.

Hearing loss and related ear problems can be treated if detected early and treated appropriately. People who are at risk of hearing loss should have their hearing examined on a regular basis.

According to the World Health Organisation, more than 360 million people have hearing loss that is disabling. Over 1 billion persons aged 12 to 35 are at risk of hearing loss as a result of recreational noise exposure. The global cost of not addressing hearing loss exceeds \$750 billion.

The theme of World Hearing Day 2022, "To hear for life, listen with care," will emphasise the importance and methods of preventing hearing loss through safe listening, with the following key messages:

- Through ear and hearing care, it is possible to maintain healthy hearing throughout one's life.
- Many common causes of hearing loss, including hearing loss induced by exposure to loud sounds, can be avoided.
- 'Safe listening' can reduce the risk of hearing loss from recreational sound exposure.

Every year, the WHO chooses a topic and



creates brochures, leaflets, posters, banners, and presentations to raise awareness about the day. These materials are distributed to government and civil society partners worldwide, as well as WHO regional and country offices.

The global health organisation also hopes to spread the key message with the theme:

- It is possible to have good hearing throughout one's life through ear and hearing care.
- Many common causes of hearing loss can be avoided.
- 'Safe listening' can reduce the risk of hearing loss associated with recreational sound exposure.

In 2021, WHO launched the World report on hearing that highlighted the increasing number of people living with and at risk of

hearing loss. It highlighted noise control as one of the seven key H.E.A.R.I.N.G. interventions and stressed the importance of mitigating exposure to loud sounds.

Aside from events, reports are produced each year to help the government learn about disabled persons and assist those in need. Hearing aids can be costly, and one of the goals of these reports is to financially assist and supply hearing aids to people in order to help them return to normalcy.

The importance of hearing is many. Hearing sounds and words assist children in learning to speak and understand. These sounds are not heard by a youngster who is deaf. This can lead to speaking, reading, academic success, and social skills difficulties. If you suspect your child is deaf, he must get tested.



Sleep extension in adults who are overweight with habitual inadequate sleep

Sleep hygiene might be an important part of weight management plans. Habitually sleeping (7 hours nightly is associated with adverse health consequences, including risk for obesity. Researchers studied the effects of sleep extension on 80 overweight young adults (ages 21–40) who had been sleeping less than 6.5 hours per night for six months. The study was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

After two weeks of baseline habitual sleep, participants were randomised to either a 2-week sleep extension or 2 week continued habitual sleep. Participants randomised to the sleep-extension group received individualised sleep hygiene counselling sessions intended to increase sleep duration to 8.5 hours; participants in the control group continued their usual sleep patterns.

None of the participants used medications that affected sleep. Compared with the control group, the sleep-extension group had a significant increase in mean nightly sleep duration, a significant decrease in energy intake (by 270 kcal/day), similar energy expenditure, and a significant reduction in weight (by 0.9 kg).

Although the mechanisms are unknown, sleep extension in overweight adults reduces energy intake and weight loss, at least in the short term.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than half of parents and pregnant women exposed to aggressive formula milk marketing



According to a new World Health Organisation /United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (WHO/ UNICEF) report, more than half of parents and pregnant women (51%) have received formula milk marketing, much of which violates international standards on infant feeding practices. The research is based on interviews with parents, pregnant women, and health workers in eight nations. It exposes the industry's unethical marketing tactics to sway parents' infant feeding decisions.

The report identifies unregulated online targeting, sponsored advice networks and helplines, promotions and gifts, and practices influencing health worker training and recommendations. The report also found that exposure to formula milk marketing increases the likelihood of women choosing formula feeding in Bangladesh (98%), China (97%), Mexico, Morocco (49%), Nigeria, South Africa, the United Kingdom (84%) and Vietnam (92%).

The report details how persistent misinformation about breastfeeding and breast milk reinforces myths and undermines women's confidence in their ability to breastfeed successfully.

Exclusive breastfeeding for six months, followed by continued breastfeeding for two years or more, protects against all forms of child malnutrition, including wasting and obesity. Breastfeeding protects babies from many common childhood illnesses. It also lowers women's risk of diabetes, obesity, and several cancers. Yet just 44% of infants under six months are exclusively breastfed.



Lipid profiling can predict risk of diabetes, heart disease decades before onset

A new study published in PLOS Biology found that measuring dozens of different fats in the blood (lipidomics) at the same time can predict future risk of type 2 diabetes (T2D) and cardiovascular disease (CVD). Patient history, current risk behaviours, and high- and low-density cholesterol levels and ratios are used to assess T2D and CVD risk.

The authors wanted to see if a more comprehensive lipid profile could improve risk prediction. 184 lipids were quantified using high-throughput quantitative mass spectrometry on baseline blood samples. 13.8% of participants developed T2D, and 22% developed CVD during the study.

A random sample of two-thirds of the lipid data was used to create a risk model, which was then tested for accuracy. Individuals were assigned to one of six subgroups based on their lipidomics profile. The highest-risk group had a 37% risk of T2D compared to the group averages, a 168% increase. The highest-risk group had a 40.5% CVD risk, an 84% increase. The lowest-risk groups saw significant risk reductions. This risk was independent of known genetic risk factors and disease onset time.

Source: PLOS Biology

Expired and unused medicine - a threat to human and environment

MD EKHTEAR MAHMUD

Inappropriate disposal of medicine can create many problems for people and the environment. But, on the other hand, proper disposal of medicines can save not only us but also our environment.

All medicine should be used within the shelf life (expiry date) to avoid losing potency. Changing the product can make it less effective or fatal.

So, what should we do with expired medicine? First, they must be properly disposed to keep us and our environment safe. Medicine wastes are disposed of in pharmaceutical industries in accordance with regulatory bodies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and World Health Organisation (WHO).

But what happens to expired medicine at home, hospitals, and pharmacies? Pharmaceutical companies, pharmacies, and hospitals run medicine take-back programmes in developed countries. But there are no such programs in our country. While some pharmaceutical companies

do take back expired medicines, most do not. As a result, people usually throw these medicines in the trash or flush them.

What happens to the environment if these medicines are exposed? Unused medicines flushed down the toilet enter surface and groundwater. Water treatment systems are designed to remove foreign materials from water, but not medicines. The main concerns about medication residues in surface water are increased bacterial resistance to antibiotics and interference with growth and reproduction in aquatic organisms like fish and frogs.

How can these medicines be disposed of safely? The most effective medicine disposal method is a convenient take-back program. Therefore, the government or manufacturers should start a programme to collect and safely dispose of medicines from homes, hospitals, and pharmacies. Also, raising public awareness of the program should be considered. If possible, manufacturers should describe safe disposal procedures for sure medicines on the product label or leaflet.

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Dr. Mohammad Rafiur Rahman

Dr. Arif Ahmed Mohiuddin

Jadeja heroics put India on top

REUTERS

India's bowlers picked up four Sri Lankan wickets after all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja's unbeaten 175 helped the hosts post a massive first innings total on the second day of the opening Test at Mohali on Saturday.

The left-handed Jadeja combined in two century stands with Ravichandran Ashwin and Mohammed Shami on Saturday to put the touring side on the mat as India declared their first innings closed on 574 for eight at the tea interval.

Jadeja's impact with the ball was also immediate. The left-arm spinner dismissed Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne leg before wicket for 28. Sri Lanka ended the day on 108 for four.



Bangladesh T20I skipper Mahmudullah Riyad fails to hide the apparent gloom from his face as he walks past the T20I series trophy, which the Tigers had to share with Afghanistan following an eight-wicket thumping in the final T20I in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Azhar hits huge 'daddy hundred'

REUTERS, Islamabad

"Daddy hundreds" of 185 from Azhar Ali and 157 from Imam-ul-Haq helped Pakistan score a commanding 476 for four before declaring their first innings on the second day of the opening Test against Australia in Rawalpindi yesterday.



Australia, on their first tour of Pakistan in 24 years, were five for no loss in reply when bad light forced early stumps, with their Islamabad-born opener Usman Khawaja on five and David Warner yet to score at the other end.

The teams observed a moment's silence before play began for the day, in memory of Shane Warne and the victims of Friday's attack in a mosque in Peshawar.

Familiar woes UNDO TIGERS

SPORTS REPORTER

A top-order failure, failure to utilise the Powerplay, a lack of partnerships and dropped catches were features of the Bangladesh team in the second T20I.

After restricting the Tigers to a modest 115 for nine, Afghanistan rode on Hazratullah Zazai's unbeaten fifty to help the visitors register a comprehensive eight-wicket win and level the two-match series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Usman Ghani also added 47 runs during a 99-run second-wicket stand with Zazai, which lay the platform for the visitors.

Bangladesh's inconsistency in the shortest format was also again exposed as they crashed after winning the first T20I by a 61-run margin.

It was again the batting department that failed miserably after Mahmudullah Riyad won the toss and elected to bat. The fact that it was the hosts' fourth-lowest total at home when batting first and that the Tigers have been able to post over 150 only once in their last ten T20I reflects the entire situation.

"It wasn't a 160-run wicket but even if we could get 135 after being at 99 for four, we could have stayed in the game. Obviously, there were some concerns in the batting department. There is no doubt about that but the wicket wasn't easy to bat on today (Saturday),"

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH

115 for 9 in 20 overs (Mushfiqur Rahim 30, Mahmudullah 21; Farooqi 3-18, Azmatullah 3-22, Nabi 1-14)

AFGHANISTAN

121 for 2 in 17.4 overs (Zazai 59 not out, Usman 47; Mahedi 1-19, Mahmudullah 1-2)

RESULT

Afghanistan won by 8 wickets.

PLAYER-OF-THE-MATCH

Azmatullah Omarzai.

PLAYER-OF-THE-SERIES

Fazalhaq Farooqi.

Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo said during the post-match press conference yesterday.

The Bangladesh batter raised questions with their approach and inability to adjust and change the game plan after losing early wickets.

Young Munim Shahriar may have realised the difference between domestic and international cricket as he once

again found himself guilty of playing too many strokes before eventually paying the price. Naim Sheikh was still struggling to find his feet while the in-form Liton Das looked good until he perished after scoring 13.

Shakib Al Hasan looked shaky and threw away his wicket in ugly fashion when he played a nothing shot off Azmatullah Omarzai after scoring nine runs to leave Bangladesh struggling on 45 for four inside 10 overs.

A 43-run fifth-wicket stand between Mahmudullah and Mushfiqur Rahim, who played his 100th T20I for the Tigers, may have raised some hope, but they were also guilty of not being able to construct their innings. Mahmudullah was dismissed after scoring 21 while Mushfiqur top-scored with 30 off 25 balls.

From 92 for 5 in 15 overs, Bangladesh added just 23 runs and lost four wickets in the last five overs.

Bangladesh were sloppy on the field despite defending such a small total, dropping three catches, including chances to send back Zazai and Ghani.

"We dropped nine catches in the last five games (three ODI and two T20Is). If we knew what the issue was, we would probably try and do it right. Whether that is concentration, dealing with pressure or confidence, I am not sure. But this cost us in the World Cup and costs us in Test matches," he said.

Tigresses start with a defeat

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh yesterday marked their debut in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in Dunedin with a 32-run defeat to South Africa as their bowlers' brilliant efforts were undone by a brilliant spell from Ayabonga Khaka.

Khaka's match-winning four for 32 included a spell of three wickets in nine balls. She also put the clamps on Bangladesh and ensured her side were able to defend a modest 207.

After impressive bowling performances from Fariha Trisna, who was the pick of the Bangladesh bowlers with three for 35, Jahanara Alam (two for 28) and Ritu Moni (three for 36), the Tigresses got off a perfect start in their innings courtesy of openers Shamima Sultana (28) and Sharmin Akhter (34).

The openers reached 69 without loss, but Khaka's timely intervention reduced the score to 72 for three with wickets falling in quick succession and the required run-rate continuing to rise.

Nigar Sultana (29) and Ritu Moni (27) put on 53 for the seventh wicket but the required run-rate continued to grow and Bangladesh were eventually bowled out for 175 in the final over.

Bangladesh will play their second match against New Zealand tomorrow.



Kings increase lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Bashundhara Kings consolidated their lead at the top of the Bangladesh Premier League table with a 2-0 win against Mohammedan Sporting Club at the Kings Arena yesterday.

Suman Reza gave the home side the lead in the 11th minute, smashing home from the middle of the box following a flick Mahadi Yusuf at the end of a low cross from Mohammad Ibrahim at the right edge of the box.

Kings skipper Robson Robinho, the only foreign player on the pitch for the two-time champions, doubled the lead eight minutes later with a solo effort, cutting into the box between two opposition defenders from the left before picking the far corner of the with a diagonal placing shot.

Mohammedan had to play almost the entire second half with 10 men after midfielder Anik Hossain was shown a second yellow card two minutes after restart. Kings failed to increase their lead but kept a clean sheet and took their winning run to six matches.

The victory took the Kings to 18 points from seven matches, five clear of Abahani while Mohammedan remained in sixth position with nine points.



Shane Warne, you crazy diamond!

Many loved to hate him back then, they must confess. This great cricketer, bona fide superstar, genius among geniuses, mythical hero, legend and so on and so forth... 'Back then' of course refers to the time after cricket had irreversibly lured them in. They hated him on the night their team lost against his since he often was the major culprit.

KHALID HOSSAIN

Some were young and somewhat loyal, but mainly it was because they were committed to teams not named Australia. But when emotions had subsided, the same people could not help but love him for the player he was.

Shane Keith Warne, the Aussie whose magnificent career stats and highlights had justifiably flowed since the news of his untimely demise broke on Friday. But upon waking up yesterday morning, the way he went about his business on the field, is all that people could probably think of.

The run-up and the way he stepped towards the popping crease bore the signature of someone who had experienced solitude amidst chaos, someone who could write poetry in a buzzing bar.

Was there anyone who did not emulate it at some point? The first couple of steps. There is a pause; a series of pauses rather, which somehow caused a strange time dilation. Or time stood still, however one perceived it.

The tongue-wagging before release and level of concentration as a leg spinner. Who did not fantasize about having him play for their team! It makes one wonder: among those who witnessed the dinosaur-era of the 90s, when giants roamed the globe, can anyone form a dream eleven without Warne!

Audiences, on the field and in front of screens, remained glued in anticipation during



Warne's masterclasses, demonstrating the art of beautiful repetitions. Warne naturally had everyone fixated on him, such was his charisma.

Out pops the kookaburra. The shoulder, arm, wrist all seem to rotate in cosmic harmony, like spiral arms of the galaxy. Then the little wooden sphere drifts in mid-air with

numerous, luminous revolutions on it, as if planets and satellites mysteriously spinning on their axis. The rest, what usually followed, had created history, almost periodically.

'Bowling, Shane!' in the voice of a Healy-Gilchrist hybrid echoes through the fabric of cricketing space-time. Seasons change yet the

song remains the same, metronome ticks on and Warne walks back to his mark again.

He never seemed the type of bowler who had figured what exact delivery they'd throw after they'd set the field and walked back to the start of run-up. Warne appeared to have left his final decision late during those time-dilated moments in between steps; like a monk meditating in the middle of a storm, he would've outfoxed himself at the last second if he had to.

Shane knew the batter's game better than they did themselves. He could call their bluff while tipsy. Someone like Warne didn't wear shades to hide. He was no conformist; for there is no fun playing safe, for there exists no proper-certified way to behave in the so-called gentleman's game.

Dear Shane, a spin wizard, you conquered time and motion, conquered the ebb and flow of neurons that construct the human psyche and its notions. You were used to leaving a full house with all in awe and disbelief on the field, and sometimes off it. And we could never have enough of it.

But can you hear us all say, "Come on, Shane!" in unison for one last time? Why not pull one Cullinan out of that white floppy hat of yours, and deal death with a ripper of a flipper, mate!

Shane Warne, you crazy diamond! The generations that witnessed your glorious journey are grateful.



Miscarriage after police ‘assault’

Says woman now in hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Police in Gazipur allegedly assaulted a pregnant woman, causing a miscarriage last week.

The 25-year-old woman, who is currently admitted to Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital, said policemen have been keeping an eye on her, making sure she doesn't talk to journalists about her ordeal.

Police have formed a three-member committee on Thursday to look into the allegation of assault, said Deputy Commissioner (North) Zakir Hossain of Gazipur Metropolitan Police, adding that policemen were watching over her because she requested for it.

The woman, who owns a parlour, told this correspondent that around six months ago, several unknown men sent her husband some fake "indecent" photos of her. The pictures were photoshopped, she added.

She then filed a case under the Digital Security Act with Kashimpur Police Station, she said.

On March 1, the woman, who was three months pregnant, went to the police station to let the officers know the names of two witnesses of the case, she said. When she reached there, the officers asked her to talk to Constable Ruma.

The woman met the constable and told her the names. The woman requested Ruma to write down the addresses.

“As I repeatedly requested her to write down the

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Ignoring restrictions, a passenger smokes a cigarette on a bus. Smoking in public, an act prevalent across the country, is not only harmful for the smoker but all those around them. The Daily Star does not condone the act of smoking or any other use of tobacco.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

He was fugitive in plain sight for 21 years

Sentenced to death for trying to kill Hasina, he made no attempts to hide his ID

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

A man, sentenced to death for attempting to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was right under the nose of law enforcers in Dhaka for 21 years.

He got married, operated businesses and made a national identity card with his real identity during his fugitive life.

Azizul Haque worked as a tailor, grocery trader and bookseller for livelihood in these years.

He even intended to get a passport but finally backed up as it required police verification.

Meantime, he took shelter at a Darbar Shareef in Netrakona's Durgapur area for some days.

He made his driving license from there and returned to Dhaka to start working for a publishing house in Banglabazar.

He also worked for a printing press in Khilkhet and then started his own press in the area.

Aziz, a member of banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Huji), used to publish Jihadi books from those printing presses and hand those over to other members of the outfit.

According to investigators, Aziz married in Narayanganj's Rupganaj in 2007. In the last decade, he visited Rupganaj from Dhaka daily.

Talking to The Daily Star, an official of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit said this.

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FOOD MINISTRY OFFICIALS' TRIP TO UK, TURKEY

No one knows how much it'll cost

SUMON ALI

An 11-member delegation of the food ministry is going to the UK and Turkey for a study tour that may start in the next few days even though the details of the 10-day trip remain unknown.

Six of the 11 officials contacted by this correspondent could not say which organisation would impart the training. Nor could they tell what skill or knowledge they expect to acquire from this trip.

Titled "Study tour and training on food security, safety, risk and crisis management" the journey may commence any day around March 8, said a food ministry order signed by Deputy Secretary Anima Rani Biswas.

None of the ministry officials, including the food secretary and chief accounts officer, could say how much this trip would cost the government.

Fewer foreign trips of officials amid the pandemic meant that the government saved Tk 2,500 crore in just about a year, finance ministry officials said in July 2021. Besides, the Finance Division in a circular on July 1,

2021, said government funds could only be spent for essential trips until further notice.

Contacted recently, Mosammat Nazmanara Khanum, secretary of the food ministry, who is part of the delegation that consists of three additional secretaries, six deputy secretaries and a joint secretary, said, "A tour has been approved but the date is not fixed yet."

When prodded about

"I think we need to know the cost and validation of the trip."

Khondaker Golam Moazzem
Research director at Centre for Policy Dialogue

the budget, she referred the correspondent to Mujibur Rahman, the ministry's additional secretary of administration.

Contacted, Mujibur said the cost of the trip would depend on the airfare and the kind of programme the officials would enroll in.

"Those who are going on this tour will submit a report and

share their experiences with other officials. This experience will be useful not only for their career but also for their whole life," he said.

Salma Momtaj, additional secretary of the ministry's finance and audit division, seemed to be in the dark, too.

"I don't know about the cost. Everything has been fixed by the administration department. I can't say anything," she said.

Ronak Sufia Afsara Rahman, chief accounts and finance officer of the ministry, did not respond to The Daily Star's request for comment.

Shah Nawaz Talukder, an additional secretary of the ministry, who is part of the delegation, said, "The government will pay whatever it costs -- no extra money will be given. We will submit the receipts [of our expenditures] after the tour."

Khurshid Iqbal Rezvi, additional secretary of the ministry's planning division and a member of the delegation, said, "We don't have the advanced technology for such a training

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29 BNP men hurt in clashes with pro-AL men, cops

STAR REPORT

At least 25 people, including a member of the police, were injured in a clash between the supporters of the Jubo League and BNP in Dumki upazila of Patukhali yesterday.

The clash took place around 11:00am in front of the BNP office, where hundreds of leaders and activists of the party gathered to take part in a rally protesting the rising prices of commodities, according to eyewitnesses.

At the same time, a procession of Jubo League, the youth wing of the ruling Awami League, was passing through and a brawl ensued.

Upon getting the information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

At least 50 BNP leaders and activists were injured during the vandalism of the party office by the Jubo League men, who attacked BNP's peaceful programme, according to Khalilur Rahman, convener for BNP Dumki upazila.

Sirajul Islam Tuhin, general secretary of Jubo League in Dumki upazila, differed: BNP men attacked the Jubo League procession that was being held in protest against "anarchy created by Jamaat-BNP".

The situation was now under control, with additional police deployed at important places in the city, said Abdus Salam, the officer-in-charge of Dumki Police Station.

Meanwhile, over at Ghordaur Bazar in Munshiganj's Louhajong Ipazila, BNP leaders and activists engaged in a scuffle with the police when they wanted to bring out a protest procession around 11:00am.

Louhjong Upazila BNP Convener Md.

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A dejected Mushfiqur Rahim, playing his 100th T20I, walks back to the pavilion after being dismissed by Afghanistan pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi in their second T20I in Mirpur yesterday. Bangladesh lost the game by eight wickets.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

ACC sues 15 for embezzling Tk 105cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday sued 15 people in three cases for their alleged involvement in dodging Tk 105.10cr government revenue.

The accused include customs officials, importers, outsiders, and clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents.

They collaboratively dodged the money by providing fake documents for clearing false declared goods, including cigarettes, from 10 imported consignments, alleged the anti-graft watchdog.

According to customs sources, five importers and C&F agents tried to release 10 consignments of imported cigarettes through Chattogram port declaring as garments raw material and Chinese new tyres between March and September in 2018.

The six sued customs employees are Assistant Programmer Kamrul Haque, revenue officers Sultan Ahmed and Habibur Rahman, Assistant Revenue Officer Saifunnahar Jony, Computer Operator Firuz Ahmed, and Office Assistant Abdul Al Masum.

The accused importers are Jarar Enterprise owner Mahbubur Rahman; Moving Trade International managing partners Mizanur Rahman, Mafizur Rahman and Abdul Hannan; and Sifat Trading owner Saklaudding Titu.

ACC also identified C&F agent Habibur Rahman Apu

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People using Airbnb to help Ukrainians

CNN



Airbnb hosts in Ukraine are being flooded with bookings from people all over the world who have no plans to visit as part of a creative social media campaign to funnel money to besieged Ukrainians who need financial assistance as Russian forces bombard their country and cut off services.

On March 2 and 3, guests from around the world booked more than 61,000 nights in Ukraine, according to an Airbnb spokesperson.

More than half of those nights were booked by Americans. "More than 10 bookings came in today. This was surprising, it's very supportive at the moment," Airbnb host Volodymyr Bondarenko, 36, told CNN early Friday.

The call for guests to book Airbnbs in Ukraine started online, where supporters urged people to book rooms as close to a check-in date as

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