



A RIVER RAVAGED

The pitch-black waters of the Shitalakkhya, right, and its distributary the Balu, left, bear witness to the unscrupulous dumping of untreated effluent from the upstream industrial plants in Narayanganj. Calls for stopping the pollution and potential threat to living organisms have fallen on deaf ears over the years. The photo was taken in Demra last week.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

INT'L DAY OF ACTION FOR RIVERS

100 acres of the Buriganga still occupied



PINAKI ROY

Nearly 100 acres along the two banks of the Buriganga river remain filled up even after installation of boundary pillars.

Most of these encroachment sites are in Kalindi, Zinzira, Shobhadya and Konda, which are on the Keraniganj side of the river.

On the Dhaka side, the filled-up area is in Kutubpur of Kamrangichar, shows a GIS-based survey conducted by River and Delta Research Centre (RDRC), a non-government organisation working on river protection.

From time to time, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) removed some of the structures built on the encroached land. But the land remains filled up.

Visiting Dhalchar area in Kamrangichar on Saturday, it was seen that the BIWTA pillars were set up without evicting the illegal grabbers.

A local influential named Hazi Md Manir Hossain set up a factory, grabbing a portion of the river in the area. The boundary walls of his house extend more than 10 feet beyond pillar no. 24 in Shrikhandha mouza.

His house is located at Jhauchar, Gudarahat, next to Fatima Orphanage and Lillah boarding.

Adjacent plot owner Abul Hossain also grabbed a portion of the river to build a house that he rented to small readymade garment factories.

Buriganga Pillar no. 23 stands between the boundary pillars of the two plots. The entrance gates of both houses are also inside the river land.

The Daily Star could not contact them for comments.

Conducting a field visit and using Geographic Information System (GIS) in 2020-21, the RDRC also made a map of the Buriganga showing the filled-up area.

They found even after BIWTA's drive against encroachment, 98.75 acres were filled up with sand and mud.

"The quantity of the occupied land must have increased by now as we conducted the survey several months ago," said RDRC Chairman Mohammad Azaz.

He said they did the survey immediately after BIWTA conducted a major drive against encroachers.

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Russia strikes near Polish border

Dozens killed as air strikes hit Ukrainian cities; Kyiv braces for pincer move

AGENCIES

Russian air strikes hit a large Ukrainian base near the border with Nato member Poland yesterday, killing 35 people and wounding 134 a local official said, in an escalation of the war to the west of the country as intense fighting was reported elsewhere.

Residents of the capital Kyiv woke again to the sound of air raid sirens and city authorities said they were stockpiling two weeks' worth of essential food items for the 2 million people who have not yet fled from Russian forces attempting to encircle the city.

Ukraine also reported renewed air strikes on an airport in the west, heavy shelling on Chernihiv

northeast of the capital and attacks on the southern town of Mykolayiv, where officials said nine people had been killed.

An American journalist was shot and killed by Russian forces in the town of Irpin, northwest of Kyiv, and another journalist was wounded, the regional police chief said.

Kyiv regional police chief Andriy Nybytov said the dead journalist worked for the New York Times. However, the Times said that the journalist had previously worked for the paper but was not currently working for it. The Times named the journalist as Brent Renaud.

Despite the violence, both sides said they thought progress could be made at bilateral talks

that have been held periodically since Russia invaded on February 24, although they gave no details of what might be agreed.

"Russia is already beginning to talk constructively," Ukrainian negotiator and presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said in a video posted online. "I think that we will achieve some results literally in a matter of days."

A Russian delegate to talks with Ukraine, Leonid Slutsky, was quoted by RIA news agency as saying they had made significant progress and it was possible the delegations could soon reach draft agreements.

Neither side said what these would cover.

The attack on the Yavoriv

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'Haha' react on FB leads to clash, deaths of three

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A haha reaction on a Facebook post has led to a deadly clash in Gazipur, leaving a 17-year-old boy and two others dead and four injured on Saturday night.

Nayeem Hossain, 17, Faruk Mia, 25, and Robin Mia, 20, all residents of Dakkingaon village were stabbed dead.

Police said the clash happened between two groups of young men led by Nayeem and Zahid Hossain, 23, a resident of Char Ali Nagar area.

Locals and police said Zahid's wife recently posted a Tiktok video on Facebook in which she is seen singing a song.

On Friday, Nayeem reacted to the video with "haha". As it rubbed Zahid the wrong way, he collected Nayeem's number and threatened to beat him up over the phone.

Both parties then agreed to settle the matter in person at a certain place, said Jahangir Alam, a member of Shommania Union Parishad.

Around 11:30pm on Saturday, Zahid and Nayeem, both accompanied by their friends, faced off in the Charpara area and soon engaged in a fight.

At one stage, Zahid and his friends stabbed Nayeem and six of his friends. Hearing the commotion, locals

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People gather in the basement of a local hospital, which was damaged during Ukraine-Russia conflict in the separatist-controlled town of Volnovakha in the Donetsk region, Ukraine. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

DEATHS OF 2 KIDS Drug admin looking into Napa syrup samples

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The drug administration has collected samples of a batch of Napa syrup from the market for lab tests.

The move came following the deaths of two siblings -- Yasin Khan, 7, and Morsalin Khan, 5 -- on Thursday night in Durgapur union of Brahmanbaria's Ashuganj upazila.

Family members alleged the children, who were suffering from high fever, died after they were given the medicine, produced by Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd. They said they bought it from a local drug store named "Maa Pharmacy".

They said the children's health deteriorated after they consumed the syrup, and they were rushed to

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Hoarding of essentials, unacceptable

Says HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said monopoly and hoarding of daily essentials like soybean oil for profits is not acceptable.

Buying more soybean oil than needed can turn out to be a cause of the price hike, the HC bench of Justice Farah Mahub and Justice SM Maniruzzaman said while hearing a writ petition that sought a directive on the government to set up a monitoring cell to control the price of soybean oil.

The bench said the issue of the prices of other daily essentials should also be included in the petition.

The court will hold a further hearing on the matter today.

On March 6, Supreme Court lawyers Monir Hossain, Syed Mohidul Kabir and Mohammad Ullah submitted the petition as a public interest litigation based on a report published in The Daily Star on March 3 on soybean oil hoarding and price hike.

Approach in war coverage biased

Says Russian envoy on some Bangladesh media

UNB, Dhaka

Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh Alexander V. Mantyskiy has slammed a section of Bangladesh media for what he said "biased approach" in their coverage of the situation in Ukraine and Russia.

He described it as a "deliberate efforts" to undermine Dhaka-Moscow relations.

"I consider the biased approach of certain Bangladeshi media towards the situation in Ukraine and Russia's actions there as a result of deliberate efforts by those forces that have always sought to undermine mutually beneficial cooperation between the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



Many farmers in Hatkhola area of Sylhet have given into the temptation of selling the topsoil from their lands to brick kilns and real estate developers. As a result, the lands lose their fertility and cause poor crops.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

INDIAN STATE POLLS

The true scale of Congress's loss

INTERNATIONAL DESK

The Congress's disastrous showing in the assembly elections to five states has added to a series of poor results, raising serious questions about the road ahead for India's oldest party.

With the results out, Congress, which has ruled most of the time since India's independence, now directly rules only two states - Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh - out of 28 states. It also has state governments supported by it in Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Tamilnadu.

On the other hand BJP rules in 12 states - Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Goa, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur and Tripura. In addition to those it is coalition partner in 6 states - Bihar, Puducherry, Sikkim, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram.

In the worst show since independence, the congress managed to win only 52 seats in the last general election in 2019. Leadership crisis, failing to get the vibe of present day India, rise of populism, Narendra Modi's bigger than party personality - reasons are many for the poor show of Congress. And ahead of the coming 2024 election, the picture doesn't look bright either. BJP has managed to

win public support even after a pandemic that raised more questions in people's mind than answers.

However, the latest state polls show the regional parties, not BJP, have won the biggest vote shares lost by Congress. That might not be a good news for BJP, but Congress has nothing to cheer on.

In the latest polls, the Congress not only lost Punjab but was decimated in all states, reported NDTV in a special story yesterday.

In Punjab, one of the last big states that it ruled, the Congress witnessed a huge 15 per cent swing against it. The Aam Aadmi Party, which swept the elections, emerged as the biggest gainer in votes with a huge 19 per cent swing in its favour. The BJP had a much smaller swing of +2 per cent.

The AAP primarily benefited (19%) from the combined enormous 21 per cent drop in votes of the Congress, Akali Dal and smaller parties, leading to a landslide for the party.

The assembly elections in Goa also proved to be disastrous for the Congress; it registered a huge 6 per cent swing against it. The newly-formed RGP saw a 10 per cent rise in votes, leaving the AAP, Trinamool Congress, and Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP) behind.

In Uttar Pradesh, India's most politically vital state, the Congress failed to make any

impact despite a high-voltage campaign led by Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

It saw a swing of 4 per cent against it; Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) saw the biggest drop in votes with a 9 per cent swing against it. The votes of the non-Samajwadi Party opposition - the Congress, BSP and others - went down by 16 per cent. While 3 per cent of those votes went to the BJP, 13 per cent went to the Samajwadi Party.

Uttarakhand - the hill state where the Congress had hoped for a comeback, or at least, a close fight - was the only state where the Congress saw a rise in its vote share.

The party emerged as the biggest gainer in votes - with a substantial 5 per cent swing in its favour - but since only 2 per cent of this came from BJP the Congress could not overtake the BJP in votes - and remained the second largest party.

The election in Manipur also turned out to be catastrophic for India's oldest party as it lost 19 per cent of its vote share, reducing the party to less than half its size in 2017.

The huge swing against the Congress did not go to the BJP - instead it went to other parties opposing the BJP: 12 per cent to the NPP and 11 per cent to the JDU - making JDU the new second (joint) largest party in the state.

No plan for military facility on foreign land

Chinese ambassador refutes media report on missile facility installation here

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

In the wake of media reports that China is setting up a missile maintenance facility in Bangladesh, Chinese Ambassador Li Jiming yesterday denied any such plan.

"China would not set up any military facility for its use in any foreign country, including in Bangladesh," Li said during a dialogue with journalists at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in the capital.

On March 11, the Japanese newspaper Nikkei Asia reported that China was preparing to set up a maintenance facility in Bangladesh for surface-to-air missile systems it supplied in 2011.

The deal on the maintenance hub has not been officially announced either by Beijing or Dhaka, but a senior Bangladeshi diplomat confirmed to Nikkei Asia that the two countries have reached an agreement on the facility.

"Beijing and Dhaka want to keep this development under wraps currently as China is under increasing scrutiny from the West - particularly the US - for upsetting the security balance in Asia with its territorial aggression," Nikkei Asia quoted the diplomat as saying.

The US has an Indo-Pacific Strategy supported by its allies including Japan, Australia and India, while Australia, US and UK have signed a security

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BIMAN CBA LEADERS HC orders ACC to probe graft allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the Anti-Corruption Commission to properly inquire into graft allegations against 17 Collective Bargaining Agency (CBA) leaders of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

After hearing a 2014 writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman also asked ACC to complete the inquiry in eight months.

Petitioner's lawyer Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star that he had sought a fresh hearing as there had been no sufficient action on the matter.

He said the ACC in January 2014 asked them to appear before it for questioning about the allegations, but they refused, prompting HRPB to file the petition seeking necessary order on ACC to question the CBA leaders.

Lawyer Fawzia Akter appeared for ACC while Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik represented the state during yesterday's hearing.

100 acres

FROM PAGE 1

On the Dhaka city side, the government built a walkway along the river bank.

"So, we did not see any new grabbers on this side," Azaz said.

But there have been fresh encroachments on the Keraniganj side to create commercial plots, he added.

"There are 90 shipyards along the Buriganga. All of them were set up filling up the river," he said, adding that much of the grabbing took place from 2015 to 2020.

Though the BIWTA recovered some of the land, most of the freed land remained filled up, the map shows.

Contacted, Gulzer Ali, joint director of BIWTA, said they have made the Buriganga "almost free of encroachment".

He admitted that they could not evict all the grabbers such as those who built mosques to occupy the river, but said any land inside the boundary pillars are river land and will be

'Haha' react on FB

FROM PAGE 1

went to the spot and caught Zahid and some of his friends, who were trying to flee the scene at that point.

The villagers beat them up and handed them over to police, said Abul Kashem, a resident of the area.

The injured were taken to Monohardi Upazila

claimed as such.

"We are making a list of the remaining encroachers. All of them will be evicted," he warned.

Environment lawyer Syeda Rizwana Hasan said the authorities so far conducted most of the eviction centring the Buriganga.

"Still, they could not make it fully free of encroachment," she said.

In fact, the government could not create an example of an encroachment-free river, she said.

In 2009, the High Court directed the government to demarcate the original territory of the four Dhaka rivers - Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakhya - to restore the river areas to their original state and protect them from pollution and grabbing.

The HC in its order had also directed the government to remove earth used to fill up the rivers and realise the cost from the grabbers. But the BIWTA is yet to do it.

Health Complex where doctors declared Nayeem and Faruk dead. Robin succumbed to his injuries on the way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, locals said.

Kapasias police said a case was filed against 10 named and 3 or 4 unnamed individuals. Of them, six have already been arrested.

Drug admin looking into Napa syrup samples

FROM PAGE 1

the Brahmanbaria General Hospital.

Contacted, Sulayman Miah, a doctor at the emergency section of the hospital, said after the family with the two children arrived and bought two tickets at the hospital, the doctors told them that they would clean out the contents of the stomach of the two boys.

"But the family disappeared from the hospital soon afterwards before we could treat them."

In a circular on Saturday, the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) said the syrup in question was manufactured under Batch Number 32113121 at a Beximco factory in Tongi, Gazipur, in December last year. The batch expires in

November 2023.

Ayub Hossain, spokesperson for the DGDA, said the drug administration formed two committees to investigate the matter, and one of them has already visited the factory in Tongi.

The other committee, headed by DGDA Director Akib Hossain, talked to the family members of the children and recorded their statements, reports our correspondent in Brahmanbaria.

Drug administration officials in the district said they found eight bottles of the syrup at Maa Pharmacy and sent them to the DGDA headquarters for lab testing.

"We hope to get the results by tomorrow [today]. Once we have the report, we will decide whether the

syrup will be withdrawn from the market or not," Ayub Hossain told The Daily Star yesterday.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday said legal actions would be taken if anyone is found guilty over the deaths of the two children.

"The Directorate General of Drug Administration is doing whatever is necessary. Our Health Services Division is also working on the matter. Steps will be taken and you'll see that," he told journalists following an event in Dhaka.

Contacted, Rabbur Reza, chief operating officer (COO) of Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd, said the company produces around 1.5-2 lakh bottles of Napa syrup every day.

"Around 100 crore

bottles of the syrup have been produced in the last 40 years and not a single case of adverse effects was reported," he said.

He also said they had no connections with the drug store in Brahmanbaria and that the store had "no licence".

"We want to know how such a store continued its operations. We are cooperating with the DGDA authorities for the investigation."

Replying to a question, he said 83,000 bottles of syrup were produced under the batch in question. "After releasing every batch in the market, we keep their samples with us. We tested the samples and found everything was perfect," he also said.

Meanwhile, talking to The Daily Star, farmers said they have been doing the same for years and no one ever asked them to stop.

Another farmer in the locality Ashrafur Islam, 48, said at least 20 to 25 farmers get benefit from the playgrounds.

Local farmer Minajul Haque, 55, said they were using the playgrounds as there was no other open field in the village.

"Our children also study here. We understand the students face a little problem," he said.

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need for political consensus and dialogue between all political parties.

Southeast University VC AFM Mafizul Islam, DU Professors Lailufar Yasmin, Akhtar Hossain and Bangladesh University of Professionals Pro VC Prof M Abul Kashem Majumder also talked at the programme.

CEC Awal said they got recommendations and would take necessary steps regarding the matters after reviewing.

"Political will and consensus among all political parties are needed. It is difficult for us to perform our duties if they do not create any conducive situation for us and if they remain in their adversarial stance," he said.

Britain said the incident marked a "significant escalation" of the conflict, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, efforts continue to get help to the strategic southern port

city of Mariupol, which aid agencies say is facing a humanitarian catastrophe.

Ukraine says more than 2,100 civilians have died in a near two-week siege, which has left the city without water or heat, and running out of food. Attempts to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people have repeatedly failed, reports AFP.

The UN estimates that more than 2.6 million people have fled Ukraine since the invasion, most of them to Poland, in Europe's worst refugee crisis since World War II.

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DHAKA

AVERTING FOOD CRISIS

PM proposes forming int'l seed bank

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday proposed the formation of an international seed bank to avert food crisis in future.

She made the proposal when Qu Dongyu, director general of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), called on her at her official residence Gono Bhaban, according to PM's press wing.

She also told the DG to form a consolidated fund for taking projects on digitisation and innovation.

Qu Dongyu assured that the existing cooperation will continue with a more robust, innovative, and digital approach. He invited the PM to participate in the World Food Forum, from October 3-7, in Rome.

He was accompanied by Maximo Torero, chief economist at FAO HQ; Jong Jin Kim, ADG at FAO Regional Office, Bangkok; and Robert D Simpson, FAO representative in Dhaka. Agriculture Minister Mohammad Abdur Razzaque, Ambassador-at-large Mohammad Ziauddin, Principal Secretary Dr Ahmad Kaikaus, Agriculture Secretary Md Sayedul Islam, and Ambassador to Rome and Permanent Representative to FAO, Rome Md Shameem Ahsan were also present.



After winter takes away all its leaves, the "buno lotkon" tree comes back in spring, sprouting leaves that are initially reddish, but soon turn green with the passing of time. Perhaps this is nature's way of reminding us that nothing is permanent, neither the times of grief or sorrow, nor the phase of rebirth and joy. This photo was taken at Ramna Park.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BR turns to ADB for loans, again

Places proposals for five priority infrastructure projects, several more

TUHIN SHUBHA ADHIKARY

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has already topped the lenders' list of Bangladesh Railway (BR). But with several new projects coming up, the state-run transport agency has sought more loan from the bank.

Of these new projects, BR has placed five infrastructure projects as priority ones, which will require around \$8 billion for implementation. It also placed several other projects — both infrastructural and mechanical — for ADB's consideration.

BR officials placed the proposals, as an ADB delegation led by its director general (South Asia department) Kenichi Yokoyama, met Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan at the capital's Rail Bhaban yesterday.

The ADB delegation, however, did not give any clear assurance to BR, rather asking it to speed up its reform programme, reduce operating ratio and increase rail fare, meeting sources said.

Currently, BR spends Tk 287 to earn Tk 100, but the ADB asked the agency to bring this down to Tk 150 per Tk 100.

Despite this, BR Director General Dharendra Nath Mazumder, who accompanied the railways minister, termed the meeting "fruitful".

Replying to a question, he said the delegation was not empowered to say whether ADB will provide the loan or not, but were tasked with placing the proposal before their board.

WHY RELYING ON ADB?

BR is implementing a 30-year master-plan for 2016 to 2045 divided into six phases. A total of 230 projects, with an estimated cost of Tk 5,53,662 crore, have been proposed in the plan.

PRIORITY PROJECTS

Inland Container Depot (ICD) at Gazipur's Dhirasram	\$289.82m
Conversion of Laksam-Pahartali metre gauge (MG) double track to dual gauge (DG) double track	\$1,486.82m
Conversion of Chattogram-Dohazari MG track to DG track	\$767.6m
Conversion of Tongi-Bhairab Bazar-Akhaura MG double track into DG double track	\$1,455.34m
Construction of a chord line from Dhaka to Cumilla via Narayanganj	To be decided after feasibility study

AMOUNT SOUGHT

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Currently, BR is implementing nine projects with ADB loans of about Tk 23, 337.07 crore.

Meanwhile, India, China, Japan and South Korea are financing 10 more BR projects.

However, two other BR projects, which were supposed to be financed by China, are facing uncertainty, after China declined to fund one, and the Chinese contractors selected by their government declined to work with a curtailed budget.

Of the seven projects financed by India, six are loans while the other is a grant. But, all the projects are running behind schedule, with the neighbouring country having no immediate plans to give more loans to railway, BR officials said.

Japan and Korea are financing one project each. Two more projects are now in the pipeline with Korea, while BR sought a loan from Japan for the Joydebpur-Iswardi double line project,

where China declined to finance.

BR earlier sought loans from the World Bank but is yet to get any formal assurance. Some companies from countries such as Russia, UK, China and Turkey had expressed interest to invest in BR, but those proposals are yet to see any visible progress.

Given this, BR is leaning towards ADB, even though the Manila-based bank had earlier imposed some conditions for the loans, including raising rail fare, BR sources said.

At yesterday's meeting, the railways minister termed ADB "a good partner" while seeking the loan, sources said.

THE PROJECTS

Five priority projects BR is seeking loans for are construction of a new Inland Container Depot (ICD) at Gazipur's Dhirasram; conversion of Laksam-Pahartali metre gauge (MG) double track to dual gauge (DG) double track; conversion of Chattogram-Dohazari MG track to DG track;

conversation of Tongi-Bhairab Bazar-Akhaura MG double track into DG double track; and construction of a chord line from Dhaka to Cumilla via Narayanganj.

Except the ICD project, the other projects are related to the development of the Dhaka-Chattogram-Cox's Bazar corridor, the most important transport corridor of Bangladesh. BR has already completed feasibility study for this under a technical assistance with ADB's loan.

Currently, most parts of the Dhaka-Chattogram corridor is MG double line, while conversion work of Akhaura-Laksam section into dual gauge double track is ongoing with ADB's loan.

As the Kamalapur ICD is unable to cope with the growing demand, authorities want to shift it to Dhirasram. The estimated cost of the project is \$362.28 million, of which BR wants \$289.82 million from ADB.

The estimated cost for the conversion of 123.76-km Laksam-Pahartali MG double track to dual gauge (DG) double track in Chattogram is \$1,841.95 million. BR has sought \$1,486.82 million from ADB.

Conversion of 52-km Chattogram-Dohazari MG track into DG track would require \$1,168.39 million. BR has sought \$767.60 million from ADB.

Estimated cost for conversion of the 95.37-km Tongi-Bhairab Bazar-Akhaura MG double track into DG double track is \$1,720.15 million. BR has sought \$1,455.34 million from ADB.

Construction of the chord line from Dhaka to Cumilla via Narayanganj will reduce the distance from Dhaka to Chattogram by 100 km. BR has taken up

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'No single agency is enough' Law minister on preventing human trafficking

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said human trafficking and migrant smuggling cannot be prevented by only one organisation or agency.

"Integrated approaches from all concerned are needed to combat the crime," he said while speaking as chief guest at a meeting.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the law ministry jointly organised the meeting at a city hotel for inaugurating a three-day training programme on human trafficking and relevant national and international legal frameworks.

A total of 22 judges of human trafficking prevention tribunals and women and children repression prevention tribunals attended the programme.

Anisul Huq said the government has formulated Human Trafficking Prevention Act, 2012 and rules in 2017, which recognise human trafficking as a heinous crime. It also established human trafficking prevention tribunals in seven divisions across the country.

Besides, the government and its different national and international associate organisations are now planning to introduce the National Action Plan 2018-2022.

"People are also getting positive results out of such initiatives," said the minister.

Maurizio Cian, head of cooperation of delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh, said the country and European Union are jointly fighting the crime, read a law ministry press release.

DEATH OF COLLEGE STUDENT

PBI gets ninth date to submit probe report

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again asked Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) to submit — by March 31 — the probe report in a case filed against Bashundhara Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir and seven others over the rape and murder of a college student in Dhaka's Gulshan.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Begum Yeasmin Ara passed the order after Investigation Officer Md Alauddin, also an inspector of PBI, failed to submit the report yesterday, said court sources.

With the latest one, PBI took nine dates to submit the report.

On February 22 this year, another Dhaka court asked PBI to submit the report by yesterday.

Police recovered the body of the 21-year-old college student in a Gulshan flat on April 26 last year. The victim's elder sister on September 6 filed a case with the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-8 of Dhaka, bringing allegations of rape and murder.

'Will take tough measures'

Railway minister warns demonstrating gatekeepers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan yesterday said his ministry will resort to tough measures, if the temporary gatekeepers who are demonstrating do not return to their posts.

"We are considering whether action should be taken against them. There must be discipline. Things cannot go on like this," Sujan told journalists at his office at Rail Bhaban.

The temporary gatekeepers have been demonstrating since February 27, with the demand to make their jobs permanent.

Meanwhile, as the minister was talking to reporters, several hundred gatekeepers took position outside the Rail Bhaban premises to press home their demand to bring their jobs under revenue budget.

A total of 1,889 gatekeepers were appointed in early 2018 under two railway projects that Bangladesh Railway (BR) took up to rehabilitate and improve level crossings.

Since February 27, they have been observing a "fast unto death" in front of Dhaka Divisional Railway Manager's office, beside Kamalapur Rail Station, but yesterday they took position outside the Rail Bhaban, as

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It's been two weeks since temporary gatekeepers started a demonstration to make their jobs permanent, even attempting "fast unto death" for their goal. While the rail minister was speaking to reporters yesterday, hundreds of gatekeepers gathered outside Rail Bhaban to stress on bringing their positions under the revenue budget.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

PRAYER
TIMING
MAR 14

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5-05	12-45	4-30	6-12	7-30
Jamaat	5-40	1-15	4-45	6-15	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

From river channel

FROM PAGE 5
 "The excavation did not bring any result, as the work was not conducted properly. Rather, it has obstructed the natural flow of the river. As a result,

the river channel has been filled up again," said Nazrul Islam, a resident of the area. However, Jamal Hossain, an official of SR & JH JV, denied the allegations and said all works were

completed as per directives. Contacted, WDB executive engineer (Thakurgaon) Rabiul Islam said he will look into the matter and take necessary measures.

A stronger than ever

FROM PAGE 5
 prosperity, climate change and sustainable development. Switzerland has invested over CHF 1.2 billion (USD

1.3 billion) in development assistance, with significant additional contributions channelled through international financial institutions.

Bilateral trade has increased rapidly and today, traded goods amount to over CHF 1 billion (USD 1.1 billion) per year.

Shamim Akhter's death anniversary

CITY DESK

Today is the second death anniversary of Shamim Akhter Rashid, editor of Parbotto Barta, a local Rangamati daily, said a press release.



Former member of Rangamati Hill District Council and a member of Rangamati district Awami League, Shamim died at an Indian hospital on this day in 2020.

Her husband Abdul Rashid, a martyred freedom fighter, was founder editor and publisher of Parbotto Barta. He was also a senate member of Chattogram University. The family requested her well-wishers to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

5-day squash tournament from Mar 18

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A five-day SA Group Bangamata International Squash Tournament will begin on March 18 at Chattogram Club Limited in the city.

For the first time, the tournament is going to be held in both male and female categories where 36 men and 16 women will participate, said organisers.

Bangladesh Squash Racket Federation (BSRF) organised the tournament patronised by Chattogram-based SA Group, said Brig Gen (ret'd) GM Kamrul Islam, general secretary of BSRF at a press conference on Saturday.

Twenty-four foreign players from seven countries are taking part in the championship, he added.

BR turns

FROM PAGE 3
 a project, with ADB loan, to carry out a feasibility study for it. The project cost will be approximately \$3,000 million.

Meanwhile, besides the priority projects, some more projects were proposed for ADB's consideration, including construction of a rail track from Panchagarh-B a n g l a b a n d h a , construction of a carriage and wagon maintenance workshop at Rajbari, and construction of another workshop at Gazipur's Dariapara.

Will take

FROM PAGE 3
 authorities did not pay heed to their demands.

Sujan said they were appointed on a temporary basis under projects, and there is a government decision that prevents bringing project workers to the revenue budget directly.

Given this, they have to go through a recruitment process to make their jobs permanent, Sujan mentioned, adding that the temporary gatekeepers will be given priority. Besides, the ministry has also sent a proposal to extend the project tenure by three years.

"If they continue their demonstration with this illogical demand, we will take action against them," he said. "We did not use force till now, but that could change."

Al Mamun Sheikh, coordinator of the movement, said they will return to Kamalapur to continue their "fast unto death", as they did not get any satisfactory reply from the authorities.

"We will declare our next course of action tomorrow [today]," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Luring clients with

FROM PAGE 5
 'Shariah-based' banks, said Rab officials.

Later, they used their contacts to set up their own business. Initially, each of the 20 founders invested Tk 7 lakh into the venture. Within a year, they had gained around 5,000-6,000 customers.

They subsequently

formed three more companies -- Shah Sultan Textile, Swadesh Textile and Shah Sultan Properties -- and opened branch offices across Narsingdi. The company later appointed 20 more directors.

Rab said that even though it was registered as a "cooperative", the company was carrying

out all kinds of banking transactions.

They had more than 300 field workers, who were paid one-time and yearly commissions instead of regular salaries. The investors would get 12-16 percent profits.

Some customers invested between Tk 5 lakh to Tk 1 crore in the

company, according to Moin.

"The company's managing director Omar Faruk and deputy managing director Masud Rana bought five to six acres of land with the customers' money. They are currently on the run," added the Rab official.

Six killed, four hurt

FROM PAGE 5
 In Nilphamari, a couple were killed and another was injured as a truck hit their motorcycle on Nilphamari-Saidpur highway at Kazirhat Bazar yesterday morning. The deceased -- Swapan Roy (28) and his wife Sumi Rani Roy (25) -- were workers of a China-

based toy factory Sonic (Bangladesh) Ltd.

The accident occurred around 250 metres from their workplace, said police.

The injured -- Swapan's brother Ratan Roy, who was driving the bike -- was taken to Nilphamari 250-bed General Hospital.

In Lalmonirhat, Ariful

Islam (30) died on the spot as a truck hit his motorbike on Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway in Barakhata Major area under Hatibandha upazila yesterday.

Meanwhile, another motorcyclist Shamim Hossain (32) was killed after a truck hit him in Medical Mor area under

Hatibandha yesterday. In Kurigram, Rafiqul Islam Pappu (27) was killed and two were injured as their motorbike hit a roadside tree in Dangir Bridge area of Nageshwari upazila yesterday. The injured are Asif Ali (21) and Sujoy Chandra Barman (25).

unesco
UNESCO Dhaka Office
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is seeking applications from Bangladeshi Nationals for the below-mentioned positions under Service Contract modality:
1 Project Officer-Communication and Information (SB-3)
2 Receptionist-cum-Storekeeper (SB-1)
 Detailed information, including Job Description, are available at UNESCO's Career Page (<https://careers.unesco.org/job>). Eligible Bangladeshi nationals interested to apply will need to submit online application on or before **26 March 2022**. Applicants are required to provide complete and accurate information. No modifications can be made to the application once submitted.

Applications received ONLY through UNESCO Careers will be taken into consideration for the next step(s). UNESCO does not charge a fee at any stage of the recruitment process.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Local Government Engineering Department
 Office of the Upazila Engineer
 Balaganj, Sylhet
www.lged.gov.bd

Reference No. 46.02.9108.000.07.001.20.113
 Date: 13/03/2022

Invitation for Tender (Works)
e-Tender Notice No. 03/2021-2022

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following packages.

Sl. No.	ID No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender method
1	663162	e-Tender/PEDP4/SLTBAL/2021-22/ W10.362	Repair and Renovation of BALAGANJ URC under Balaganj Upazila, District: Sylhet.	OTM

These are online tenders where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 11.30am on 03/04/2022 for Tender ID No. 663162. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

S.M. Abdullah Al Mamun
 Upazila Engineer (Add. Ch.)
 LGED, Balaganj
 District: Sylhet
 E-mail: ua_balaganj@lged.gov.bd

GD-498

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
 Center of Excellence in Higher Education
TENDER NOTICE
Tender No. NSU/21-22-13

North South University is inviting sealed offer from the bona fide/ reputed organization/distributors/ business partners/agents for supplying various types of book for the University as described in the tender schedule.

Interested bidders may collect a schedule of tender from **Southeast Bank Ltd. Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka-1229** from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on all working days till **Monday, March 28, 2022**, by paying the non-refundable amount of Taka 1,000.00 (One Thousand) in cash for each schedule. One bidder may submit bid for all or any single item.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of North South University along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **Tuesday, March 29, 2022, by 2.15 p.m.** at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at **2:30 p.m. on the same day**. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

Director, Internal Affairs
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
 Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229
 Phone : +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1204, Fax: +88-02-55668202
 E-mail to: procurement@northsouth.edu, www.northsouth.edu

বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
BDBL
 ৮, রাজউক এডিনিউ, ঢাকা
 রিয়েল এস্টেট ডিপার্টমেন্ট

বাণিজ্যিক স্পেস ভাড়া বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর নিম্নোক্ত ভবনসমূহের খালি স্পেস ব্যাংক/বীমা/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠান/সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/স্বায়ত্তশাসিত/সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত বাণিজ্যিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট ভাড়া দেয়ার লক্ষ্যে প্রস্তাব আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

ক্রঃ নং	ভবনের নাম ও ঠিকানা	ভাড়াযোগ্য স্পেস
০১।	বিডিবিএল ভবন, ৮, রাজউক এডিনিউ, হেড অফিস, ঢাকা-১০০০।	লেভেল-১০ ৯৩৪০ বর্গফুট
		লেভেল-১২ ৯৩৪০ বর্গফুট
০২।	বিডিবিএল ভবন-২, ১২, কারওয়ান বাজার বা/এ, ঢাকা।	লেভেল-১৭ ৪৫৬১ বর্গফুট
		লেভেল-১৮ ৯১৮৬ বর্গফুট
০৩।	বিডিবিএল ভবন, ২৫-২৬, কেডিএ বা/এ, খুলনা।	লেভেল-৫ ১২৩৮ বর্গফুট
		লেভেল-৬ ২৩৫০ বর্গফুট
০২।	আব্রাহী প্রতিষ্ঠান নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তর হতে ভাড়া নেয়ার শর্তাবলী অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন।	

মোঃ নজরুল ইসলাম
 ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার
 ফোনঃ ২২৩৩৫০৬৮৯
 মোবাইলঃ ০১৫৫২৩৩৫৪৩৯

জিডি-৪৯৪

Dhaka Tannery Industrial Estate Wastage Treatment Plant Company Ltd. (DTIEWTPCL)
 (A Public Limited Company)
Tannery Industrial Estate, Dhaka (TIED)
 Horindhora, Hemayetpur, Savar, Dhaka

Invitation for Tenders (National)

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Industries			
2	Agency	Dhaka Tannery Industrial Estate Wastage Treatment Plant Company Ltd. (DTIEWTPCL)			
3	Procuring Entity Name	Managing Director, DTIEWTPCL			
4	Procuring Entity Code	N/A			
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka			
6	Invitation for	Supply of Tannery effluent treatment chemicals			
7	Invitation Ref No	DTIEWTPCL/Chem/101/2021-22/			
8	Date				
KEY INFORMATION					
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) (Frame-work contract)			
FUNDING INFORMATION					
10	Budget and Source of Funds	GOB through Tannery Industrial Estate, Dhaka (4 th revision) project			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
11	Tender Package No.	DTIEWTPCL/Chem-01/22			
12	Tender Package Name	Procurement of Tannery effluent treatment chemicals			
13	Tender Publication Date	15/03/2022			
14	Tender Last Selling Date	11/04/2022			
15	Tender Closing Date and Time	12/04/2022 at 12.10 PM			
16	Tender Opening Date and Time	12/04/2022 at 03.00 PM			
17	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address			
	- Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Office of the Managing Director, DTIEWTPCL, TIED, Horindhora, Hemayetpur, Savar, Dhaka			
	- Selling Tender Document (Others)	Office of the Chairman, BSCIC & Chairman, DTIEWTPCL, 398, Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208			
	- Receiving Tender Document	i) Office of the Managing Director, DTIEWTPCL, TIED, Horindhora, Hemayetpur, Savar, Dhaka ii) Office of the Chairman, BSCIC & Chairman, DTIEWTPCL, 398, Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka-1208			
	- Opening Tender Document	Office of the Managing Director, DTIEWTPCL, TIED, Horindhora, Hemayetpur, Savar, Dhaka			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
18	Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	i) Tender security in the form of Bank draft/ pay order/ an irrevocable unconditional Bank guarantee ii) Trade license updated for 2021-2022 fiscal year iii) TIN & Tax paid certificate for 2020-2021 year iv) VAT registration certificate with 13 digit BIN v) Bank solvency certificate and Bank statement for last six months vi) Minimum amount of liquid capital shall be Tk. 75.00 lac for Lot- G-01 and Tk. 93.00 lac for Lot- G-02 vii) Manufacturers authorization certificate for each chemicals viii) One successfully completion certificate at least to the tune of Tk. 95,00,000/- for Lot- G-01 and Tk. 1,25,00,000/- for Lot- G-02 from any Govt./ Semi Govt./ Autonomous body/ Limited company (Public/ Private) in last 2 years for supply of similar goods ix) Registration/enlistment to any Govt./Semi-govt. organization/ Autonomous body/ Association as chemicals supplier x) Other details as per tender schedule			
19	Brief Description of Goods	Supply of Caustic soda, Ferrous sulphate, PAM, Potash Alum and Poly Aluminum Chloride (PAC) as per specifications in the tender document			
20	Brief Description of Related Services	All services related to Supply of chemicals upto CETP warehouse at TIED, Horindhora, Hemayetpur, Savar, Dhaka including transportation, loading, unloading, testing (for each call off order) etc.			
21	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	Tk. 5000/- (five thousand) only in cash (non-refundable) with application on letter head pad			
	Package & Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time in month
22	i)DTIEWTPCL/ Chem-01/22	Procurement of Tannery effluent treatment chemicals.	Office of the Managing Director, DTIEWTPCL, TIED, Horindhora, Hemayetpur, Savar, Dhaka	Tk. 8,25,000/- for Lot- G-01 and Tk. 10,00,000/- for Lot- G-02	Total time of Frame-work contract is 12 months from the date of issuance of work order. The chemicals should be supplied at CETP warehouse, TIED after issuance of call-off order
	a) Lot: G - 01	- Do -	- Do -	in the form of Bank draft/ pay order/ an irrevocable unconditional Bank guarantee in favour of DTIEWTPCL	
	b) Lot: G - 02	- Do -	- Do -		
23	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Mustak Ahmed			
24	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Managing Director			
25	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Office of the Managing Director, DTIEWTPCL, TIED, Horindhora, Hemayetpur, Savar, Dhaka			
26	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Cell : 01718-275990 e-mail : dtiewtpcl@gmail.com			

N.B. :
 (a) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject in part or whole of any or all tenders without explanation or annul the tender proceedings.
 (b) The purchase quantity may vary from the schedule. The quantity will be fixed during contract signing.
 (c) Bidder must enclose original schedule which is duly filled in unit rate, total price both in figures and words. Any overwriting, correction and scratch or illegibility will be rejected.
 (d) If the date of selling, receiving and opening of tender is hindered under any unavoidable circumstances the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively.
 (e) This tender advertisement can not ensure the purchase of chemicals.

12.3.2022
 Mustak Ahmed
 Managing Director
 DTIEWTPCL

GD-496

'A stronger than ever partnership'

50yrs of ties with Switzerland observed

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Swiss President Ignazio Cassis greeted Bangladesh President Md Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the occasion of 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries yesterday.

In his congratulatory message, Cassis emphasised the long-standing collaboration between the two countries in many domains as well as the continuous broadening and deepening of bilateral ties, said a statement of Swiss embassy in Bangladesh.

Highlighting the stronger than ever partnership, Cassis underlined key areas of future collaboration, including Covid-19 recovery, peace and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



As the excavation works weren't done thoroughly enough, something that locals blame on the contractors of the project, this channel of the Suk river has filled up with silt and sand and has been turned into a farmland for cultivating crops and vegetables. PHOTO: STAR

From river channel to farmland

Botched excavation work to blame, allege locals

MD QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT, Thakurgaon

The government recently ran an excavation project in Thakurgaon's Suk river. But within 10 months of its completion, the river channel has been filled up again, making the entire effort futile.

In these 10 months, the channel has become a farmland, with farmers cultivating crops and vegetables there.

Locals alleged that the contractor who was assigned to excavate the channel did not do the job properly, while government officials in charge of the project looked away. As the channel wasn't dug properly, it eventually filled up with the silt and sand the water carried from the river.

The Suk river originates in Radhanagar area of Panchagarh's Atwari upazila. Flowing through different villages of Panchagarh and Thakurgaon, the river flows into Tangan river in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

Water Development Board (WDB) implemented a project worth Tk 6.90 crore to excavate the 24-kilometre river channel and plant trees on the riverbank.

A joint-venture contractor firm named SR & JH JV was awarded the work, which began in May 2019 and ended in April 2021, according to sources at WDB Thakurgaon office.

However, during a recent visit to Dholarhat and Mohammadpur areas in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila, it was seen that farmers were cultivating crops and vegetables on the newly-filled up river channel.

Meanwhile, in Dholarhat bridge area, a signboard saying "It's a punishable offence to obstruct normal flow of the river, as per directives of the High Court" was seen hanging, although to little effect.

Akhil Barman, a farmer of Dholarhat village, said, "I have planted boro paddy here and hope to get a good yield. My neighbours Hasem and Majid are cultivating sweet potatoes and other vegetables here."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

MYMENSINGH CITY CORPORATION

Here come the mosquitoes again



PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

It hasn't been long since winter left the country, but already, mosquitoes are posing a serious threat to the lives of Mymensingh residents.

"It's beyond control. Before bedtime, we can't even pass a minute without mosquito coils," said Halima Akter, a college teacher living in Mymensingh's Rambabu Road area.

Shahadat Hossain, a resident of the city's Notun Bazar area, said, "The city's drains – filled up with various daily wastes – have turned into a haven for mosquitoes to breed. The authorities concerned are indifferent to act in many cases, resulting in a problem that keeps getting more dire."

Locals alleged that Mymensingh

City Corporation (MCC) is yet to take any initiative in this regard. They also said they rarely see conservancy workers cleaning drains and spraying insecticides.

Meanwhile, MCC sources said it has been trying some alternative methods to combat the menace.

In April last year, they released some 20,000 frogs in the city's drains and canals to curb the mosquito population. Their efforts also included releasing 50,000 tilapia fish to contain mosquitoes.

Residents, however, said they are yet to experience fruitful results from these eco-friendly initiatives.

Advocate Nazrul Islam Chumnu, president of Jono Udyog, said the initiative lacks strict monitoring, for which it hasn't seen success yet.

Dr Harunur Rashid, professor of

fisheries management at Bangladesh Agricultural University, said to contain mosquito spread, using small country fish like khalisa, darkina and dhani (zebra-fish) instead of tilapia could be far more effective – as they consume mosquito larvae and can survive in drain water.

On the other hand, Deepak Mazumder, food and sanitation officer at MCC, said they're suffering from a serious staff crisis. There are only 20 workers for mosquito control, but realistically, each of the 33 wards needs at least 20 workers.

Admitting that mosquito infestation is high, MCC chief medical officer Dr SK Devnath said they have already started an anti-mosquito crash programme in three zones.

Luring clients with 'shariah' schemes

Rab arrests five of a cooperative in connection with embezzling Tk 200cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twelve years ago, Shah Sultan Multipurpose Cooperative Society Limited was opened in Narsingdi. The company enticed people to make interest-free investments following Islamic shariah, with promises of lofty returns.

Using religious clout, they lured thousands of clients and collected around Tk 200 crore in deposits.

After the pandemic hit, the entire population of the country needed cash in hand, and so did the clients of the cooperative.

They started putting pressure on the cooperative so that they could withdraw their deposited funds. As the demands to withdraw grew louder, the cooperative closed the office and went out of reach, scamming numerous clients.

Rapid Action Battalion claimed to have arrested five, including chair of the cooperative, from different areas of Narsingdi on Saturday.

The arrestees are Shah Alam (50), chairperson of the cooperative, and

his associates Delwar Hossain Sikder (52), Kazi Mane Ullah (44), Sumon Mollah (33) and Abdul Hannan Mollah (30).

"Luring people into so-called Shariah-based and interest-free schemes, they collected money from people," Commander Khandaker Al Moin, RAB's media wing director, told a press briefing yesterday.

"Before getting the money, the cooperative would ask clients if they prayed regularly and adhered to Islamic customs. This was their way of creating credibility, on which they later capitalised on to scam their clients," said Moin.

The arrestees claimed that they owe their customers Tk 200 crore. However, the customers – around 6,000 of them – claim that the figure is much higher.

Shah Sultan Cooperative began operations in Narsingdi after registering with Department of Cooperatives in 2010. All 20 members of its board of directors had previous affiliations with various

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Six killed, four hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed and four injured in road accidents in four districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Tangail, a truck driver was killed and another driver injured in a collision involving three trucks at Bangabandhu Bridge East Link Road.

Mohammad Shahin Miah (30) from Bogura died on the spot. The injured – Rafiqul Islam (40) – was admitted to Tangail General Hospital.

The accident occurred as two trucks first collided head-on, and later, another truck hit one of them from behind at Jokarchar in Kalihati upazila, said Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station.

After the accident, a 10-km tailback from Salla to the bridge's east end was created, said passengers and transport workers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

The excavation did not bring any result, as the work was not conducted properly. Rather, it has obstructed the natural flow of the river. As a result, the river channel has been filled up again.

NAZRUL ISLAM
Resident of the area

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Line Director
Upazila Health Care (UHC), DGHS
BMRC Bhaban (1st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
Phone:02-222280785, Fax:02-222282900
E-mail: uhc@ld.dghs.gov.bd

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Sealed Tender is hereby invited from the manufacturer/wholesaler/supplier for supply of MSR for Urban Health (Urban Dispensaries/Satellite Clinics). As per PPR-2008, terms and conditions are as follows:

KEY INFORMATION	
1 Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), Health Services Division.
2 Agency	Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), MOHFW.
3 Procuring Entity	Line Director, Upazila Health Care (UHC), DGHS.
4 Procuring Entity Code	224330400
5 Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
6 Invitation for	Supply of MSR for Urban Health (Urban Dispensaries/Satellite Clinics).
7 Invitation for offer Ref. No	UHC/Proc./RPA-GOB/MSR (Urban Health)-15/2021-22/1117
8 Date	13.03.2022

KEY INFORMATION	
9 Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (OTM)

FUNDING INFORMATION	
10 Budget and Source of Funds	RPA-GOB
11 Developments Partners	None

PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
12 Project/Program Code	224330400
13 Project/Program Name	UHC
14 Tender Package No	UHC/R-GD-6/2021-22
15 Offer Package Name	MSR for Urban Health (Urban Dispensaries/Satellite Clinics).
16 Tender Publication Date	14.03.2022
17 Tender Last Selling Date	27.03.2022 at 5.00 pm
18 Tender Closing Date and Time	28.03.2022 at 12 pm
19 Tender Opening Date and Time	28.03.2022 at 2 pm
20 Name and address of the Office	

a) Selling of Tender Documents	a) Office of the Line Director, UHC, DGHS, BMRC Bhaban (1 st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212. b) Central Medical Store Depot (CMSD), Tejgaon, Dhaka.
b) Receiving of Tender Documents	a) Office of the Line Director, UHC, DGHS, BMRC Bhaban (1 st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212. b) Central Medical Store Depot (CMSD), Tejgaon, Dhaka.
c) Opening of Tender Documents	Office of the Line Director, UHC, DGHS, BMRC Bhaban, (1 st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER	
21 Eligibility of Tenderer	As stated in TDS
22 Brief Description of Goods	Supply of MSR (26 items) for Urban Health (Urban Dispensaries/Satellite Clinics).
23 Price of Tender Documents Taka	TK. 2,000 (Two Thousand) only by Treasury Challan (with CTR) Code No. 1-2711-0000-2366 to be deposited Sonali Bank Ltd. or Bangladesh Bank. (Non-refundable).

No	Identification & Name	Location	Tender Security Amounts in BDT	Completion time (in weeks)
Single lot	UHC/R-GD-6/2021-22	UHC office, BMRC Bhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka.	Tk. 1,25,000 (One lac twenty five thousand) only by Pay Order/Bank Draft or Bank Guarantee in Prescribed format in favour of Line Director, UHC, DGHS.	10 (Ten) weeks from date of signing the contract.

PROCURING ENTITY DETAIL

25 Name of Official Inviting Offer	Dr. Md. Rizwanur Rahman
26 Designation of Official Inviting Offer	Line Director, UHC, DGHS.
27 Address of Official Inviting Offer	BMRC Bhaban (1 st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
28 Contact details of Official Inviting Offer	BMRC Bhaban, Mohakhali, Dhaka. Phone:02-222280785, Fax:02-222282900

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers.

13.03.22

(Dr. Md. Rizwanur Rahman)
Line Director
Upazila Health Care (UHC), DGHS
BMRC Bhaban (1st floor), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

GD-499



PHOTO: RAE, TAKEN FROM SHITHI'S FACEBOOK

SHITHI'S subcontinental ventures



Shithi with Anup Jalota in Mumbai.

"We were first introduced through my online show, 'Shithir Otithi', where we instantly hit it off," says Shithi. "After listening to my voice, he shared his interest in collaboration."

SHARMIN JOYA

After garnering accolades for the track "Raat Jaga Pakhi", a collaboration with Pakistani sensation Shaqat Amanat Ali, talented singer Shithi Saha has now worked with eminent Indian musician Anup Jalota. Anup, considered a legend in his own field, is often referred to as the 'Bhajan Samrat'.

The singer has now returned to Dhaka after recording the duet ghazal, titled "Unkey Khayalon Mein", in Mumbai's Re N Raga Studios. "I am extremely honoured to have earned this opportunity," shares the singer. The song is written by Abrar Lakhnawi and composed by Anup Jalota himself.

"We were first introduced through my online show, 'Shithir Otithi', where we instantly hit it off," says Shithi. "After listening to my voice, he shared his interest in collaboration."

Although this is Shithi's second Urdu song, it is her first project in Mumbai. She will soon be returning to Mumbai to

shoot for the music video.

Aired on Maasranga television, the musical adda "Shithir Otithi" began its journey after the pandemic had hit the country.

"Like everyone, I was depressed, and looking to initiate something, which resulted in the show. Since then, we have successfully completed 80 episodes," shares the artiste, who is a trained classical singer, also adept in folk and contemporary styles.

Making her playback debut in the film "Projapoti", directed by Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Raz, Shithi wants to work in more films. "It's not like that I don't want to lend my voice in films," she says. However, I have had a bad experience recently, which really upset me."

The singer informs that after recording a

song for a film, the actress purposely dropped it. "I was shocked – I really did not expect it. It would have been easier to accept if the composer or director made that call," says a disappointed Shithi Saha.

She has recently collaborated with Habib Wahid, and she is in talks for more projects, both in Bangladesh and India. "I believe in working slow and steady. I urge my fans to wait for even more surprises in the future."

Where is Farukh Ahmed?

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Chorki released the teaser of Shatabdi Wadud and Afsana Mimi starrer thriller "Nikhoj". Directed by Reehan Rahman, the series

revolves around the mysterious disappearance of Farukh Ahmed who has been missing since 1999.

"Nikhoj" stars an ensemble cast - Intekhab Dinar, Shamol Mawla, Sporshia, Khairul Basar, Masum Rezwan, Shilpi Sarkar, Deepanwita Martin, among others.

"Nikhoj" is slated to be released on the streaming platform on March 17.



"Waiting for Godot" to be staged today at DU

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Samuel Beckett's play "Waiting for Godot" is set in the backdrop of the class struggle of man, fight against exploitation, and endless exhaustion of the post-World War II.

Commemorating the 75th anniversary of this historic creation, the Department of Theatre and Performance Studies of The University of Dhaka will present the play on stage from today until March 16 every day at 7 pm, at the Natmandal Auditorium and at the Experimental Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA), from March 18 till 20.

The play has been directed by professor Dr Israfil Shaheen and translated by Asadul Islam in collaboration with the Academy of Arts. It was played by the second semester students of Dhobi's post graduation.



COUNTRYWIDE

TANGAIL-ARICHA REGIONAL HIGHWAY

Traffic movement halted as bridge deck collapses again



A large steel plate of the deck of this Bailey bridge over a canal in Tangail's Nagarpur upazila collapsed yesterday, halting vehicular movement on the busy Tangail-Aricha regional highway.

PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Vehicular movement on Tangail-Aricha regional highway came to a halt as a steel plate of the deck of a Bailey bridge, repaired just a few days ago, on a canal at Tengripura in Nagarpur upazila collapsed again yesterday.

As a result, a good number of vehicles including passenger buses and goods-laden trucks got stranded on either side of the vulnerable bridge.

Locals said due to the sudden collapse, passengers were compelled to cross the bridge on foot and board another vehicle on the opposite side of the bridge to go to their destinations.

Meanwhile, in a temporary fix, workers put a bundle of logs on the broken part so that some heavy vehicles could cross the bridge amid serious risk of accident.

On March 8, another portion of the bridge deck collapsed when a mustard-laden truck was crossing it.

After couple of days of suspension, vehicular movement on the bridge resumed when workers engaged by the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) repaired the damaged part.

"I have informed the matter to the RHD officials after one of the steel plates of the bridge deck collapsed again yesterday morning," Nagarpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Waheduzzaman said.

Bhadra Union Parishad Chairman Shawkat Ali said vehicular movements on the bridge remained suspended on August 23 and September 17 last year due to collapse of the bridge deck in other spots.

Though the bridge was repaired later, but it got damaged again due to substandard repair work, he alleged.

"Hundreds of vehicles as well as nearly one lakh people, who move on the road every day, are facing immense sufferings due to

suspension of traffic movement through the bridge," the chairman added.

RHD officials, however, claimed that they were trying to hold a sustainable repair work of the old bridge, but could not do so due to plying of overloaded heavy vehicles, defying ban.

Of the 55.5 kilometre Tangail-Aricha regional highway, 35.5 kilometre area is under Tangail, RHD officials said.

Besides, almost all the 12 Bailey bridges under Tangail portion of the regional road, constructed over two decades ago, have turned awfully risky.

Although, RHD hung caution notices on both sides of all the old bridges, prohibiting movement of overloaded vehicles, nobody pay heed to it.

Tangail RHD Executive Engineer Aliul Hossain said a project has already been approved to construct 10 concrete bridges in places of the risky Bailey bridges.

22-year drive around the world

FROM PAGE 12

The couple had been married six years, had good jobs and had just built a house, with plans to have kids, too, when wanderlust hit. Their round-the-world journey began with a backpacking trip in Alaska.

And somebody offered

them a car, a 1928 model of an American make called Graham-Paige. The engine was bad and the paint looked terrible.

They went through only eight sets of tires in 22 years and only twice needed to do major engine work.

While out on the road,

and with the first two kids born – Pampa, now 19, came into this world in the US and Tehue, 16, during a visit back to Argentina – they enlarged the car by actually cutting it in half and adding 40 cm (16 inches) of length and another seat.

That made room for the

arrival of Paloma, now 14 and born in Canada, and Wallaby, 12, down under in Australia.

The last additions to the family were a dog named Timon and a cat called Hakuna during a stay in Brazil, where the Zapps were stranded for a while in 2020 because of Covid-19.

Approach

FROM PAGE 2

Russian Federation and the People's Republic of Bangladesh, which started 50 years ago," he said in an open letter to editors of print and electronic media, the heads of radio and TV broadcasters in Bangladesh yesterday.

The ambassador referred to 1971 when Bangladeshis overthrew, with the active support from India and the USSR, the dominance of non-Bengali masters, to stop harassment, discrimination and violence against Bengali people, so that they could finally enjoy the right to speak their native language.

At least 60 dead in DR Congo train accident

AFP, Lubumbashi

A train crash in southeastern Democratic Republic of Congo has killed at least 60 people, the state rail company and local sources said on Saturday.

"(Currently) the toll is 61 dead, men, women and children (and) 52 injured who have been evacuated," Marc Manyonga Ndambo, director of infrastructure at the SNCC train operator, told AFP.

Jet fuel price skyrocketing

FROM PAGE 12

is already high compared with the neighbouring and peer countries, said Kazi Wahidul Alam, an aviation expert.

"Due to the hub airport, our airlines will have to buy jet fuel from Bangladesh at a higher rate. On the contrary, foreign airlines that are operating to

and from Dhaka will buy jet fuel at a lower price from their countries. As a result, we won't be able to compete with foreign airlines."

The government increased the jet fuel price without considering the fact that foreign airlines would be taking over the local airlines' business

because of this, he added. "It's really an ominous sign for our airline sector," said ATM Nazrul Islam, another aviation expert.

Asked about the price hike, BPC Chairman ABM Azad earlier said the local price of jet fuel corresponded to those in the international market.

Sharif files writ challenging

FROM PAGE 12

inquiry into the allegations and counter-allegations over the termination of Sharif.

On February 27, Sharif applied for reinstatement in the job.

He submitted an application to the ACC chairman citing some of

his successful works.

ACC sources said the ACC was yet to take any decision on this matter.

Aggrieved by ACC's decision, Sharif's colleagues formed a human chain in different districts of the country.

According to them, Sharif was a hardworking

and skilled officer who filed 52 corruption cases while he was in Chattogram.

Because of his stance against corruption, the corrupt threatened him with life, they said, adding that firing him with no room for self-defence was tantamount to supporting corruption.

No plan for military facility

FROM PAGE 2

pact "AUKUS". Also, the UK, Australia, Japan and India are engaged in a quadrilateral security dialogue called QUAD.

"Though the US and its allies say that these mechanisms are not aimed at China, practically they are. AUKUS runs the risks of nuclear proliferation in this region. So, I hope that Bangladesh will take a wise decision towards all of these mechanisms," Li said. Meanwhile, China

is working to facilitate early repatriation of the Rohingyas.

"There has been some progress but unfortunately there is no formally-organised repatriation yet. Hopefully, this year we will achieve that."

Asked about cost escalation of China-funded projects, Li, who has been in Bangladesh since 2019, placed the blame on land acquisition and the pandemic. More Chinese

companies will be investing in Bangladesh as the infrastructure and power generation have significantly improved, he said, while suggesting improvements in the areas of logistics and project approval procedures.

On Ukraine, he said China is ready to facilitate any talks between Russia and Ukraine for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

"As a friend of both Russia and Ukraine, China wants to pour water, not fuel to the fire."

Ballistic missiles hit Iraq's Erbil Iran claims responsibility, says attack targeted Israeli site

AFP, Erbil

Iran claimed responsibility for a missile strike yesterday on the northern Iraqi city of Erbil, saying it targeted an Israeli "strategic centre".

Authorities in Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region had earlier said 12 ballistic missiles rained down on Erbil in a pre-dawn attack targeting US interests that slightly wounded two civilians and caused material damage.

The missiles came from beyond Iraq's eastern border, Kurdistan's counter-terrorism unit announced – in effect saying they were fired from Iran, a nation which wields considerable influence over Baghdad.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards later confirmed they fired the projectiles, claiming they were targeting sites used by Israel, a top ally of the US.

A "strategic centre for conspiracy and mischiefs of the Zionists was targeted by powerful precision missiles fired by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps", the Guards said in a statement.

The assault comes nearly a week after the Guards vowed to avenge the death of two of their officers killed in a rocket attack in Syria they blamed on Israel. Iran backs the government in Syria's civil war.

There was no immediate reaction from Israel to yesterday's missile attack and Kurdish authorities insisted that the Jewish state has no sites in or anywhere near Erbil.

Kurdish authorities said the target of the attack was the Erbil consulate of the US. Washington said there was "no damage or casualties at any US government facility".



Police officers detain a woman during a protest against Russian military action in Ukraine, in Manezhnaya Square in central Moscow, yesterday. Reports said Russia yesterday detained 268 people from 23 Russian cities for protesting Moscow's "military operation" in Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

COVID-19 SURGE China slaps lockdown on millions

AFP, Beijing

Millions of people across China endured lockdowns yesterday as virus cases doubled to nearly 3,400 and anxiety mounted over the resilience of the country's 'zero-Covid' approach in the face of the worst outbreak in two years.

A nationwide surge in cases has seen authorities close schools in Shanghai, lock down southern tech powerhouse of Shenzhen as well as whole northeastern cities, as almost 18 provinces battle clusters of the Omicron and Delta variants.

Shenzhen, home to 17 million people, was put under a citywide lockdown yesterday after it reported 66 new coronavirus cases.

The city of Changchun – an industrial base of nine million people – was locked down Friday, while at least three other small cities have been locked down since March 1.

Arms shipments legitimate target

Kremlin warns West; at least 1,300 Ukrainian troops dead; French and German talks with Putin fail

AGENCIES

Russia has said it will treat arms shipments to Ukraine from Nato countries as "legitimate targets" for military action in a dangerous new escalation of tensions as the United States stepped up arms supply to Ukraine.

The warning from the deputy foreign minister, Sergei Ryabkov, came as supporters of Ukraine, including the UK, Germany and the United States, have been urgently shipping thousands of anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles to Kyiv in response to Moscow's aggression.

The United States on Saturday said it would rush up to \$200 million in additional small arms, anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons to Ukraine.

Ryabkov said that Russia had "warned the US that pumping weapons from a number of countries it orchestrates isn't just a dangerous move, it's an action that makes those convoys legitimate targets".

Volodymyr Zelenskiy, the Ukrainian president, disclosed that at least 1,300 of his country's troops have been killed in the conflict so far in

the first estimate of Ukraine's combat losses after almost three weeks of fighting. Ukraine has claimed to have killed some 12,000 Russian troops.

The French president Emmanuel Macron and German chancellor Olaf Scholz reported that Vladimir Putin showed no willingness to end the war after a phone call between the leaders in which they renewed a call for a ceasefire and negotiations. A statement from the office of the French president described the conversation with Putin as "very frank and also difficult".

In his call with Macron and Scholz on Saturday, Putin spoke about "issues related to agreements under discussion to implement the Russian demands" for ending the war, the Kremlin said without providing details. Among other things, the Kremlin has previously demanded a promise by Nato never to accept Ukraine as a member and for the alliance to pull back from countries such as Poland, Romania and Bulgaria.



TERRORISM CHARGES Saudi Arabia executes 81 in one day

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia said Saturday it had executed a record 81 people in one day for terrorism-related offences, exceeding the total number killed last year and sparking criticism from rights activists.

All had been "found guilty of committing multiple heinous crimes", the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported, saying they included convicts linked to the Islamic State group, al-Qaeda, Yemen's Huthi rebel forces or "other terrorist organisations".

Of the 81 people killed, 73 were Saudi citizens, seven were Yemeni and one was a Syrian national. Saturday's announcement of 81 deaths marks more than the total of 69 executions in all of 2021.

Up until Saturday, Saudi Arabia in 2022 had executed 11 people convicted of various crimes, AFP reported.

Sonia stays as Congress chief Leaders rally around Rahul after poor show in state polls

AGENCIES

The Congress Working Committee, the highest decision-making forum of India's main opposition yesterday met in New Delhi to discuss the debacle it suffered in recent assembly elections in five states amidst calls by leaders and workers for return of Rahul Gandhi as party chief.

After a mammoth four-and-a-half-hour meeting amid demands of a change in leadership, the party decided to continue with Sonia Gandhi as the party's interim president, NDTV reported.

Ahead of the meeting, party workers gathered nearby the venue and voiced support for Rahul to return as the party's full-time president, a post he quit soon after the defeat in national elections in May, 2019.

Senior Congress leader and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, expressing his support for Rahul, said no one takes on Prime Minister Narendra Modi as Rahul Gandhi does.

A group of Congress leaders from Delhi, including Alka Lamba, backed Rahul to lead the party and raised slogans in his and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's favour, reported our New Delhi correspondent.

Rahul and Priyanka were among the senior leaders who attended the CWC meeting. Dissident leaders, who have demanded organizational reforms, also participated in it.

The Congress lost the poll in Punjab to Aam Aadmi Party and failed to win against Bharatiya Janata Party in three other states Uttarakhanda, Goa and Manipur. The Congress' tally of seats in politically crucial Uttar Pradesh fell to its lowest – two out of total of 403 seats.

While Sonia Gandhi has not been actively taking part in the poll campaign for quite some time, Rahul, along with Priyanka, campaigned extensively in the polls in the five states.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Prime Minister's Office
Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority
BEPZA Economic Zone
Mirsarai, Chattogram-4320
(www.bepza.gov.bd)

Ref No. 03.06.1553.394.14.079.19-90 Date: 10 March 2022

e-Tender Notice (Re-Tender)

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

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of good/works	Date of publication	Last selling date and time	Closing & opening date and time
672720	BEPZA W-43	Construction of outlet including sluice gate and box culver at BEPZA Economic Zone, Mirsarai, Chattogram (Package No. BEPZA W-43).	16-Mar-2022	03-Apr-2022 18:00	04-Apr-2022 11:00
672709	BEPZA EW-05	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of solar street light (Group-Ka) at BEPZA Economic Zone, Mirsarai, Chattogram (Package No. BEPZA EW-05).	16-Mar-2022	03-Apr-2022 18:00	04-Apr-2022 11:30

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

For more details, please contract to the PE's Support Desk (01737790029).

Mohammad Shafiqul Islam
Superintending Engineer
BEPZA Economic Zone
Mirsarai, Chattogram
Phone: +880241389011
E-mail: shafiqce74@gmail.com

GD-497

The Russian invaders cannot conquer us. ... They do not have such spirit. They are holding only on violence. Only on terror.

Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskiy**

Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University

Khulshi, Chattogram-4225

Memo No. CVASU/EO/ESC/21-22/IFT-4 Date: 13/03/2022

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of goods as follows:

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Package name	Tender closing date	Tender notice publication date
672062	EO/Dev/ESC/PW-17/21-22	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Passenger Lift, Air Conditioning System and Heavy Duty Paper Shredder for Research and Farm Based Campus, Hathazari under Establishment of Second Campus Project of CVASU.	06-Apr-2022 15:30	14-Mar-2022 16:30
672964	CVASU/EO/Dev/ESC/PGD-3/21-22	Procurement of Scientific Machinery and Other Equipment for Research and Farm Based Campus, Hathazari under Establishment of Second Campus Project of CVASU.	07-Apr-2022 15:30	
673136	CVASU/EO/Dev/ESC/PGD-4/21-22	Procurement of Scientific Machinery and Other Equipment for Faculty of Veterinary Medicine under Establishment of Second Campus Project of CVASU.	10-Apr-2022 15:30	

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for **last downloading** the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to date & time (05-Apr-2022 17:00 for Tender ID 672062; 06-Apr-2022 17:00 for Tender ID 672964; 10-Apr-2022 12:30 for Tender ID 673136).

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sd- Chief Engineer
Engineering Office
Chattogram Veterinary and Animal Sciences University

GD-494

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Why the delay in fixing unsafe RMG factories?

The RSC must hold factories accountable

We are extremely concerned by the lack of progress made by more than 1,000 RMG units in becoming “fully safe,” since the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh closed its operations in the country in May 2020. After the Accord left the country, the responsibility of making the factories structurally safe and compliant with the international standards was handed over to the RMG Sustainability Council (RSC). However, it seems the RSC hasn't made any significant headway in terms of factory inspections and other safety-related matters.

According to the RSC's website, over 70 factories from the Accord and RSC's list still haven't implemented even half of the remediation measures recommended by Accord. Moreover, there are a few factories that are just getting started with their preliminary inspection after the RSC took over. Even though around two-thirds of the listed un-remediated factories had implemented over 90 percent of the remediation measures recommended at the time of Accord's departure, even the minor work that has been left incomplete can cause major accidents—as made evident by the fire at Zaheen Knitwear Ltd in late January this year.

The RSC has said that it faced many drawbacks in carrying out its safety-related inspection work and other matters due to the pandemic. However, the fact remains that ignoring such work can be extremely costly in terms of human lives—as proven by a number of past tragedies. Moreover, the goodwill that Bangladesh has been able to develop with foreign brands and other customers since the tragic events of Rana Plaza will also be at risk if RMG factories across the country now start to ignore safety standards in the absence of Accord. And that could be very costly economically in the long run, particularly for Bangladesh's balance of payment, which relies so heavily on RMG exports.

Many experts and activists believe that the fact that the RSC cannot legally force brands to stop buying from factories that are not making progress in remediation—which the Accord agreement had the power to do—is among the main reasons why this process has slowed down so significantly.

At the end of the day, factories that do not strictly enforce all the necessary safety measures have to be held accountable in some way. Otherwise, why would they have the incentive to implement them—especially when it is cheaper for them to not do so? We believe that it is time the RSC started acting like an independent and empowered institution that prioritises the issue of workers' safety.

Extrajudicial killing is a blot on our credentials

Purge this gruesome culture

THE news of extrajudicial killings, or reports that expose the percentage of “kills” by the various elements of law enforcement agencies is always unsettling. Much as we would like to shun the issue, it keeps coming back to haunt us. A report in this newspaper gives us the chilling statistics of a study by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) on extrajudicial killings. Between 2019 and 2021, 562 people became victims of extrajudicial killings, the study has found. That amounts to nearly 85 persons every year. The police were involved in 51.24 and Rab in 28.64 percent of the cases.

The issue has stained our credentials as a country that claims to be run by the rule of law—not of men. It is disturbing to read which among the law enforcement wings has outdone the other in circumventing the law and taking lives of people in the most arbitrary manner. That the percentage of such crimes is higher among the police is even more disconcerting as this is a force that is responsible for the overall security of all citizens.

However, it must be mentioned that the number of such killings has gone down remarkably since December last year; in fact, there have only been two since (though still too many). Coincidentally, it was in December 2021 that the US imposed a sanction on Rab. That begs the question: Is there a link between the December sanction and drop in extrajudicial killings, or is this merely a coincidence? Have all the “crooks” decided to be good boys and the law enforcement agencies have found no scope for using their weapons in the manner they used to before then? Without venturing a value judgement, let's say that law and order can be maintained just as well and with equal efficiency, if not more, without resorting to such deviant practice, which the administration chooses to euphemistically call “crossfire.” Let's restate and re-emphasise that extrajudicial killing is immoral, illegal and unethical. It not only subverts the judicial system of the country; it also reveals a lack of confidence of the administration on the judiciary. Every alleged offender, even though he may be a noted criminal, deserves his day in court. The law enforcement agencies can just as well perform their duties effectively without being the judge, jury and executioner at the same time. We should run the system as per law and of our own volition, not because of strictures from abroad.

CORRIGENDUM

In an editorial titled “No more carte blanche to errant cops” published in The Daily Star on March 11, 2022, “jail custody” was mistakenly written as “police custody.” We sincerely apologise for this error.

Inflation could dent Covid recovery



MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

The struggle of the poor and low-income group that began with the outbreak of Covid-19 in early 2020 is now worsened by the unabated rise in the prices of essentials. These people are still grappling with their limited budgets as the pressure of price hikes continues to mount. Of course, the global economy is also under tremendous pressure. With the pandemic persisting for more than two years, economies across the world have lost pace and, in some cases, stalled. Supply disruptions, logistical interruptions, shipping and airline charges and port congestions have led to higher prices of commodities. This is affecting the economic recovery process as a large section of people are still struggling to stay afloat. On the other hand, demand is on the rise as countries strive to recover from the pandemic fallout. The capacity of economies to meet the demand remains unfulfilled in view of the economic shrinkages during the pandemic.

Indeed, Bangladeshi consumers began to feel the inflationary pressure in June 2020. High commodity prices in Bangladesh are often connected with high global prices, but that is not always the reality. In Bangladesh, there is a tendency to blame external factors for high prices even if certain commodities do not have any connections with the global demand. As the country imports a few important commodities, higher prices of those will be passed onto the consumers. Unfortunately, such pass-through is reflected only in the case of price hike. When global prices decline, it does not get reflected in our domestic market. So, when global prices of fuels and other commodities go up, their prices in our domestic market are raised correspondingly, but the opposite does not happen. While importers pay less for their imports, the end consumers continue to pay the elevated prices.

Bangladesh is dependent on imported oils. The oil prices for Brent crude oils have

increased by 83.9 percent over the last 12 months. This increase is worrisome since the share of Brent oil in the globally traded crude oil is more than 50 percent. The price is expected to continue to rise in the face of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. Therefore, the Bangladesh government will have to prepare to face such price

of support for poor and low-income groups. The volume of sale of essential commodities through the open market system (OMS) should be increased. In a welcome move, the government has decided to supply edible oil, sugar, lentils, and chickpeas at an affordable price to 50 million people across the country. Distribution of these commodities must be managed effectively and without any corruption, so that the eligible people have access to these items at low prices. Indeed, the government should provide direct cash support to the poor, enhance social protection for low-income families, and extend stimulus to the small businesses for their survival during difficult times.

Besides, the government should prepare for maintaining adequate food stock not only through better agricultural production, but also through importing food. The high fertiliser price would lead to higher cost of production and higher prices of agricultural commodities, including rice. Due to the impact of climate change, the global projection of agricultural production is not promising. Natural disasters such as flood, cyclones, drought and wildfire will continue to disrupt agricultural production, resulting in continued inflationary pressure. Because of uncertain climatic conditions, high input costs, and the pandemic, the international food market is predicted to be unstable in 2022 by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO).

In Bangladesh, despite bumper production, the rice market has been observed to be volatile during the past years. Despite the claim of being self-sufficient in food, we have to import food from the international market to meet the local demand. Also, Bangladesh's vulnerability to climate change is high. In these circumstances, there is a need for actual demand estimation of rice and other food items in the country. During a crisis, food-exporting countries would not export food without meeting their domestic demands first. If they decided to export, the prices would be exorbitant. Therefore, planning the production and import of food should be done early on. And again, the government must monitor the market closely to curtail any attempt to manipulate the prices. Otherwise, the pain of the inflationary pressure cannot be relieved in the short term. It will hamper a sustainable and inclusive pandemic recovery, since the real purchasing power of many people will decline, causing further inequality.



COLLAGE: STAR

Unscrupulous market players have always been active to take advantage of difficult periods, by stockpiling and creating artificial crises in the market. Efficient market management will be critical to keep prices under control during Ramadan and beyond.

hikes strategically—without any delay. The demand for fuels has been high as countries have been striving to recover from the pandemic slowdown. Bangladesh should make advance purchases to reduce the pressure of high prices. High payment for expensive fuel will be a stress on the country, given the shrinking fiscal space.

Bangladesh also imports edible oil, food, sugar, intermediate goods and raw materials for production. Using the excuse of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, prices of these items, particularly of edible oil, have skyrocketed. The government recently withdrew VAT from a few items such as edible oil, chickpeas, sugar and lentils till June this year. This has been a right move, given that the demand for these products will increase ahead of Ramadan, which is less than a month away. However, the need for strong market intelligence is critical. Unscrupulous market players have always been active to take advantage of difficult periods, by stockpiling and creating artificial crises in the market. Efficient market management through close monitoring and supervision will be critical to keep the commodity prices under control during Ramadan and beyond.

The other measure that the government should put in place is the enhancement

For RMG, digitisation is the way to go



RMG NOTES

Mostafiz Uddin is the managing director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

NEW developments in technology, robotics, automation and digitisation are something all garment manufacturers need to be mindful of. Knowledge, as they say, is power.

There are two ways of looking at this. The first is from the perspective of how we can use technology to drive productivity and other improvements—sustainability being an obvious example in our own factories. The second aspect is the extent to which “Industry 4.0” represents a threat to Bangladeshi garment manufacturers and how much we should view it as a new form of competition.

This week, I read about a garment manufacturing social enterprise called Fashion-Enter Ltd (FEL). FEL has recently entered into a collaboration with a well-known digital printing company, Kornit Digital, to open what is being described by some as the world's most sustainable and efficient end-to-end garment micro-factory.

The factory, based in London, United Kingdom, uses direct-to-fabric and direct-to-garment digital printing machines and according to press reports, these can take a dress “from pixel to parcel,” or from a design on screen to being ready to be shipped, in as little as 25 minutes. All of these processes take place at the same site in one seamless, efficient, sustainable operation, although it must be stressed that we are only talking about product samples at the present time.

It is also claimed that Kornit Digital's process removes the requirement for harmful textile chemicals (a huge concern for global fashion retailers) and uses a minimum amount of water.

Not surprisingly, there is already talk of this “factory of the future” being

replicated across the UK. Every fast fashion retailer in the world is now looking at ways to decrease the time it takes to get the latest fashion styles into the wardrobes of consumers. That said, most wise observers believe this kind of sophisticated, fully digitised production will remain in the domain of mid-to-high end apparel for the foreseeable future.

Should we, as garment makers, be

the future could be scaled effectively in a major western country, it is hard to believe somebody would not have capitalised on this opportunity before now. Perhaps I am being cynical, but experience tells me ours is a conservative industry in many ways, and change comes slowly.

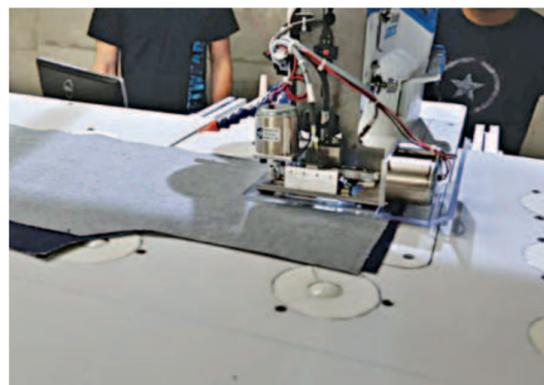
All that said, as garment makers, we must be abreast of these issues and give consideration to how we can incorporate aspects of Industry 4.0 into our own operations. If the sustainability gains on offer are as great as being claimed, our customers will soon be knocking on our doors asking how we, as suppliers, can take advantage of these emerging technologies.

To this end, surely it could do no harm for some of our more progressive garment factories to think about introducing pilot lines which incorporate full digitisation. If nothing else, such lines, perhaps launched in collaboration with a major fashion retailer, would offer garment makers a chance to show what is possible and would certainly be a worthwhile exercise from a public relations perspective.

A key benefit of digitisation is speed to market and responsiveness. Our geographic location negates these potential advantages. Therefore, Bangladeshi manufacturers should consider setting up satellite operations in target markets. We are the experts in garment manufacture, and I passionately believe that if anybody is to build the factory of the future, surely it should be us.

One other possible avenue for incorporating these digital technologies would be via the formation of a strategic partnership with a global apparel maker. This could see the offering of real-time sampling to customers abroad, even providing short trial runs to test what sells. All of this could be supported by upscaled manufacturing in Bangladesh.

Embracing these kinds of new business models and routes to the end consumer will be vital for Bangladesh to ensure our apparel industry remains ahead of the game in a rapidly evolving market.



A key benefit of digitisation is speed to market and responsiveness.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

concerned about such developments? And how can we capitalise on the opportunities these amazing new technologies can offer our industry?

Of course, we cannot simply ignore the concept of “near-shoring,” especially given our heavy dependence on garment exports. And we cannot turn a blind eye to or shrug off new developments in digitisation like this. After all, we are seeing a rapid shift to online purchasing of clothing and the e-commerce business model would dovetail well with a move towards digitisation in supply chains. Industry 4.0 is coming whether we like it or not.

Simultaneously, it is worth considering that talk around near-shoring has been around for a great many years. The costs involved in producing clothing along fully digital and automated lines are also unclear.

Ultimately, if the garment factory of

46TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF JASIM UDDIN

More than a pastoral poet



AZFAR HUSSAIN

Dr Azfar Hussain is interim director of the graduate programme in social innovation, and associate professor of integrative, religious, and cultural studies at Grand Valley State University in Michigan, US. He is also the vice-president of the US based Global Center for Advanced Studies (GCAS).

Today—March 14—marks the 46th death anniversary of Jasim Uddin (1903-1976). Popularly called “*palli kabi*” (folk poet), Jasim Uddin is also considered a major Bangla poet. And by now he has been fully assimilated into the Bangla literary canon and the academy as well. Yet, his work remains marginalised—and sometimes even gets gruffly dismissed—in contemporary Bangla criticism. I think this has to do with a certain “aesthetic elitism”—to use the African writer Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s term—predicated as it is on the contention that Jasim Uddin’s characteristic preoccupations with everything rural or pastoral, accompanied by his inattention to the complexities of urban life, do not make him “modern” enough to merit attention.

But I will argue that consciously running against the grain of the literary modernism of the 1930s—represented by such poets as Sudhin Dutta (1901-1960), Amiya Chakravarty (1901-1986), Buddhadeva Bose (1908-1974), Bishnu Dey (1909-1982), and, to an extent, Jibananda Das (1899-1954)—Jasim Uddin’s work articulates a particular version of alternative, anticolonial modernity. And, thus, he comes close to Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976), their different thematic concerns and stylistic dispositions notwithstanding. I’ll return to the question of Jasim Uddin’s anticolonial modernity later. Let me now make some quick observations about a few aspects of his life and work that I find significant for a partly introductory piece like this one.

Poet in the first place—but also lyricist, composer, dramatist, novelist, short story writer, memoirist, folklorist, teacher, researcher, music critic, and even travel writer—Jasim Uddin was born on January 1, 1903 in a village called Tambulkhana in the district of Faridpur in present-day Bangladesh. His rural upbringing had a lasting influence on the development of his work. By his own admission, his rural life brought him profoundly close to poor peasants, making him live and breathe their own songs and stories that remained in his blood. As a university student, Jasim Uddin worked with his mentor Dinesh Chandra Sen (1886-1939)—the famous educationist, folklorist, and literary historian—under whose guidance he collected folk songs and poems. He ended up collecting more than 10,000 folk songs, some of which are available in his famous compilations called *Jaari Gaan* (1968) and *Murshidi Gaan* (1977). And, of course, what has come to be famously known as the *Purbabanga Geetika*—a collection of folk ballads from Mymensingh, Netrakona, Chattogram, Noakhali, Faridpur, Sylhet, and Tripura—owes much to Jasim Uddin’s compilation. Thus, early on in his life, his intimate and intense immersion in Bangladesh’s folk traditions significantly contributed to the formation of his poetic sensibility.

Jasim Uddin’s phenomenal productivity spanned more than six decades. He started writing poetry at school. While in Class 10, he wrote the proverbial poem “*Kabar*” (Grave). This poem immediately catapulted him into fame, and it was soon included in college textbooks. I think Jasim Uddin is most popularly associated with this singular poetic achievement—a doleful dramatic monologue in which an old man, pointing at his wife’s grave, addresses his little grandson. I recall how my

own grandfather—who was a primary schoolteacher in a village—recited that poem to me when I was 12 or 13. I immediately felt the poem had a gripping voice, a sad tale to tell, and a musical cadence of its own. A story has it that Jasim Uddin’s mentor Dinesh Chandra Sen cried while reading “*Kabar*.” So did I. Jasim Uddin is also popularly

Jasim Uddin (1903-1976)

ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLO CHAKROBORTY



Jasim Uddin’s rural upbringing had a lasting influence on the development of his work. By his own admission, his rural life brought him profoundly close to poor peasants, making him live and breathe their own songs and stories that remained in his blood.

embracing such genres as *aul*, *baul*, *sari*, *jari*, *marajati*, *murshidi*, among others. He exemplarily energised and intensified the *bhatiyali* tradition, in particular. Indeed, Jasim Uddin’s own musical works—extraordinarily rich and revealing as they are—call for an extended discussion. But, for now, suffice it to say that the musical and the poetic remain

it was Jasim Uddin who both excelled and revelled in reinventing and reusing the *payar* cadences and couplets that even remained a universal constant in his poetic work.

Dinesh Chandra Sen ardently asserted that no modern poet in his time could simply match up to such an intimate knowledge of rural life as Jasim Uddin had. And his English translators Barbara Painter and Yann Love rightly pointed out, “The heroes of his poems are farmers, fishermen, boatmen, weavers, cowherds, even roadside barbers, wandering gypsies, palmists, and astrologers.” But one should also underline Jasim Uddin’s passionate concerns with poor, rural women. Many of his titles themselves clearly ascribe centrality to women, as a number of his works—his major ballads included—significantly foreground their suffering and marginalisation, and struggles at more levels than one, although one also notices his limitations in terms of questioning and unsettling male domination in the final instance.

In closing, let me say a few words on his two masterpieces, his two groundbreaking ballads, mentioned earlier—*Nakshi Kanthar Math* and *Sojan Badiyar Ghat*. Both—unforgettable stories of love as they are—are also remarkable for capturing conflicts, tensions, struggles, rhythms of living, human and even vegetal subjectivities, and life worlds that characterise the totality of rural life. This is more than radical pastoralism for Jasim Uddin. His choices of sites, subjects, scenes, and even signs in his richly structured and textured ballads—and his sensuous rootedness in rural Bengal—are all significantly political and anticolonial, marking his brand of modernity in oppositional terms, at a time when many of his contemporaries remained high on Western aesthetics and poetics.

As for *Sojan Badiyar Ghat* in particular—a poem that fiercely dramatises the “dangerous,” suicide-inviting romantic relationship between a Muslim man named Sojan and a Namasudra woman named Dulali—Jasim Uddin’s own modern sensibility offers an explosive tale of love on the one hand, and on the other, a tempestuous site of the interplays between communalism, colonialism, and casteism, all of which Jasim Uddin contests as an artist. Owing to space constraints, I cannot go into further details here, but I think rereading Jasim Uddin’s work at this conjuncture will not only enable us to re-examine the relationship between the politics of art and the choice of our subjects and sites, but will also make us see why he continues to remain relevant as a truly great poet.

associated with his two masterpieces—his two trailblazing ballads—named *Nakshi Kanthar Math* (The Field of the Embroidered Quilt), published in 1929, and *Sojan Badiyar Ghat* (The Place of Sojan, the Gypsy) that appeared in 1933. These two works distinctly diverged from the very lyrical tradition dominated by Rabindranath Tagore himself (1861-1941). And Jasim Uddin’s ballads seemed to hark back to the mediaeval tradition of verse narratives represented by such figures as Chandidas (1370-1430), Krittibas Ojha (1381-1461), Maladhar Basu (c. 15th century), and even Kashiram Das (16th century), although he by no means returned to mediaeval theocentrism as such. In fact, poor peasants characteristically remain at the heart of his creative enterprises. And, of course, his ballads have their own lyricism and musicality; while Jasim Uddin did not abandon the lyrical tradition altogether, he later decisively returned to it.

Jasim Uddin’s first collection of poems called *Rakhali* appeared in 1927 (which included the poem “*Kabar*”). Some of his poetic works include *Baluchor* (1930), *Dhankhet* (1933), *Hashu* (1938), *Matir Kanna* (1951), *Beder Meye* (1951), *Sakina* (1959), *Ma je Jononi Kande* (1963), *Holud Barani* (1966), and *Padma Nadir Deshe* (1969). And some of his dramatic works include *Padmapar* (1960), *Beder Meye* (1951), *Modhumala* (1951), and *Gramer Maya* (1952). He also wrote a novel called *Boba Kahini* (1964)—a work in which he remarkably depicted the struggles of two generations of poor peasants against the colonial-feudal order of things represented and reinforced by the Permanent Settlement of Bengal. Jasim Uddin wrote several memoirs, among which particularly significant is *Jibankatha* (1964). He also wrote a number of travelogues, among which his *Je Deshe Manush Boro* (1968) at least implicitly reveals his otherwise lifelong predilection for socialism.

And Jasim Uddin—who remained organically connected to the tradition of what is called “*kabi gaan*” since his childhood—composed numerous songs,

profoundly indivisible in Jasim Uddin’s work, while this almost Nazrul-like quality constitutes one of the forces of Jasim Uddin’s own “modern” sensibility that remains opposed to the derivative modernist aesthetics of the 1930s and colonialism’s divisive literary and cultural logic.

Now, overall, Jasim Uddin’s work—in which the narrative, the dramatic, and the lyrical variously intersect and interpenetrate—abundantly reveals his concerns with the common, the ordinary, the insignificant, the neglected, the marginalised, and even the invisible. His avowedly anti-canonical—and anti-colonial—position prompted him to say that he learnt mostly from his “first teachers,” who are his country’s “uneducated and half-educated poets”—Jadab, Prikshit, Ismail, Hari Patani, and Hari Acharya. Respectful as he was of Madhusudan Dutta, Rabindranath Tagore and Nazrul Islam, he made it a point that he would never imitate any one of them. And in the era of the free verse movement,

Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Dhaka PWD Division-IV, 15 Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka
Phone No: (02)-223388778 Fax-(02)- 223388778.

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

E-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/>) for the procurement of the following works:

Name Of Work	Construction of 9-Storeyed office Building with 2 Basement and 10-Storeyed Residential Building of the Department of Public Library, Dhaka including Civil, Internal Sanitary and Internal Electrification Works during the year 2021-2022.
Procuring Entity Name & Address	Md. Mahabubur Rahman, Executive Engineer, Dhaka PWD Division-4, Dhaka.
Tender Id	672689
Tender Package No	157/Dpp/D-IV/V of 2021-22
Last Selling Date & Time	17 April 2022, 15:00 Pm
Last Closing & Opening Date	18 April 2022, 15:00 Pm
Tender Proposal Security Amount	65000000
Security last Submission date & Time	18 April 2022, 14:00 Pm
Eligibility of Tenderer	1. The minimum number of years of General Experience of the tenderer in the construction works as Prime Contractor or Sub-contractor or Management Contractor Shall be 10 (Ten) years. 2. Having experience as a prime Contractor or Subcontractor or Management Contractor in Successful completion of 01(one) number of 8 storied RCC Building with 2 basement including civil, sanitary, and internal electrification works in a single contract amounting to Tk.170.00 (one Hundred Seventy) Crore in Govt. Semi-Govt. and Autonomous Organization of Bangladesh during last 5 (five) Years. 3. The tenderers shall have a minimum average annual construction turnover during last 5 (five) financial years of Tk. 150.00 (One Hundred Fifty) crore. Payment certificates for contracts in progress or completed under public sector must be submitted along with tender in support of average annual construction turnover. 4. The minimum amount of liquid asset or working capital or credit facilities as PW3-7 format of the tenderer shall be Tk.50.00 (Fifty) crore. Document submitted along with the tender must be issued in between tender publication and submission date 5. The minimum tender capacity shall be Tk. 225.00 (Two hundred Twenty five) crore. In case of JV, tender capacity required for leading and other partner shall be as described in Tender Data Sheet (TDS). To calculate minimum tender capacity the tenderer must be submitted list of contract agreement, up to date payment certificate for on-going and completed contract under any public sector for the year in which maximum value of works performed within 5 years. In case of JV, Agreement between leading and other partner shall be required. 6. The Tenderer must possess up-to-date trade license, ABC License, VAT Registration, Tax certificate & 3(three) sets of steel shutter.

This is an online Tender, where e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit Tender registration in the e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/>) is required. This notice is also available in www.pwd.gov.bd.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP system Portal have to be deposited online through any e-GP registered bank's branches up to date & time mentioned in respective Tender. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

[Signature]
Md. Mahabubur Rahman
Executive Engineer
Dhaka PWD Division-IV, Dhaka

GD- 495

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

29 Outback runner
1 City on the Tiber
5 Hightails it
9 Like argon
11 Blow one's top
13 Caesar's land
14 Game host
15 List-shortening abbr.
16 Swamps
18 Turns
20 Drama division
21 Past plump
22 Pale
23 Enjoy some turkey
24 Director Lee
25 Mined fuel
27 Churlish fellows

DOWN

1 Ceremonies
2 Boxing combo
3 French thanks
4 Go astray
5 Lewd looks
6 Prepares for war
7 Spanish thanks
8 Oration
10 Least spirited
12 Snappish
17 Pub offering
19 Schnitzel meat
22 Shortly, in poems
24 Big arteries
25 Scots and Irish support
26 Sioux people
27 Tour carrier
28 Printer's goof
30 Rocker Bob
31 Foils' cousins
33 Cuzco native
37 "Fifth Beatle" Sutcliffe

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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

REVISITING THE INHERITANCES OF BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR

Between fiction and testimony

Once stories of sacrifices made and pain incurred for the country have been told, extolled and retold in lore about the liberation war, once the betrayal by compatriots have been mourned, what remains is examining the complex legacies of the war.

CHAITY DAS

Literature in Bangladesh about the war is in the nature of memorials to 1971, a thread between the dead and the living, a reminder of the absent as having once been, a mark of the present, of rupture and continuity. Memoirs and fiction pave the way for a narration of betrayal, resistance, sacrifice and disillusionment. What lessons nations draw from violence and war.

My heart was stuck in my throat. I asked her:

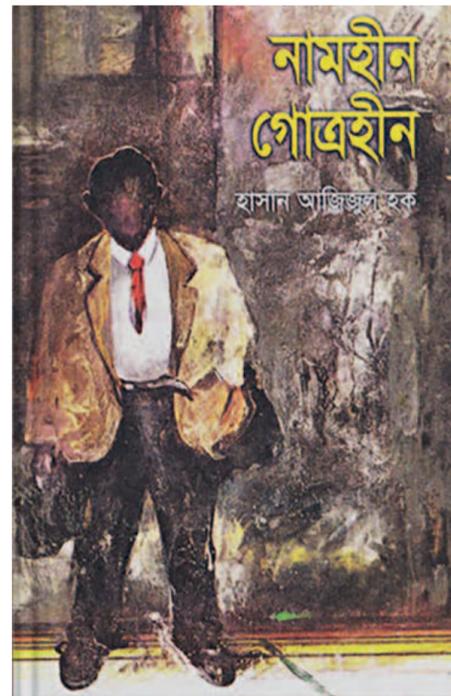
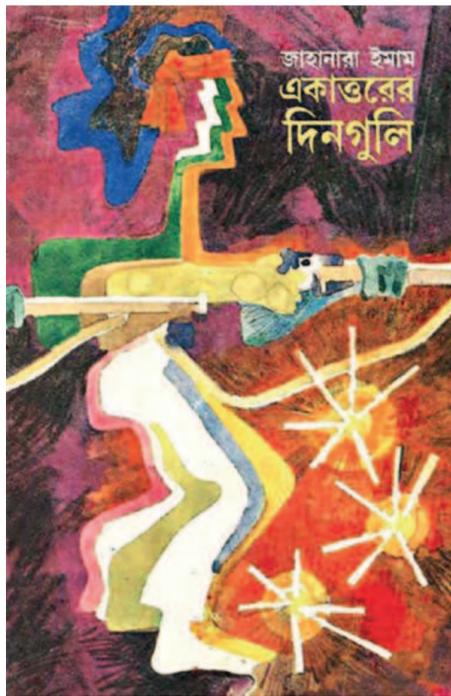
—They allowed you to meet him.

—No, sister. Just once. They used to bring him to Ramana police station. A man I know bribed the soldier and somehow managed to let me in. I spoke to him surreptitiously through the window.

—What did you say to each other? How is he?

—Oh Sister! They have beaten him mercilessly. I asked him, "Son, you haven't revealed anyone's name, have you?" He said, "No ma, I haven't. But Ma, if they keep hitting me? I am afraid I might". I told him: "Son, if they keep hurting you, harden yourself and try to bear it"

Jahanara Imam in her *Ekattorer Dinguli* reports this conversation between herself and Safia Begum, Azad's mother, the same woman Anisul Hoque pays tribute to in his iconic, moving docu-fiction *Maa*. The spirit of Shahbag protests had appeared long before in war writing. The sons of both women



their way into war writing. Selina Hossain's novel *Hangor Nodi Grenade* has a free-spirited woman Buri at the centre of her novel. The war brings her an opportunity to transcend the narrow confines of her life. In seeking empowerment, vicariously, she turns her autistic son over to the Army in order to save her stepsons who have joined the Mukti Bahini. In an interview with the writer in 2010 she spoke of how she attempted to question the stereotype of women as victims in 1971 through this novel.

Fiction in English from Bangladesh in the past couple of decades has emerged, revisiting the war through the lens of the present. Clearly visible are also the strings that bind them thematically to the early writers of fiction on the war. Tahmima Anam's *A Golden Age* presents a cosmopolitan Urdu-speaking Rehana Haque who fights tooth and nail to keep her children alive during the war. Her son Sohail (a lover of Tagore and Neruda) becomes a guerrilla. Returning from the war in the sequel *A Good Muslim* he kills a "nothing man". In a reminder of Septimus Warren Smith in Woolf's *Ms Dalloway*, he encounters another young man traumatised by the violence he had witnessed and committed during the war. To avoid annihilation of his self he turns to the Koran and alienates his sister Maya who believes that it is religion that had divided the country and is committed to the war crimes trials. In the microcosmic family space, a struggle between a fundamentalist faith and unbending secularism plays out in a tender evocation of the failure of empathy between estranged siblings, as the mother watches silently, urging empathy and forgiveness. Masud, in Adib Khan's *Spiral Road*, is a freedom fighter who leaves for Australia, deeply disillusioned after independence. He returns to find young men like his nephew leaning towards religious extremism. The return is never to the same country. *Babu Bangladesh* by the late Numair Atif Choudhury, a polyphonic eruption of voices, travels with Babu, from his childhood in Tangail. When his playmate and caregiver, the Hindu Kanu is hacked to pieces after the war, he turns to books and a world of imagination, a reverse of Sohail's move away from them. In a powerful evocation of ecological costs of war, he describes how the West Pakistani soldiers hacked away at the tree at the University of Dhaka that stood for the undying spirit of freedom. The hacking of the tree and the hacking of Kanu remind one of spectacular violence. To witness such failure of all connotations of 'human' or 'humane' is perhaps what turns Babu into an apparition of sorts.

Slowly and surely, a body of literature that deals directly or implicitly with the consequences of 1971 and how the nation's future was

foot after the military crackdown as we encounter incredible human misery in the images the writer records:

In the crowd I saw a girl – her image is still clear in my mind. Wearing a cheap blue saree the young maiden walked with slow steps. Her co-travellers would soon leave her behind; a new group would catch up with her and move ahead as well. Under her *achol* was an infant – wonder if it had been born on the way! Her neck was tilted to the right. No tears in her eyes, no words. She was moving unhurriedly in search of safety – whatever she else may lack in the world, she did not lack time.

Combatant memoirs take us to the center of the theatre of war where guerrillas brave inclement weather and terrain and strategize to inflict maximum harm on the enemy. In images of shared cigarettes, communal cooking, anecdotes of clashes with the enemy, the banter and bonhomie among the men we are made privy to the world of conflict and its memories. Mabbub Alam's *Guerrilla Theke Shommuakh Juddhe* communicates the alchemy of a glorious cause that alleviates physical pain. The desire for homecoming is ubiquitous, whether one recalls the idealism or the horrors. In a letter written by a rebel Firdaus to his mother on the September 3, 1971 published in *Ekattorer Chithi*, we encounter the dark underside of the violence that war sanctions:

Mother, if you see me now, you won't recognize me. Though I do not know what I look like exactly for there is no mirror here. Mihir says I look like a savage. Mihir is right. I can feel a savagery inside me these days. I am no longer who I was. Do you remember mother that I used to turn my gaze away when a chicken was to be slaughtered? That same Mihir now swims in rivers of blood. (57)

Amin, the protagonist in Muhammad Zafar Iqbal's *Akash Bariye Dao* is a guerrilla who has returned from the war. He cannot forget the blood, raw wounds, thirst and fever of the days of torture by the army. Thrown into the river and mistaken to be dead, he escapes. That was 1971. He returns to find most of his childhood playmates killed. Thereafter, having joined the university in Dhaka he encounters students who are now, so to speak, part-time criminals. He witnesses their transgressions which range from extortion, hold-ups, abducting women, gambling and occasionally murder. Terrified when his MIT-bound friend is killed by an irate mob as he attempts a 'hijack' to fund his trip to America, Amin embarks on a journey of discovery across the country. The poignancy of the beauty of Bangladesh's landscape set against pettiness of human acts does not escape the reader. Iqbal presents us with the possibility of a spiritual regeneration but the deeply traumatized war hero commits suicide on his return.

To be able to find the right vocabulary to represent an experience without precedent is a struggle that writers are alive to. Anwar Pasha's novel *Rifle Roti Aurat* pushes the margins of fiction and testimony as its protagonist provides an eyewitness's account of the violence in Dhaka since the genocidal military crackdown. On the night of December 14 when defeat seemed inevitable, Pasha was killed along with other intellectuals but not before he wrote what appears to be the last lines of the novel

The old life came to an end on the night of the 25th. Ah – let that be true. New men, new friends and a new dawn. How far were they? Couldn't be very far. There was nothing to fear. It was a matter of this one night. It will be over. (216).

Nights lengthened further in post war Bangladesh. As it is with the energy that drives utopias, there was gradual realization that the darkness was far from over. As Jatin Sarkar put it in his *Pakistaner Jonmomorityu Dorshon*, the ghosts and specters of Pakistan had reappeared with the rise of military dictatorship.

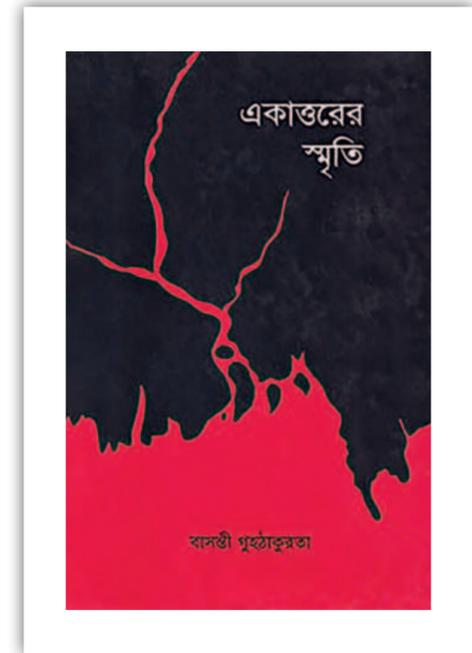
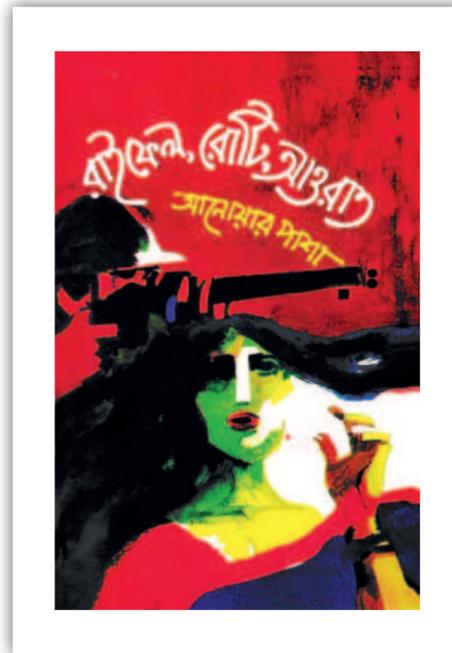
Utopias are treacherous. They also possess stardust. They offer us hope and like Rupnagar in Intizar Husain's *Basti* etch a world culled out from shards and fragments. In the debris of the utopias writers search for remnants of dreams and painstakingly rebuild stories. In "Milir Haathe Stengun" by Akhtaruzzaman Elias, Abbas Pagla informs Mili, his neighbour, that the bastards have taken over the moon; not content with colonizing the earth they have spread their tentacles and all he needs is a gun to save the world. With an almost prophetic voice, the writer presents the war's moral burden and the injury to nature that it inflicts.

Why should a river have a name? Now that the fuckers have reached, the bastards will name it. They will give it a name, mark it, make accounts, seize and document it, get a mutation done – the bastards think it's their property that it belongs to their bloody fathers and grandfathers – don't you see they

Abbas. Abbas, a schoolteacher who has returned from the war reminds one of Toba Tek Singh in Manto's story, mirroring the chaos of the nation by his very existence. Elias' narratives inhabit half-lights and liminal spaces. In "Khowari" he highlights the marginalisation of the Hindu Samarjit who cannot forget how he had carried his grandmother as a refugee across the border, running for cover from bullets. Both he and Iftekhar, a "Bihari", after the war become hangers-on, grateful to their 'native' friends and acquaintances for small favours and even basic safety.

Such love that holds up a mirror is difficult and yet many writers from the country continue to discharge this debt. As is to be expected, once stories of sacrifices made and pain incurred for the country have been told, extolled and retold in lore about the liberation war, once the betrayal by compatriots have been mourned, what remains is examining the complex legacies of the war. Hasan Azizul Haq's "Namheen Gotraheen" presents us with its conception of such a task. An unnamed man returns to his desolate town as the war rages. He finds his home empty and starts digging through a mound in the garden by moonlight. Skulls and bones are thrown up as he utters cries of recognition. This act overwhelms its immediate context to become a metaphor for the ethical task that confronted those left behind.

The testimony of Firdausi Priyobhashini and other women in *Narir Ekattor*, a narrative which leads



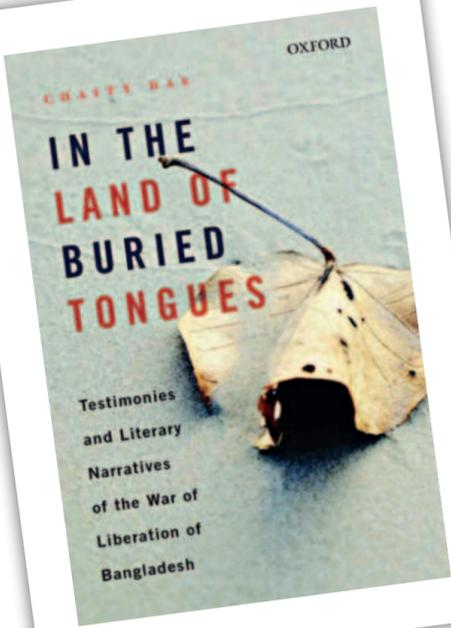
have taken their position on both sides of the river? Those dung heaps have soiled the water – air – earth – fire – rocks here; now they have carried their filth to the moon. (52)

Rana, Mili's brother, has now found respect at home after the war because he is now the breadwinner. The home grows visibly prosperous as he returns from nightly jaunts in the company of his friends... with fresh spoils. In a Bangladesh where post war lawlessness was fast becoming a norm, where the Rokkhi Bahini wielded coercive power while the Army grew restless, Mili finds a kindred soul in

us into the many alleys and nooks of what women experienced during the war or Shaheen Akhtar's fictional *Talaash*, represent memories of sexual violation. Like Priyobhashini, Mary and Tuki in *Talaash* look upon themselves as having given their body to liberate their country. While they receive rhetorical ennoblement as war-heroines they only experience acknowledgement of their wounds ever so briefly. Abandonment and oblivion are more norm than exception. However, their endeavour to rebuild the normal in spite of social strictures, their loneliness, all make

shaped, grows. While the references to 1947 are few and far between, we might soon encounter a work that reaches beyond 1971 to re-examine both partitions in a continuum. If one is to take the man digging away in "Namheen Gotraheen" as a symbol, we may venture to say that the day is perhaps imminent.

Chaity Das teaches English at Kalindi College, University of Delhi and is the author of *In the Land of Buried Tongues: Testimonies and Literary Narratives of the War of Liberation of Bangladesh* (OUP)



Salahuddin questions drafting Mithun, Raja

SPORTS REPORTER

Prime Bank coach Mohammad Salahuddin questioned the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolis (CCDM) and cricket organisers' motives behind taking two of Prime Bank's key players in Mohammad Mithun and Rezaur Rahman Raja to South Africa with the national team despite neither being part of the ODI or Test squad.

Salahuddin said that teams had been formed with the national team's assignments in mind, but the latest scenario had proven difficult for Prime Bank.

"Mithun and Raja aren't with the ODI squad or the Test squad. We already don't have six players. If two more leave, then it's very difficult to set up the side. If these two were playing, it would have been alright but they are not in the squads and they will only train there. Other teams have cricketers too but not one was taken. It's only Prime Bank's players who had to leave and that doesn't seem right to me," Salahuddin told the media yesterday.

Prime Bank, who finished second in the DPL last year, will miss the services of key players such as Tamim Iqbal, Mustafizur Rahman and Shoriful Islam, who will feature for the Tigers in South Africa, for a major part of the tournament.

Salahuddin asked why Abahani's Mohammad Naim, who had played a Test in New Zealand this year, was not taken despite being available. "Mithun was not part of the national set-up for 6-7 months but he had to leave suddenly. Naim was available. He could have been taken."

The DPL will return this year tomorrow as a 50-over competition after it was held in the T20 format last year due to time constraints resulting from the pandemic. But for the first time since being given List A status, it will be an 11-team tournament.



HIGHLIGHTS

Cristiano Ronaldo etched his name in the record books as professional football's all-time leading scorer with 807 goals.

The all-time top goalscorer title in football is much contested and FIFA does not keep an official record, but the world governing body estimates that Austro-Czech Josef Bican netted 805 goals during a career that lasted from 1931 to '55.

The Czech FA has said that Bican's total was actually 821 goals following a review of his statistics. Brazilian strikers Pele and Romario each scored more than 1,000 goals during their careers, but those statistics include strikes in amateur, unofficial and friendly matches.

It was the 59th treble of Ronaldo's career and his first for the Old Trafford side since 2008 following his return.

PHOTO: REUTERS

'He showed why he is Cristiano Ronaldo'

AGENCIES

There was an extra fire in Cristiano Ronaldo's performance on Saturday and Manchester United's World Cup winning French midfielder Paul Pogba addressed the issue head on.

"He has never been a problem. You have the best striker in history in our team, it cannot be a problem. Today he showed why he is Cristiano Ronaldo. The performance from him and all the team was very brilliant," he said.

"Everybody knows Cristiano - there's no need to talk about him. That's what he does. He didn't play in the last game, but he comes back and scores three goals. Everybody's happy."

Ralf Rangnick admitted managing Ronaldo is "challenging" after the 37-year-old rolled back the years with a hat-trick to beat Tottenham 3-2 and keep Manchester United's chances of playing in the Champions League next season alive.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner had scored just once in his previous 10 games, but three fantastic finishes took



As the NFL's greatest Tom Brady walked onto the Old Trafford field to greet Cristiano Ronaldo after the Manchester United striker's hat-trick in Saturday's 3-2 Premier League win over Tottenham Hotspur, there was a knowing smile on his face. What would surely have most impressed the record seven-time Super Bowl winner, who retired last month aged 44, was not the stunning 25 metre opener nor the well-placed header to win the match nine minutes from time but the look of determination, bordering on anger, that the 37-year-old Ronaldo had throughout the game.

him clear as the highest scorer in professional men's football history according to FIFA's records with 807 goals for club and country.

Ronaldo's second spell at Old Trafford has so far proven to be an anti-climax with his poor form sparking debate over whether his powers are waning.

He missed United's thrashing in the Manchester derby last weekend and was criticised for a perceived lack of commitment as he jetted off to Portugal to rehab a

hip injury rather than watch his teammates lose 4-1 at the Etihad after reports he would have been dropped by Rangnick even if fit.

The Portuguese has scored 18 goals so far this season, after returning to United from Italian club Juventus, but there has been continuous chatter from pundits that he is a 'problem' for the club and more recently suggestions that all is not well in his rapport with interim manager Ralf Rangnick.

"It is challenging with

players like him but he showed today he still has the quality to play for Manchester United," said Rangnick. "He's part of the team and if we want to be successful we have to do it together."

"Today it was his best performance, at least since I arrived. Not only because he scored three goals, but he was also energetically good today and part of the whole team when we had to defend. A top performance by him, but also the rest of the team."

"Tremendously happy with my first hat-trick since I came back to Old Trafford!" Ronaldo wrote on Instagram. "Nothing beats the feeling of being back on the pitch and helping the team with goals and effort."

Tottenham's Italian manager Antonio Conte had no doubt about the impact of the five-times Ballon d'Or winner on the game.

"Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi are the two best players in the world in this era. When you play against this type of player, they're decisive. Without Cristiano Ronaldo, for United it wouldn't have been a good night," he said.

PSG extend lead but fans voice discontent

AGENCIES

Paris St Germain extended their Ligue 1 lead to 15 points when they beat bottom side Girondins de Bordeaux 3-0 at home on Sunday, but their latest Champions League failure still loomed large at the Parc des Princes.

Kylian Mbappe, Neymar and Leandro Paredes found the back of the net to put PSG on 65 points from 28 games, four days after being knocked out of Europe's premier club competition by Real Madrid at the last-16 stage.

The PSG players were met by a cold reception from the crowd, with Neymar heavily booed as he took a free kick after the ultra fans had called for club president Nasser Al Khelaifi and sporting director Leonardo to resign.

Lionel Messi and Neymar received the loudest abuse as fans whistled as their players were introduced before the game.

As the announcer read out the team sheet before kick-off supporters at Parc des Princes made clear their feelings

about the club's latest Champions League disappointment. All but one name was greeted with whistles. The exception was Kylian Mbappe. The volume rose for the names of Neymar and Messi. Coach Mauricio Pochettino's name as also whistled.

For the fourth time in six seasons PSG crashed out in the last 16, self-destructing against Real Madrid on Wednesday.



AGENCIES

India pacer Jasprit Bumrah took five wickets to bowl out Sri Lanka for 109 on Day-2 of the pink ball Test yesterday.

It was Sri Lanka's second-lowest Test total against India as Bumrah's fiery spells gave him his eighth five-wicket haul in 29 Tests and his first on home soil on a pitch that heavily favoured the spinners on day one.

Meanwhile, former India captain Kapil Dev had also registered his 8th five-wicket haul in his 29th Test match. With this achievement, Bumrah is now the fourth Indian bowler to claim a five-for in Day-Night Tests following Axar Patel, Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav.

Bumrah claimed five wickets for 24 runs; the third-best bowling figures by a seamer after James Anderson's 5 for 16 in Leeds (2016) and Pat Cummins' 6 for 23 in Brisbane (2019).

After Bumrah's remarkable bowling, a record-breaking half century from Rishabh Pant helped India build a commanding lead of 342 runs as the hosts finished the second session at 199-5.

Pant took the game away from the Lankans by going after the bowling as soon as he walked to the crease and the wicketkeeper quickly brought up his fifty with seven fours and two sixes.

Made from 28 balls, his half century was the fastest by an Indian batsman, breaking the record set by Kapil Dev 40 years ago.

'A lot will depend on the pacers'

SPORTS REPORTER

Against the backdrop of a historic Test win at Mount Maunganui against New Zealand earlier this year, there was a sense of growing self-belief among the Tigers as they traveled to South Africa for a three-match ODI and two-match Test series.

Like their record in New Zealand until that Test victory, Bangladesh have never won a game in any format in South Africa over the years. But ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal stated before boarding the flight that the win in New Zealand could prove to be the tonic.

However, South Africa's conditions are among the toughest for Bangladesh. The Tigers have played six Tests, nine ODIs, and four T20Is, losing them all.

Experienced pacer Rubel Hossain, who was part of the last tour to South Africa in 2017, informed that pacers would have to play a major role if Bangladesh want to flip the script.

"Conditions and pitches in South Africa are challenging. Nowadays we don't get to see a lot of bouncy tracks. Instead, we see sporting

tracks that help both batters and bowlers. If I talk about white-ball cricket, a majority of bowlers tend to bowl fuller. But it will be important to read the pitch and bowl accordingly. Accuracy will be key for our bowlers and it will be important not to give any room," Rubel told The Daily Star.



The 32-year-old, who has 129 wickets in 104 ODIs, also prescribed the pacers to bank on their strengths and bring in variety.

"Every bowler is different and each has their strengths. If I talk about Taskin Ahmed, his strength is pace. So he needs to bank on that and try to exploit the conditions. On the other hand, Shoriful Islam has got some variations up his sleeve, which is very important in ODIs. Mustafizur

Rahman needs to adjust when he plays abroad and I think he needs to be more accurate and look to utilise his cutters accordingly," he said.

Rubel, who last played a Test against Pakistan in 2020, shared his experiences with other pacers like Abu Jayed and Khaled Ahmed on how to approach the longest format in South African conditions.

"A lot will depend on the pacers if we want something positive in South Africa, similar to New Zealand. However, our pacers do not have a good record abroad. If the bowlers only want to bowl fast, I'm afraid it won't work. It is important to bowl fuller in Test cricket and to get swing and seam movement from the surface. If you only bowl fast, it won't give you wickets consistently. I spoke with Jayed and Khaled before they left for South Africa and tried to share my experience.

"Ebadot can be a good example. He was a little wayward before but recently has become consistent with his line and length. He bowls a lot fuller now. You can see the results for yourself. He picked up a fiver in New Zealand and I think our pacers need to be consistent to get a favourable result," Rubel concluded.



(From R to L) Prime Bank Cricket Club players Mahedi Hasan, Alok Kapali and Rubel Hossain wear a smile during a practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday ahead of the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League, which starts tomorrow.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

CAP 10 OF THE STEEL INDUSTRY

BSRM WINS THE BEST BRAND AWARD FOR THE 10TH TIME IN A ROW

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT

BSRM building a safer nation

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

RECORD HOLDER

SHAH CEMENT

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS RECOGNIZES

World's Largest VRM



Tobacco leaves being dried in the sun on the ground of Durgapur Government Primary School in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila, putting the health of the students, the teachers as well the tobacco workers, who hardly use any protections, under risk. Children can no longer play on the field, and the strong smell from the leaves has spread. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

School ground turns tobacco drying field

S DILIP ROY

More than 500 students and teachers of two government schools have been suffering immensely as local farmers dry and process tobacco leaves on their campus premises in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila.

The educational institutions are Durgapur Government Primary School and Durgapur High School, sharing the same premises.

According to the schools' authorities, farmers forcibly dry and process their tobacco leaves on the playground even after multiple teachers' protests.

The farmers keep the playgrounds occupied from morning to afternoon every day during this season, depriving students of routine sports, they said.

Talking to The Daily Star, the teachers of the schools said this practice imposes students to health hazards.

There are incidents of students falling sick in the classroom because of the stench, said one of the teachers.

According to the students, some of their classmates stopped going to the institutions for the stench.

Sahidul Islam, headmaster of Durgapur High School, said the farmers ignore any protest against them and continue.

"At this point, we are left with no other option but to take help from the law enforcement agencies in this regard," he said.

Razia Parveen, headmaster of Durgapur Government Primary School, echoed Shahidul's statement.

Contacted, Muhammad Habibullah Talukder Ruskin, associate prof and head of cancer epidemiology, National

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22-year drive around the world Argentinian family comes home

AFP, Gauleguaychu

An Argentine family is about to finish the trip of a lifetime: they have covered five continents in a 1928 jalopy on an adventure that began in 2000, while bringing into the world and raising four kids who are now adolescents.

The Zapp family -- Herman and Candelaria and those children -- have driven a total of 362,000 kilometres and have now stopped off in a town on the border with Uruguay before their scheduled arrival Sunday back where they started on January 25, 2000 at the Obelisk, a monument in downtown Buenos Aires.

"I have very mixed feelings. We are ending a dream, or fulfilling a dream," Herman told AFP. "What will come now? Thousands of changes, thousands of options," said the 53-year-old, who is already thinking of sailing around the world.

Candelaria, who was 29 when the trip began and is now 51, said her biggest and best discovery was the people encountered along the way.

She said the family visited no fewer than 102 countries, although sometimes they had to take detours because of wars or other kinds of conflict.

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DIALOGUE ON EC

Political consensus key

Say academics, suggest bringing law enforcers under EC's authority during polls

MOHUDDIN ALAMGIR

Building consensus among political parties, bringing back people's trust in the Election Commission and reforming the electronic voting machine system are among the vital measures needed for free and fair elections, academics said yesterday.

While attending a dialogue with the Election Commission at the EC conference room, invitees also proposed that "law enforcers" be brought under EC authority during elections and that commission officials, instead of deputy commissioners, act as returning officers during national polls.

The EC's initiative to hold dialogues with a cross-section of people seeking recommendations on how best to hold free and fair elections received an underwhelming response on the first day of the talks yesterday, as just 13 out of 30 invitees joined the dialogue.

Chattoogram University Professor Muhammad Yeahia Akhter said Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal has already talked about political consensus, without which it will be tough for EC to perform its duties.

"It was tough for the commission to hold an election when there was no caretaker government ... It has been proved on more than one occasion that transparent election cannot take place under a

political government," he said.

"I have seen that under the political government, the Election Commission cannot work without any unannounced dictation. It cannot work independently," he said.

He said the caretaker government system was abolished unilaterally, although it was introduced with political consensus after recommendations of three alliances of political parties during the movement against dictator HM Ershad.

"In the existing system the PM, ministers will remain in power [during elections] as the PM and ministers and MPs also remain MPs ... it will be tough to hold a fair election [in this manner]," Akhter said.

He proposed that field level election commission officials be made returning officers during the national election.

"Do not use EVMs [electronic voting machines] in any constituencies, as it is a high-tech machine and most voters do not have knowledge about technology," he said. "If needed hold a referendum on whether EVMs will be used or not".

He said if someone has a meal at 8:00am, everyone calls it breakfast, but if someone eats at 1:00pm, none will call it breakfast as it is lunch.

"Ballot boxes can eat at 8:00am, but what we have seen in the last general elections is that ballot boxes took sehri [a pre-dawn meal] during

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FIRING OF ACC OFFICIAL Sharif files writ challenging his dismissal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sharif Uddin, former deputy assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission, filed a writ with the High Court yesterday challenging the dismissal from his job.



He was sacked on February 16 under section 54(2) of Anti-Corruption Commission (Servants) Service Rules-2008.

According to the corresponding section, the ACC can terminate any officer either issuing a 90-day notice or paying 90 days' salary in cash.

In the petition, Sharif said the commission violated his constitutional rights by applying the section. He also urged the HC to reinstate him.

Contacted, his lawyer Mia Mohammad Ishtiaque said they were expecting a hearing of the petition within a day or two.

Meanwhile, the HC yesterday deferred issuing an order till March 15 on another writ that sought a directive to conduct an independent

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Jet fuel price skyrocketing

Hiked for 12th time in 16 months; now Tk 87 a litre

RASHIDUL HASAN

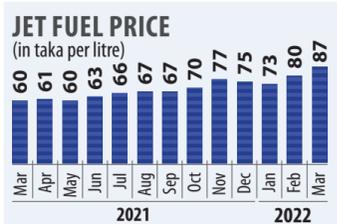
The jet fuel price has gone up for the 12th time in 16 months, in a development that is bound to cause further strain to migrant workers, who are struggling to foot the high airfares, particularly to the Middle Eastern countries.

The price of jet fuel is now Tk 87 per litre after the Padma Oil Company, a subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), raised it by Tk 7 a litre. In December 2020, it was Tk 48 a litre.

The latest round of hike in the price of jet fuel, which accounts for up to 46 percent of the operational costs of an airline, will invariably be passed on to passengers, said leaders of different manpower recruiting platforms.

"The airlines will have an excuse to hike the airfare further," said Tipu Sultan, president of the Recruiting Agency Oikya Parishad.

In January last year, the lowest airfare on the domestic route was Tk 3,200. In



February this year, it rose to Tk 4,000 for the jet fuel price hike last month.

The airfare will increase by at least Tk 300 for the fresh hike, said Mofizur Rahman, secretary-general of the Aviation Operators Association of Bangladesh.

This can put off many from air travel, which will have a serious impact on the airline industry, said Rahman, also the managing director of Novoair.

The jet fuel price in Bangladesh

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Three students enjoy ice lollies from a vendor at a fair in Azimpur Government Officers' Quarters in the capital yesterday. Even though such lollies taste amazing, especially as the mercury rises by the day, they are not always made with utmost attention to hygiene or standards.