



B2 Arms sales amid war

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P5 Bangladesh rail network

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Local industry thrives on rising demand



P3 999 not a joke

Hotline facing barrage of prank calls

Helpline in distress

999 response slow because of outmoded system and manpower crisis

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The speed at which the National Emergency Helpline (999) responds to distress calls is much slower than that of developed countries due to an outdated operating system and manpower shortage.

The average response time of the 999 unit in Bangladesh is about 20 minutes against around seven minutes in countries like the US, the UK, and Japan, said several unit officials.

Because of such delayed response, the callers in distress run the risk of being deprived of emergency services, while many alleged that they had to wait for hours after calling the helpline.

999 is a toll-free hotline number that allows citizens in trouble to call and ask for help from police, fire service or ambulance service providers in case of any crimes, accident or other emergencies.

At present, the emergency helpline unit receives around 30,000 calls a day.

Officials at the unit said the response time would have come down significantly if their demand for providing the unit with automatic caller identification and location system had been met.

They said the Police Headquarters sent a demand note



A great assortment of iftar items on the streets is a tradition of Chawkbazar in Old Dhaka. The photo of iftar delicacies was taken yesterday, the first day of Ramadan. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

NATIONAL EMERGENCY HELPLINE



999 is a toll-free hotline number that allows citizens to call and ask for police, fire and ambulance services for any kind of incidents

The unit now receives around 30,000 calls a day

999 has the capacity to attend 100 phone calls at a time; it should be at least 500 calls

Emergency response time 15-20 minutes in Bangladesh, whereas it is around 7 minutes in the US, the UK, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and China

to the home ministry in this regard in May, 2018, and a decision to provide the unit with the system was made in August, 2019, after a series of meetings involving different ministries and government agencies.

"But it is yet to be implemented," one of the officials told this newspaper.

The system can locate the caller's exact address instantly which is not possible in the existing manual

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3

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Pak PM dodges ouster

Opposition decries 'treason' as no-trust vote blocked; cabinet, parliament dissolved on Imran's order; election in three months; SC to have the final say

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's political turmoil deepened yesterday, when Prime Minister Imran Khan avoided an attempt to oust him and sought fresh elections after dissolving parliament, a move the opposition called treasonous and vowed to fight.

The deputy speaker of parliament, a member of Khan's party, blocked an opposition no-confidence motion that Khan had widely been expected to lose, ruling it was part of a foreign conspiracy and unconstitutional.

That stymied the opposition's attempt to come to power, and set up a potential legal showdown over the Constitution in the country of 220 million people.

Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif called the blocking of the vote "nothing short of high treason" and said on Twitter there would be consequences for "blatant & brazen violation of the Constitution." He added he hoped the Supreme Court would uphold the Constitution.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, head of the opposition Pakistan People's Party, promised a sit-in at parliament and told reporters, "We are also moving to the Supreme Court today."

The Supreme Court's Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial yesterday said evening the court would hear the matter today and that any directions given by the president and prime minister would be subject to the court's orders.

The chief justice said that no unconstitutional step should be taken by any state institution and that no one should try to take advantage of the situation. Justice Bandial also ordered the interior and defence secretaries to brief the court on the law and order situation.

Bandial said the court would review the deputy speaker's actions. The court, however, rejected a request to suspend the deputy speaker's ruling and directed the attorney general to present it today, reported Dawn.



SEE PAGE 2 COL 7

'Which law says women can't wear teep?'

Suborna asks in parliament, condemns harassment of a teacher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suborna Mustafa yesterday expressed resentment in parliament over the harassment of a Tejgaon College teacher, allegedly by a policeman, for wearing a 'teep'.

Speaking on a point of order, the popular actor and a lawmaker from reserved seats questioned which law of the land says a woman cannot wear teep (a decorative mark, mostly in the shape of a dot, worn in the middle of the forehead by many women).

She demanded that the government take immediate action against the accused policeman.

Lata Samaddar, a lecturer of theatre and media studies, yesterday filed a complaint with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station. She wrote that when

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



FARMERS' SUICIDE Tube-well operator held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police yesterday arrested a man for allegedly abetting the suicides of two Santal farmers in Rajshahi's Godagari upazila last month.



Shakhawat

The arrestee is Shakhawat Hossain, deep tube-well operator of Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) at Issoripur village.

The arrestee stands accused in two cases filed with Godagari Police Station for abetting the suicides by not supplying water to farmlands for Boro irrigation.

Kamrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Godagari Police Station, said they arrested Shakhawat around 1:00am in Chabbishnagar area of the upazila.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



With schools and colleges open in Ramadan, the streets in the capital were crowded during peak hours yesterday. The photo of commuters desperately trying to get on a bus was taken at Farmgate in the afternoon.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Cousin admits to raping, killing five-year-old

Body found in a septic tank

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Police recovered the body of a child from a septic tank yesterday, 10 days after she went missing, in Noakhali's Chatkhali upazila.

The body was found based on information give by Shahadat, 22, the five-year-old victim's cousin, who was detained after the filing of a general diary with Chatkhali Police Station, said Gius Uddin, officer-in-charge of the station.

The GD was filed by the child's father on March 25, a day after she went missing.

Shahadat, in police custody, admitted to kidnapping, raping and killing the child, and then throwing her body in a septic tank of his home.

According to the GD, the child went out to play with her friends the day before and had been missing since then.

The body has been sent to Noakhali General Hospital for autopsy.

OC Gius said the accused confessed to holding the victim hostage and raping her several times, which led her to bleed. He then killed the child, wrapped her body in a plastic bag and threw it into a septic tank.

The child's father yesterday filed a case with the station accusing Shahadat of raping and killing his daughter.

City dwellers suffer due to gas supply drop

UNB, Dhaka

Consumers in different areas have been experiencing shortage or low pressure in gas supply following a technical fault in supply process of gas from Bibiyana field in Sylhet.

According to a Chevron statement, the operator of the Bibiyana gas field, two process trains in Bibiyana Gas Plant are down due to maintenance since 1:15am yesterday which has resulted in lower production of gas from the field.

"Our field operations team is working to bring the trains back online. At this moment we are unable to inform about the time required to resume full production from the field," said Chevron Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry in a press release said that different areas of the country may experience low pressure in gas supply due to maintenance works at the Bibiyana gas field.

"Experienced engineers are working to fix the problem. It is expected that the situation will become normal within shortest possible time", said the release of the ministry signed by its public relation officer.

The ministry regrets for the temporary inconveniences of the consumers, it added.

Official sources said that senior officials of the Petrobangla rushed to the Bibiyana gas process area to supervise the repair work of the gas field.

They, however, failed to give any indication as to when the problem might be solved.

Consumers at different areas in the city and elsewhere alleged that they have been experiencing shortage in supply.

"We could not use our gas oven for cooking as there is no gas in pipeline," said a consumer in the city's Bashundhara area.

Similar allegation were received from consumers in Moghbazar, Malibagh, Mirpur and some other areas in the city.



The number of patients at icddr, Dhaka hospital has been several times the number of beds it has amid an outbreak of diarrhoea and cholera in the city. The photo of a crowded ward at the facility was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Ensure people get services

PM urges civil servants

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the public servants to ensure that the general people are not deprived of the services provided by the government.

"You have to make sure that people of Bangladesh are never deprived of getting services. Remember, our independence is meant for changing their fate," she said while addressing the certificate giving ceremony of 121, 122 and 123 batches of the Law and Administration course.

The programme was held at BCS Administration Academy in Shahbagh while the prime minister joined virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

She asked the civil servants that fruits of the independence have to be reached every house of the country and that is the aim of the government.

"Whenever you work you have to always think about the people of the country," she said.

She mentioned that the public servants working in the field should know every detail about the place where they are posted and work.

Hasina stressed effective coordination of development programmes of the government for timely implementation and getting better results.

She also said that if any problem arises regarding any development programme of the government in any area the respective field official has to coordinate that for its successful completion.

She termed the young government officials as the driving force in achieving the lofty goal of making Bangladesh a developed nation by 2041.

"You have to work towards that direction from now on," she said.

In this connection, she asked them to make use of their talents and energy for the welfare of the country.

State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Administration Ministry HN Ashiqur Rahman, Senior secretary KM Ali Azam and BCS Administration Academy Rector Mominur Rashid Amin also spoke at the programme.

Referring to the UN's recognition of Bangladesh as a developing nation the prime minister said this should encourage the officials to redouble their work to build a secular and prosperous country in the spirit of the War of Liberation.

"That is not enough. We have to make the country stronger so not a single person remains hungry and homeless," she said. "That had been the dream of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and we must materialize it."

She asked the officials to always focus on programmes related to public welfare.

The premier listed various steps of the government for making the public servants more competent.

Hasina said Bangabandhu started rehabilitation of landless and homeless people, but it halted after his assassination.

In this connection, she referred to the Ashrayan-2 project which has been implemented since the Awami League assumed power in the second term. During her first tenure in 1996, the government implemented the Ashrayan-1 project.

"There is no moment happier than when we see the smiling faces of homeless people getting homes," she said.

M Navid Rezwanaul Kabir of the 121st batch, M Rahibul Hasan of the 122nd batch and Rezwana Hashim of the 123rd batch expressed their feeling from their respective batches.

A video documentary on BCS Administration Academy was screened at the programme.

On behalf of the PM, the state minister for public administration distributed medals, certificates and crests among the participants and winners.



Which law says

FROM PAGE 1

she was on her way to work around 8:30am, a policeman hurled abuses at her after seeing a teep on her forehead.

The incident took place in front of Shezan Point shopping mall.

When she protested, he threatened her and tried to run her over with his motorbike, she alleged.

The teacher said she came to Farmgate area by rickshaw from her home and was walking towards the college.

In parliament, Suborna said, "It's a very hateful incident, especially for women, irrespective of party affiliations. The incidents of 'bad boys e-teasing school girls' have now been brought under control."

"However, it's a matter of great shame for all of us when a member of a law enforcement agency engages in, what I would have to also call, an act of e-teasing."

She then went on

to say, "In which law of the country and the constitution is it written that a woman cannot wear a teep? It should not matter whether the woman is Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, or even whether she is married or a widow. A woman, a teacher no less, wearing a teep was e-teased - verbally belittled, humiliated - by a police official."

The AL MP also said, "When the woman protested, the policeman verbally abused her, even disrespected her by calling her 'tui' [an informal way of addressing someone]."

She said the prime minister always says the people's rights will be considered over everything else. The father of the nation said people must love one another and he put human rights first.

Suborna demanded that immediate action be taken to prevent the recurrence of such incidents against women.

Tube-well operator

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, BMDA Executive Director Abdur Rashid said the accused was relieved of his duties after the authorities conducted a probe.

On March 23, two Santal farmers - Abhinath Mardi and Robi Mardi of Nimghutu village - drank pesticide standing on their land at Issoripur village to protest Sakhawat's refusal to provide them with

water.

Abhinath died at his home on the following night while Robi breathed his last undergoing treatment at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital on March 25.

Abhinath's wife Rozina Hembrom and Robi's brother Sushil Mardi filed suicide provocation cases against Sakhawat on March 25 and 26.

Helpline in distress

FROM PAGE 1

Now, upon receiving a call, the staffers in the helpline unit ask about the assistance seekers' identity, location and the reasons for calls. They then arrange conference calls with the duty officers at police or fire stations or ambulance service providers whom the assistance seekers have to brief.

After that, the duty officer conveys the message to the police patrol team or fire service or ambulance closest to the caller's location to rush for help.

"The whole process is time-consuming and can be shortened significantly through automatic location identification system," the official said.

For instance, the official said, it took more than five hours to rescue 13 fishermen stranded at sea in December last year.

The engine of their boat broke down in the Bay of Bengal, leaving them stranded. After floating in the sea for five days, one of the fishermen managed to call 999 on December 5 noon from his cell phone that suddenly caught mobile network signal.

The caller, Md Jamal, could not give any location. He could only say that their boat engine went out of order after sailing for 18 hours to the east in the Bay of Bengal from Patharghata.

Following a frantic search up to 12 nautical miles in the Bay from Hatia, a Coast Guard team located the fishermen near Nijhum Dwip around 5:30pm, almost five hours after the call for help.

Officials in the helpline unit said the fishermen in distress could have been rescued much earlier if the automatic caller identification and location system had been in place.

Mohammad Tabarak Ullah, the chief of the unit, said the unit's response time is between 15 and 20 minutes compared to seven minutes in the US, the UK, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and China.

"The response time can be cut down drastically if the emergency helpline unit instantly gets the automatic caller's ID and location," he told The Daily Star.

Tabarak, an additional deputy inspector general of police, said they need

a larger workforce to act swiftly as the number of emergency calls has increased.

The helpline unit started its operation on December 12, 2017, with 30 phone lines and 100 staffers. It got 8,000 to 12,000 calls per day in the first few months.

Currently, it has 392 personnel from police, the Department of Fire Service and Civil Defence and the Directorate General of Health Services to handle around 30,000 calls from all over the country every day.

It has the capacity to attend 100 calls at a time.

"If we are to respond quickly, we need to build the capacity to attend at least 500 calls at a time, taking into consideration the country's population of 17 crore," said an official involved in the emergency service.

The official further said the Police Headquarters that runs the helpline unit sent a proposal to the home ministry in January last year, saying the unit requires a workforce of 1,847 employees for smooth operation.

Besides, unit officials have sought Mobile Data

Terminal (MDT) for all 1,800 patrol vehicles and Thana Dispatch System (TDS) for the 650 police stations across the country.

MDT is a tab-like device used in patrol vehicles to communicate with a central control system.

TDS is an electronic device through which the 999 unit can quickly dispatch to the police station concerned all the information it receives from the callers.

On a pilot basis, 320 police stations in the capital and several other cities have been equipped with TDS while 289 patrol vehicles have been provided with MDT.

Contacted recently, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said the helpline would be provided with the automatic location identification system soon.

On the proposal for providing more manpower and logistic support, he said, "We are scrutinising it."

Healy fires Aus

FROM PAGE 16

India in England.

The peerless Australians have now won three of the last five 50-over World Cups and own both the major global trophies, having claimed the T20 World Cup on home soil in 2020.

"I think we deserved a victory today," said skipper Lanning.

"It hasn't been easy but it is nice to be able to get to the end of this block and say we are the champions."

LPG price goes up Tk 48 per 12kg cylinder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission has increased liquefied petroleum gas price by Tk 4 a kg with effect from yesterday.

People have to pay an additional Tk 48 to buy a 12kg cylinder, the most popular way households get cooking gas. Now the 12kg LPG cylinder price will be Tk 1,439, which was earlier Tk 1,391.

It is the third consecutive hike after the price came down in December January. The price of a 12kg cylinder was Tk 1,178 in January.

The price of LPG for motor vehicles has also increased to Tk 67.02 a litre from Tk 63.07.

BERC Chairman Abdul Jalil said the global price hike of Saudi CP (contract price) due to the Russia-Ukraine war and also the increase in taka-dollar rate are the key reasons for the new price hike.

Now each dollar's exchange rate is Tk 85.25, which was earlier Tk 85.07, he said while announcing the new price.

He said the CP has risen globally to \$953 from \$911.25 per tonne.

"It is hard to predict whether the price will go up or down in the current global situation," he said.

According to industry insiders, the Saudi CP is normally announced at the end of every month to make it effective for the next month, and it takes at least seven-10 days for a shipment of the fuel to arrive in the country.

Most Bangladeshi private companies import bulk LPG from the Middle East based on Saudi CP and market it locally.

Padma bridge to open in June: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Padma bridge will be open to traffic in June this year, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

"The overall progress of the Padma Bridge Project work is 92 percent," he said while speaking at a review meeting on the progress of construction of the project at the Bridges Division.

In addition, the progress of installation work for gas pipeline is 99 percent and 400KVA power lines is 79 percent.

14 out of 15 sugar mills suffer losses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fourteen out of 15 government sugar mills are incurring loss. Only one mill is making profits, Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun told parliament yesterday.

In reply to a query from ruling Awami League lawmaker Ali Azam, he said sugarcane threshing at six out of 14 non-profit sugar mills (Panchagarh, Setabganj, Shayampur, Rangpur, Pana and Kushtia) has remained suspended since 2020-2021 season.

Pak PM dodges ouster

FROM PAGE 1

The opposition blames Khan for failing to revive the economy and crack down on corruption. Khan has said, without showing evidence, that the move to oust him was orchestrated by the United States, a claim Washington denies.

Khan later yesterday said his evidence of the conspiracy was accepted by the National Security Committee.

"When the country's highest national security body confirms this, then the [parliamentary] proceedings were irrelevant, the numbers were irrelevant," Khan said.

US officials yesterday denied any involvement.

"There is no truth to these allegations," a State Department spokesperson told Reuters yesterday, adding "we respect and support Pakistan's constitutional process and the rule of law."

The opposition and analysts say Khan, an international cricket champion turned politician who rose to power in 2018 on the military's support, had fallen out with it, a charge he and the military deny.

"Army has nothing to do with the political process," Major General Babar Iftikhar, the head of the military's public relations wing, said when asked about any involvement in yesterday's events.

No prime minister has finished a full five-year term since Pakistan's independence from Britain in 1947, and generals on several occasions have ruled the country, which is perennially at odds with

fellow nuclear-armed neighbour India.

President Arif Alvi, also of Khan's party, approved the prime minister's request to dissolve parliament and cabinet. Khan will remain prime minister, said Fawad Chaudhry, the former minister of information and law.

Farrukh Habib, another former minister, said fresh elections would be held in 90 days, although that decision rests with the president and the election commission.

Deputy Attorney General Raja Khalid, a top prosecutor, resigned, calling the government's dissolving of parliament unconstitutional. "What has happened can only be expected in the rule of a dictator," he told local media.

The political fight comes as Pakistan faces high inflation, dwindling foreign reserves and widening deficits. The country is in a tough International Monetary Fund bailout programme.

Islamabad also faces international pressure to prod the Taliban in neighbouring Afghanistan to meet human rights commitments while trying to limit instability there.

Khan lost his majority in parliament after allies quit his coalition government and he suffered a spate of defections within his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party.

A prominent newspaper had recently said Khan was "as good as gone", but he had urged his supporters to take to the streets yesterday ahead of the planned vote.



Proudly wearing teep on their foreheads, a group of women form a human chain yesterday, protesting the harassment of a teacher allegedly by a police official on Saturday. This photo was taken in Shahbagh area.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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HARASSMENT OF TEACHER Police yet to identify the 'cop' Outrage all around; arrest of harasser demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police could not yet identify the "cop in uniform" who harassed and hurled abuse at a female teacher of Tejgaon College after seeing a "teep" on her forehead while she was going to the campus on Saturday morning.

Multiple teams of police are working to identify the man, Biplob Kumar Sarkar, deputy commissioner (Tejgaon division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star yesterday. "The woman mentioned six digits of the motorbike. Based on that, we identified two motorbikes in the Dhaka Metro series -- L and H," he said.

One of them said, his motorbike with the "L" series got stolen in 2016 in Gulshan when he went there for visa-related work. He also filed a general diary with Gulshan Police Station.

The "H" series motorcycle is registered to an individual in Mirpur. When police went to the address, they found that he had moved nearly three months ago. The landlord told the police that he was not a cop.

The Tejgaon DC said they are also looking into motorbikes, registered outside of Dhaka.

He said they were collecting CCTV footage of all streets leading away from the place of occurrence. It was seen that the accused went towards Bangla Motor.

In a general diary filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, Lata Samaddar, a lecturer of theatre and media studies at Tejgaon College, said the incident took place in front of Shezan Point shopping mall around 8:30am.

Momen- Blinken talk today

DIPLOMATIC
CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will meet today, marking the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relationship between the two countries.

The meeting, scheduled at Blinken's office in Washington at 1:00pm Washington time (11:00pm Dhaka time), will entail all aspects of bilateral relationship and discuss how the countries will take forward the relationship in the next 50 years.

The historic meeting at the invitation of Blinken comes at a time when the bilateral relations witnessed some strains following the US sanctions on Rab and seven of its current and past officials for human rights violations.

Dhaka was also frustrated when the Biden administration did not invite Bangladesh to the Democracy Summit late last year.

It also comes two weeks after the US-Bangladesh Partnership Dialogue between US Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Victoria Nuland and Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

999 IS NOT A JOKE

National hotline facing barrage of prank and irrelevant calls, creating obstacles to service delivery



SHARIFUL ISLAM

Sitting at his desk with headphones on, helpline (999) operator Anik Sen heard the cry of a baby right after he pressed the receive button to attend a distress call.

"Someone might be in danger," he thought immediately, but his concern faded when he heard a woman on the other side asking the baby to stop crying and talk over the phone.

Flabbergasted, Anik asked the reason for the call. "I made the call to calm my baby down," she replied, rather nonchalantly.

As shocking as this may be, this was no isolated incident, as operators of the hotline face calls like this every day. They termed this one of the biggest impediments to providing support to people in actual distress.

Around 67.44 percent of the calls made

From its inception on Dec 10, 2017 to Jan 31 this year, hotline received over 3.53cr calls

67.44pc calls either blank calls, prank calls, missed calls, test calls or repeat calls

Prank calls create system congestion, deprive those who need service

Job more stressful for female operators

Lack of awareness among people about service's sensitivity



from December 2017 till January this year were either blank calls, prank calls, missed calls, test calls or repeat calls, according to National Helpline Centre sources.

For female operators at the helpline centre, the job is even more stressful. "A few days back, as soon as I received a call, the caller said 'Apu, I want to marry you' and started laughing..." said Tasnia Akhter, a female operator at 999.

Sometimes the callers even hurl abusive words at us, she added.

The two first respondents at the helpline desk -- an integrated service of police, fire and ambulance -- said the high number of such "prank calls" creates unnecessary congestion in the system and ultimately deprives the ones who really need the service.

They said adolescents are the biggest abusers of the service.

"Sometimes, teenagers call and say there

is a fire incident somewhere, which later turns out to be a hoax. To make things worse, sometimes they'll keep calling, seven to eight times within a few minutes, blocking the lines," said Tasnia.

Officials at the centre said they received around 1.64 lakh calls made by adolescents in 2020, which rose to 2.35 lakh last year.

They blamed the lack of awareness among people about the sensitivity of the service.

Many people even call the hotline to complain about the price hike of essentials, for information about Covid-19 vaccines and seeking help for a problem with their mobile phones, said officials at the emergency service centre.

Last year, a law was enacted to take legal action against abusers of this kind through mobile courts, but no one has been punished yet.

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Coming back to life After a 2-year halt, Chawkbazar iftar scene abuzz once again

HELEMUL ALAM

Anik Mridha, a resident of Uttara came to Chawkbazar around 2:00pm yesterday to purchase his favourite iftar item "Boro Baper Polay Khay".

Though he used to come to Chawkbazar every year to purchase Boro Baper Polay Khay since 2012, the last two years have been an exception due to the pandemic.

"This is a very special item which I can't get in other areas. I've come to purchase it here along with my father like I did every year before the pandemic," said Zara, a resident of Malibagh Chowdhurypara, a college student.

The several hundred years old Chawkbazar iftar market, the largest in the capital, not only attracts Dhaka residents but also people from all over the country.

Almost 100 makeshift shops have been set up at Chawkbazar this year which sell items prepared with meat, vegetables, sweets, milk and other ingredients.

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Conduct survey on mosquito density at Dhaka airport: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to conduct a survey on the density of mosquito and larva in the capital's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport area.

The court also ordered the chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) to submit a report on this issue by June 8.

The bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil passed the order during hearing a petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Tanvir Ahmed in March 2019, seeking its directive on the officials concerned to take steps for tackling the mosquito menace in the airport area.

During the hearing, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh lawyer submitted a report on the survey of 2019 to the HC.

Petitioner Tanvir told the court that the CAAB has not conducted any survey on the density of mosquito in the airport area for the last three years.

Following the same petition, the HC on March 12, 2019 issued a rule asking the officials to explain why their inaction to eradicate mosquitoes at the airport and its surrounding area should not be declared illegal.

Secretary to the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation and ward councillors concerned were made respondents to the rule.

Deputy Attorney General Tushar Kanti Roy represented the state during the virtual hearing of the petition yesterday.

Who damaged Novera's sculpture?

Probe report submitted in 2020, but no action taken against those who ruined famous work of art

TARUN SARKAR

More than three years have passed since a prominent sculpture by renowned sculptor Novera Ahmed was damaged inside Bangladesh National Museum. But even though so much time has passed, perpetrators behind the incident are yet to be brought under law.

Protesting the government's inaction, members of a conservation committee tasked with preserving Novera's sculptures have kept their works suspended ever since.

Amid such a situation, voices of Novera's admirers are getting louder, demanding immediate steps from the government to end the deadlock.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Considered one of the first modernist sculptors of the country, Novera Ahmed has 43 of her creations preserved at Bangladesh National Museum. Of them, 41 are quite old.

With an aim to conserve these sculptures, authorities of the museum formed a four-member conservation committee in 2015, with Prof Lala Rukh Selim of Dhaka University's Department of Sculpture at the helm.

The same year, the committee got

going with the project and completed works for 35 sculptures by 2018.

"The remaining six sculptures are quite large in size, with multiple cracks on them that developed over the years," said committee member Nasimul Khabir, assistant professor of the department.

"We thought the cracks might intensify if we conduct the works under the open sky," he said, adding that this is why they were taken to the museum's

conservation laboratory.

"Temperature must be kept at a certain level to work on sculptures like this. But one day in June, 2018, the air conditioner of the laboratory suddenly went out of order," said Nasimul.

"Despite repeated requests, the museum authorities did not repair it, and we refused to work in the absence of air conditioners," he informed.

A few months later, committee members went to the laboratory and found out one particular sculpture -- named Poribar -- was distorted and damaged, as someone or a group conducted unsanctioned conservation work on the important piece.

Previously known as "Cow and Two Figures", the sculpture is a significant creation in the history of the country's modernist sculpting, Nasimul said.

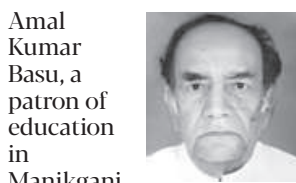
"We don't know who did it. It was done without consent from the conservation committee, and we've decided to suspend our work ever since. We demand punishment of those involved, and we will not resume our work until this is done," said committee head Lala Rukh.

"If the perpetrators are spared, they

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Amal Kumar Basu passes away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj



Amal Kumar Basu, a patron of education in Manikganj, passed away yesterday. He was 83. Amal was former president of Manikganj district unit of Udichi Shilpigosthi, former general secretary of Manikganj Subdivision Sports Association and former founder headmaster of Manikganj Girls High School. He served as the secretary of Kalibari Anandamoyee Kali Mandir in the district town for 24 years. He was the founding president of the subdivision unit of Tamuddan Majlish and the secretary of Manikganj Art Council. He was involved in building numerous educational institutions. Amal was born on February 16, 1939 in a zamindar family at Chandahar village in Singair, Manikganj.



With a pledge to help create a world where all people with autism can reach their full potential, a group of people under the banner of "School for Gifted Children" brought out a rally on Saat Masjid Road in Dhanmondi yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Momen-Blinken talk today

FROM PAGE 3
Momen in Dhaka on March 20. On April 6, Masud Bin Momen will also hold security dialogue in Washington. The two

countries will also hold US-Bangladesh Business Council meeting in Dhaka on May 11 and Defence Dialogue on May 14 in Hawaii.

"We are a democratic country and value human rights. We shared these values with the US. Rab has many achievements in combating crimes,

especially militancy. So, we would request them to withdraw the sanction," Momen told reporters last Friday, a day before he left for Washington.



TODAY MARKS THE 26TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF Late Salahuddin Ahmad
(May 6, 1926-April 4, 1996)

Your memory has not dimmed, your presence felt evermore.....May Allah (SW) grant you Jannatul Ferdous and rest your soul in eternal peace.

We humbly request all our relatives, friends and acquaintances to remember late Salahuddin Ahmad in their prayers.

Wife, children and grandchildren

Who damaged

FROM PAGE 3
may damage more sculptures in this way," she told The Daily Star recently.

To investigate the issue, the museum authorities formed a probe body, headed by the museum's then trustee board president Hasem Khan.

The probe body started investigations in January 2019 and submitted its report in January 2020.

It found the renovation works on the "Poribar" sculpture was done violating guidelines, which

led to inflicting damage to the sculpture, said Prof Nisar Hosain, a member of the probe committee.

The probe committee also recommended taking action against those responsible for the incident, said Nisar, also dean of DU's Faculty of Fine Arts.

However, the report and its recommendations are yet to materialise, as no action has been taken so far, alleged conservation committee member Nasimul.

Meanwhile, talking to The Daily Star, multiple members of Dhaka University Sculpture Alumni Association demanded that the government take immediate action against those involved.

Contacted, museum director General Khondoker Mostafizur Rahman said he doesn't know about the issue very well, as it took place before he joined the post. He also assured to look into the matter immediately.

999 is not a joke

FROM PAGE 3
At the same time, the officials said they were reluctant to take any punitive measures against such callers, fearing it might discourage people from making calls for help.

As an alternative, they sometimes block the numbers of such disruptive callers for a certain period of time.

Contacted, Mohammad Tabarak Ullah, chief of 999-service unit, told The Daily Star, "Such calls obstruct our first

responders from actual emergencies of people."

The 999 is a toll-free hotline number that allows citizens in trouble to call and ask for police assistance. Citizens can avail a number of services through this helpline, including assistance for any type of crime, accident, abduction, fire, and call for ambulances. From its inception on December 10, 2017 till January 31, the National Emergency Service has received over 3.53 crore calls.

Police yet to identify

FROM PAGE 3
"A policeman in uniform was sitting there on a parked motorbike. When I was passing by, he started harassing me, seeing a teep on my forehead and hurling abuse at me. As I protested, he started the bike and tried to run me over. I tried to move away but got injured severely by falling," said Lata, who is the wife of Dhaka University professor Malay Bala.

She also mentioned the bike's number in the complaint.

After the incident, she went to three on-duty traffic policemen who advised her to file the complaint, she added. One of the policemen told reporters that the accused was in police uniform.

OUTRAGE ALL AROUND
Different rights

organisations demanded a proper probe into the incident and sought exemplary punishment of the alleged cop.

In a statement yesterday, Amrai Pari Paribarik Nirjaton Protirodh Jot (WE CAN Alliance to end Domestic Violence) said this incident shows that the member of the force engaged in public security is behaving against the constitution and the spirit of the Liberation War.

Naripokkho demanded immediate arrest and trial of the perpetrator while forming a human chain in front of their office in Dhanmondi.

Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha in a statement said a police officer must ensure that the law and order situation is not harmed and assist the citizen. But he [the accused] clearly violated the constitutional conditions of service of the republic, which is a serious crime in any consideration.

In another statement, Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian Oikya Parishad demanded the arrest of the "responsible cop" within 72 hours. The incident also triggered a huge outcry on social media where people condemned the incident. Many women shared pictures with teep on their foreheads as a form of protest.

Coming back

FROM PAGE 3
Some iftar items can be traced back to the Mughal era.

The most popular item remains "Boro Baper Polay Khay"—a mixture of chickpeas, minced meat, potatoes, brains, chira, egg, chicken, spices and ghee. The item is sold at Tk 600 per kg, although it was sold for Tk 500 last year.

Other famous items include — giant beef, chicken and mutton roasts, keema rolls and paratha, borhani and different types of kebabs like Suti, Jali, Irani and Tika.

Needless to say, the list is endless. Besides, different seasonal fruits are also available at the market.

Md Hossain, has been

selling Boro Baper Polay Khay at the market for the last 45 years. He said he targets selling around 120kg along with some other items like chicken and quail roast on the first day of Ramadan.

However, many said prices of most items have increased by a good range this year.

Md Harunur Rashid, a resident of Chawkbazar, said iftar items at Chawkbazar is a tradition of Dhaka but its quality has fallen in some regards as some newcomers selling iftar are not maintaining quality.

CONFUSION WITH DMP RESTRICTIONS
As there was a restriction from the Dhaka

Metropolitan Police to run the iftar market on the road, traders had to wait till 2:00pm to get a green signal to run the market.

Shafi Mahmud, president of DalBeboshayee Samity, said they have requested the government to allow the traders to run the makeshift shops for a brief time in Ramadan, considering this market has been running traditionally for the last 400 years.

He said, "Police are not allowing us to conduct business here, considering the traffic congestion. But every year 60 to 70 community police personnel usually manage the traffic here. We'll avail of their services from tomorrow."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Principal
Barguna Polytechnic Institute
Barguna

Memo No. BGPI/TENDER-2/2021-22/9123 Date: 30-03-2022

e-Tender Notice: BGPI/2021-22/02

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

| Tender ID No. | Package No. | Description | Online notice publication date | Online tender closing date |
|---------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 679481 | BGPI/e-GP/2021-22/GD-04 | Procurement of Engineering Machinery (Electrical and Electronics Lab) | 03-April-2022 | 18 April-2022 |
| 680243 | BGPI/e-GP/2021-22/GD-07 | Procurement of Raw Materials and Spare Parts | 03-April-2022 | 18 April-2022 |

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for last selling/downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 17-April-2022, 16:00pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd, +8809609112233, +8801762625528).

Md. Dween Islam Khan
Principal-In Charge
Barguna Polytechnic Institute
Barguna
Phone: 044863460

GD-633

Office of the Executive Engineer
Dhaka O&M Division-1, BWDB
WAPDA Building (7th Floor)
Motijheel, Dhaka-1000
Telephone No. 9551371
Email: xen.dhaka1.bwdb@gmail.com
xen.dhaka1@bwdb.gov.bd

বাংলাদেশ পানি উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়
ঢাকা পল্লী বিজ্ঞান-১, বাপাউদো
ওয়াদা ভবন (৭ম তলা),
মতিঝিল, ঢাকা-১০০০
ফোনঃ ৯৫৫১৩৭১ (স্ব)

www.bwdb.gov.bd

তারিখঃ ০৩/০৪/২০২২খ্রিঃ

Invitation for Tender

| Invitation Reference No. | Name of the work |
|----------------------------|---|
| T-1/1674 Dated: 03/04/2022 | Repair & maintenance of C & E-Type Building of DND Colony at Shirmrail, Narayanganj under Dhaka O&M Division-1, BWDB, Dhaka during the FY year 2021-22. |

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (01762625528-31) (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Renendra Sanker Chakraborty
Executive Engineer
Dhaka O&M Division-1
BWDB, Dhaka

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Karnafuli, Chattogram
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.1539.000.99.009.20-151 Date: 03/04/2022

e-Tender Notice No. 04/2021-2022

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System (OTM) Portal (<http://www.procure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following works. Details are given below:

| Sl. No. | Package No. | Tender ID No. | Description of work | Last date & time tender security submission | Tender closing & opening date & time |
|---------|-------------------------|---------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | e-tender EUCP W-185 (a) | 679654 | Construction of Hall Room under Upazila Complex Karnafuli, Chattogram. | 28-04-2022 12.00am | 28-04-2022 13.30pm |

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.procure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for the downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registration bank branches published in e-Tender notice. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). More than 10% above or less submitted tender consider to be rejected.

Md. Golam Mostofa
Upazila Engineer
LGED
Karnafuli, Chattogram
ue.karnafuli@lged.gov.bd

GD-642

জনতা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড গ্রাহক সেবা ও অভিযোগ ব্যবস্থাপনা সেল

সন্মানিত গ্রাহকগণকে উন্নত ও আধুনিক সেবা প্রদানের লক্ষ্যে অভিযোগ গ্রহণ ও নিষ্পত্তি এবং গ্রাহক সেবা সম্পর্কিত তথ্য/সেবা পেতে নিম্নোক্ত নির্বাহীগণের বর্ণিত নম্বরসমূহে ফোন কল ও ইমেইল করতে পারবেন।

| নাম ও পদবী | ফোন নং | ই-মেইল |
|--|--|--|
| মোঃ আলমগীর হোসেন ডিজিএম ভিজিলায়ন্স ডিপার্টমেন্ট | +৮৮০২২২৩৩৮৪২৪৪ +৮৮০১৭১১০০৭৮৫১ +৮৮০১৭৩০৩৩২০২২ | mdsquad@janatabank-bd.com |
| মোঃ আসাদুজ্জামান এজিএম ভিজিলায়ন্স ডিপার্টমেন্ট | +৮৮০২২২৩৩৮৬৯৬ +৮৮০১৭১৩০০০১২৯৫ | mdsquad@janatabank-bd.com |

সাংগঠিক ও সরকারী ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত সকল কর্মদিনে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে যোগাযোগ করা যাবে।

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www.jb.com.bd

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Manager
Government Poultry Breeding and Development Farm, Tangail
Department of Livestock Services (DLS)
Ministry of Fisheries & Livestock
managerpbf@gmail.com

Memo No. 33.01.0000.318.07.007.22.94 Date: 20/12/1428 Bang 03/04/2022 Eng.

Invitation for e-Tender

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no hard copies will be accepted. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

| Sl. No. | Tender/Proposal ID, Reference No. | Name of tender | Last selling date and time | Closing date and time |
|---------|--|---|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Tender ID- 675234 33.01.0000.318.07. 007.22.93 Date: 20/12/1428 Bang 03/04/2022 Eng. | Procurement of Maize, Rice Polish (Auto), Soybean Meal, Protein Concentrate 60% & Limestone under Govt. Poultry Breeding and Development Farm, Tangail. | 24-April-2022 12:00 | 24 April-2022 12:30 |

Dr. Md. Mizanur Rahman
Manager Government Poultry Breeding and Development Farm, Tangail
Phone No. 0921-63404
Mobile: 01717-861344

GD- 641

World Health Organization Bangladesh

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites proposals/bids from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following service:

1. **RFP/BAN/2022/006 (Re-1):** Development of protocols and training manual for post-crash response for the victims of road traffic injury in Bangladesh.

Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 17 April 2022**

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from: <https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice>.

Interested bidders are requested to submit their financial and technical proposals in two separate sealed envelopes as per the instructions provided in the RFP documents at the Reception of WHO Country Office for Bangladesh, House SW 1/A, Road-8, Gulshan-1, Dhaka.



On the first day of Ramadan yesterday, Dhaka's usual gridlock took an even more gruesome face, as commuters rushed to their homes from work to join their families for iftar. This photo was taken in Tejgaon area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Chattogram-Kathmandu flights from April 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Himalaya Airlines, a private air operator of Nepal, is going to operate flights on Chattogram-Kathmandu route from April 7.

Md Moniruzzaman, director of SAir Air BD Ltd, general sales agent of Himalaya Airlines, told The Daily Star that the airlines will initially operate weekly two flights on this route.

This will be first ever direct flight on this route.

At present, the Nepalese airline is operating seven weekly flights on Dhaka-Kathmandu-Dhaka route, the airlines said.

Moniruzzaman said initially they are operating the flight on Chattogram-Kathmandu-Chattogram route considering Bangladeshi migrant workers. "But in the long run, we are targeting to bring Nepalese people to visit Bangladesh, especially Cox's Bazar," he said.

PRAYER TIMING

| APRIL 4 | | | | | |
|-------------|-------|------|---------|------|--|
| Fazr | Zohr | Asr | Maghrib | Esha | |
| AZAN 4:31 | 12:45 | 4:45 | 6:19 | 7:45 | |
| JAMAAT 4:41 | 1:15 | 5:00 | 6:29 | 8:15 | |

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

| RAMADAN | APRIL | SEHRI | IFTAR |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| 2 | 4 | 4:26 | 6:19 |
| 3 | 5 | 4:24 | 6:20 |
| 4 | 6 | 4:24 | 6:20 |

New rail line to link SHARIATPUR

Proposal for feasibility study submitted to BR

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh Railway (BR) is considering linking Shariatpur district headquarters with the railway network to implement the government's plan of taking railway services to all districts.

Chief engineer's office of BR [west zone] has already submitted a proposal for carrying out a feasibility study for constructing a 24-kilometre rail line from Janjira to Shariatpur and a railway junction at Janjira.

A committee led by BR Director General Dharendra Nath Mazumder will hold a meeting on Thursday to examine the proposal, said BR sources. The move comes months before the government plans to open the Padma bridge, which will connect the Mawa and Janjira end of the river.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday reiterated that the long-cherished bridge would be open to the public by June this year.

Currently, BR is implementing a Tk 39,246.79 crore Padma Bridge Rail Link Project to build a 169km rail line from Dhaka to Jashore through the Padma bridge.

There will also be a station at Shariatpur's Janjira point.

While visiting the railways ministry in October 2014, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina instructed the authorities concerned to bring all districts under the railway network.

Currently, 44 districts are under the 3,000km network of BR.

Besides, a lawmaker from Shariatpur in December 2020 sent a semi-official letter to the railways ministry, asking to expand the rail network to Shariatpur district headquarters under the Padma Bridge Rail



AT A GLANCE

- Proposal for feasibility study submitted to BR
- Study to cost around Tk 9cr
- Project evaluation committee

meeting Thursday

- Janjira to become railway junction
- 24km rail line from Janjira to Shariatpur to be built

Link Project, according to sources.

However, BR found that no new work can be incorporated into the rail link project, which is being implemented by China Railway Group Ltd under a commercial contract.

Under the current circumstances, BR's planning cell in June last year asked the chief engineer of BR's west zone to prepare a project for carrying out a feasibility study for the line and a junction at Janjira.

Contacted, Chief Engineer Monirul Islam Firoji said they have already sent a proposal to the BR headquarters. Replying to a query, he said the study would cost around Tk 9 crore.

Another top railway official said the move is still at a very preliminary stage and would require more time.

He said once the project is approved by the DG-led committee, it would go to the railways ministry for approval. After the railways ministry approves the proposal, it would be sent to the planning ministry.

The feasibility study would start after the planning minister's approval. If the project is found to be feasible, BR will have to take another project building the line and the junction said the official under anonymity.

"This is a long process," he added.

Contacted, the BR DG said they have taken the move as per their plan to bring all districts under the railway network.

"If we find the project to be feasible, then we will move forward with it," he told this correspondent yesterday.

Three killed in Magura road crash

UNB, Magura

Three people were killed and 12 others injured in a collision between a battery-run auto-rickshaw and a bus in Mohammadpur upazila of Magura yesterday.

The deceased are auto-rickshaw driver Rabbi (22), Jashim (24), and Nirmal Kumar Biswas (60).

Ikram Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Mohammadpur Police Station, said the accident took place around noon near Kanutia on Mohammadpur road.

The auto-rickshaw was hit by the bus coming at high speed from the opposite direction, leaving around 15 people injured.

Among the injured, four were rushed to Magura Sadar Hospital where the doctor declared Rabbi and Jashim dead, said the OC. Nirmal succumbed to his injuries on the way to a Jashore hospital.

The vehicles were seized, however, the bus driver managed to flee the scene, he said.

A case was filed with Mohammadpur Police Station in this regard, he added.

JS passes Boilers Bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Boilers Bill, 2022, which aims to check boiler-related accidents and ensure a safer work environment, was passed in the parliament yesterday.

Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun placed the bill that will replace the Boiler Act, 1923.

As per the bill, anyone who operates boilers without taking prior permission will face imprisonment of maximum two years or maximum Tk 2 lakh fine or both.

The punishment is the same for tempering the license of any boiler.

For transferring or handing over boiler to another person, the punishment is imprisonment of maximum one year or maximum Tk 1 lakh fine or both.

For building boilers without permission, the punishment is imprisonment of maximum two years or maximum Tk 2 lakh fine or both.

After any boiler accident, the user has to inform the authorities concerned immediately about the cause. For failure, they will be jailed for maximum two years or imposed maximum Tk 2 lakh fine or both.

LAUNCH FIRE SCARE

Passengers' panic eased due to a prompt response

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

In the wake of the multiple launch accidents within the last few months, passengers were panicked after a dense smoke came out of a launch's silencer pipe at Munshiganj terminal on Saturday night.

Prince Awlad-10 was going to Barishal from Dhaka. The incident took place when the vessel crossed the Munshiganj berthing point, prompting some of its passengers to call the national emergency number 999.

Eventually, the launch was anchored at the Munshiganj terminal as per the directions of firefighters and police. They checked thoroughly and found that nothing was wrong, so they let the launch go to its destination.

Barishal River Port Officer Mostafizur Rahman said the launch was anchored there for two hours.

Mahfuzul Haque, manager of Prince Awlad-10, said the silencer was new and such an incident occurred when it became heated.

This Ramadan, take a loss to save humanity

Jashore sees initiative to provide daily essentials to lower, middle-income groups at lower prices

MOKAMMEL SHUVU

With the advent of the holy month of Ramadan, prices of essential commodities see a hiking trend – a common phenomenon in the country for quite some years now.

To put a stop to the unfair practices of profit mongering at the cost of people's well-being, Idea Samaj Kalyan Sangstha, a voluntary organisation, launched their journey "Loss Project" in Jashore town on Tuesday. They started an outlet selling essential food commodities to people belonging to the lower- and middle-income groups way beneath the market prices.

"People belonging to these income groups cannot make ends meet with their limited resources. They can't even go from door to door asking for help. Our effort aims to get them some relief from the worry from the soaring prices," said

Hamidul Haque Shaheen, chief adviser of the organisation.

Their outlet at Idea Pitha Park in Jashore's Kharki area has all essential commodities, including rice, onion, potato, soybean oil, date and rice.

The package of commodities costs Tk 555, while the market price is Tk 940.

"We identified 472 families in Kharki who needed the assistance and gave them cards. Each family can buy up to four packages until Eid each week," said Hamidul. The outlet is open every Sunday and Tuesday from 3:00pm to 7:00pm.

Students who run the Idea Pitha Park – a local food corner – donate 35 percent of their profit to the project, according to Hamidul. "We get donations from other well-wishers as well," he said.

"We can avail the package of the daily essential food items at half the market price. This is a huge relief to us," said Rita Khatun, a homemaker from Kharki.



To put a stop to the unfair practices of profit mongering at the cost of people's well-being, Idea Samaj Kalyan Sangstha, a voluntary organisation, launched their journey "Loss Project" in Jashore town on Tuesday. They started an outlet selling essential food commodities to the people belonging to the lower- and middle-income groups way beneath the market prices. The outlet at Jashore's Idea Pitha Park is open every Sunday and Tuesday from 3:00pm to 7:00pm.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Marie Stopes opens three pharmacies

CITY DESK

Marie Stopes Bangladesh, a well-known healthcare service provider for women and children, has initiated three model pharmacies at different cities on Saturday.

The pharmacies are located at Dhaka's Mirpur, Gazipur, and Sylhet – adjacent to its three maternity hospitals, said a press release.

Marie Stopes has 40 clinics in 28 districts including seven maternity hospitals.

Officials said they want to provide a one-stop treatment solution and ensure the access to quality medicines preserved at the right temperature and dispensed by registered pharmacists. Marie Stopes Bangladesh is an affiliate of Marie Stopes International.

Six dead, 9 injured in US shooting

AFP, San Francisco

At least six people were killed and nine more wounded in a shooting in the California state capital of Sacramento early yesterday, police said.

"Officers located at least 15 shooting victims, including 6 who are deceased," Sacramento police said in a statement on Twitter.

In an earlier tweet at just after 4:00 am they had called for people to avoid the area "as a large police presence will remain and the scene remains active."

A video posted online showed people scuffling in the street, then starting to run as gunfire can be heard.

The shooting occurred in the downtown area, which has many bars and restaurants, police said.



Protestors beat utensils as a sign of protest during a march against the surge in prices and shortage of fuel and other essential commodities in Colombo, Sri Lanka, yesterday. Armed troops in Sri Lanka had a tense confrontation with a crowd protesting a worsening economic crisis yesterday, after a social media blackout failed to halt anti-government demonstrations.

PHOTO: AFP

Ukraine-Russia war will affect food

FROM PAGE 16
Russia as the lead producer. Supply chain and logistical disruptions on Ukrainian and Russian grain and oilseed production and restrictions on Russia's exports will have significant food security repercussions around the world. This is especially true for some 50 countries that depend on Russia and Ukraine for 30 percent or more of their wheat supply. Many of them are least developed countries or low-income, food-deficit countries in Northern Africa, Asia and the Near East. Many European and Central Asian countries rely on Russia for over 50 percent of their fertilizer supply, and shortages there could extend to next year. FAO has five policy recommendations to address this situation: keep global food and fertilizer trade open; find new and more diverse food suppliers; support vulnerable groups, including internally displaced people; avoid ad hoc policy reactions; and strengthen market transparency and dialogue.

DS: What is the FAO's strategy for Bangladesh and South Asia, a densely populated region that faces the threats of climate change and decline in farmland amid rapid urbanisation and industrialisation?

Dongyu: FAO's mission for the next 10 years is to support the 2030 Agenda through the transformation of agri-food systems and making

them more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable. The approach to agriculture is now not production-oriented approach but much more holistic. While production needs to increase to meet the demands of a growing population, agriculture needs to reduce its carbon footprint, use natural resources optimally and provide decent livelihoods. FAO's updated strategy on climate change takes a sustainable agri-food systems approach and places small holders and family farmers at the centre and promotes country-driven climate actions for sustainable results.

DS: With the new farming technologies, food productivity level has almost reached its peak. How far can food productivity increase through use of modern technology to feed the ever increasing population?

Dongyu: Many exciting farming systems innovations to increase productivity and technologies such as digitalisation to improve efficiencies have emerged in the last decade. Traditional knowledge such as about good cultural practices, enhancing biodiversity and cropping patterns is contributing to enhancing resilience. FAO promotes both old and new innovations that are relevant to various country contexts and is developing a science and innovation strategy to upscale work in this area. Besides, we

can produce more food by using less resources, these innovations can also conserve natural resources and mitigate adverse environmental impacts. No size fits all. Countries with ageing populations will need solutions such as smart farming while those with young populations need more emphasis on skill development and entrepreneurship.

DS: How is FAO working and how should the countries work in tackling climate change-related challenges in terms of food production?

Dongyu: FAO is developing a five-year Action Plan in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To respond to the growing number of climate and food security challenges, countries need to increase biodiversity, implement actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions as committed at COP26 and other agreements, improve policy and governance on climate actions and mobilise more funding for climate finance including from the private sector.

DS: Bangladesh has significantly increased food production in the last few decades. Do you think that it has equally improved the level of nutrition and food safety? If not, why and what can Bangladesh do?

Dongyu: The Asia-Pacific Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in 2020 showed that more than 40 percent

of the population in the region cannot afford a healthy diet. This, in turn, contributes to multiple burdens of malnutrition in a region which otherwise has shown good economic growth even during the Covid-19 pandemic. Countries in the region including Bangladesh need to do more to ensure that all citizens can access healthy diets through a judicious mix of nutritious crops and sources of protein such as meat and fish. Bangladesh should be justifiably proud of having achieved the MDGs and ensuring availability of safe and nutritious diets will be vital to achieve the SDGs.

Protesters

FROM PAGE 16
reconsider the partial internet blackout. "I will never condone the blocking of social media," said Namal, also the country's sports minister.

The anti-government hashtags "#GoHomeRajapaksa" and "#GotaGoHome" have been trending locally for days on Twitter and Facebook.

A social media activist was arrested Friday for posting material that could allegedly cause public unrest. He has since been bailed.

Hundreds of lawyers have volunteered to represent anti-government protesters arrested by the authorities. Sri Lanka's influential Bar Association has also urged the government to rescind the state of emergency.

Ukraine accuses

FROM PAGE 16
immediately.

"It looks exactly like war crimes," President Volodymyr Zelensky's spokesman told BBC television.

"We found mass graves. We found people with their hands and with their legs tied up... and with shots, bullet holes, in the back of their head. They were clearly civilians and they were executed."

UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss called for "indiscriminate" Russian attacks in Bucha and elsewhere to "be investigated as war crimes". In Brussels, European Council chief Charles Michel said the EU was

helping Ukraine and NGOs gather evidence "for pursuit in international courts".

And Germany's vice chancellor and economy minister Robert Habeck said a "terrible war crime" had been carried out in Bucha and called for fresh EU sanctions against Russia.

The International Criminal Court in The Hague has already opened a probe into possible war crimes committed in Ukraine.

Several Western leaders, including US President Joe Biden, have accused Russia's Vladimir Putin of being a "war criminal".

RECORD COVID SURGE

Shanghai asks its 26m residents to self-test

REUTERS, Shanghai

Shanghai yesterday ordered its 26 million residents to undergo two more rounds of tests for Covid-19 as public anger grows over how authorities in China's most populous city are tackling a record coronavirus surge.

Residents should self-test using antigen kits and report any positive results, Shanghai government officials told a news conference, while a nucleic acid test would be conducted citywide today.

"The main task is to completely eliminate risk points and to cut off the chain of transmission so that we can curb the spread of the epidemic as soon as possible," said Wu Qianyu, an inspector from Shanghai Municipal Health Commission.

Essentially all of China's financial capital is locked down after the city began curbing movement in its eastern districts last Monday, extending the restrictions to the entire city days later



Shanghai's lockdown has massively disrupted daily life and businesses, even as healthcare workers and volunteers work round the clock trying to test the entire population and supply residents with groceries.

China's Covid caseload remains low by international standards, but spikes in places like Shanghai are testing its previously successful approach of stamping out the virus through strict curbs and aggressive testing and tracing.

Most of Shanghai's infections have been asymptomatic, according to official data, but China's "dynamic clearance" approach requires authorities to test, trace and centrally quarantine all positive cases.

Shanghai yesterday reported 7,788 daily locally transmitted asymptomatic cases, up from 6,501 the day before, while symptomatic cases rose to 438 from 260.

The city accounted for the bulk of mainland China's 11,781 daily locally transmitted asymptomatic cases and nearly one-third of its 1,506 symptomatic cases.

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Ref. No. 57.03.5659.300.18.076.22-207 Date: 03/04/2022

Invitation for e-GP Re-Tender

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

| SL | Re-Tender Id | Package No. | Description | Tender publishing date & time | Tender last selling date & time | Tender closing & opening date & time |
|----|--------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | 673829 | MPI/Rev/21-22/PG-04 | Supply of Civil Modern Equipments (4112304) (Geotechnical Lab) | 06 April-2022 9:00 | 19-April-2022 12:00 | 20-April-2022 12:00 |
| 2 | 673830 | MPI/Rev/21-22/PG-05 | Supply of Civil Modern Equipments (4112304)(Materials Testing Lab) | | | |
| 3 | 673831 | MPI/Rev/21-22/PG-11 | Supply of Cleanliness Materials (3211102) | | | |
| 4 | 673814 | MPI/Rev/21-22/PG-12 | Books & Magazine (3211127) | | | |
| 5 | 673823 | MPI/Rev/21-22/PG-15 | Supply of Raw materials (3256105) | | | |
| 6 | 673825 | MPI/Rev/21-22/PG-16 | Supply of Office Equipments (4112310) | | | |
| 7 | 673826 | MPI/Rev/21-22/PG-17 | Supply of Educational Materials (4112312) | | | |
| 8 | 673827 | MPI/Rev/21-22/PG-18 | Supply of Furniture (4112314) | | | |

This is an online tender, 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 selling/downloading the e-Tender documents from the e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to scheduled date and time. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd, +8809609112233, +8801762625528, +8801762625529).

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শিক্ষা নিয়ে গড়ব দেশ
শেখ হাসিনার বাংলাদেশ

e-Tender Notice

Memo No.: 57.03.8600.301.07.133.22.148 Date: 03/04/2022

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

| Sl. No. | Tender ID No. | Name of Goods | Procurement Method | Publishing Date & Time | Last Selling Date & Time | Tender Opening & Closing Date & Time |
|---------|---------------|--|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | 680534 | Supply of Raw Materials & Spare Parts | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 10:00 |
| 2 | 680535 | Supply & Installation of Computer Accessories | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 10:45 |
| 3 | 680536 | Supply & Installation of Office Equipments | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 11:30 |
| 4 | 680537 | Supply & Installation of Education & Learning | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 12:00 |
| 5 | 680538 | Supply & Installation of Furniture | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 12:30 |
| 6 | 680539 | Supply & Installation of Engineering & Other Accessories | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 13:00 |
| 7 | 680540 | Supply & Installation of Engineering & Other Accessories | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 14:00 |
| 8 | 680541 | Supply & Installation of Engineering & Other Accessories | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 14:30 |
| 9 | 680542 | Supply & Installation of Engineering & Other Accessories | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 15:00 |
| 10 | 680543 | Supply & Installation of Engineering & Other Accessories | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 15:30 |
| 11 | 680545 | Supply & Installation of Engineering & Other Accessories | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 16:00 |
| 12 | 680546 | Supply & Installation of Engineering & Other Accessories | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 16:30 |
| 13 | 680547 | Supply & Installation of Engineering & Other Accessories | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 17:00 |
| 14 | 680548 | Supply & Installation of Engineering & Other Accessories | OTM(e-GP) | 03/04/2022 09:00 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 17:30 |

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(Shaikh Mustafizur Rahman)
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GD- 644



Smoke rises after an attack by Russian army in Odessa, Ukraine, yesterday. Air strikes rocked Ukraine's strategic Black Sea port Odessa early yesterday morning, according to an interior ministry official, after Kyiv had warned that Russia was trying to consolidate its troops in the south.

PHOTO: AFP

WAR IN UKRAINE DEVELOPMENTS

AFP, Kyiv

RUSSIAN 'WAR CRIMES'

Ukraine accuses Russian troops of war crimes after the discovery of mass graves and civilians apparently "executed" in the streets of Bucha, near the capital Kyiv. AFP reporters see at least 20 bodies, all in civilian clothing, strewn across a single street. UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss calls for "indiscriminate" Russian attacks in Bucha and elsewhere to "be investigated as war crimes". Germany's vice chancellor Robert Habeck says a "terrible war crime" has been carried out. EU chief Charles Michel pledges further sanctions on Moscow as he condemns "atrocities" near Kyiv.

AIR STRIKES HIT ODESSA

Air strikes rock Ukraine's strategic Black Sea port Odessa yesterday morning, but the army says there were no casualties. "High-precision sea and air-based missiles destroyed an oil refinery and three storage facilities for fuel and lubricants near the city of Odessa," the Russian defence ministry says.

11 UKRAINIAN MAYORS HELD BY RUSSIANS

Ukraine's deputy prime minister Iryna Vereshchuk says 11 local community leaders in the Kyiv, Kherson, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv and Donetsk regions are "in captivity".

TOO SOON FOR PEACE SUMMIT

Russia's chief negotiator Vladimir Medinsky says it is too early for a top-level meeting between Zelensky and Putin on ending the conflict. He says Ukraine has become "more realistic" in its approach to issues related to the neutral and non-nuclear status of Ukraine but a draft agreement for submission to a summit meeting is not ready.

MINES AND BOOBY TRAPS

Ukraine President Zelensky accuses Russian soldiers of planting mines and other booby traps as they withdraw from northern Ukraine.

NEARLY 4.2M REFUGEES

Nearly 4.2 million Ukrainians have fled their country since Russia's invasion began on February 24, with almost 40,000 pouring into neighbouring countries in the past 24 hours, UN numbers show. The United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, yesterday said that 4,176,401 Ukrainians had fled in just over five weeks, up 38,559 from the figure given a day earlier. Women and children account for 90 percent of those who have left Ukraine.



POPPY CULTIVATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Taliban chief orders ban



AFP, Kabul

The Taliban's supreme leader yesterday ordered a ban on poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, warning that the hardline Islamist government would crack down on farmers planting the crop.

Afghanistan is the world's biggest producer of poppies, the source of sap that is refined into heroin, and in recent years its production and exports have only boomed.

"All Afghans are informed that from now on cultivation of poppy has been strictly prohibited across the country," said a decree issued by Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada.

The decree was read out by government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid at a gathering of reporters, foreign diplomats and Taliban officials.

"If anyone violates the decree the crop will be destroyed immediately and the violator will be treated according to the sharia law," it added.

It is not the first time the fundamentalist group has vowed to outlaw the trade. Production was banned in 2000, just before the group was overthrown by US-led forces in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

During their 20-year insurgency against foreign forces, the Taliban heavily taxed farmers cultivating the crop in areas under their control.

It became a key resource for the group to generate funds.

The United States and Nato forces tried to curb poppy cultivation during their two decades in Afghanistan by paying farmers to grow alternative crops such as wheat or saffron. But their attempts were thwarted by the Taliban who controlled the main poppy-growing regions and derived hundreds of millions of dollars from the trade, experts say.

Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Hanafi rejected claims the Taliban helped fuel poppy cultivation during their insurgency.

"How come it was exported all over the world when they (US-led forces) had full control over Afghanistan," Hanafi said yesterday.

Afghan media reports say production has increased in two southern provinces, Kandahar and Helmand, since the Taliban seized power in August, although data is not available.

Afghanistan has a near monopoly on opium and heroin, accounting for 80 to 90 percent of global output, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The amount of land planted with poppies hit a record high in 2017 and has averaged around 250,000 hectares in recent years, roughly four times the level of the mid-1990s, UN figures show.

More transmissible Covid-19 variant found in UK: WHO

NDTV ONLINE

A new Covid variant has been found in the UK, the World Health Organisation said in its latest report. The new mutant, called XE, may be more transmissible than any strain of Covid-19, the health body said.



XE is a "recombinant" which is a mutation of BA.1 and BA.2 Omicron strains. Recombinant mutations emerge when a patient is infected by multiple variants of Covid. The variants mix up their genetic material during replication and form a new mutation, UK experts said in a paper published in British Medical Journal.

The World Health Organisation said that the new mutation XE appears to be 10 per cent more transmissible than the BA.2 sub-variant of Omicron.

"Early-day estimates indicate a community growth rate advantage of 10 percent as compared to BA.2, however, this finding requires further confirmation," the global health body added.

Britain's health agency said that XE was first detected on January 19 and 637 cases of the new variant have been reported yet.

Hungary vote goes to wire as Orban seeks fourth term

AFP, Budapest

Nationalist Hungarian PM Viktor Orban faced a tough challenge with a united opposition in an unpredictable general election yesterday, after a campaign dominated by Russia's invasion of neighbouring Ukraine. The six main opposition parties are for the first time fielding a joint list, determined to roll back the "illiberal" revolution Orban's Fidesz party has pursued during 12 consecutive years in office. That has involved repeated confrontations with EU institutions, including over the neutering of the press and judiciary, and measures targeting the LGBT community. By early afternoon turnout stood at 40 percent, down slightly from the record participation seen at the last national polls in 2018.

N Korea threatens South over minister's 'reckless' remarks

AFP, Seoul

North Korea blasted the South Korean defence minister yesterday for "reckless" remarks about Seoul's ability to strike Pyongyang, warning of retaliation after conducting a record number of weapons tests this year. South Korean defence minister Suh Wook had said Friday that his



army had missiles with "the ability to accurately and quickly hit any target in North Korea".

The comments drew condemnation from Kim Yo Jong, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and a key policy adviser.

"His reckless and intemperate rhetoric about the 'preemptive strike' has further worsened the inter-Korean relations and

the military tension on the Korean Peninsula," she said according to official North Korean news agency KCNA. "South Korea may face a serious threat owing to the reckless remarks made by its Defence Minister... South Korea should discipline itself if it wants to stave off disaster," Kim added.

Vienna nuke talks nearing deal: Iran

AFP, Tehran

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian yesterday said an agreement is "close" in paused negotiations to restore the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers.

Iran has been engaged in negotiations to revive the deal, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with France, Germany, Britain, Russia and China directly, and the United States indirectly.

"We are close to an agreement in the negotiations," Amir-Abdollahian said during a phone conversation with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, according to a statement by the ministry.

"We have passed on our proposals on the remaining issues to the American side through the EU senior negotiator, and now the ball is in US court," Iran's top diplomat added.

Nearly a year of negotiations brought the parties close to renewing the landmark 2015 accord.

But the talks were halted last month, after Russia demanded guarantees that Western sanctions imposed following its invasion of Ukraine would not damage its trade with Iran.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov later said Moscow had received the necessary guarantees from Washington on trade with Iran.



Activists of ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) stand on shipping containers and shout slogans during a protest in front of the National Assembly in Islamabad yesterday, after Pakistan's president dissolved the National Assembly on the advice of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

PHOTO: AFP

Flash floods, landslides kill 14 in Brazil

AFP, RIO DE JANEIRO

Torrential downpours triggered flash floods and landslides across Brazil's Rio de Janeiro state, killing at least 14 people including eight children, and leaving five missing, authorities said Saturday.

Two days of heavy rain have battered a broad swathe of the southeastern state's Atlantic coast, the latest in a series of deadly storms in Brazil that experts say are being aggravated by climate change.

More rain is forecast for the region in the coming days.

The victims included a mother and six of her children, who were buried when a landslide swept away their home, officials said.



Shocked by haunting images of atrocities committed by Russian army in Kyiv liberated region #BuchaMassacre. ... Further EU sanctions & support are on their way.

EU chief
Charles Michel



Looking Forward to the Next 50 Years



PETER HAAS,
U.S. Ambassador to
Bangladesh

Through its remarkable first five decades of independence, I like to think that Bangladesh has found no better partner than the United States. And we intend to build upon that partnership over the next 50 years.

Since we first clasped our hands in friendship on this date in 1972, the United States has provided more than \$8 billion in development assistance. We have partnered with the people of Bangladesh to save lives following deadly cyclones, combat terrorism and human trafficking, and help people lead healthier and more prosperous lives. Most recently, the United States provided more than 61 million COVID-19 vaccines to assist your efforts to combat this pandemic. Bangladesh is the largest recipient of U.S.-donated vaccines worldwide. That is what friends do.

Bangladesh's transformation over the past 50 years has been stunning. When it emerged from the dark days of its Liberation War as an independent,

sovereign nation, its economy was shattered, its infrastructure destroyed, and countless of its best minds had been murdered. Many thought Bangladesh would never be able to thrive on its own. Many thought Bangladesh would be forever dependent on the assistance of others.

Those days are long gone. Today, Bangladesh is widely admired as a success story. Thanks to the drive, resourcefulness, and innovation of the Bangladeshi people, Bangladesh has made rapid improvements in health and literacy, has achieved 100 percent electrification, and is home to one of the world's fastest growing economies. Indeed, Bangladesh will

soon graduate into middle-income status, a remarkable accomplishment.

Bangladesh now lends a helping hand to its neighbors. For example, Bangladesh stepped in to support Sri Lanka during its cash crisis and provided COVID assistance to the Maldives. As the largest contributor of UN peacekeeping forces, Bangladesh plays a critical role in ensuring peace around the globe. And Bangladesh, as one of the world's most vulnerable nations to the effects of climate change, has emerged as a powerful voice in urging major emitting countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. It is also a powerful voice in calling for financing for climate

adaptation.

Our two countries are peers. While development assistance is still important, our economic relationship is increasingly about trade, not aid. The benefits are mutual – the United States is Bangladesh's largest export destination, and more and more American corporations now identify Bangladesh among their most important trade and investment partners.

Our people-to-people ties go back before Independence. In 1952, Dr. Fazlur Rahman Khan was the first Bangladeshi Fulbright scholar recipient. He went on to receive his doctoral degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His vision shaped architecture around the world, starting in my home state of Illinois. In Chicago, the Willis tower and the John Hancock Center stand as a testament to our two people's long relationship. Similarly, the banyan tree planted at Dhaka University by Senator

Edward Kennedy also symbolizes our close friendship.

The United States and Bangladesh have a common historical experience. Both of our countries have fought bloody wars for independence, united by a fervent belief in democracy. And both of our countries have learned that democracy is a process, not an end state. In the United States we have witnessed unspeakable acts of violence and racism. Americans are confronting these issues openly, honestly, and sometimes noisily in an effort to hold people accountable and to effect real change. Many in Bangladesh are doing the same, and we applaud their courage.

The United States and the people of Bangladesh want the same things: a vibrant, secure, and prosperous democracy, an accountable judicial system, and basic human rights for everyone. Bangladesh can count on our partnership for decades to come to accomplish these shared goals.



AMCHAM BANGLADESH

Strengthening economic and trade relations



SYED ERSHAD
AHMED,
President, AmCham
Bangladesh

On the historic occasion of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the United States of America that coincides with the Silver Jubilee of The American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham), we take both pleasure and pride in providing a common platform for all our members and stakeholders' activities that would encourage more investment, stimulate bilateral trade between these two friendly nations, and support ongoing business operations.

Since establishment, AmCham has played a central role in introducing major American companies to Bangladesh with the core objectives being to promote:

- Exchange of information between the US and Bangladesh with a view to stimulating greater understanding about each other's economic potential and opportunities.
- Economic cooperation between these two economies, particularly in the

private sector.

- Support measures calculated to benefit and protect the interests of business.

When AmCham was established, the bilateral trade volume between Bangladesh and the US was only a few millions dollars, which has surpassed more than \$9 billion recently. However, we are still working to increase the number through many activities that we introduced here in Bangladesh and undertake each year.

AmCham has been a dynamic platform where many visionary ideas were discussed for the first time in Bangladesh. We, for example, hosted the prime minister and leaders of the opposition numerous times since the beginning. We also participated in various events organised in the US and Asia-Pacific, representing the American business community and contributing in deepening bilateral relations.

We as a chamber for the very first time in Bangladesh started a

dedicated, country-specific trade fair in conjunction with the US Embassy in Dhaka in 1992, even before we formally established AmCham.

We introduced awards to recognise the performance of business personalities and entities from the private sector, such as "The Business Executive" award from 1997 and "Outstanding American Company" award from 1999.

To achieve the vision of our honourable Prime Minister of becoming a developed nation by 2041 and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, we have to attract more investments – both foreign and local – and thereby diversify the country's export portfolio.

The current trade and investment scenario remains far below potential. Unleashing the full potential of the opportunities between Bangladesh and the US will benefit from a systematic assessment of where the opportunities lie, what holds back the full potential,

how other competitor countries are making headway, and identifying strategic options for US stakeholders to maximise potential.

We conducted research and published a report last year that will help our next generation set priorities to develop US-Bangladesh trade and investment. We also publish a quarterly journal covering vital issues of economic interest with a view to identify the opportunities and recommend policies to overcome the snags on the way to progress, where renowned economists and eminent think-tanks from home and abroad contribute regularly to enlighten our readers.

AmCham members consider corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a business strategy for sustainable development. Over the last 30 years, besides business, we cared for the community within Bangladesh and even in neighbouring countries. Few of the initiatives included building

cyclone shelters, donating to the prime minister's fund for flood affected people, supporting the local heritage "Jamdani Palli" and its artisans, and even during the disastrous earthquake we supported the affected people in Nepal.

We are thankful to all AmCham members for the wonderful support we have received, also the government agencies of Bangladesh and the US.

If plans are implemented with the help of automation, we hope the promise of providing an attractive destination for investors across the world, not only the US, will come to fruition.

While the world is experiencing a new beginning in the post-pandemic era, we believe under this new order AmCham would be able to contribute to further strengthening the bilateral and multilateral interests between these two friendly nations to create a safe and secured place where our future generations can live and continue to prosper peacefully.





LIVE LEGENDARY

4 TODAY X 4 EVER

CELEBRATING 50TH YEAR OF USA X BANGLADESH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS







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ANWAR GROUP

Aid to Trade, now Strategic Partnership: What's next?

PORIMOL PALMA

When it comes to US-Bangladesh relationship, one naturally points to the global superpower's pro-Pakistani role during the Liberation War in 1971. Then comes the infamous tag "basket case" for Bangladesh by the then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Bangladesh's former ambassador to the US M Humayun Kabir said, while the US government opposed Bangladesh's independence for its global strategic position against the communist Soviet bloc, its people, especially the media and civil society, supported Bangladesh. George Harrison's "Concert for Bangladesh" in New York, which raised money for the Bangladeshi refugees, is a classic example. Many Congressmen and officials of the Nixon administration,

including Senator Edward Kennedy and US Consul General Archer K Blood in Dhaka, were on the side of Bangladesh. The US also provided \$103 million in humanitarian assistance for Bangladeshi refugees in India in 1971.

After Bangladesh's victory on December 16, Washington, however, was quick to recognise Bangladesh on April 4, 1972. It also supported Bangladesh in getting UN membership, whereas China vetoed.

"The US believed in the doctrine of reality as Bangladesh became independent. They are very pragmatic," said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen.

Bangabandhu, too, was pragmatic because he had realised that the US help was required for rebuilding the war-ravaged Bangladesh, said Shariful Islam, assistant professor of International Relations at Rajshahi University, who researched US-Bangladesh relationship.

As the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu met the then US President Gerald R Ford at the White House in October, 1974 and spoke of economic and food grains problems in Bangladesh and the need for a long-term plan for flood control, assistance for repayment of loans, and reconstructing the war-torn country. Ford assured food supply aid and the two countries signed an agreement.

"In the aftermath of the war, the US came forward very strongly to help the war-ravaged Bangladesh. For the first 20 years, the relationship was dominated by aid," said M Humayun Kabir, also president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute. Food and agriculture, health, education, disaster management, women empowerment, governance, and human rights were some of the major areas of US assistance, which has amounted to some USD 8 billion as of now.

In 1980, the US provided GSP facility for Bangladeshi products to its market, facilitating development of trade. The aid-based relationship began to shift to trade in 1991 with the restoration of democracy, he said.

In the next one and a half decade, with more socio-economic progress,

Bangladesh gained more importance from Washington and the relationship became more structured in 2012, when the two countries started partnership dialogues and signed the Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement (TICFA) in 2013. Dhaka

| | |
|---|---------------|
| US assistance to Bangladesh since 1972 | \$8 billion |
| Foreign Direct Investment | \$3.4 billion |
| US donation of Covid-19 vaccines | 61 millions |
| Bangladesh's export to the US | \$7 billion |
| Since August 2017, US assistance for Rohingyaas | \$1.7 billion |

and Washington now hold regular dialogues on security, defence, and comprehensive economic partnership.

The US is the biggest destination of Bangladesh's export, which is worth 7 billion dollars. Bangladesh's import from the US is worth 2 billion dollars.

Bangladesh, which saw its per capita income rise from USD 85 in 1971 to USD 2,591 in 2022, aspires to graduate out of LDC by 2026. Some 800,000 Bangladeshis live in the US and make significant contribution to their economy, society, and politics.

Dhaka has also been able to change Washington's mindset. It now considers Bangladesh as a strategic partner not only in South Asia but in the Indo-Pacific, mainly because of Bangladesh's strategic location between South and Southeast Asia, and the country's emergence of a regional leadership through BIMSTEC, Indian Ocean Rim Association, and SAARC. Bangladesh became a leader in disaster management, demonstrating important leadership in the LDC and Climate Vulnerable Forum.

"Bangladesh knows the importance of helping neighbours, such as providing Covid-19 assistance to the Maldives, or supporting Sri Lanka last year with a currency swap at the height of its cash crisis," said Peter Haas, US Ambassador

to Bangladesh - in striking contrast to what Henry Kissinger once said.

At a recent international conference in Dhaka, the US Ambassador said, by committing to the peaceful resolution of its land and maritime border disputes, Bangladesh has made the Bay of Bengal an example for the world to follow. He committed to work with Bangladesh and other partners to ensure the region's seas and skies are governed and used according to international law.

While these words are encouraging, Dhaka is frustrated over some issues. Washington is yet to reinstate the GSP that was suspended following the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013. Dhaka faced a severe blow when the Biden administration slapped sanctions on RAB and seven of its former and current officials in December last year. The US also dropped Bangladesh from its Democracy Summit last year, angering the Awami League government, which has been in power since 2009.

Dhaka says RAB played an important role in combating militancy, which was a major global agenda for Washington after 9/11. Washington appreciates that but also wants Dhaka to behave more maturely, said Humayun Kabir.

Following the Russian invasion in Ukraine, Washington crystallised its position - there are groups of countries: democracies and autocracies - and that it would only support the democracies.

"With the relationship becoming mature, the US now wants Bangladesh to behave maturely in every aspect - call it democracy, governance, or human rights," he said.

With that also comes the US' Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS), as the region became the world's focus. The main objective of the IPS is ensuring open and free navigation in the seas, while also preventing any illegal and arbitrary behaviour by any countries.

Analysts say that China, going ahead with its global Belt and Road Initiative, is also in the mind of the world powers. The US, Australia, Japan, and India have a security alliance called the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue - the Quad - while Australia, UK, and US

signed another military deal last year, under which US and UK will help Australia acquire nuclear-powered submarines.

As the world transitions to a new polarisation, how Bangladesh, which maintains a neutral foreign policy, will navigate has become a pertinent question, especially as it buys majority of its defence equipment from China and significantly depends on Chinese funding for its ever-increasing infrastructure demand.

Officials say Dhaka is diversifying its defence purchase to reduce reliance on China. During US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland's visit from March 19-21, drafts of two defence deals - General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) and the Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) - were shared with Bangladesh.

GSOMIA ensures that governments protect classified military information, while ACSA allows US forces to exchange basic support such as food, fuel, transportation, ammunition, and equipment.

Foreign Minister Momen said Dhaka is examining these agreements, and will sign for the interest of the country, if necessary, but not under any pressure.

Foreign policy analysts say Bangladesh can surely sign defence deals for strengthening its defence capacity, but in no way should go for any military alliance. They say it is natural that the US will advance geopolitical interests, but Dhaka needs to explain its priority, which is the economy. The US has provided naval ships to Bangladesh, and there is no problem in working with the US on security aspect.

"If we can engage efficiently with the US, and explain that we will need China for our economy, and not for anything else, we will be able to do that. What we need is to have creative, dynamic, and productive diplomacy," Humayun Kabir said.

"We need to thoroughly know how the great powers work, their policymaking process, the various dimensions of their work. That's how we can design our diplomacy," he said.

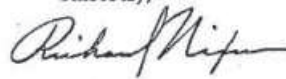
Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I wish to inform you that the United States Government has recognized the People's Republic of Bangladesh and that we would like to establish diplomatic relations at the embassy level with your government.

Historically, there have been warm ties between our two peoples. The United States has maintained an official mission in Dacca since 1949 and over the years many Americans, both in private and official capacities, have derived great satisfaction from the opportunity to work side by side with the Bengalee people in a variety of enterprises aimed at combatting disease, illiteracy, poverty, hunger and the impact of natural disaster. Enduring relationships have resulted from this collaboration.

I am sure that the friendship and goodwill between our two peoples will be further strengthened in the coming years, and I trust that our traditional cooperative association with your development efforts will continue. We fully share your aspirations for the progress and the welfare of the Bengalee people and the hope that the nations of the Sub-continent can normalize their relations and work together to forge a lasting peace.

Sincerely,




His Excellency
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
Prime Minister of The People's
Republic of Bangladesh
Dacca

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PA/HO, Departme
E.O. 12958, as am
June 9, 2005

Dispatched 4/1/72 (JRH)

COURTESY: US EMBASSY IN BANGLADESH

Nixon's letter to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.





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- Digital campaign facilities will be void in case of more than 3 registrations of fridge from the same mobile number in a year.
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Upholding the National Poet's legacy

In conversation with Nazrul Sangeet exponents Khairul Anam Shakil and Masuda Anam Kalpona

An audio anthology of 125 Nazrul songs performed in strict accordance with authentic lyrics and compositions by seasoned veterans and emerging artistes from Bangladesh and West Bengal was released at the festival.

SHARMIN JOYA

A two-day festival, titled "Nazrul Utsav 2022", was held at the capital's Gulshan Society Lake Park recently. Organised by Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha, Arunaranjani, and Gulshan Society, it aimed to celebrate the work and philosophy of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. Nazrul Sangeet exponents Khairul Anam Shakil, General Secretary, Bangladesh Nazrul Sangeet Sangstha, convener of the festival and Masuda Anam Kalpona shared their plans of preserving the work of Nazrul. They intend to preserve the heritage of Nazrul and promote wider awareness of the depth of his work. "We also want to continue this festival annually, not only in Dhaka, but all over the country," adds Shakil. "We intend to inspire the younger generation of artistes to carry forward the legacy of Nazrul. We are trying to uphold the philosophy of the great poet, which he documented through his work." Artistes from both the Bengalis participated in the festival. Apart from the music, an exhibition on Nazrul's life was also organised. An audio anthology of 125 Nazrul songs performed in strict accordance with authentic lyrics and compositions by seasoned veterans and emerging artistes from Bangladesh and West Bengal was released at the festival. In addition, an online archive that will ultimately include 2,000 to 2,200 songs by Nazrul in authentic form was launched, which is available free of cost.

The archive includes all background information of making the songs, primarily collected from newspapers published before 1942. Shakil shares that Nazrul Sangstha has a team that is working on a project that will explain the context of the poet's works. "Nazrul's writings convey multi-dimensional messages, however, explaining the proper context will help people to refrain from misinterpreting his thoughts," he explains. Both Shakil and Kalpona are grateful to the late Dr Rafiqul Islam, one of the most distinguished researchers of Kazi Nazrul Islam, for his immense support and ensuring the



PHOTO: COURTESY

authenticity of the works they are preserving. Nazrul Sangstha is supported by researchers, who have been investigating Nazrul for many years, from Bangladesh and India. "We can sense the change already, as students from several divisions call us and say that they have been following the original tunes of Nazrul Geeti," says Kalpona. "This makes us happy and proud." The Nazrul Sangstha aims to arrange workshops four to six times a year. "Our workshops connect the students from all over the country, and also overseas," she explains. A panel of around 30 teachers, including noted artistes Salahuddin Ahmed, Yaqub Ali Khan, Nasima Shaheen Fancy, Sharmin Shathi Moyna, Mahmudul Hasan, Bijon Mistri, Rezaul Karim, and a group of young aspiring artistes conduct these workshops. "We provide certificates to the students, and our technical team is working hard to improve our virtual activities," adds Kalpona. Shakil sees a ray of hope, as this initiative will also increase cultural activities. "The young generation

needs to understand the philosophy of our National poet, it will certainly enlighten them and inspire them to raise their voice against oppression and help to come out from the compromising zone, they are in," he shares. Both the artistes conveyed their gratitude to Syed Ahsan Habib from Gulshan Society, Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Gulshan Society, and the community police for traffic management during the festival.

"Above all, their around-the-clock supervision and coordination made the event a huge success. I would also like to thank BLUES Communication management, Ashfaq Swapan, for his creative and graphical works for the entire event including the emblem, main stage, backdrop, brochure, standees, Maasranga, our media partner, and last but not the least, HSBC in particular and all the other twelve sponsors without whom we could not have turned our dream into a reality."

'Thank God I didn't quit'



Yami Gautam, following many hit movies including the recent 'A Thursday', is firmly established in Bollywood. However, the actress told the media that she was thinking of quitting the film industry at one point. "I honestly thought that I would go back to Himanchal and start farming," said Yami to Indian Media. "This is a very uncertain industry, where you might not get your due even if you're talented." Yami further said that if it wasn't for movies like "Bala", she would have left a long time ago.

Denzel Washington on Will Smith: 'DEVIL GOT AHOLD OF HIM'

Oscar winner Denzel Washington recently appeared with author and pastor T.D. Jakes where the conversation soon turned to Will Smith's infamous slap.

"There's a saying: When the devil ignores you, then you know you're doing something wrong. The devil goes, 'Oh, no, leave him alone. He's my favorite,'" said the actor. "Conversely, when the devil comes at you, maybe it's because you're trying to do something right. And for whatever reason, the devil got ahold of that circumstance that night."



COUNTRYWIDE



Rainwater harvesting tanks have been set up at homesteads of the people living in the coastal areas, thanks to DPHE. The tanks are likely to come as a respite for the people who suffer from acute freshwater crisis in summer. PHOTO: STAR

Cry for freshwater gets louder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The crisis of safe drinking water has turned acute in south-western part of the country in the onset of summer causing untold sufferings. Both surface and underground water sources have become sparse in the area.

Bagerhat's Mongla, Rampal, Sharankhola, Morrelganj, Kachua and Chitalmari upazilas are the worst affected areas.

"All of the ponds in our area have dried up. Some have a little water which is not even suitable for bathing. We can hardly manage fresh water for cooking and drinking," said Kabir Molla, a resident of Kalmibuniya village in Kachua upazila.

"We cannot use water of nearby canals or rivers due to salinity. Very often, we become compelled to bathe in salt water. It causes skin disease," said Majid Sheikh, a resident of Chanderkhola village in

The Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) has installed over 10,000 rainwater harvesting tanks in the affected upazilas in the last five years. Each tank has a capacity to contain 3,000 litres of water.

the same upazila.

"Even we don't get water from deep tube well. People have to buy a jar of 20-litre fresh water at Tk 35," he added.

It is a double blow for the villagers," said Ruhul Sheikh of Kalmibuniya area in Kachua.

Amid such a situation, the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) has so far installed over ten thousand

rainwater harvesting tanks in the affected upazilas in the last five years.

Each of the tanks has a capacity to contain 3,000 litres of water, said DPHE officials.

"The tanks have proven to be very helpful for us. We will be able to preserve rainwater for three to four months. It will save our money bringing an end to freshwater crisis," Bappi Devnath, a resident of Raripara union in Kachua upazila.

"But these are not sufficient in comparison to the demand. So, we demand more tanks be installed at every doorstep," said Asis Das Kalu, a resident of Sree Rampur village in Kachua.

Contacted, Bagerhat's DPHE Executive Engineer Joyanta Mollick said the government will continue distributing the tanks.

"We have the plan to install the tanks at every homestead gradually," he said.

TIB warns of a surveillance-based state

FROM PAGE 16 countries, or defamation, TIB said in its comments on the regulation.

An intermediary must remove the content promptly, but in any event within 72 hours. Fundamentally, this requirement raises several concerns, it said.

"We have seen interpretation of the abovementioned grounds made arbitrarily to suit motivated objectives over the years," it also said.

Under Section 57 of the Information and Communication

Technology Act, 2006 and the Digital Security Act, 2018, thousands of arrests were made over a decade for expressions on social media, it further said.

Clause 7.03 of the draft law says upon receiving a court order or instructions from the BTRC, messaging service operator is required to track the originator of a message and disclose information about him or her to the authorities.

Effectively, this provision requires every message, photo, video and other communications sent over a messaging service to be

"fingerprinted", it said.

It added that most messaging services now use end-to-end encryption, which means that this clause will require the services to break those encryptions, violating the legitimate expectation of citizens regarding the privacy of their correspondence and other means of communication.

Iftekharuzzaman said while formulating the regulation, the government has to consider that people's fundamental rights, especially freedom of speech and freedom

of expression, are not put at risk in the name of controlling digital, social media and OTT platforms.

The move's main aim should be controlling harmful elements or contents, the TIB recommended.

Iftekharuzzaman urged the government to analyse good practices in different countries and take lessons from those while launching the mechanism in the country.

It is essential to bring significant changes to the draft based on such good practices, he added.

Boro on 700 hectares submerged

FROM PAGE 16 farmer of Golabari village in the Tangur Haor area.

As the Nazarkhali levee was not properly reconstructed, it posed a serious threat to all the harvest of two unions in the upazila, said Saidur Rahman, former chairman of Bangshikunda Dakshin union parishad in Madhyannagar upazila.

Najarkhali levee was not in the scheme but on request of the farmers, a few closures were reconstructed, said Md Shamsuddoha, executive engineer of BWDB in Sunamganj and general secretary for Kabita district committee.

However, the sudden

flash flood devastated it all and it could not be protected, he said.

"We are now struggling to protect the Muktarikhola levee to protect the harvest," Rahman said.

Meanwhile, 500 hectares of boro paddy field outside the crop protection dam in different haor areas of Khaliyari upazila in Netrokona are submerged, said Md Jasim Uddin, Khaliyari upazila agriculture officer.

Boro paddy fields in Kirtankhola, Chunai, Monijaan, Hemnagar, Nayakhal and Bagani haors are affected due to the onrush of hilly waters from March 30.

Hilly waters through

Jadukata and Surma rivers in Sunamganj flooded the Dhanu river in Khaliyari, which caused the flash flood.

The water level has risen to six feet in the last four days and the situation was unchanged as of yesterday, Jasim Uddin said.

If the water level in Dhanu river crosses its danger point for the onrush of hilly waters, it will bring a disastrous effect for thousands of haor farmers in different areas of the district, he added.

The boro fields in several areas of Kishoreganj's Itna upazila are also affected due to the onrush of hilly waters in the last couple of days.

Contacted, Md Saiful Alam, deputy director of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), said the officials are visiting the affected areas and the actual figure is yet to be prepared.

About 3.8 crore tonnes of rice were produced in fiscal 2020-21 with the dry season Boro variety making up 53 percent of the total yield, according to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

This season, the boro rice crop was planted on about 49.1 lakh hectares, up from 47.9 lakh hectares in the previous season.

The DAE has targeted acreage of 48.7 lakh hectares this boro season.

SC blasts govt for not rehabilitating

FROM PAGE 16 people's constitutional right to their properties, the apex court said yesterday.

Following a government's prayer, the SC fixed next Sunday for further hearing of the leave to appeal petition.

Acting on the instruction of the Dhaka district administration, the

police in 2010 beat Maleka, her sons and daughter and evicted them from the land illegally, Awsafur Rahman, the writ petitioner's lawyer, told The Daily Star.

Haq's wife and children later came to know that the land was acquired in favour of the BCS Administration Multiple Welfare Cooperative Society as

vested property.

In 2012, the state filed a petition with the Appellate Division challenging the HC verdict. The apex court then issued a status quo order on the land's possession.

It is now under the possession of the BCS society near Ad-Deen Hospital at Moghbazar

and Maleka, her sons and daughter are living nearby.

The other members of the SC bench are: Justice Obaidul Hassan and Justice M Enayetur Rahim.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and Additional Attorney General Mohammad Mehedi Hassan Chowdhury appeared for the government.

National Housing Authority
Office of the Executive Engineer
Mirpur H&S Division-2
Section-2, Mirpur, Dhaka
www.nha.gov.bd
Phone: 02-48040117

Memo No. 25.38.2648.701.73.003.19.1975 Date: 03.04.2022

Re-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the National e-GP:

| Tender ID | Name of works | Tender publication & closing date & time |
|-----------|--|--|
| 682170 | Construction of B+G+8-Storey Residential Flats Building at Plot No. 38/C, 39/C Asad Avenue, Mohammadpur H/E, Dhaka under the Project "GRIHAYAN DHANMONDI". | 04-04-2022, Time-09:00 08-05-2022, Time-15:00 |

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no office/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) and NHA site www.nha.gov.bd.

Md. Abu Horaira
Executive Engineer
Mirpur H&S Division-2, NHA.

GD-635

Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project, PUST Pabna.
Memo No: PUST/PD/ Printing & Publication /394 (2021-22)/PD-1336 Date: 03/04/2022

Invitation of Tender
Tender Serial No-49
Invitation for Tender (OTM)

| | | |
|----|---------------------------|--|
| 01 | Ministry/Division | : Ministry of Education |
| 02 | Agency | : University Grants Commission of Bangladesh/Pabna University of Science and Technology |
| 03 | Procuring Entity Name | : Project Director, Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project, PUST, Pabna. |
| 04 | Procuring Entity Code | : 224262400 |
| 05 | Procuring Entity District | : Pabna |
| 06 | Invitation for | : Supplying of Printed Answers Script for the Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project, FY-2021-22 |
| 07 | Invitation No. | : 49/2021-2022 |
| 08 | Date | : 04 April 2022 |

Key Information

| | | |
|----|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 09 | Procuring Method | : Open Tendering Method (OTM) |
|----|------------------|-------------------------------|

Funding Information

| | | |
|----|--------------------------|-------|
| 10 | Budget & Source of Funds | : GOB |
|----|--------------------------|-------|

Particular Information

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|
| 11 | Tender Last Selling Date | : 27 April, 2022 (within office hour) |
| 12 | Tender Receiving Date & Time | : 28 April, 2022 up to 12-00 Noon |
| 13 | Tender Opening Date & Time | : 28 April, 2022 at 14:00 PM |
| 14 | Name & Address of the Office(s) | : Janata Bank Ltd, PUST Branch, Pabna. DC Office, Pabna and SP Office Pabna |
| | Selling Tender Document | : DC Office, Pabna and SP Office Pabna |
| | Receiving Tender Document | : Project Director Office, PUST, Pabna |
| 15 | Place/Date/Time of Pre-Tender Meeting | : 17 April 2022 at 11.00 AM at PD, Office, PUST, Pabna. |

Information for Tenderer

| | | |
|----|-------------------------|--|
| 16 | Eligibility of Tenderer | : Any bona fide contractors/firms who have experience in successful completion of similar nature of works in a single amounting equal to 75% of quoted amount in any Govt./Semi Govt./Autonomous organization during last 5 (five) years and to be supported by the following documents from the employer (certificates in this regard issued from an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer) 1. Work order accompanied with attested copy. 2. Completion Certificate of said work with attested copy. 3. Latest Trade licence photocopy. 4. VAT Registration certificate. 5. Latest Income tax clearance certificate with TIN number. 6. Up to date Bank solvency certificate Minimum 30 lac. |
|----|-------------------------|--|

Price of Tender Document

| | | |
|----|--------------------------|--|
| 17 | Price of Tender Document | : 1,000.00 (One Thousand) only. |
|----|--------------------------|--|

| Lot No | Description of work | Location | Tender Security (Tk.) | Time for Completion of work |
|--------|--|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 49 | Supplying of Printed Answers Script for the Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project, FY-2021-22 | Pabna University of Science & Technology | 1,00,000/- | 4 (Four) weeks |

Procuring Entity Details

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 19 | Name of the official inviting Tender | : Engr. Lt. Colonel G M Azizur Rahman, afwc, psc (Retd.) |
| 20 | Designation of the official inviting Tender | : Project Director, Development project of Pabna University of Science & Technology |
| 21 | Address of the official inviting Tender | : Project Director, Development Project, PUST, Pabna. |
| 22 | Contract Details of the official inviting Tender | : 0731-64961, 01911-218988, email: azizur2007@yahoo.com |
| 23 | The Procuring Entity Reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason what so ever. | |
| 24 | Special Instruction: If it is not possible to receive/open the tender on the schedule date for any unavoidable circumstances the same will be received / opened on the next working date in the same time & same venue. | |

Project Director
Pabna University of Science & Technology,
Development Project, PUST, Pabna.

GD-640

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেমোরিয়া ইন্ডিয়াসিটি, বাংলাদেশ
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ফোন- ০১৭৬৬৯২১০১০, ফ্যাক্স- ০৯৬০৬২৪৮২৪৮
ওয়েব: www.bsrmu.edu.bd, ই-মেইল: regoffice@bsrmu.edu.bd

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং: বিএসএমআরএইউ/রেজি-৩৩৬/২২/০১ তারিখ: ০৩/০৪/২০২২

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

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| ক্র. | পদের নাম ও পদসংখ্যা | বেতন-স্কেল ও গ্রেড | সর্বোচ্চ বয়স | শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা | মন্তব্য |
|------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|---|---|
| ১. | সহকারী পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক-০১ (এক) জন | ২৯,০০০-৬৬,৪১০/- (গ্রেড-৭) | ৩৫ বছর | কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে বেসরকারি বিজ্ঞান স্নাতক (সম্মান) সহ স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি | ১। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা এবং আবেদনের শর্তাবলী সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটে (www.bsrmu.edu.bd) দেখুন। |
| ২. | ক্যাউন্সিলিং অফিসার-০১ (এক) জন | (২২,০০০-৫৬,০৬০/-) (গ্রেড-৯) | ৩০ বছর | কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে মনোবিজ্ঞান/শিক্ষা/সমাজকর্ম/ক্যাউন্সিলিং বিষয়ে স্নাতক (সম্মান) সহ স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি | ২। সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে যোগ্য ও অভিজ্ঞ সামরিক বাহিনীর (অব:) কর্মকর্তা/সদস্যগণ আবেদন করিতে পারিবেন এবং তাহাদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সীমা শিথিলযোগ্য। |
| ৩. | গ্রাফিক্স ডিজাইনার-০১ (এক) জন | (১৬,০০০-৩৮,৬৪০/-) (গ্রেড-১০) | ৩০ বছর | কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে স্নাতক অথবা এইচএসসি/এসএসসি সহ গ্রাফিক্স এ ডিপ্লোমা | ৩। আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ১৫ মে ২০২২। |
| ৪. | যানবাহন সেকান্ডারি-০১ (এক) জন | (১৬,০০০-৩৮,৬৪০/-) (গ্রেড-১০) | ৩০ বছর | কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/কারিগরি শিক্ষা বোর্ড হইতে অটোমোবাইল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং-এ ডিপ্লোমা | ৪। ২০২৩ সাল নাগাদ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের স্থায়ী ক্যাম্পাসে চট্টগ্রামে স্থানান্তরিত হইবে। |
| ৫. | ফটোগ্রাফার-০১ (এক) জন | (১১,০০০-২৬,৫৯০/-) (গ্রেড-১০) | ৩০ বছর | এইচএসসি পাস। সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে ডিপ্লোমাধারী প্রার্থী আধিকারযোগ্য | ৫। উপরোক্ত পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধি পাইতে পারে। |

মোট পদ সংখ্যা = ০৫টি

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেমোরিয়া ইন্ডিয়াসিটি, বাংলাদেশ

GD-637

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Police Telecommunication Organization
Police Telecom Bhabon, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
telecom.police.gov.bd

Invitation for International Tender

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the Manufacturers/Suppliers in their official pad for Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis for Bangladesh Police in FY 2021-2022.

| | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|
| 1. | Ministry/Division | Ministry of Home Affairs |
| 2. | Agency | Bangladesh Police |
| 3. | Procuring Entity Name | SP (Logistics), Police Telecom Organization |
| 4. | Invitation for | Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis for Bangladesh Police. |
| 5. | Invitation Ref. No. | 44.01.0000.057.11.054.21/1564/Betar |
| 6. | Date | 03/04/2022 |

Key Information

| | | |
|----|--------------------|--|
| 7. | Procurement Method | One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method (OSTETM) - (International) |
|----|--------------------|--|

Funding Information

| | | |
|----|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 8. | Budget and source of funds | Revenue Budget (GOB) |
|----|----------------------------|----------------------|

Particular Information

| | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------|
| 9. | Tender Publication date | 04 April 2022. |
| 10. | Tender last selling date | 16 May 2022. |
| 11. | Tender closing date and time | 17 May 2022 at 14:30 hrs. |
| 12. | Tender opening date and time (Technical offer only) | 17 May 2022 at 15:00 hrs. |

Name & address of the office

| | | |
|-----|------------------------------|--|
| 13. | Name & address of the office | Bangladesh Police, Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka. |
| | Selling tender document | SP (Logistics), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka. |
| | Receiving tender document | Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka. |
| | Opening tender document | Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka. |

Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 14. | Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional) | 18 April 2022, at 12:30 hrs. at Police Telecom Conference Room (1 st Floor), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka. |
|-----|--|---|

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

| | | |
|-----|-------------------------|---|
| 15. | Eligibility of Tenderer | 1) Up to date Export license 2) Written confirmation authorizing the signatory of the tender in accordance with the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of the Principal 3) Affidavit confirming the legal capacity and financial capability 4) Original full Brochure of products of the Principal 5) Other requirements described in the tender document (PG 5A). |
|-----|-------------------------|---|

| Sl. No. | Description of Good | Price of tender document (Non-refundable) | Tender security | Completion time |
|---------|--|---|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Lot-1: Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis. | 10,000/- | TK-26,00,000/- or US\$-30,160.00 | 120 days from the Date of Opening L/C. |

Procuring Entity Details

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 17. | Name of official inviting tender | M. Anwar Zahid |
| 18. | Designation of the official inviting tender | SP (Logistics), Bangladesh Police, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217. |
| 19. | Address of official inviting tender | Police Telecom Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217. |
| 20. | Contact details of official inviting the tender | Phone: +880 2-8301253 FAX: +880 2-8301404, Mobile: + 88 01320-020041 e-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd |

Special Instructions

22. a) No tender will be received after the deadline of submission time & date.
b) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender process without assigning any reason.
c) The Procuring entity also reserves the right to omit, increase and/or decrease the quantity of any item(s) of the tender.
d) If not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstance, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time & same venue.
e) Evaluation will be done by Lot basis.
f) Date of financial offer opening will be duly informed to the Technically Responsive Tenderers and their local agents.
g) The Tenderer must comply with all requirements as per the tender data sheet provided with the tender schedule.
h) The Tender Security shall be in the form of an irrevocable bank guarantee issued by an internationally reputable bank and shall require to be endorsed by its any correspondent bank located in Bangladesh.
i) The Procurement will be performed according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 and Public Procurement Regulation 2008.

(M. Anwar Zahid)
SP (Logistics)
Police Telecom, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
Ph: 8301253 Fax: 8301404
E-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd

GD-643

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Munshiganj Road Division
Dashkani, Panchasar (Mukterpur) Munshiganj
Phone # 02-7611259
E-mail: eemunrhd@gmail.com

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by the Executive Engineer, RHD, Munshiganj Road Division, Munshiganj for the procurement of

| Sl No. | Tender ID # & Package No. | e-Tender description | Last selling date & time | Closing date & time | Opening date & time |
|--------|--|---|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | TID: 681754, 41/e-GP/Mundiv/20 21-2022 | Supplying Semi-Skilled & Un-Skilled Labour for Routine Maintenance work (Jungle Cutting of Both Side Soft Shoulder) at Ch. 03+000 to Ch. 07+000 of Padma By-Pass Road (Z-8205) under Munshiganj Road Division, during the year 2021-2022. | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 12:25 | 18/04/2022 12:25 |
| 2 | TID: 681759, 42/e-GP/Mundiv/20 21-2022 | Supplying Semi-Skilled & Un-Skilled Labour for Routine Maintenance Work (Jungle Cutting of Both Side Soft Shoulder) at Ch. 8+000 to Ch. 11+500 of Keraniganj (Sayedpur)-Hasara-Birtara-Kajolpur-Nagerhat Road (Z-8203) under Munshiganj Road Division, during the year 2021-2022. | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 12:30 | 18/04/2022 12:30 |
| 3 | TID: 681711, 43/e-GP/Mundiv/20 21-2022 | Repair of Different type of works of Narisha Inspection Banglo under Munshiganj Road Division during the year 2021-2022 | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 12:35 | 18/04/2022 12:35 |
| 4 | TID: 681731, 44/e-GP/Mundiv/20 21-2022 | Supplying best quality 1st Class Bricks for departmental emergency maintenance work at different roads of Sreenagar road Sub-Division, under Munshiganj Road Division during the year 2021-2022. | 17/04/2022 16:00 | 18/04/2022 12:40 | 18/04/2022 12:40 |

1. The above tenders are online tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

2. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branch.

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

Dewan Abul Kashem Mohammad Nahin Reza
ID No. 602143
Executive Engineer, RHD
Munshiganj Road Division

GD-636

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Where are those 'DB' men who beat a bus driver to death?

Police should not soft-pedal this issue

IT seems odd that a group of men would intercept a bus on a highway and beat up the driver so mercilessly as to cause him to succumb to his injuries, and get away with it—with the law enforcement agencies unable to do anything about it in three years. In April 2019, that is exactly what happened to a Shyamoli Paribahan bus driver in Chattogram city's Shikalbaha area. He was set upon by plainclothes men, who claimed to be police detectives, and done to death in front of passengers and the helper of the bus. They were looking for yaba, but found nothing after searching the vehicle. It seems they vented their spleen on the driver for failing to net their target—as if it was the driver's fault that there was no yaba on the bus.

It is not surprising that the case has not made any headway in three years, and given the circumstances and the alleged perpetrators, one doubts whether the culprits will be identified, let alone brought to justice—ever.

The telltale signs—some of them were carrying handcuffs, walkie-talkies and pistols—betray the identity of the men involved in the driver's death, apart from the fact that they had themselves declared their identity as Detective Branch (DB) personnel. What is unacceptable, therefore, is the inordinate delay in finding out exactly who they were that day on April 22, 2019. The Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) are quoting records and CCTV footage to support their claim that none of their DB personnel was out on any operations that night. Admittedly, every operation is supported by relevant documents showing time out and in, and the nature and location of operations and the personnel employed in it. Therefore, it should not be a problem to identify the personnel from the records, provided that the records have not been tampered with.

However, if we take the CMP's statement as true, then it begs several questions. Firstly, does it take three years to find out about another "microbus, an SUV and a car of another law enforcement agency crossing the toll plaza of Shah Amanat Bridge's Karnaphuli end and heading towards the city after the incident," as was revealed in the CCTV footage, and acknowledged by the CMP? Secondly, if no law enforcement agencies were involved in the incident that day, should we assume that there are people masquerading as DB men and going about their ways with impunity? That is an equally dangerous scenario.

We believe there is an attempt to hedge the issue and sweep it under the carpet. It is for the police to identify the culprits, because the fingers are pointing at them. The facts are clear, and the perpetrators must be identified and punished for the sake of justice and credibility of the police. Killing is a reprehensible crime—abetting is equally, if not more, so.

Deliver on road safety promises

Immediately frame the new road safety action plan

IT is outrageous that the government has still not framed a new action plan for road safety, even though the tenure of the last one expired two years ago. Although a draft National Road Safety Strategic Action Plan 2021-2024 was prepared over a year ago, it is yet to be approved. As this newspaper reported on April 3, 2022, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) placed a draft before a meeting of National Road Safety Council (NRSC) on February 18 last year. During the meeting, led by the Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, a committee was formed to scrutinise and finalise the draft within one month. Even though the committee submitted its report, having updated the draft, the plan apparently could not be sanctioned as no NRSC meeting was held since then.

At a time when road crashes and the number of their victims have shot through the roof, why is it that there is so little urgency among the authorities to formulate an action plan for road safety? A total of 5,088 people were killed in 5,472 road crashes in 2021, which was 30 percent higher than the previous year, according to a police report. This inexcusable delay on the officials' part exposes how little they care about road safety issues—and to an extent, about the lives of ordinary people.

As recently as March 29 this year, the World Bank approved USD 358 million for a project to help Bangladesh improve road safety and reduce fatalities and injuries from road accidents in selected high-risk highways and district roads. Why is it that, while acquiring these funds, we don't have any comprehensive action plan to that end? Before financing the project, the World Bank in January said that despite the existence of different bodies to ensure road safety in Bangladesh, the number of deaths from road crashes refuses to go down because these organisations are not held accountable. That no one has been held responsible for the failure to frame a new road safety action plan—which successive governments have framed since 1997—for two years is another example of that.

We have heard government high-ups repeatedly making lofty promises in regards to road safety—particularly following the student movement for safer roads—and then failing to deliver consistently. We, therefore, demand that the authorities immediately frame the new action plan and take comprehensive actions to deliver safer roads for people.

What to look for to make UPS successful



AN OPEN DIALOGUE
Dr Abdullah Shibli is an economist and works for Change Healthcare, Inc., an information technology company. He also serves as a senior research fellow at the US based International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI).

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

THE Bangladesh government recently announced a move to roll out a pension plan, initially named the Universal Pension Scheme (UPS), during the 2022-23 fiscal year. There are several areas—government contribution, investment portfolio, etc.—that need to be sorted out as the responsible government agencies and the pension authority work out the mechanism and institutional and technical infrastructure before the programme is formally launched. The finance minister has provided a few details of the UPS and promised that it will be launched within the next 12 months. My comments are based on the minister's virtual press conference on February 23, where he presented an outline of the scheme.

The finance minister declared that a person would receive Tk 64,776 in pension until the age of 80 if he or she started depositing Tk 1,000 every month from the age of 18 until 60—i.e. for 42 years. If they start depositing money at the age of 30 and continue until 60, they will receive Tk 18,908 in pension every month. It is not clear if the government will match the contribution of an enrolled citizen.

I believe the announcement of UPS is laudable and—one might add—comes not too soon. The ruling party committed to the scheme during the 2008 general elections, and it has been planning to introduce it since FY2017-18. However, it is going to be a challenge for the government and the new agency responsible for running it, both financially and administratively.

There are three financial parameters and two sociological considerations that will affect this programme's success. The financial parameters are: future paths of inflation, rate of return, and the time value of money (TVM). The concepts of inflation and the rate of return on investment are well-known. On the other hand, the TVM is a basic concept that holds that money in the present is worth more than the same sum of money to be received in the future. If you lend Tk 1,000 today, and the borrower gives you back the same amount in 10 years' time, would you be interested? Is the value of Tk 1,000 today the same as Tk 1,000

at a distant future date even if there is no uncertainty, inflation or alternative investment opportunities? The answer is: No.

The two sociological considerations are: "trust in government" and "savings culture." If the public is wary of its competency, honesty or corruption, they might be hesitant to hand over their savings to the government. Similarly,

January 2085.

If we assume that inflation is zero percent over the next 62 years—i.e. starting from 2023 till the end of 2084—and the government's pension fund is the only investment outlet available in Bangladesh, that's not a bad deal for the pensioner. However, my arithmetic is based on two major assumptions: the rate of returns on investment and the rate of inflation are both zero. Let's relax these two pivotal conditions and introduce financial intermediaries and banks, plus inflation.

Scenario 2: No inflation and 6 percent rate of return

First, let's keep the inflation rate frozen at zero, but consider different investment avenues and different rates of return. If the money is regularly put into a savings account or in a fixed deposit which generates a 10 percent annual rate of return, at the end of 42 years, the total amount of savings balloons to Tk 85,67,791.08, thanks to the power of compounding. But this sum is less than the Tk 1,55,46,240, which is the present worth of UPS.

Alternatively, at a 12 percent rate of return, my monthly investment of Tk 1,000 turns to Tk 1,68,75,746.13, which is greater than the present pension value.

Thus, the implicit rate of return offered by the UPS is greater than the rate any savings account in Bangladesh would offer, which is six percent, but less than the 12 percent return for some savings certificates. The judgement here is based on a projected inflation rate of zero.

Scenario 3: Inflation at 5 percent, real rate of return at 6 percent

Now let's bring in inflation. For illustrative purposes, if inflation is five percent, then the real value of the UPS is much less after discounting for inflation. The real rate is calculated by subtracting the rate of inflation from the nominal interest rate. In this case, the real rate of return is six percent.

Still worse, if inflation continues at the same rate for 42 years of saving, and another 20 years after that, the discounted value of your total pension is even less. Actually, the purchasing power of Tk 64,776 in 2065 is a fraction of the nominal value if you factor in a five percent rate of inflation, and it keeps on declining further as you approach 80 years of age.

I, therefore, advise the pension authority to keep an eye on the financial and sociological factors in view as they design the new UPS. They will need to build trust among the public to ensure the success of this important programme.



▲ STOCK ILLUSTRATION

for a family that is currently not putting away any money for the future, an opportunity to save in a pension fund may provide an incentive to save.

In the following (hypothetical) example, I use some basic mathematics and very simple assumptions to illustrate the principle. I arrived at the conclusion that the incentive for a prospective participant in the scheme is less than enticing, given that there are many other alternatives available in Bangladesh.

Scenario 1: No inflation and zero rate of return (no investment outlet)

If an 18-year-old worker joins the programme from day one, say in January 2023, he or she will contribute Tk 1,000 per month. The total over the next 42 years will amount to Tk 504,000 if the money is sitting idle in the government's coffers. According to the finance minister's figures, when this worker turns 60 in January 2065, he or she receives Tk 64,776 in monthly pension and keeps on receiving this fixed amount over the next 20 years. In total, he or she will have received Tk 1,55,46,240 till

If the public is wary of its competency, honesty or corruption, they might be hesitant to hand over their savings to the government.

War or Peace, Barbarism or Hope?

Anis Chowdhury is adjunct professor at Western Sydney University and the University of New South Wales, Australia.

Jomo Kwame Sundaram is a former economics professor and a former assistant secretary-general for economic development at the United Nations.

ANIS CHOWDHURY and JOMO KWAME SUNDARAM

THE spectre of "stagflation" threatens the world once again. This time, the risk is the direct consequence of political provocations and war.

Stagflation is a composite word implying inflation with stagnation. Stagnation refers to weak, "near zero" growth, inevitably worsening unemployment.

The term "stagflation" was supposedly first used in 1965 by Iain Macleod, then UK Conservative Party economic spokesperson. It caught on in the 1970s, when high inflation and unemployment ended an economic era dubbed the "Golden Age of capitalism" describing the post-World War 2 boom.

Normally, in a recession, the inflation rate—i.e., the overall rate at which prices increase—falls. As unemployment rises, wages come under pressure, consumers and businesses spend less, reducing demand for goods and services, slowing price rises. Similarly, when the economy booms, the labour market tightens, pushing up wages, in turn passed on to consumers via increasing prices. Thus, inflation rises and unemployment falls during a boom.

However, stagflation poses a dilemma for central banks. Normally, when economies stall, central banks try to stimulate growth by cutting interest rates, encouraging more borrowing, and thus spending. But that could also fuel further price rises and higher inflation. On the other hand, if they raise interest rates to check inflation, growth may slow even more, further worsening unemployment.

The growth of world trade after WW2 increased demand for the US dollar,

the de facto world currency under the 1944 Bretton Woods (BW) international monetary agreement. During the 1960s, US economic growth was increasingly sustained by government military and social expenditure. Spending increased for both "defence", especially the Vietnam War, and President Lyndon B Johnson's social programmes.

As LBJ was reluctant to acknowledge the rising costs of the Vietnam War, it was difficult to raise taxes to pay for his "swords and ploughshares" spending. Instead, spending was financed by government debt, from selling US Treasury bonds. Thus, the world financed US government spending, including the war.

US monetary policy was obligingly expansionary. Unsurprisingly, inflation shot up from 1.1 percent during 1960-64 to 4.3 percent in 1965-70. Higher inflation also eroded US competitiveness, further worsening its balance of payments deficit, and undermining US ability to honour its BW commitment to maintain full convertibility to gold at USD 35 per ounce. This obligation did not go unnoticed by foreign governments and currency speculators.

As inflation rose in the late 1960s, US dollars were increasingly converted to gold. In August 1971, US President Richard M Nixon ended the exchange of dollars for gold by foreign central banks, effectively violating its BW commitment. A last-ditch attempt to salvage the international monetary system—through the short-lived Smithsonian Agreement—failed soon after. By 1973, the post-WW2 BW international monetary arrangements were effectively done with.

Oil exporting, European and other countries which held reserves in US dollars suddenly found their assets worth much less. With Venezuela, the Middle East-led Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) reacted by dropping their earlier willingness to keep oil prices low.

In October 1973, "nationalist" Saudi monarch Faisal embargoed oil exports to nations supporting Israel. The oil

price almost quadrupled—from USD 3 to nearly USD 12 per barrel when the embargo ended in March 1974. This rise was paralleled by great increases in other commodity prices during 1973-74.

Commodity supply shocks and higher commodity prices increased production costs, consumer prices and unemployment. As rising consumer prices triggered demands for higher wages, these in turn increased consumer prices. Thus, wage-price spirals accelerated price increases and inflation.

The 1979 Iranian revolution triggered a second oil price shock. The resulting "great inflation" saw US prices rise over 14 percent in 1980. In the UK—then deemed the "sick man of Europe"—inflation averaged 12 percent a year during 1973-75, peaking at 24 percent in 1975.

In the 1960s, unemployment in the seven major industrial countries—Canada, France, West Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the US—rarely exceeded 3.25 percent. But by mid-1982, it rose to 8 percent, exacerbated by interest rate hikes, ostensibly to fight inflation.

In October 2021, the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank, the US Fed and other such institutions believed the factors driving inflation were transitory. None of these authorities saw an urgent need for interest rate hikes.

But in the last month, the war in Ukraine and sanctions against Russia have driven up the prices of commodities such as wheat and oil. This will exacerbate rising inflation in much of the developed world.

This time, 'stagflation' is the direct consequence of political choices, especially for war, not unavoidable economic trends. Developing countries are fast learning where they really stand in this unequal world of endless war, e.g., from the European treatment of Ukrainian refugees.

Peace is therefore imperative. The alternative is the barbarism of conflict among big powers in which most of us have no vested interests.

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In the last month, the war in Ukraine and sanctions against Russia have driven up the prices of commodities such as wheat and oil. This will exacerbate rising inflation in much of the developed world.

Where is our independent prosecution service?



'JUSTICE'
IN PRACTICE

TAQBIR HUDA

Taqbir Huda is the advocacy lead for the Gender Justice and Diversity Programme at Brac.

ALTHOUGH we frequently hear calls for justice whenever a grievous crime takes place, the role of public prosecutors, i.e. the very individuals who conduct criminal cases in court on behalf of the state, is seldom—if ever—discussed.

Three state actors play the most important roles in ensuring justice for a crime. The police record the complaint and investigate the crime. The public prosecutor presents the case in court and formulates arguments as to why the accused ought to be convicted. Finally, the judge weighs the evidence and arguments put forth by both sides, and decides whether there is sufficient evidence to punish the accused, or whether they must be acquitted. While we commonly acknowledge the important role of police and judges in ensuring justice and subject them to some critique, public prosecutors often escape public scrutiny, despite playing a role that is no less important than the other two actors.

Although members of the police force are recruited through the Bangladesh Civil Service, and judges are recruited through the Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission, no such recruitment system exists for public prosecutors. As a result, there is no officially prescribed selection criteria for public prosecutors that is based on merit and qualifications, nor is there any permanent service regulation to ensure their efficiency and accountability. Section 492 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 gives the government the power to appoint public prosecutors. Currently, public prosecutors, additional public prosecutors, special public

prosecutors and assistant public prosecutors are appointed by the Solicitor Wing of the Law and Justice Division under the law ministry.

According to the Justice Audit in 2018, public prosecutors in metro areas receive a daily fee of Tk 500, and a monthly allowance of Tk 2,000. In non-metro areas, their daily fee is Tk 250, while the monthly allowance is Tk 1,500. Assistant public prosecutors receive a daily fee of Tk 200 in both areas, but no monthly allowance. Given such meagre pay, prosecutors often engage in private practice, which hampers their state duties, or seek additional income through other means, according to a 2016 research report on criminal justice in Bangladesh by the International Crisis Group.

Experts have long called for an independent prosecutorial service in Bangladesh. In 2006, at a Regional Workshop on Strengthening the Criminal Justice System arranged by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the then Law Minister Moudud Ahmed highlighted our disintegrated public prosecution system as one of the two key weaknesses of the criminal justice system in Bangladesh, the other being weak investigation. He said, "Bangladesh has no permanent public prosecutors. Every political government appoints its own political allies in the public prosecutorial service to serve at its pleasure and only while its term lasts... The ad hoc nature of their appointment prevents continuity in service and accountability." He mentioned that as an "initial step," the law ministry had prepared a law to introduce a permanent attorney service in Bangladesh, so that public prosecutors would be "recruited purely on merit basis after passing a national examination like that taken by other civil servants... As permanent appointees, they will be made accountable in the performance of their duties." This law was not, however, passed during his



ILLUSTRATION:
AFIA JAHIN

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tenure. More recently, in January 2017, the then Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha had denounced the partisan bias in appointing public prosecutors at a meeting of the Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee. He said, "Earlier, in every district, the famous and renowned lawyers used to be appointed as APP in criminal cases. This post was dignified. But now they [those who are loyal to the ruling party] are being recruited instead of the experienced lawyers."

Interestingly, the last caretaker government had promulgated the Government Attorney Services Ordinance, 2008, which had set up a separate and permanent Government Attorney Services Department. The purpose of this department was to appoint, train, retain and administer government law officers to ensure effective representation of the state in the judicial process in the Supreme Court, district courts and upazila courts. However, as ordinances are laws that are made in the absence of parliament, Article 93 of the constitution requires them to receive parliamentary approval at the first parliamentary session after any ordinance is promulgated. In

absence of such approval, it will cease to have effect, as was the fate of the Government Attorney Services Ordinance.

Notably, Section 1.4.3 of the Eighth Five Year Plan (2020-2025) published by the Bangladesh Planning Commission specifically states establishment of an independent prosecution service as one of the key targets in relation to improvement in governance and institutions. It mentions that "primarily 70 percent of this attorney service appointment will be from registered advocates which will be selected by government. Rest 30 percent will be recommended by Judicial Service Commission to appoint. Before, adhering to the appointing process, it will develop attorney service appointing rule, disciplinary rule, service rule, posting and promotion guidelines, in service training procedures, etc."

Although the Eighth Five Year Plan states that the "government will gradually execute this decision," whether an independent prosecutorial service will in fact be established in the coming years remains to be seen. A useful starting point for the government in introducing this long overdue service would be to consult the Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1990. Under Article 2 of the guidelines, member states must ensure that the "selection criteria for prosecutors embody safeguards against appointments based on partiality or prejudice," and excludes any discrimination against a person on any grounds, such as political status. Article 4 of the guidelines requires the states to ensure that prosecutors are able to perform their professional functions without improper interference.

As we celebrate 51 years of independence, how much longer must we wait to see the introduction of an independent prosecution service that can truly combat crime?

PR is the missing link in RMG sector



RMG NOTES

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

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).

"PUBLICITY is absolutely critical. A good PR story is infinitely more effective than a front page ad."

This quote is from Sir Richard Branson, British business magnate and founder of the Virgin Group. He knows a thing or two about public relations. Whether one likes him or not, there is no question that he has used the media brilliantly to promote his businesses, and ultimately become one of the world's most successful entrepreneurs.

I've always been a great believer in the power of public relations. When one looks around our industry, PR is a tool which is being used more widely than ever. It used to be just newspapers that were used to spread messages. But now we have social media platforms, which, in many cases, are just as powerful, if not more so.

I see our customers, fashion brands and retailers using PR to a powerful effect. Online-only brands like Boohoo would not have been able to reach the heights they have without employing smart PR strategies. Such strategies have helped

these and other new, online brands to break the monopoly of traditional high street retailers. That's the power of PR.

But what about manufacturers? In some countries, I see ready-made garment (RMG) makers now using PR to great effect. They issue regular press releases which are used far and wide internationally. Some of the stories that are better are picked up by dozens of publications. How much would it cost to get this level of exposure via straightforward advertising? The answer is tens of thousands of dollars. Manufacturers simply do not have this kind of money to throw around, so PR is a better, less risky avenue that offers a far better return on investment.

Right now, there is a huge opportunity for Bangladesh garment makers to promote themselves internationally. And the beauty of using PR is that they don't even have to leave the country to do it. In the past two years since the pandemic engulfed our industry, promotion has been a real challenge for Bangladeshi manufacturers. The traditional shows, conferences and events they went to have not been in operation. Many manufacturers have consequently "fallen off the radar" from a publicity viewpoint.

The thing is, lots of people in the know say that, in future, we will see less live conferences and events, because businesses have realised that you don't necessarily need to leave the office to

promote your work. A work-from-home culture has developed, especially among our customers in the West. There are talks of offices being closed down for good as businesses seek to cut costs by allowing staff to work remotely. Retailers are also said to have realised how much money they can save by not having their staff fly around the world.

Against such a backdrop, the importance of PR becomes more pronounced than ever. It is time for our garment makers to embrace what PR has to offer.

How can they do this? There are several avenues which they can explore, and none of them need to break the bank. Are manufacturers on social media? If not, they should be. Just a simple presence there, even if they are not very active, provides another form of contact with the outside world. That in itself is PR in action.

Manufacturers can also issue their own press releases. They don't need an external agency to do this for them. If a manufacturer has done something new or different, if they have a new technology or product, why not tell the world about it? People would be amazed at how much global interest there is in the fashion industry and what is happening in supply chains.

Journalism—great stories—is always about people. That's why I would urge any manufacturer to tell stories that

focus on individuals within the business. The most important people, of course, are garment workers. So why not bring their stories to life?

Ultimately, PR is just another way to make your business more competitive. In fact, I would argue that it is the icing on the cake when it comes to improving competitive advantage. Put another way, you can have the best products in the world, the most sustainable operations around, but they won't mean anything if you don't tell people about them.

I actually know of many great manufacturers in Bangladesh who are doing amazing work. They have some remarkable stories to tell, but they keep quiet about them. Look at all the Gold-rated LEED factories in Bangladesh. We have more such factories than any other country in the world; yet, when do we hear their stories? And be in no doubt about it, there is a wonderful story to be told here.

Of course, if manufacturers engage in better PR, this has a double benefit as it helps with the broader promotion of our garment industry. The promotion of Bangladesh as a brand is in all our interests right now. Pushing this brand is a collective effort, which can be improved considerably via the individual PR efforts of RMG makers across the country. It's time to start banging the drum for Bangladesh.

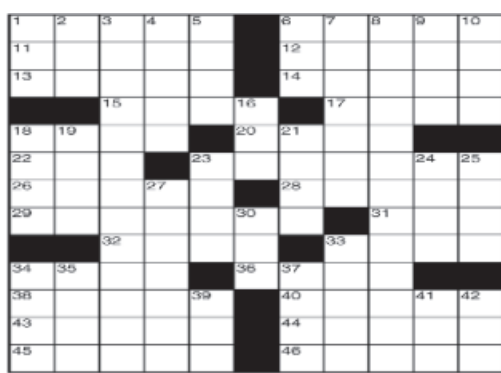
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CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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| ACROSS | 32 Spot | 8 "You can't arrest me!" |
| 1 Like good brownies | 33 Rainbow maker | 9 Call for |
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| 14 Copier need | 43 Buenos — | 21 Brooklyn team |
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| 26 Earthy color | 2 Early hour | 34 Do the decks |
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| 31 Join the crew | 5 Circus sight | 39 Snaky shape |
| | 6 Be decisive | 41 Vein makeup |
| | 7 Lead the way | 42 Combo instrument |



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

M A S S C O R P U S
A C H E U N E A S E
I R O N R E G R E T
N E W D E L H I
J O I N T I M I N S E T
A R M T A N G O
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A S S E T O F T
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A C T I V E I R A N
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MUZAFFAR AHMAD'S Unexpected Turn in Life

SUCHETANA CHATTOPADHYAY



Muzaffar Ahmad (1889-1973), one of the earliest communists in India, became the representative figure of a socialist and communist circle in Bengal during 1921-22. His life had taken a turn that involved a rejection of mainstream politics based on the identities of 'nation' and 'community'. He and his fellow activists stepped out of the confines of nationalism dominated by the Hindu *bhadralok* landed caste-classes, of political movements based on perceptions of Muslim exclusivity and of the primacy of ethnolinguistic identities. They came to regard class politics from below as the source of freedom. Class-consciousness, therefore, was regarded as a space beyond the politics of identities.

A MIGRANT

Muzaffar Ahmad, born in 1889 on the remote coastal island of Sandwip on the Bay of Bengal, was one of many who travelled to the city in search of colonial education. He was also eager to become a part of the urban literati. Musapur, his village, was indistinguishable from other villages in every respect except for its weekly *haat* (village market). The material conditions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries indicated island life encouraged migration. Limited education and job opportunities meant a section of the male children from genteel families would leave the island in search of livelihood. For them, growing up meant moving away from rural origins. Those from the impoverished peasant families also left.

Muzaffar was the youngest child of his parents, Mansoor Ali and Chuna Bibi. In 1910, he shifted to Noakhali District School and completed his secondary education. The stages of Muzaffar's migration to the city were intertwined with insufficient access to colonial higher education in the districts. Muzaffar arrived in Kolkata in 1913 and enrolled as a college student. Having failed to qualify in the pre-graduation examination, he gave up on attaining formal education. Though

journalism in 1920 was also a step in this direction. By late 1921, he had aligned himself with a left political course.

THE LEFT TURN

The international anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist groundswell at the end of the First World War encouraged a group of urban intellectuals and political activists, predominantly Muslim, to initiate an early socialist nucleus in Kolkata (1922-1924). The failure of the Non-Cooperation and the Khilafat Movements and the disillusionment with mainstream political ideologies of 'nation' and 'community' set the immediate local context for the popularisation of a 'class'-based anti-colonial tendency.

The first attempt to offer a Marxist and Leninist critique of Indian society and its anti-colonial movement came in the form of a leaflet, M. N. Roy and Abani Mukherjee's 'Manifesto to

Muzaffar Ahmad moved independently towards Marxist and Leninist ideology. No link with the Third International existed before late 1921. Yet, an anti-Bolshevik surveillance network was already in place by this time, and its origins could be traced back to the closing years of the First World War. The police started following Muzaffar Ahmad's correspondence with M. N. Roy in 1922, and he was arrested in 1923. In May 1924, Colonel Cecil Kaye, director of the Central Intelligence Bureau, specially congratulated the Intelligence Branch of the Bengal Police for the efforts in bringing the 'Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case' to 'a satisfactory conclusion'. Two of the four accused, Nalini Gupta and Muzaffar Ahmad, were from Bengal and statements of police officers as prosecution witnesses played a key role in their quick conviction by the colonial state.

After his release from prison, Muzaffar

vocabulary, and to spell certain Bangla words in ways that delinked them from their Arabic and Persian roots. Simultaneously he wrote in a modern style that originated from the great nineteenth-century Hindu *bhadralok* writers. He also mastered reticent humour through his sentence structures. This acted as a tool of subversion while the prose was adapted to put forward the social interests of the lower orders of society. Therefore, his writings were examples of radicalism in the formal sense as well. One way of arriving at class-based politics was an interpretation of 'freedom' and, more importantly, identifying its enemies. 'Bharat Kano Swadhin Noy?' ('Why is India Not Free?') offered an analysis of class forces, obstructing 'freedom' for the vast majority of peasants and workers.

Muzaffar turned to the autobiographical genre from the late 1950s and continued writing

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad (1889-1973)

Muzaffar Ahmad became friends with anti-colonial Urdu and Bangla Muslim political activists engaging with labour issues and organisation of strikes by workers, which strengthened the ongoing Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements. His turn toward radical political journalism in 1920 was also a step in this direction.



Portrait of 25 of the Meerut Prisoners taken outside the jail (early 1930s). Back row (left to right): K. N. Sehgal, S. S. Josh, H. L. Hutchinson, Shaukat Usmani, B. F. Bradley, A. Prasad, P. Spratt, G. Adhikari. Middle Row: R. R. Mitra, Gopen Chakravarti, Kishori Lal Ghosh, L. R. Kadam, D. R. Thengdi, Goura Shanker, S. Bannerjee, K. N. Joglekar, P. C. Joshi, Muzaffar Ahmad. Front Row: M. G. Desai, D. Goswami, R.S. Nimbkar, S.S. Mirajkar, S.A. Dange, S. V. Ghate, Gopal Basak.

the 36th Indian National Congress, Ahmedabad, 1921'. Smuggled into India and circulated by Roy's contacts, it projected 'complete independence' as the foremost demand. The leaflet argued for a transformation of the Congress into a platform for the majority of the population, namely the workers and the peasants. Roy was also carefully building a combined analysis of the Indian proletariat, reformism in trade union circles, and imperialist and anti-imperialist strategies. He criticised nationalist ideology, including its 'extremist' variant, for its dependence on Hindu revivalist forms and subordination of working-class and peasant demands. The process of forming a socialist network in Kolkata and Bengal gained momentum after Nalini Gupta, M. N. Roy's emissary, arrived. Probably having heard of Muzaffar and Nazrul's socialist leanings, he met them during the last week of December 1921. After they met, Muzaffar learnt that an émigré Indian Communist Party had emerged in Soviet Tashkent in 1920 under M. N. Roy's leadership and the Communist International's directions. Nalini Gupta decided Muzaffar was best equipped to be the Third International's contact in Kolkata.

Dissemination of socialist literature and ideas was one of Muzaffar's principal aims. Since Muzaffar was part of the wider anti-colonial literary circle in Kolkata and had access to periodicals and journalists, he also managed to influence some radical anti-imperialist Bangla Muslim periodicals. During his correspondence with Roy in 1922-23, he was encouraged to take over and transform *Moslem Jagat* (Moslem World) into a communist newspaper. The paper enjoyed a brief existence, and Muzaffar's stint there as the de facto editor was even shorter, lasting only a few months. Nevertheless, his own efforts among Muslim anti-colonial activists and Roy's correspondence with *bhadralok* revolutionaries yielded results. British Intelligence reports complained that 'extremist' newspapers were spreading Bolshevik ideas.

attended the first Communist Conference at Kanpur in December 1925, which helped forge an all India network. He returned to Kolkata and, in 1926, joined his comrades from the left circle to organise the Peasants and Workers Party (renamed Workers and Peasants Party), the open legal organisation of the Communist Party of India, which was banned. The mouthpiece of this group was *Langal* (The Plough), which reappeared as *Ganabani* (Voice of the Masses) and consciously promoted left ideas, analysis and literature. Political analysis and critical reportage, fiction and non-fiction, prose and poetry dealt with social oppressions and institutional mechanisms to perpetuate and enforce them.

During the second half of the 1920s, significant shifts in the realm of politics were evident in Bengal. Historians have overwhelmingly focused on the impact of these changes, introduced by colonial constitutional reforms, which intensified communal polarisations and the related making of segmented 'constituencies'. Only a few have treated the demands for redistributive justice from below, expressed through new approaches to political identity and movements. The role of Muzaffar Ahmad and his colleagues in systematically developing a left perspective on contemporary social conflicts through a prism of 'class' started during this period. This ideological orientation also made them look beyond urban metropolitan boundaries, even if Kolkata was the centre of activism. The first socialist organisation signalled the appearance of a new kind of political formation in the history of modern Bengal. Its structure and expansion also created a political space for wider receptions of communist ideas and practices in the region. Organisation among workers, several militant strikes and attempts to influence the youth again attracted police attention. As strike actions gained ascendancy and plans were made to build a peasant league, the colonial state became eager to suppress the left current in general and communism in particular. In 1929, Muzaffar Ahmad was arrested and put on trial along with 30 others in the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case (1929-31), the most protracted judicial process in the history of colonial India. Muzaffar Ahmad was the Chief Accused and received the longest sentence. The individual and joint statements of those charged with sedition popularised communist ideas by receiving wide press coverage in the depths of the Great Depression. The communists challenged 'imperialism from the dock'.

A WRITER

In 1913, Muzaffar Ahmad was just one more in the sea of migrants from rural Bengal to Kolkata. His ambition was to be a writer. Yet, in the vortex of metropolitan upheavals, his life would take a completely different direction. Muzaffar Ahmad's emergence as a communist polemical writer in the second half of the 1920s mirrored a break from his earliest intellectual engagements. An advocate of a distinct language that was rare in the 1920s, his prose style, shaped by radical modernist perceptions, attracted only a small left readership even if other writers acknowledged its significance later. During his career as a Bangalee Muslim cultural polemicist, Muzaffar supported Islamic content, but not Islamisation of form, opposing artificial Arabisation or Sanskritisation. As his political outlook changed, his rejection of attempts to communalise the Bangla language became even more pronounced. Muzaffar refused to do away with Arabic and Persian words, which had been part of the Bangla

during the 1960s while in and out of prison as the undivided CPI faced a split. This would culminate in the formation of another party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), in 1964, independent of Moscow and Peking, which he joined as one of the senior-most communist leaders. His memoirs generated controversy and recalled his days as the leading figure on the left and the literary world with Nazrul at its centre. The revised and final versions, including a major sourcebook on communism in India, *Amar Jibon o Bharater Communist Party* (My Life and the Communist Party of India), were mainly completed and published during the last ten years of his life (1963-73). Muzaffar's emphasis on documents to support his version of events and their context was motivated by the desire to give his narrative a sense of historicity, even if he was adamant that the exercise was to remember his past. The prose style of Muzaffar's autobiographical writings reflected the same syncretic modern language which had evolved during the early decades of the twentieth century.

IN THE CITY

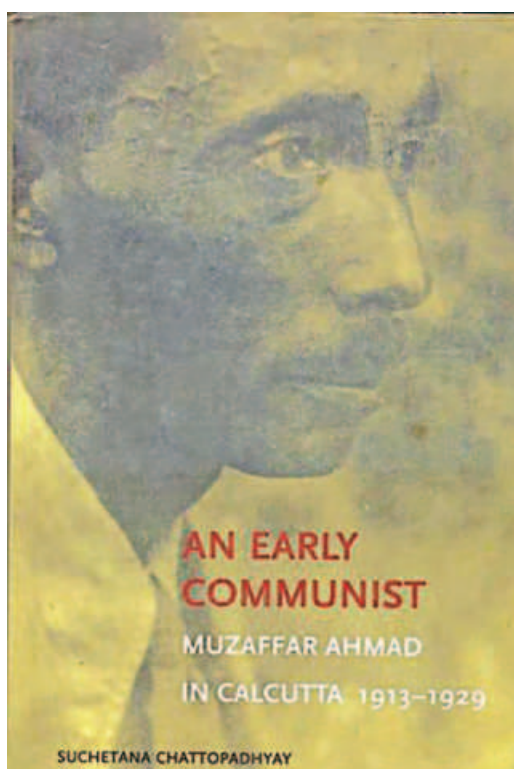
Muzaffar Ahmad's autobiographical accounts centred around, veered away from and always returned to Kolkata, despite the momentous upheavals and uncertainties he was to experience in the urban space and the region from the 1910s to the early 1970s. He and the other early communists journeyed from obscurity in the political wilderness to become radical veterans who paved the way for the later emergence of a mass party and movement. After the Partition, the relegation of East Bengal, in his own words, to 'not just a foreign land but a distant foreign land', even occasional contact with relatives became increasingly difficult to maintain. He visited his friends and relatives, his daughter, grandson and the family in 1972 after Bangladesh was born. This was a final gesture of farewell to Eastern Bengal, where he was born. He died the following year in Kolkata. Towards the end of his life, he remarked: 'My attachment to atheist materialism increases each day. It is said, as people grow older, they become increasingly inclined toward the spirit. In my case, I notice the opposite. I am becoming even more attached to [the world of] matter each year.' Munshi Alimuddin had died long before Muzaffar Ahmad arrived in the city. Yet the nineteenth-century Urdu writer's unobtrusive shadow seems to have followed Muzaffar from the beginning to the end of his time in Kolkata. During the 1910s, Muzaffar found employment as a private tutor and stayed in the house of Alimuddin. Whenever the spectre of destitution visited in the early 1920s, he could seek asylum there. This association was strangely rekindled in the later decades of his life when a communist commune and office were set up at Alimuddin Street, named after the late writer. It became the Bengal headquarters of his party from the 1960s. Following his death, the office was moved to a new building named after Muzaffar Ahmad on the same street. When Muzaffar reached the city in 1913, his ambition was to be a writer. What Munshi Alimuddin became in nineteenth-century Kolkata eluded him. The interplay between his social being and social consciousness took him in directions he could not have envisaged at the moment of his arrival.

Suchetana Chattopadhyay, Professor, Department of History, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, is the author of *An Early Communist: Muzaffar Ahmad in Calcutta 1913-1929* (Tulika, Delhi 2011).



Cover of Muzaffar Ahmad's autobiography.

Muzaffar was in college briefly, College Street and its surrounding neighbourhoods, associated with the intelligentsia as well as subterranean and prominent political currents, remained his regular haunt. In the course of the 1910s, he became engaged with Bangiya Mussalman Sahitya Samiti (Bengali Muslim Literary Society) and its journal, *Bangiya Mussalman Sahitya Patrika* (Bengali Muslim Literary Magazine). He had initially wished to devote himself to thoughtful essays on the glories of Islamic culture. However, he gradually involved himself in political activities since, in his milieu, culture and politics had become explicitly intertwined. His political experiences as a marginalised figure on the fringes of society made him focus on the wider anti-colonial struggle and the social questions concerning equality and inequality which they generated. Involvement in militant labour politics heightened during 1920-21 in Kolkata and its suburbs. A simultaneous switch to radical journalism increasingly made him write about the political movements of workers and peasants. Soon Muzaffar developed links with bookshops selling socialist literature under the counter. He became friends with anti-colonial Urdu and Bangla Muslim political activists engaging with labour issues and organisation of strikes by workers, which strengthened the ongoing Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements. His turn toward radical political



Cover of *An Early Communist: Muzaffar Ahmad in Calcutta, 1913-1929*



Bangladesh spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz appeals vehemently as his teammates join in unison during the fourth day of the first Test against South Africa at Kingsmead in Durban on Sunday. A number of appeals were turned by the two umpires, some of which were overturned on review while a few proved to be umpire's call. Meanwhile, (bottom) Yasir Ali's catch was the highlight of Bangladesh's fielding yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Big guns cancel one another

SPORTS REPORTER

Title aspirants Abahani squandered a glorious opportunity to close the gap with leaders Bashundhara Kings after surrendering a lead to play out a thrilling 2-2 draw against the defending champions at the Sylhet District Stadium yesterday.

The result means Kings maintain their six-point gap with Abahani, on third place with 19 points from equal ten matches, after second-placed Sheikh Jamal DC beat Swadhinata KS 3-1 at the Muktiyoddha Smriti Stadium in Rajshahi yesterday.

Meanwhile, at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj, hosts Saif Sporting Club registered an emphatic 3-0 win over Uttar Baridhara Club while Chittagong Abahani beat Muktiyoddha Sangsad 2-1 at the Shaheed Dharendra Nath Datta Stadium in Cumilla.

At Sylhet, the home side Abahani expectedly dominated the beginning to create two clear chances before Costa Rican forward Daniel Colindres gave the Sky Blues a deserving lead in the 20th minute with a left-footed drive after Monir Hossain whipped a cross from the right flank.



Seven minutes later, Kings suffered a huge blow as midfielder Sohel Rana was shown the red card for slapping Abahani's midfielder Emon Mahmud. With a man advantage, Abahani strengthened their foothold in the game, however, Kings goal-keeper Anisur Rahman Zico denied Colindres and Brazilian Dorielton Gomes towards the end of first half.

And at the stroke of half time, Rakibul Hasan destroyed Abahani's momentum after being sent off in stoppage time as the winger lost his temper and hit Rimon Hossain.

After interval, a determined Kings made the game almost one-sided but Rimon and substitute Eleta Kingsly narrowly missed converting two chances, much relief for Abahani goalkeeper Shahidul Alam Sohel, in the beginning of second half. With Abahani looking dead and buried in face Kings' barrage of attacks, Eleta was once again denied by keeper Sohel on the hour-mark but Eleta found his shot home following a deflection in the 64th minute.

Kings kept pressing through the left flank to get the lead and five minutes later, Robson Da Silva's clever shot from outside the box, assisted by Masuk Mia, put the away side in the driving seat.

Abahani, shocked by two quick goals, brought on Nabib Newaj Jibon and Jewel Rana and it paid dividends immediately. Brazilian Dorielton Gomes brilliantly levelled the margin in the 84th minute after Jibon and Jewel nicely combined.

With scores tied at 2-2, Kings refused to settle for a draw as Eleta and substitute Suman Reza came close to hitting the winner. In the end though, Kings looked happy to keep their gap with Abahani intact.

Taskin, Shoriful coming back

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh pacers Taskin Ahmed and Shoriful Islam will return home after the first Test against South Africa in Durban due to injuries, informed the Bangladesh Cricket Board's chief selector Minhajul Abedin on Sunday.

Taskin, despite battling a shoulder injury, bowled on the fourth day of the ongoing Test and also bagged the wickets of South Africa skipper Dean Elgar and spinner Keshav Maharaj. "Taskin and Shoriful are coming home after this Test match." "We will take a look at them when they are back. We are trying to find out how Taskin got injured. We have four fast bowlers remaining in the squad. So we are covered," he added.

Shoriful was ruled out of the first Test due to multiple injuries including an ankle niggle, as per coach Russell Domingo.

Umpires' dependency on reviews in question

SPORTS REPORTER

It was a tough day at the office for Bangladesh on the fourth day of the first Test against South Africa in Durban, but the Tigers showed their fighting instincts after a few dropped catches had dampened the mood.

At stumps, Bangladesh were on 11 for three and need another 263 to win, having bundled the hosts out for 204 in their second innings.

But the focus of yesterday remained the umpiring, with South African on-field umpires Adrian Holdstock and Marais



dismissal in South Africa's second innings was only confirmed after a review. It was among eight decisions changed after review.

Unfortunately, Bangladesh were largely got the shorter end of that poor umpiring display, which started from the second over of the day bowled by Mehedi Hasan Miraz. South African skipper Elgar survived a close leg before shout after the ball hit his back leg and Bangladesh captain Mominul Haque reviewed the decision from Erasmus before it was ultimately upheld due to the umpire's call. Elgar, who rode his luck during a 64-run knock, was only given out after the Tigers took opted for a review after Erasmus had again turned down their appeals.

Nazmul Abedeen Fahim, a prominent

coach and mentor to cricketers like Shakib Al Hasan, expressed disappointment over the umpiring on social media, questioning the rule regarding umpire's calls.

"The rule was introduced to give the benefit of doubt to the batters. If the umpire thought it was close, he could give it. But the original rule is that it should be given out if the ball is going on to hit the wicket. In some ways, bowlers have been deprived because of the umpire's call. But it's still fair because that is how the game is being played," Fahim told The Daily Star.

"But when you see so many similar instances, you may feel like the umpires are trying to take that benefit away or trying to shift the advantage. It may seem like the umpire is trying to favour someone and that's what I felt today (Sunday). Eventually, we saw Mominul refrain from taking reviews because of that. If umpires depend totally on reviews, does actual umpiring ultimately exist? The umpire's decision may vary once in a while, but if it happens on a regular basis then that umpire's reputation suffers."

Star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who missed out on the Test series due to personal reasons, tweeted yesterday that the time had come for the International Cricket Council to bring back neutral umpires.

"I think it's time for ICC to back to neutral umpires as the Covid-19 situation is okay in most cricket-playing countries," Shakib wrote.

SCORES IN BRIEF (DAY-4)

SOUTH AFRICA

First innings- 367 all out and Second innings- 204 all out (Elger 64; Miraz 3-85, Ebadot 3-40, Taskin 2-24)

BANGLADESH

First innings- 298 all out and Second innings- 11 for 3 (Joy 4, Shadman 0, Mominul 2, Shanto 5 not out, Mushfiqur 0 not out; Maharaj 2-7, Harmer 1-4)

Erasmus dominating discussion.

At least ten reviews were overturned between the teams, four of which were decided by the umpire's call. Dean Elgar's

Tail-enders make the difference in thrillers

SPORTS REPORTER

Ripon Mondol was the star of the show for Shinepukur Cricket Club as they clinched a nail-biting Dhaka Premier League (DPL) match against Rugganj Tigers with one wicket and two balls to spare at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Ripon started with the ball, picking up three wickets for 30 runs while Alauddin Babu, Hasan Murad and Sikandar Raza bagged two each. Losing wickets throughout the innings, Fazole Mahmud's 52 saw Rugganj Tigers reach a fighting score of 172 before being bowled out.

After the exchange, Shinepukur fell under the spell of spinners Nasum Ahmed and Aparajith Baba and slumped to 37 for five. Nasum picked up both openers Avishek Mitra and Anisul Islam for naught in the very first over before scalping Mahidul Islam in his next over.

A 55-run sixth-wicket stand between Raza and Rahutul Ferdous revived their chase and when Raza fell for 48 after Aparajith accounted for Ferdous, over 60 runs were required.

Babu struck a useful 22 but left number 10 and 11 batters Ripon and Murad with the task of getting 30 more

runs. Incredibly, Ripon played out 65 deliveries in a 28-run knock while Murad's unbeaten 13 saw the duo knock off the runs as Shinepukur won by one wicket.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi picked up a commanding nine-wicket victory over Gazi Group at BKSP ground 3 to go second in the standings.

Mrittunjoy Chowdhury and Ziaur Rahman picked up three wickets each to bundle Gazi Group out for 157 before Sheikh Jamal openers Shykat Ali (77 not out) and Saif Hassan (54) saw Sheikh Jamal coast to victory.

In the other match at BKSP ground 4, City Club picked up their first win in the tournament in another close encounter.

Amite Hasan's 85 and Salman Hossain's run-a-ball 66 saw Khelaghar Samaj Kallyan Samity reach 241 for seven.

City were moving along nicely with Zakirul Ahmed's 72 before Ashik Ul Alam's 74 got them closer but from the 43rd over onwards, they lost five wickets and added just 34 runs to slump to 240 for nine.

However, number 11 Shahriar Alam stepped up to the mark, hitting hit a six off the penultimate delivery of the innings to seize victory.



Napoli forward Lorenzo Insigne jumps for joy as his teammates follow him following his successful spot-kick against Atalanta in their Serie A fixture in Bergamo on Sunday. Napoli won the match 3-1.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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

DRAFT DIGITAL, OTT RULES

TIB warns of a surveillance-based state

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If the proposed regulation for the digital, social media and over-the-top (OTT) platforms is enforced, there will be a risk of Bangladesh becoming a "surveillance-based" country, Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Ittekkharuzzaman said yesterday.

Addressing a virtual press conference, the TIB boss said the proposed regulation largely contradicts the government's high-profile goal which is to build a Digital Bangladesh.

TIB organised the conference to brief the media about its position on the draft "Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Regulation for Digital, Social Media and OTT Platforms 2021".

The government published the first draft of the regulation in February for comments on it from different stakeholders.

The graft watchdog raised concerns over a number of clauses in the draft regulation, stressing the need for bringing significant changes to them before going for the enforcement.

According to clause 6.01 (d) of the draft regulation, either BTRC or a court with competent jurisdiction can issue a content removal request on grounds related to sovereignty, integrity or security of the country, decency or morality, friendly relationship with foreign

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Traders from across the country gather at Natun Bazar's Fishery Ghat in Chattogram to buy and sell both freshwater and saltwater fish. There are at least 200 major wholesalers at the fish market, who operate from 3:00am-8:00am. The fish from this market goes to the port city, Dhaka and several other districts. This photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Boro on 700 hectares submerged

DWOHA CHOWDHURY and MD AMINUL ISLAM

Hundreds of haor farmers in Sunamganj, Netrakona and Kishoreganj are left distraught after about 700 hectares of paddy fields became inundated in the last four days.

About 200 hectares of Boro paddy fields are submerged in Sunamganj's Tanguar Haor after the Nazarkhali levee broke due to a sudden rise in water level.

As much as 548 mm of rainfall was recorded in India's Meghalaya in the last two days, which caused the water level in Sunamganj rivers to soar two metres in two days, according to the Bangladesh Water Development Board in Sunamganj.

The sudden rise in water level triggered the early flash flood in the haor.

"We are in fear of losing our harvest if the water level keeps rising this way," said Sajidur Rahman, a

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Ukraine-Russia war will affect food security

FAO director general tells the Star

MAHFUZ ANAM

While the world was already passing through various challenges including Covid-19 pandemic, climate change that affected food production and supply chains, Ukraine war has further complicated the global situation in the food



sector. This is more so as Russia and Ukraine are major food suppliers of the world. The Daily Star reached out to UN Food and Agriculture Organization Director-General Qu Dongyu, who toured Bangladesh early March, via email to understand the crises and ways out.

DS: With Russia-Ukraine war, energy supplies are being disrupted and prices are going up. What are its implications and what is FAO's strategy to face this new situation?

Dongyu: Russia and Ukraine play a substantial role in global food production and supply. Together, they provide 19 percent of the world's barley supply, 14 percent of wheat, and 4 percent of maize, making up more than one-third of global cereal exports. The global fertilizer supply is also highly concentrated, with

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CRISIS IN SRI LANKA

Protesters defy curfew

Western diplomats express concern as social media platforms blocked

AFP, Colombo

Armed troops in Sri Lanka yesterday blocked an opposition march that defied a weekend curfew to protest the island nation's worsening economic crisis, after authorities imposed a social media blackout to contain public dissent.

The South Asian nation is facing severe shortages of food, fuel and other essentials, along with record inflation and crippling power cuts, in its most painful downturn since independence from Britain in 1948.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa imposed a state of emergency on Friday, the day after a crowd attempted to storm his home in the capital Colombo, and a nationwide curfew is in effect until this morning.

The Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), Sri Lanka's main opposition alliance, denounced a social media blackout aimed at quelling intensifying public demonstrations, and said it was time for the government to resign.

Troops armed with automatic assault rifles moved to stop a protest by opposition lawmakers and hundreds of their supporters attempting to march to the capital's Independence Square.

The road was barricaded a few hundred metres from the home of opposition leader Sajith Premadasa and the crowd engaged in a tense stand-off with security forces for nearly two hours before dispersing peacefully.

"President Rajapaksa better realise that the tide has already turned on his autocratic rule," SJB

lawmaker Harsha de Silva told AFP at the rally.

Fellow SJB legislator Eran Wickramaratne condemned the state of emergency declaration and the presence of troops on city streets.

"We can't allow a military takeover," he said. "They should know we are still a democracy."

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp were among the platforms shut down yesterday on the orders of defence authorities, internet service providers told their subscribers.

Private media outlets reported that the chief of Sri Lanka's internet regulator resigned after the order went into effect.

Western diplomats in Colombo expressed concern over the use of emergency laws to stifle democratic dissent and said they were closely monitoring developments.

The streets of the capital stayed largely empty yesterday, apart from the opposition protest and long lines of vehicles queued for fuel at service stations.

Mass protests had been called on social media before the ban went into effect, and organisers have since postponed the rallies until after the curfew is lifted today.

Small crowds defied the curfew on Saturday night to hold peaceful demonstrations in various neighbourhoods around Colombo which broke up without incident.

Cracks in the government have emerged, with the president's nephew Namal Rajapaksa announcing he had urged the government to

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LAND FOR ADMIN CADRE

SC blasts govt for not rehabilitating occupants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday blasted the government for acquiring a piece of land at Moghbazar in Dhaka as a vested property for the BCS Administration Multiple Welfare Cooperative Society without rehabilitating its current occupant.

"The issue of settlers has to be considered and disposed of first before their land is acquired. If we allow such acquisition of the land, then what is the necessity of this court," said Chief Justice Hasan Foz Siddique.

Siddique's comments came while presiding over a three-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC during the hearing of the leave to appeal petition filed by the government challenging a High Court verdict on the matter.

In 2012, the HC had declared illegal and scrapped the acquisition of 19.5 katha of land in Moghbazar, which was mutated in the name of one Sirajul Haq based on the power of attorney in 1946 by its original owner, one Birendranath Roy who had gone to India.

Haq, a freedom fighter commander, has died.

The HC verdict came following a writ petition filed by his wife Maleka Siraj and their five sons and daughter challenging the land ministry's decision to acquire the plot in favour of the BCS Administration Multiple Welfare Cooperative Society.

Such acquisition of the land will violate the

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Healy fires Aus to 7th WC title

REUTERS

Opener Alyssa Healy smashed a record 170 as Australia routed England by 71 runs to claim their seventh Women's World Cup win in Christchurch on Sunday.

Healy's belligerent 138-ball innings, the highest total in a World Cup final, helped Australia set a mammoth victory target of 357 at Hagley Oval which proved beyond the defending champions despite a fighting century by Nat Sciver.

Sciver's unbeaten 148 entertained the crowd but she played a lone hand as England were bowled out for 285 with six overs to spare.

"That was pretty special from our group," said wicketkeeper-batter Healy, player-of-the-match as well as the tournament.

"Our team sets out to win events like these.

"We have done it all but to do it on the biggest stage, I never imagined in my wildest dreams."

Meg Lanning's Australia finished unbeaten in nine matches, erasing their 2017 World Cup disappointment when they were stunned in the semi-finals by

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Australia's wicketkeeper-batter Alyssa Healy holds the trophy as she poses for photographs with the crowd following their 71-run victory over England in Women's World Cup final at Hagley Park Oval in Christchurch on Sunday. PHOTO: AFP

Ukraine accuses Russia of war crimes

Mass grave of nearly 300 people found in Bucha

AGENCIES

Ukraine yesterday accused Russian troops of war crimes after the discovery of mass graves and civilians apparently "executed" in the streets of Bucha, near the capital Kyiv.

The claims came as explosions rocked the Black Sea port city of Odessa, which has largely been spared in the conflict, with air strikes apparently targeting key infrastructure.

In Bucha, AFP reporters saw at least 20 bodies, all in civilian clothing, strewn across a single street. One had his hands tied behind his back with a white cloth, and his Ukrainian passport left open beside his body.

"All these people were shot," Bucha's mayor Anatoly Fedoruk said, adding that 280 other bodies had been buried in mass graves elsewhere in Bucha.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba called it a "deliberate massacre" and urged G7 countries to impose "devastating" sanctions

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