



A man walks past the remains of a house at KwaNdenezi township outside Durban, south Africa, on Friday. South Africa's flood-ravaged east was hit by more rain yesterday after the deadliest storm to strike the country in living memory killed nearly 400 people and left tens of thousands homeless.

PHOTO: AFP

#### RAID ON JERUSALEM'S AL-AQSA MOSQUE

## Fear of new conflict rises

AGENCIES

Almost one year after confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli security forces in Jerusalem led to war in the Gaza Strip, escalating tension in the city during the holy month of Ramadan has raised fears that events of 2021 could repeat.

At least 158 Palestinians were wounded when Israeli riot police raided the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound on Friday where they were met by stone throwing and hurled firecrackers.

The Al-Aqsa compound sits on a plateau in occupied East Jerusalem, which Israel captured in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed in a move not recognised by most in the international community.

For Muslims, the compound hosts Islam's third-holiest site, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the Dome of the Rock, a seventh-century structure believed to be where the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven.

The compound is also where Jews believe the Biblical Jewish temples once stood and is known to them as Temple Mount.

The contested site has been the focal point of the decades-long Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

"Jerusalem is perhaps the number one issue that has the potential of triggering wide-scale violence," said Khalil Shikaki, director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research. "We have seen that in the past," he said.

Deadly attacks on Israelis by Palestinians in the past two weeks and Israeli soldiers killing Palestinians in the occupied West Bank has caused outrage and the temperature in the holy city is reaching boiling point as the festivals of Ramadan, Passover and Easter are all marked this month.

At a rally in Gaza, a spokesman for Hamas, which rules the enclave, said that Israel's use of force at the holy site would not go unanswered.

Almost a year ago in May 2021, Palestinian armed groups fired rockets into Israel after

Hamas demanded Israeli police withdraw from Al-Aqsa and the Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, where a court threat to dispossess Palestinian residents led to protests and confrontations. In the 11-day war that followed, 250 Palestinians in Gaza and 13 people in Israel were killed.

The Israeli army has killed 47 Palestinians so far this year.



**The shortest way to peace is to supply weapons to Ukraine. From the international community, we need three things: weapons, weapons and weapons.**

Former Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko appeals to the international community

## Learning Bangla made kool

FROM PAGE 1

App Store in February and on Google Play store in March. So far downloaded to more than 1,200 devices, the app is getting the attention of second generation Bangladeshi children growing up abroad.

The idea of the app came to Razeeb Hasan Chowdhury, CEO of Banglaskool, from his own experience of trying to teach the language to his son. When Razeeb immigrated with his family to Canada in 2016, his son Jeeyon Chowdhury, who was only four then, understood and spoke Bangla.

But gradually as he started school, Jeeyon started forgetting Bangla, said Razeeb. When Razeeb and his wife tried to teach the language to Jeeyon, they discovered that children, exposed to modern technologies, do not relate to the language the way it is traditionally taught.

So Razeeb adopted new ways. He shuffled the letters around and instead of starting with the vowels, Razeeb started with an easy to write consonant like 'Bo', which is basically a triangle, he said. Then he incorporated games in the learning process to make it enjoyable.

The new method caught up with Jeeyon in less than three weeks. It also worked with some of his friend's children there.

"So then the idea came, why can't we make it a product or an app that can be accessed all over the world," Razeeb said.

The first module of the app has 52 lessons, each of



which teaches one letter or one sound with video tutorials, writing modules and games. The app also has an e-book library with easy to read books.

One of the challenges in the development process was finding e-books without "juktaokkhor" (compound letters) for beginners, said Razeeb.

Thankfully, many Bangladeshis from home and abroad came forward to help Razeeb create the contents for the app by writing books and illustrating often at prices lower than the market. He said most people helped him out of love for the language.

Mashroof Hossain, Additional Superintendent of Police, is one of them. Although a law enforcer by profession, Mashroof said Razeeb's endeavour inspired him to write. He recently wrote "Sada Bhoot" (White Ghost) for Banglaskool.

The friendly face in the video tutorials is that of Rafia Mahzabin, a young Bangladeshi-Canadian living in Vancouver. She flew to Toronto for the shoot with Razeeb's son Jeeyon.

"They were looking for someone who can speak Bangla, understand it obviously and also can talk to kids from here," Rafia said, explaining that children growing up abroad are used to a different style of interaction. "They look for a certain type of enthusiasm," she added.

Since the app was launched, Rafia said she received a lot of positive feedback from people whose children are using Banglaskool.

In fact, Rafia's sister-in-law, 26 year old Fariha Khondaker, who moved to Canada with her parents at the age of four, is also using Banglaskool.

Growing up, she too could not learn Bangla, although she speaks and understands the language.

Now as a grown up she feels disconnected with the culture at times. "When my friends send me memes or some funny pictures or videos, I can never understand it. They have to translate it for me," she said.

Though Banglaskool is meant for children aged five to 14, Fariha said the game Bagadoolia is a motivation even for adults.

"Watching the videos, you learn how to say the words, then the next stage is to write the words and the next stage is you play a game. So you are more motivated to learn the words so that

you can play these games," she said.

In fact, Singularity, the Bangladeshi firm that transformed the app from a concept to a digital product, had to incorporate millions of words in the app's database.

Zafir Shafee, co-founder of Singularity, said they had to reschedule the launching date several times to manage the enormous task of transforming Banglaskool from a concept to a product by integrating different types of resources from different places around the globe.

Soon subscribers will be able to pay for the app not just directly through their android but also their Apple devices, he added.

Currently, the first class is free and then each subsequent class costs \$10. The app and all the services now being offered cost \$275.

Talking about her motivation for spending money to teach Bangla to their kids, Farhana pointed out that a common language bridge is necessary to continue the legacy of Bangla from one generation to the next. Until Banglaskool, she did not find anything that her children would like or at least try, she added.

Razeeb expressed his hope that the competitive aspect of the app would also make it interesting to children of English medium schools in Bangladesh.

"I think this is the only language learning app focusing to teach a mother tongue and to make the mother tongue cool to the newer generations," he said.

## Rockets fired by Pak forces kill 6 Afghans

AFP, Kabul

At least five children and a woman were killed in an eastern Afghan province when Pakistani military forces fired rockets along the border in a pre-dawn assault yesterday.

Since the Taliban seized power last year in Afghanistan, border tensions between the neighbours have risen, with Pakistan alleging militant groups were carrying out attacks from Afghan soil.

"Five children and a woman were killed and a man wounded in Pakistani rocket attacks in Shelton district of Kunar," an official told AFP.

Hundreds of civilians of Khost poured into the streets chanting anti-Pakistan slogans later yesterday, Afghan media reports said.

## Covid-19: More Chinese cities tighten controls

REUTERS, Shanghai

Shanghai reported a record number of symptomatic Covid-19 cases yesterday and other areas across China tightened controls as the country kept up its "dynamic clearance" approach that aims to stamp out the highly transmissible Omicron variant. The Zhengzhou Airport Economic Zone, a central Chinese manufacturing area that includes Apple Inc APPL supplier Foxconn, announced a 14-day lockdown on Friday "to be adjusted according to the epidemic situation". In northwestern China, the city of Xian on Friday urged residents to avoid unnecessary trips outside their residential compounds and encouraged companies to have employees work from home or live at their workplace, following dozens of Covid-19 infections this month. Shanghai itself, which is at the centre of China's recent Covid surge starting in early March, on Saturday reported a record 3,590 symptomatic cases for April 15, as well as 19,923 asymptomatic cases. The asymptomatic case number was up slightly from 19,872 cases a day earlier. The city's case tally makes up the vast majority of cases nationwide even as most of its 25 million residents remain under lockdown.

## Pakistan elects new Speaker

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's new ruling alliance took control of the lower house of parliament yesterday with the election of a new speaker, cementing control of the assembly after former premier Imran Khan was ousted in a no-confidence vote. The previous speaker and his deputy, both Khan allies, had attempted to block and then delay the vote, only for the country's top court to deem their actions illegal. The lower house of parliament eventually voted in favour of removing Khan from office on Sunday.

The new ruling alliance has already elected their candidate, Shehbaz Sharif as the new prime minister. The new speaker is Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, a former prime minister who belongs to the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), part of the new ruling alliance. He was elected unopposed in the absence of Khan's party, which resigned en masse from the house on Monday. The resignations are yet to be fully processed. If accepted, Pakistan faces the prospect of close to 100 by-elections within two months, a major distraction for Sharif and his coalition partners and a potential platform for Khan to mobilise support. Sharif is expected to name his cabinet in the coming days with a number of policy challenges facing the new government, in particular dealing with an economy in deep trouble.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার  
অধ্যক্ষের কার্যালয়,  
শহীদ তাজউদ্দিন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ  
গাজীপুর।



তারিখ: ১৬/০৪/২০২২

স্বাক্ষর নং-শহীদতাজউদ্দিনআহমদমেডিকেল/২০২২/৫৬০

উন্নত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১. মুসলিম/বাঙালি/ভাষাগুরু	বাঙালি শিক্ষা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ বিভাগ, বাঙালি শিক্ষা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়
২. বাঙালি	শহীদ তাজউদ্দিন আহমদ মেডিকেল কলেজ, গাজীপুর।
৩. স্বাস্থ্য স্বাস্থ্যকর স্বাস্থ্য মাধ্যম ও টিকিনা	
৪. দরপত্রের পক্ষত্ব	উন্নত দরপত্র পক্ষত্ব
৫. বাঙালি ও অন্যান্য ভাষার স্বাস্থ্য মাধ্যম ও টিকিনা	বাঙালি বাঙালি
৬. দরপত্রের স্বাস্থ্যকর স্বাস্থ্য মাধ্যম ও টিকিনা	পরিকল্পনা পরিকল্পনা ও অন্যান্য পরিকল্পনা
৭. দরপত্রের পক্ষত্ব স্বাস্থ্য মাধ্যম ও টিকিনা	অবসরের প্রয়োজন প্রয়োজন করা হচ্ছে।
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৯. দরপত্রের খোলার স্বাস্থ্য মাধ্যম ও টিকিনা	বেগুনী ১১:০০ খাটিকা হচ্ছে।
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