







"A great deal of history of our world in the next 50 years is going to be written in the Asean countries." US President Joe Bider



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Tangail hillocks Grabbers continue



'Fame fades' Actor Sohel Mondal tells The Daily Star



Journo funeral Mourners attacked,



Forex crisis Experts suggest BB weaken taka

INDIAN EXPORT BAN

Pressure now brews over wheat

Prices shoot up by 25pc

STAR REPORT

After edible oil, wheat, the second-most consumed cereal in Bangladesh, is posing to be the next pressure point for food inflation, which in March leapt to its highest level since October 2020.

Yesterday, a day after India announced a shock ban on wheat exports, the prices of the grain shot up here, in a testament to the interconnected nature and fragility of agricultural systems that have been exposed by a perfect storm of war and weather.

At Chattogram's Khatungani, the country's largest wholesale market, the price of wheat has increased by as much as 25 percent. The Indian wheat is selling for Tk 1,500 a maund (about 37.5 kilograms), up from Tk 1,200 on Thursday.

The Canadian wheat's price too increased: by about Tk 250 to Tk 2,050-Tk 2,080.

It was the same case similar all over the country, including the capital, according to traders.

Bangladesh, which depends on imports to meet 86 percent of its annual requirement of 85 lakh tonnes of wheat, started procuring the cereal in significant volumes from India in 2020.

And in the financial year that ended on March 31, Bangladesh was the largest importer of wheat from India, accounting for nearly half of the neighbouring country's record seven million tonnes of wheat exports, according to estimates by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade under the Commerce Ministry.

"We have kept the window open for [our] neighbours. We have also kept the window open for a large number of vulnerable countries if their governments do make such requests. The order is to divert trade to the needy, poor and the vulnerable countries,"

Indian Commerce Secretary **BVR Subrahmanyam**

Tigers face

new-look SL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will be

desperate to start the

process of transforming

themselves into a proper

Test unit when they face

Sri Lanka in the first match

of the two-Test series at the

Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury

The match is scheduled

Stadium in Chattogram

to begin at 10am [BST].

Since their historic

win against New Zealand

earlier this year, Mominul

Haque and his troops have

match Test series in South

been unable to live up to

expectations. They were

outplayed in the two-

The hosts will be

Africa in April.

at Mount Maunganui

WHY A GLOBAL WHEAT **SUPPLY SHORTAGE IS EXPECTED**

- Russia-Ukraine war
- Poor harvest in China
- Inventories tight in the US, Canada
- Argentina restricted exports
- Australia shipping at full capacity
- Drought and heat in India

The Indian export restriction comes after searing heat in March and April, where temperatures of up to 45C hit large parts of India's wheat

belt, have heightened concerns about the country's domestic supply. Subsequently, the wheat price in India, where inflation has hit an eight-year high, has risen to record levels, going well above the government's minimum support price of Rs 20,150 in some spot

However, Indian Commerce Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam vesterday calmed the fears of its neighbours.

"We have kept the window open for [our] neighbours. We have also kept the window open for a large number of vulnerable countries if their governments do make such requests. The order is to divert trade to the needy, poor and the vulnerable countries," he told the media, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

He, however, did not name any country. Indian officials said while the ban on wheat export may hit private traders, it is unlikely to affect government-to-government deals. For SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Dinghies with commuters negotiate a water hyacinth-covered stretch of the Buriganga at the capital's Swarighat. The invasive plant becomes ubiquitous during this time of the year. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

PK Halder arrested in West Bengal

The man who 'embezzled Tk 2,500cr' was posing as an Indian, defrauding banks there too; Momen says he will be brought back to Bangladesh

STAR REPORT

Prashanta Kumar Halder, who has been on the run from facing charges of mone laundering since 2019, was arrested along with an associate in West Bengal yesterday.

The former managing director of NRB Global Bank, better known as PK Halder, was arrested by the Indian Directorate of Enforcement, which investigates money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws, said officials at Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata.

The arrests were made at the request of Bangladesh, our correspondent in New Delhi reports, quoting Bangladeshi officials.

In cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), PK Halder is accused of swindling multiple non-banking financial

institutions out of more than Tk 2,500 crore. The ACC will take measures to bring him



back to the country as soon as possible, said its chairman Mohammad Moinuddin

"We have an extradition agreement with India... We will bring him back," he told The Daily Star.

Contacted yesterday evening, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Journalists decry DSA

Worried over laws in the offing, shrinking space for free speech

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalism in Bangladesh is under siege on the digital front, beginning from surveillance to draconian

This has led to a culture of fear and self-censorship, curtailing freedom of expression and silencing independent media.

Editors and publishers of newspapers across the country convened to present this statement at a discussion yesterday to mark the World Press Freedom Day. The programme was organised by the Editors' Council at the CIRDAP auditorium.

At a session titled "Press Under Digital Siege", all speakers condemned the expansive list of laws that can be used to silence journalists.

These include the defamation law in the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Information Communication Technology Act, the Digital Security Act, the draft Data Protection Act, the draft BTRC regulations for social media and the draft OTT platform regulations.

Mahfuz Anam, president of the Editors' Council, asked, "What is it that journalists do that our hands and feet must be bound with so many

laws?" There are 20 provisions in the DSA that prosecute offences related to freedom of expression and 14 of

fear is established, it is always because of the deficit of a free press ... "-- Nurul Kabir, editor of New Age.

"Whenever a culture of

those are non-bailable, he said.

Even the most impartial, best-intentioned judicial system cannot prevent the incarceration of a journalist being prosecuted under the DSA, since the offences are non-bailable, he added.

"What offences do journalists commit that they do

not even deserve bail?" Nurul Kabir, editor of New Age, said the press operates within a culture of "extralegal" oppression – a kind that abuses repressive legislation.

Whenever a culture of fear is established, it is always because of the deficit of a free press. Freedom of expression is a political right."

Kader Gani Chowdhury, the president of the BNP-faction of the Dhaka Union of Journalists, said, "Previously, it was not possible to write against influential people on mass media. Now it is not possible to write against them on [even] social media."

He added, "Laws should be made for the public's benefit, whereas they have [instead] been made to violate the rights of the people. This is meant to threaten them into silence. Leaders should be open to criticism.'

Nazrul Islam Mithu, president of Dhaka Reporters' Unity, said, "The defamation law in the country is a remnant of our colonial legacy. But even the British have turned defamation into a civil offence – it is no longer a criminal offence [there]."

Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul, former president of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, said the Official Secrets Act is another colonial act that gets pulled up on a whim to persecute journalists.

"Globally, trust in the media is eroding. New laws that repress independent media will intensify this."

without two of their crucial cogs of the bowling department - pacer Taskin Ahmed and Mehedi Hasan Miraz -- due to injuries. However, Bangladesh will be boosted by the presence

of Shakib Al Hasan, who was supposed to miss the

Test due to Covid-19, as SEE PAGE 2 COL 7 Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo (C) and team director Khaled Mahmud (R) laugh with ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (L) at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday, ahead of the first Test against Sri Lanka beginning today. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7

Dhaka College, Ideal College students clash STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two groups of higher secondary students at Dhaka College and Ideal College were caught in a clash in the capital's Science Laboratory intersection around 11:00am yesterday.

The violence injured two Dhaka College students and caused interruptions to traffic at the intersection, said SM Qayyum, officer-in-charge of New Market Police Station.

Later on the day, Dhaka College students tried to move towards Ideal College in flocks, but police barred and dispersed them, he added.

The teachers of the respective colleges also came to the streets to cool down their students and get them back to their campuses

According to some students, the clash took place after a group of Dhaka College students harassed an Ideal College student and his female friend on Thursday.

Clashes between students of Dhaka College and other adjacent colleges are nothing new. Frequently, they locked themselves into clashes over trivial matters that made headlines.

On March 30, at least 12 were injured in the clashes between Dhaka College and Teachers' Training College students.

The clash ensued over a brawl at a tea shop.

Not only with the students, brawls between the shopkeepers of the New Market area and Dhaka College students also take place quite frequently.

In the latest such event, New Market storekeepers and Dhaka College students fought pitched battles for two days starting on April 18 night, resulting in the deaths of two youths and damage to properties.

Five cases including two murder cases were filed in this connection.



Journalists pose for a photo during a discussion on World Press Freedom Day yesterday at the capital's CIRDAP auditorium. The **Editors' Council organised the discussion.**

Sri Lanka eases curfew

New PM begins forming cabinet without opposition support

AGENCIES

Sri Lanka lifted a nationwide curfew for 12 hours yesterday, further easing tight curbs as new Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe made first his cabinet appointments after clashes between proand anti-government groups killed nine

More than a month of predominantly peaceful protests against the government turned violent this week after supporters of former Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa stormed an anti-government protest camp in the commercial capital Colombo, burning tents and clashing with protesters and police.

The initial violence and reprisals against government figures also left more than 300 injured.

Hit hard by the pandemic, rising oil prices and tax cuts by the populist government, Sri Lanka is in the throes of its worst economic crisis since independence from Great Britain in 1948.

The government lifted the curfew from 6:00am (0030 GMT) yesterday until 6:00pm. A 24-hour curfew imposed on Monday had been lifted for a few hours on Thursday and Friday to allow purchase of essential supplies.

Mahinda Rajapaksa stepped down after violence flared on Monday, leaving his younger brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa to rule on as president.

Mahinda has since been banned by a court from leaving the country and has taken refuge at the Trincomalee naval base in Sri Lanka's east.

Troops have since restored order and a nationwide curfew has been in effect for most of the week.



Wickremesinghe, a five-time prime minister, was appointed to another term late on Thursday.

He appointed four ministers from the Rajapaksas' Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), a decision unlikely to satisfy the protesters demanding the removal of the party from power.

The appointments, announced by the president's office, include GL Pereis, the SLPP chairman who had held the post before resigning on Monday.

However, the all-important finance ministry post remains vacant at a time when Sri Lanka is in negotiations for a much-needed International Monetary Fund bailout.

Wickremesinghe is the sole lawmaker from his United National Party to hold a seat in parliament, and is reliant on other parties to form a coalition government. The SLPP has pledged to support him.

The main opposition has ruled out supporting him, but several smaller parties have said they would back policies by the new prime minister to stabilise the

Foreign diplomats in Colombo were among the first to call on Wickremesinghe after he officially assumed duties on

Envoys from China, neighbour India and Japan all pledged to continue providing Sri Lanka with assistance through the crisis, the prime minister's

Wickremesinghe is seen as a pro-West, free-market reformist, potentially making bailout negotiations with the International Monetary Fund and creditor nations smoother.

Parts of Sylhet submerged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The low-lying areas in Sylhet division have submerged due to excessive rainfall in the country's north-eastern region and in India's Assam and Meghalaya.

Because of the heavy rainfall, the Surma river was overflowing at 98 centimetres above the danger level in Kanahat upazila point in Sylhet, reported the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) of the Bangladesh Water Development Board.

According to FFWC, the water level of the upper Meghna Basin rivers -- Kushiyara, Bhugai-Kongsho, Dhanu-Baulai, Manu and Khowai -- will rise fast in the coming 48 hours.

Due to excessive rainfall, many low-lying areas in Sylhet's Gowainghat, Kanaighat, Companiganj, Jaintiapur and Sadar upazilas flooded.

In Sunamganj, a few areas in Bishwambharpur, Tahirpur and Sadar upazilas are submerged due to flashfloods triggered by excessive rain. In Bishwambharpur, 15 houses were damaged

on Friday due to the flash flood and while Boro harvest went submerged in Korchar Haor's high grounds. Earlier on last month, 8,852 hectares of Boro

harvest were damaged in six districts due to flash flood while Sunamganj were the worst hit where 5,775 hectares of the harvest were damaged.

7 of organ trading gang arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Seven suspected members of an organ trading gang, who are mostly engaged in kidney trading, have been arrested from different places in Joypurhat on Friday night, said police.

Masum Ahmed Bhuiyan, superintendent of Joypurhat police, confirmed it.

All the arrested persons have been sent to Joypurhat jail after producing them before a local court yesterday, said the SP Masum.

The SP also said that the organ trading gang members are operating a network in the district. They often target the impoverished family in Kalai upazila of Joypurhat and trap the people in loan circles. Later, they forced the loan taker

to repay their amount by selling their organs, especially the kidney. Man killed in landslide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A man was killed while his brother injured after a huge chunk of earth from a hillock fell onto a house in Sylhet's Golapganj upazila early

The dead is Apu Paul, 30, of Chakrabarty village in the upazila's Laksmanabandh union. He was an NGO official at Association for Social Advancement (ASA).

His brother Pappu Paul, 28, was also injured during the landslide.

Golam Kabir, upazila nirbahi officer of Golapganj, said, "After cutting a hillock, the house was built right in the bottom of the trimmed edge. Due to excessive rainfall, the hillock landslide damaged two adjacent houses.'

"In one house, where the brothers were, one died and another injured. There was no one in the other house that was damaged in the landslide," he said adding that the family was handed over Tk 20 thousand as temporary help.

PK Halder arrested

government was yet to be "The money taken by the formally informed of the accused was taken as loan

good news, he said, adding on paper. Realising that that bringing him back they had been cheated, to the country won't be a the banks informed the problem.

the Indian Directorate of Enforcement in a statement approached the Indian released on Friday, said PK Halder and other associate individuals were accused in a multi-million financial fraud in Bangladesh. They laundered thousands of crores of Bangladeshi Taka to India and other countries.

The directorate is out carrying operations on different premises linked to Halder, Pritish Kumar Halder, Pranesh Kumar Halder and their associates across the state of West Bengal.

PK Halder has been posing himself as an Indian citizen named Shibshankar Halder after having managed to fraudulently obtain the government Ration Card, Indian Voter ID card, PAN and Aadhar card, said the statement.

There are allegations against PK Halder's associates, it added.

"The directorate crore. that these ascertained Bangladesh nationals have also managed to float companies in India on the basis of fraudulently obtained identities and immovable properties at various places including in the posh areas of the Metropolis Kolkata."

directorate told our New police.

Delhi from various banks by PK Halder's arrest is companies that only exist financial intelligence Prior to the arrests, unit of the Bangladesh police that subsequently government."

Halder's name came in discussions during the "anti-casino" drives in Bangladesh in 2019.

Thefinancialinstitutions swindled by PK Halder between 2009 and 2019 are: People's Leasing and search Financial Service (PLFS), International Leasing and Financial Service Limited, FAS Finance, and Reliance Finance.

PLFS is now in the process of liquidation while the rest are in bad shape.

An ACC investigator said the ACC will press charges against PK Halder in three cases soon.

So far, 34 cases have been filed against PK Halder and his cohorts. The authorities have similar frozen the bank accounts of 83 and seized properties worth around Tk 1,000

The Immigration Wing of the Special Branch of police in March informed the High Court that PK Halder fled the country by road through the Benapole have even purchased land port at 3:38pm on October 23, 2019.

He left minutes before the travel ban against him and his accomplices An officer of the reached the immigration

Pressure now brews over wheat

this, Dhaka would have to reach out to New Delhi

they added.

through official channels. The world's secondbiggest wheat producer is likely to be sensitive to the concerns and requirements of Bangladesh and Nepal,

However, wheat import through the Hili land port in Hakimpur upazila was on pause yesterday because of the Indian government's export restriction even though the ban is not applicable for shipments for which letters of credit had already been issued, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

The Indian customs authority did not get any official order on this, so they did not allow any wheat-loaded truck to cross the border, said Harun Ur Rashid, the president of Importers and Exporters Group of Hili land port.

Consignments of two lakh tonnes of wheat through the land port have become uncertain now after India's decision, he added.

Abul Bashar, chairman of BSM Group, one of the

That included those in

the southern port city of

Mariupol, where the last

defenders are holed up in the

Staff said in an update

Saturday that Russian forces

continued "to blockade our

units near the Azovstal plant"

and carried out "massive artillery and air strikes".

predicted a long drawn-out

conflict, after Russia was

Western leaders have

The Ukrainian General

vast Azovstal steelworks.

FROM PAGE 12

War could be over

country's leading wheat importers, remains hopeful that there would not be any crisis for wheat and flour as the country meets 15-20 percent of the demand from domestic production and the local harvests will be available in the market by

the end of the month. In addition, Canada and Australia will go for wheat harvesting in the next one and a half months.

Over the last decade, most of the country's wheat imports were from India. Russia, Canada and Ukraine.

"But our dependence on India has been increasing over the last few years due to low prices and short shipment time," he added.

There is still no alternative to increasing contacts with alternative countries at the government and private levels, he added. "Options for Bangladesh

are low. Canada, Australia and the US could be options but the prices there are too high for us to afford," said Taslim Shahriar, senior assistant general manager of Meghna Group of Industries.

He went on to urge the

victory in the face of stubborn

intelligence chief, Major

General Kyrylo Budanov said

the months ahead would be

be in the second part of

August," he told Britain's

Sky News television. "Most

of the active combat actions

will have finished by the end

internal turmoil in Russia as

Budanov also predicted

The breaking point will

But Ukraine's military

Ukrainian resistance.

decisive.

of this year."

denied a hoped-for swift a result, without elaborating.

government to take steps left by the two countries but to ensure import through government-to-government

contracts. In Bangladesh, wheat is imported from 16 countries, including India, Canada, Russia, Ukraine, the US, Australia, Cyprus, Italy, Argentina, Éstonia and Belgium, according to the data from the National Bureau of Revenue.

Regardless, a global wheat supply shortage is brewing because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine and Russia together account for nearly 30 percent of the exports of the world's wheat.

Russia, the world's biggest exporter of wheat, has largely been unable to export food because of sanctions that have effectively cut it off financially, while Ukraine has been cut off physically after Russia blocked the Black Sea for exports.

And Ukraine, the fifthlargest exporter, lacks enough rail cars to transport food overland. India was looking to

fill the supply gap in the international wheat markets

The developments come

Hours after Finland's grid

operator said Russia had

pulled the plug on electricity

supplies overnight, President

Sauli Niinisto spoke to

jettisoning decades of military

from Russia.

steps".

the export restriction amid the drought is derailing its designs.

Inventories are already tight in the US and Canada, according to the UN, while Argentina is limited exports and Australia is already shipping at full shipping capacity.

Following India's announcement of the export ban on May 13, wheat futures in Chicago, the international benchmark, closed at \$11.6725 a bushel, up 50 percent from the start of the year, while the European wheat futures market was 410.75 euros a tonne, just of its record high in March.

Meanwhile, poor harvests in China, the world's biggest producer and consumer of wheat, is a major cause for concern: the country has the world's largest foreign currency reserves, so it can buy as much wheat as it needs from the world markets.

Pallab Bhattacharva, Kongkon Karmaker, Mohammad Suman and Sukanta Halder contributed to the report

his Russian counterpart

as Finland and Sweden, Vladimir Putin. 'The conversation was non-alignment, are poised to direct and straight-forward and it was conducted join Nato as a defence against feared further aggression aggravations," without Niinisto's office Moscow has warned "Avoiding tensions was Finland, with whom it shares considered important. The a 1,300-kilometre border, phone call was initiated by that it would take "reciprocal Finland."

Putin, however, told him that Finland joining Nato would be a "mistake", insisting that Russia posed "no threat to Finland's security", the Kremlin said.

Journalists decry DSA

"The digital ecosystem has to see them." opened up the possibilities to further journalism but, at of Bhorer Kagoj, stressed the same time, has brought on the importance of us under surveillance," said AK Azad, publisher of Samakal and president aside any political bias to of the Newspaper Owners'

M Abdullah, president BFUJ, echoed the same of BFUJ (BNP faction), thoughts. commented, "Journalists culture of surveillance, where their movements are monitored."

Rahman Matiur Chowdhury, editor of Manabzamin, said, "Our publish reports – they kill moderated the event.

reports even before we get

Shyamol Dutta, editor maintaining unity as a community and casting tackle the crisis, while Omar Association of Bangladesh. Faruk, the chairperson of

"None already operate in a governments have fully supported the press. They have always seen us as adversaries," said Golam Rahman, editor of Ajker Patrika.

Dewan Mahmud, editor corporate owners censor of Bonik Barta and general us. They tell us not to secretary of the Council,

Tigers face new-look SL

FROM PAGE 1

the premier all-rounder is confirmed to start today after testing negative in his latest Covid test.

A young Sri Lankan side, on the other hand, will begin a new journey under head coach Chris Silverwood. Dimuth Karunaratne is the likes of Kusal Mendis,

The Lankan team will also be in focus as the country has been going through a huge political and economic crisis in recent times.

Meanwhile, there is a heavy chance of rain Skipper disrupting the most of the five-day contest despite expected to add some the severe cyclone, brewing experience along with in the Bay of Bengal, weakening into a cyclonic Dhananjaya de Silva and storm a couple of days Lahiru Thirimanne in the back.

New York subway shooting suspect pleads not guilty

The 62-year-old man arrested for allegedly shooting 10 people on the New York subway last month pleaded not guilty on Friday to federal terrorism charges.

Frank James was taken into custody a day after the April 12 attack, which took place as a crowded subway train pulled into a Brooklyn station.

DHAKA



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana jointly laid the foundation stone of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust Library at the capital's Dhanmodi-32 yesterday. PHOTO: BSS

Dhaka's air quality remains 'moderate'

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka's air quality continued to be in the "moderate" zone yesterday, mainly owing to rains in different parts of the country

With an air quality index (AQI) score of 99 at 10:05am, the city ranked 11th in the list of world cities with the worst air quality.

When the AQI remains between 51 and 100, the air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.

India's Delhi, Kuwait's Kuwait city and the United Arab Emirates' Dubai occupied the first three spots in the list, with AQI scores of 282, 172 and 161, respectively.

An AQI between 101 and 200 is considered 'unhealthy', particularly for sensitive groups. Similarly, an AQI between 201 and 300 is said to

be 'poor', while a reading of 301 to 400 is considered "hazardous", posing serious health risks to residents.

AQI, an index for reporting daily air quality, is used by government agencies to inform people how clean or polluted the air of a certain city is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for them.

In Bangladesh, the AQI is based on five criteria pollutants -- Particulate Matter (PM10 and PM2.5), NO2, CO. SO2 and Ozone.

Dhaka has long been grappling with air pollution issues. Its air quality usually turns unhealthy in winter and improves during the monsoon.

A report by the Department of Environment (DoE) and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

SC judicial activities resume on Monday

49 held in

anti-drugs

capital UNB, Dhaka

drives in the

Dhaka Metropolitan Police

(DMP) yesterday claimed

on charges of selling and

consuming banned drugs.

Sources at the DMP

members of the Detective

Branch and local police

conducted drives across

Some 12,151 pieces

cannabis, 73 small packets

of yaba, nearly 12 kg of

of heroin and 43 bottles

of Phensedyl were seized

been registered with local

A total of 39 cases have

from their possession.

police stations against

the arrestees under the

Narcotics Control Act.

the city in the past 24 hours and made the

arrests.

headquarters said

to have arrested 49 people

The Supreme Court will resume its judicial activities from

Monday, after a 17-day vacation. The cause list for 53 benches of the High Court

division was published for hearing in this regard, said

Besides, the hearing of the cases under the appellate division of Supreme Court will be held by two separate benches, it added.

The 17-day vacation included weekly holidays, public holidays and court's vacation.

'A pioneer of freethinking'

Say speakers on National Professor Anisuzzaman at event marking his second death anniversary



Speakers at the event commemorating the second death anniversary of National Professo Anisuzzaman yesterday. PHOTO: COLLECTED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It has been two years since National Professor Anisuzzaman, famously known as the nation's lighthouse, passed away. Yesterday was his second death anniversary

Chandrabati Academy organised a seminar in remembrance of his life and works at the capital's Foreign Service Academy on the day.

Foreign Minister Abdul Momen was chief guest at the seminar. Selina Hossain, chairperson of Bangla Academy and Prof Muhammad Samad, pro-vice chancellor of Dhaka

University, were special guests. The seminar was chaired

by renowned singer Rezwana

Chowdhury Bannya. Litterateur Anisul Hoque, Abul Khayer and Prof Abdul Mannan were present among

many distinguished guests. Dr Anisuzzaman's wife Siddiqua Zaman and son Ananda

Zaman were also present. Honouring Anisuzzaman's contributions, Momen said, "Professor Anisuzzaman was our lighthouse. Although he has left us, he has left behind a treasure trove of literary works and

literature." "We must preserve his works and convey his thoughts and ideas to our future generations," the minister said.

fundamental research on Bengali

Selina said, "A personality like Anisuzzaman is born once every several centuries. We must teach our next generation about how he has enlightened us through

his thoughts and literary works."

"He is one of the pioneers of freethinking in Bangladesh. His knowledge on our history, heritage and traditions was massive. He was a vanguard in all our historic national movements, such as the Language Movement, Liberation War and the movement for democracy," added Selina.

Remembering Anisuzzaman's contributions in the Language Movement, Prof Samad said, "Anisuzzaman was one of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

None can erase Bangabandhu's name from history Says PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina vesterday said repeated attempts were made to remove the name of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from history and thus the nation was deprived of knowing the real history since 1975.

"But it is not possible now as the new generation is very much aware of the country's true history," she said.

The premier made this remark while addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust Library at Dhanmodi-32 in the capital.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana, the two daughters of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, jointly laid the foundation stone of the library.

Prime Minister's Deputy Press Secretary KM Shakhawat Moon briefed the media about it.

Hasina said the library of Bangabandhu Memorial Trust would help the new generation know about the true history of Bangabandhu and the country.

She said the anti-liberation forces had stopped the trial of the killers of the Father of the Nation by enacting an indemnity ordinance after 1975.

The Awami League government has freed the nation from the stigma through the trial of the killers by repealing the indemnity ordinance after assuming power, she added.

Bangabandhu's grandson Radwan Mujib Siddiq was also present on the occasion.

Will introduce school buses to ease gridlock Says DNCC mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Md Atiqul Islam yesterday said they would take initiative to introduce school buses for different schools, especially English-medium ones, to reduce traffic congestion in the city.

Addressing a meet-the-press programme at Gulshan's Nagar Bhaban to observe his two years as mayor for the second term, Atiqul said they will ask authorities of all English-medium schools to introduce the service.

"I have already discussed the matter with the deputy minister for education. I will talk to the education minister to make the initiative successful," said the

"We will reduce taxes for those who will introduce the bus service and will also come up with a system so that guardians can easily monitor their children's movement," he said.

Regarding traffic congestion, the mayor said Setu Bhaban and BRTA Bhaban have become the cause of traffic congestion from Banani's Chairman Bari to Dhaka airport.

Requesting the government to take steps to shift those buildings to other places, the mayor said if the BGMEA building can be demolished, then why will it not be possible to demolish these two buildings.

Responding to a question about U-loops, the mayor said they were an initiative of late mayor Annisul Huq, and authorities have implemented them following Buet's design.

Widening of roads is required at some U-loop points like Chairman Bari and Nabisco to get desired results, he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



	razr	Zonr	AST	Magnrib	Esna				
Azan	4-10	12-45	5-00	6-36	8-00				
Jamaat	4-45	1-15	5-15	6-40	8-30				
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION									

One held over question leak of **DSHE exam**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The question paper of an examination to get employed at Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) has allegedly been leaked.

The exam for the post of "office assistant/computer operator" was held at 61 centres in Dhaka on Friday. It aimed to fill 513 vacancies.

Police's detective branch (DB) has made the claim, following the arrest of an examinee from the capital's

Eden College centre on that day. The arrestee was identified as Md Sumon Jomadder

Harun-or-Rashid, joint commissioner of DB, told The Daily Star yesterday that the question was leaked around 2:18pm on Friday, around 42 minutes before the exam. 'The arrestee already said that the question paper was

leaked," he said. Asked about who was behind it and how it happened, he said they are investigating the incident, and details

will be disclosed soon. A case was filed with Lalbagh Police Station. According to the first information report (FIR), the invigilator of room-2237 at Eden Mohila College found Sumon answering the MCQ questions by copying

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



On Dhaka-Chattogram highway, where hundreds of medium and large vehicles ply on a regular basis, a man was seen riding his bicycle right in the middle of the road with a passenger on board. Since vehicles tend to move at high speed on highways, such risky a way of travelling could lead to a fatal accident at any point. This photo was taken in Narayanganj's Signboard area yesterday.

RMCH shuts Covid unit for lack of patients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) has shut down its Covid Unit as it lacked patients.

We have no reason to run the unit any more as patients barely come," hospital director Brig Gen Shamim Yazdani told The Daily Star yesterday.

From now on, Covid-19 patients would be sent to the Infectious Disease Hospital instead of the unit, he said. The unit was opened in May 2020.

RMCH hired two more private hospitals to treat Covid-19 patients as their numbers rose up.

To manage patients, the government last year decided to revive Rajshahi Sadar Hospital which had been shut for three decades. The number of Covid-19 patients started reducing from the beginning of this year.

Last month, only a few patients went to the hospital for treatment. This month, no patients turned out so far.

"We still have all the facilities developed in the hospital for treating Covid-19 patients. If situation demands, we can reopen everything," the hospital director said.



Standing on his small boat, a man cleans off the roots of water taro (pani kochu), which tends to grow on the bank of canals and other waterbodies. After collecting them, he sells the different sized taro at local markets, earning Tk 500 per day. This photo was taken yesterday at Barishal's Harta village. PHOTO: TITU DAS

3 held with snake venom worth Tk 5cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctq

Detectives in a drive in the port city's Double Mooring area seized more than 1,350 grams of snake venom and arrested three people on Friday night.

The arrestees are Mohammed Ismail. Md Javnal Abedin and Rupan Chakma, said a DB press release. Zahirul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of

Chattogram Metropolitan Police's Detective Branch (north), said, "After receiving information, detectives conducted the drive and seized the venom.' Checking market price, police estimated that the price might be Tk 5 crore.

In a primary interrogation, the arrestees confessed that the venom was illegally brought into the country to be sold for producing drugs, said

"We're suspecting that an international syndicate is behind the trade. We are looking into it," said the

A case has been filed with Double Mooring Police

The land was greener

Bagerhat's Rampal sees massive deforestation due to growing industries

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY,

A vast area of Bagerhat's Rampal upazila is at risk of environmental degradation due to massive industrialisation surrounding the power plant.

Sand-filling in croplands and water bodies in around 1,750 acres of land are going on in full swing, while hundreds of trees have been cut to set up factories and industries.

The area is currently in a desert-like situation from the rampant sand filling. During

a recent visit, this correspondent saw signboards of dozens of companies hoisted on the lands on both sides of Khulna Rampal highway, stretching

across the 15-kilometre area. "Many companies are working here to set up their factories. Ours was an area calm and quiet

Due to massive industrialisation surrounding the Rampal power plant, cropland and waterbodies are being filled with sand. Hundreds of trees have been cut down to set up industries, affecting the area's biodiversity and harming the lives of locals.

with natural greeneries. Now life itself has become hazardous for us," said Yasin Miah (37), resident of Rampal's Tangramari

"We used to grow paddies and

other crops in this area. Now all our croplands are filled up," said a resident of Rampal's Hurka

village, seeking anonymity. Some entrepreneurs are also turning croplands into shrimp

Locals said they are in a severe crisis of drinking water and have to collect saline water from nearby ponds for their daily consumption.

Noor Alam Sheikh, convener of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), said vast areas have been acquired for multiple megaprojects like Khan Jahan Ali Airport, railway and coal-based power plant, which is also contributing to the destruction of the environment.

"The amount of carbon dioxide in this region's air will sharply increase as trees and greeneries have been destroyed. The disappearance of water bodies will pose a severe threat to environmental degradation as well," said Prof Abdullah Harun Chowdhury of Khulna University's environmental sciences discipline.

Contacted, Arafin Badal, deputy director of the Department of Environment (DoE) in Bagerhat, said he would investigate and take action against anything that is causing environmental hazards in the

Serenity lost at the hands of TikTokers

are risking their

lives by climbing

the slippery slope

these videos have

circulated on

Facebook.

Tourists hesitant to visit Madhabkunda waterfall fearing harassment

MINTU DESHWARA

With its serene waters and tranquil environment, Madhabkunda waterfall in Moulvibazar is among the top picks of tourists to visit during the holidays.

However, the situation has changed since the waterfall has been infiltrated with "TikTokers", who breach the privacy of Some of these tourists and often create **voung TikTokers** a chaotic situation that

alleged many. Besides, some of these young TikTokers are risking their lives by climbing the slippery slope of the waterfall, evading the eves of the law enforcers, for making videos. Some of these videos have

is unpleasant for visitors,

They've also been accused of harassing and physically abusing tourists.

circulated on Facebook.

Sajjad Mia, a trader in the waterfall area, said, "On different occasions, teenagers and young 'TikTokers' from different areas of Barlekha and surrounding upazilas come to visit Madhabkunda. They are harassing tourists in various ways. Some are filming female tourists getting drenched in the

waterfall without their consent."

Enam Uddin, chairman of Dakshinbhag Uttar Union Parishad, said some tourists visiting Kulaura and Juri were intentionally drenched in water by TikTokers. There was even a confrontation after which they beat up the tourists.

Tourist Jahangir Hossain, who went

to visit Madhabkunda during the Eid holidays, said, "I saw a huge crowd of TikTokers making videos. In this situation, female tourists were feeling uncomfortable."

Advocate Subimol of the waterfall, Lyngdohkiri, a local and evading the eves of assistant public prosecutor the law enforcers, of Moulvibazar court, for making echoed him. videos. Some of

Some traders also alleged that every day teenagers make videos there and harass tourists.

Khairul Islam, in-charge of Madhabkunda tourist police, said, "We're always working to

ensure that tourists aren't harassed in any He also said they are warning those

who try to get up the slippery cliff. UNO Khandaker Mudassir Bin Ali said, "We have also set up a mobile court for tourists' safety.'

Dhaka's air

FROM PAGE 3

the World Bank in March FROM PAGE 5 2019 pointed out that the pollution in Dhaka "are brick kilns, fumes from vehicles and dust from cautionary signs. construction sites".

work, rundown roads, brick kilns and other sources.

consistently ranks among the top risk factors for death and disability worldwide. Breathing polluted air has long been recognised as increasing a person's chances of developing a heart disease, chronic respiratory diseases and lung infections.

No warning sign

bridge and not using there before.

Among the teenagers, With the advent of Fahim Hossain (18) and the winter, the city's air driver Jisan Hossain (19) quality starts deteriorating were killed, while Zahid sharply due to the massive Hossain (16) was injured, discharge of pollutant said Tongibari Police particles from construction Station Officer-in-Charge Mollah Soheb Ali.

"A police patrol team pollution rescued the three and took them to Munshiganj General Hospital, where the two were declared dead. The car fell from a height of 15 to 20 feet," he said.

During their drive, the Highways three saw the abandoned Bailey bridge. Since plans to in place, vehicles usually warning sign was put

Relatives of the deceased location. But the friends Locals may have covered three main sources of air blamed authorities for not did not notice the bypass sealing the abandoned road, as they had not gone

> Rupa Akter, sister of deceased Jisan, said, "There was no warning sign beside the bridge. They fell into a ditch directly and died, of the road's conditions. since they couldn't see the bypass road," she said.

Md Babu Hossain, a resident of Pura Bazar, said for the last two years, no warning sign has been in place. From a distance, there is no way to know that there is a bypass road in front.

Munshiganj Roads and Department Executive Engineer Dewan Abul Kashem Mohammad build a new bridge there are Nahin Reza, said, "A

ply on a bypass road at the up about two years ago. the signboard with election and greeting posters. We will put up a new one and ensure lighting at night."

He said that there was no negligence on their part. People in the area are aware Design and soil tests have already been completed for installing a new bridge. The tender process will start from June.

1 KILLED, 25 HURT AS **BUSES COLLIDE IN TANGAIL**

The driver of a bus was killed in a head-on collision between two buses in Madhupur, Tangail yesterday.

At least 25 passengers of both the buses were injured in the accident, said police.

Shamim Miah (45), the driver of a bus of Prantik Paribahan, succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment at Tangail General Hospital.

The incident occurred around 8:00am on Tangail-Mymensingth Gangair area, said Mamunur Rashid, a subinspector of Madhupur Police Station.

Police and fire service personnel with the help of locals rescued the injured and took them to Tangail General Hospital and Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Quoting witnesses, SI Mamunur Rashid said both the vehicles were damaged in the accident which might have happened due to reckless driving.

One held over

FROM PAGE 3 information written behind

the admit card. After the centre's invigilator and police questioned him, Sumon

said he got the answers in WhatsApp around 2:18pm, with help from Saiful from Tangail and four to five others. Police then seized two admit cards, an answer sheet, a question paper and phone from his possession, reads the FIR.

Analysing his phone, police found that Sumon 70 questions, Shahadat Hossain Sumon, additional

deputy commissioner of DB, told The Daily Star.

"We are now conducting drives to arrest the mastermind behind the question leak and his associates," said the official.

Prof Nehal Ahmed, director general of DSHE, Patuakhali, Khokon from told The Daily Star yesterday that an examinee was identified by the invigilator while he was cheating in the exam hall.

"We have handed the examinee over to police," he said. Asked about the leak, he said if police find received answers for all any proof of the leak, they will think of an alternative

We will keep

he said. "Through the under a neutral Election 2023 elections, we want to rebuild Bangladesh, where there will be no such oppression and repression."

He demanded that

the AL step down and system, politicised the hand over power to a news media and took the neutral government. "The country towards ruination, elections should be held

> BNP will force the AL government to accept their demands through strong movements, added

Commission," he added.

Farmer killed in lightning strike

STAR REPORT

A farmer was killed and another was injured after lightning struck them in Battola village under Phulbari upazila of Kurigram vesterday.

The deceased was identified as Rahim Badsha (47), said Bazlur Rahman. officer-in-charge of Phulbari Police Station.

The injured, farmer Matiar Rahman (38), is now undergoing treatment at Phulbari Upazila Health Complex, added the OC.

Quoting locals, the OC said lighting struck on Rahim and Matiar when they were working at a paddy field along with other farmers at Battola village in the upazila.

Fellow farmers rescued and took them to Phulbari Upazila Health Complex, where an on-duty doctor declared Rahim Badsha dead, informed the OC.

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আমি মিসেস দৌলতিয়া আলী স্বামীঃ মোহাম্মদ আলী, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র নং-১৯৪০৮৭৪৭০২ আমার মালিকানাধীন ঢাকাছ বনানী ডিওএইচএস এলাকার পুট নং-৮৯, রোড নং-৬/সি এর বরাদ্পত্র, লীজ দলিল, দানপত্র দলিল, নামজারী সহ মালিকানা সংক্রান্ত সকল মূল কাগজাদি গিয়াছে. ডায়েরী নং-১১৫৯ তাং-২৪/০৪/২০২২ ইং এবং ১০২৫, তাং-২৭/০১/২০১৫ ইং ক্যান্টনমেন্ট থানা, ঢাকা।

প্রয়োজনে: ০১৭১৩০৯১৭৫১

Will introduce school

FROM PAGE 3

About clearing footpaths, the mayor said they have talked with different city planners to provide them with proper suggestions. We are working on a system to facilitate hawkers in a systematic way, so that they can sit for a limited time, keeping road crossings free. We will also give them specific cards," he said.

DNCC mayor The said people keep their construction materials on the road while constructing buildings, even though they took actions against it. Some blame councillors, while others blame police and political activists for

"But when I go there, I find the place clear. It's true," he said.



The DNCC mayor inspecting an establishment for aedes mosquito larvae in the capital. PHOTO: COLLECTED

problem, the mayor said they have already taken through drones is at the various initiatives to protect final stage. canals and waterbodies

About the waterlogging from encroachers, and the work to demarcate canals

He said they will start a

drive to recover Rupnagar canal from encroachers next month, and they will not provide legal notice to encroachers, as it is DNCC's duty to remove illegal structures. "The canal will connect to Turag River after the drive," he said.

Mentioning their initiatives for the antimosquito drive, the mayor said they will start a crash programme on May 17, which will continue till May 26. He urged city dwellers to use the "Shobar Dhaka" app or call the city corporation to lodge complaints about their area's problem, so that authorities can solve it

immediately. "We have formed quick response teams for 10 zones and are working to resolve complaints within 48 hours," he said.

A pioneer

FROM PAGE 3

the thought leaders of the movement. He wrote the first leaflets of the movement, which inspired hundreds of students and student leaders at that

"His role in constructing thoughts philosophical background of the movement is unforgettable. At the same

processions during the movement." he said.

Anisul said, "If we study Anisuzzman's life, we can learn deeply about the contemporary history of Bangladesh. He was However, there is hardly any academic research on his life and works."

Bannya said, "We can learn the beauty and the ground, organising Anisuzzaman's life. He by this nation."

used to respect people from all walks of life." At the end of the

seminar, speakers launched a photo-book on Prof Anisuzzaman's life, edited by poet Maruful Islam. a scholar like no other. Maruful said, "Professor Anisuzzaman was a great scholar. He has enlightened the entire nation through his scholarly works. His works and contributions time, he was active on wisdom of simplicity from will always be remembered



Grabbers feast on Tangail hillocks

MIRZA SHAKIL

A range of red hillocks -- it's not only a great sight, surrounded by luscious Sal forests, but is also crucial in conserving the biodiversity of the midlands of Tangail and Gazipur.

However, this geological feature is on the verge of extinction, owing to the greed of an influential quarter, which is cutting the hillocks, flattening them and selling the soil to brick kilns.

In many areas, these influential locals have also occupied the surrounding flatlands and cultivated different crops, fruits and vegetables, by forging documents of ownership, thanks to some corrupt land department officials and employees, sources

A recent study by the environmental science and resource management department of Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University found that the hillocks in the region are undergoing a transformation due to the growing commercialisation of land and expanding

According to locals, the excavators cut the hillocks in these areas at night and take the soil away on trucks, leaving the roads dusty. This also creates inconvenience for people living on the sides of roads.

urbanisation and industrialisation. Even just two decades ago, before falling victim to the soil traders' greed, there were numerous hillocks in Mirzapur's Gorai, Ajgana, Latifpur, Banshtail and Tarafpur unions. The traders have also been extracting soil from the government's reserve forests surrounding the hillocks, alleged locals.

Ashraful Islam, a ranger at Banshtail Range, said they had recently seized three excavators and sued one of the owners for extracting soil from the reserve-forest land.

According to locals, the excavators cut the hillocks in these areas at night and take the



oil away on trucks, leaving the roads dusty This also creates inconvenience for people living on the sides of roads.

Jamir Uddin, deputy director of Department of Environment in Tangail, said they cannot take any action against the plunderers due to not having magistracy power. "Only the local administration can take steps against it."

Asked, Mirzapur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Hafizur Rahman said fines of around Tk 50 lakh have been realised during multiple drives. He also mentioned that they will continue the drives.

The mayhem has not stopped in Ghatail upazila as well, where about one third of the landscape is covered by red hillocks, under six bits of a reserve forest area in Dhalapara range. During a recent visit, this correspondent noticed that many of the hillocks have already been flattened in Delutia, Kachara and Baripara areas under Choura and Deopara, Gourishwar under Battala and Akander Baid in Sagardighi.

"It is not possible to cut the hillocks without contacting the forest department officials and employees. Yet, it has become a

Dhalapara Range Officer Abdul Hamid, however, claimed that they stopped the hillocks from being razed after they acquired information about it.

Ghatail upazila assistant commissioner (land) Farzana Yasmin said they conducted mobile court drives at Delutia. However, no one was found at the scene.

Meanwhile, indiscriminate cutting of hillocks is also going on at adjacent Sakhipur, where grabbers have been occupying khas land, according to sources.

Contacted, Ataul Gani, deputy commissioner in Tangail, said a section of influential people backed by politicians are active in hillock cutting due to increasing demand for soil in different development projects.

"However, there is no alternative to conserving the beautiful natural assets for protecting the balance of environment and biodiversity," he said.

The issue has already been discussed in several development coordination committee meetings of the district, he added.

No warning

their death

2 teens die as car falls off abandoned bridge; families blame authorities' negligence OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

sign to prevent

Three young friends yesterday decided to go on a joy ride in a car, hoping to have

a good time together.

But that joy turned

Their car fell

from an abandoned bridge into a canal,

killing two of them in

Munshiganj's Tongibari

into a nightmare for them and their loved



to cut the hillocks without contacting the forest department officials and employees. Yet, it has become a common occurrence.

Jahurul Islam A local from Dhalapara

We will keep fighting for democracy

Says Fakhrul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Alamgir yesterday urged party leaders and activists to continue movements to restore democracy through the 2023 elections. He said democracy has been destroyed during AL's rule.

BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam

Fakhrul was addressing the inaugural session of Dinajpur district council of BNP on Dinajpur Institute premises. The senior BNP leader said the

nation is going through a tough time and such a situation occurs whenever AL is in power. "Awami League talks about democracy but does the opposite," he said.

Autocratic rule is prevailing in the country, he said. Murder, rape, looting and robbery have

become common nowadays, he said. The AL-led government ruined the judicial

AL council of Ctg south by Sept: Hanif

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctq

The council of Chattogram south district unit of Awami League will be held by September, the party's joint general secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said yesterday. He made the announcement while addressing the grassroots representatives conference organised by the AL unit at a convention centre in the port city.

Hanif said unlike what BNP leaders are saying, Bangladesh will never face situation like that in Sri Lanka due to very strong economic foundation of the country. "We have been developing under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and so, there will not be any economic crisis in this country," he said.

"The conspirators are spreading propaganda but they would not succeed," he added. Information Minister Hasan Mahmud, who also addressed the programme, echoed him.

AL organising secretary Abu Sayeed Al Mahmud Swapan said the council of grassroots level would be completed by July while the district level council would be held by the first week of September. AL presidium member Engr Mosharraf Hossain addressed the meeting as the chief guest with AL Chattogram south district president Moslem Uddin Ahmed in the chair.





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বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা আবশ্যক

বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের উন্নয়নমূলক কার্য সুষ্ঠুভাবে সম্পন্ন করার নিমিত্তে প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়ে নিমুবর্ণিত পদটি খন্ডকালীন (সম্পূর্ণ অস্থায়ী) নিয়োগের জন্য যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন

পদের নাম ও বেতন	পদের সংখ্যা	নির্ধারিত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
স্থপতি (Architect) সর্বসাকৃল্যে মাসিক বেতন ৮: ৪৬,৪৪০/- (ছেচল্লিশ হাজার চারশত চল্লিশ) এছাড়া বছরে ১টি নববর্ষ ভাতা ও ২টি উৎসব ভাতা প্রাপ্য হবেন। অফিস সময়ঃ সপ্তাহে ৩ দিন, সকাল ৯:০০	১টি পদ খন্তকালীন (সম্পূর্ণ অস্থায়ী)	বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে B. Arch ডিগ্রিধারী হতে হবে। ন্যূনতম ১০ বছরের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।

প্রার্থীকে সাদা কাগজে নাম, পিতার নাম, মাতার নাম, স্থায়ী ও বর্তমান ঠিকানা, শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা, জাতীয়তা, জন্ম তারিখ, NID-এর কপি, সদ্য তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ২ কপি ছবি, মোবাইল নম্বর, ইত্যাদি উল্লেখপূর্বক সকল প্রকার সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি এবং নিজ ঠিকানা সম্মলিত ফেরত খামসহ আবেদনপত্র রেজিস্ট্রার, বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা বরাবরে পৌছাতে হবে। নিয়োগ পরীক্ষায়/সাক্ষাৎকারে উপস্থিত হওয়ার জন্য কোন প্রকার যাতায়াত বা দৈনিক ভাতা প্রদান করা হবে না। কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ ব্যতিরেকে এই নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়া গ্রহণ/বাতিল/পদ সংখ্যা হ্রাস-বৃদ্ধির ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়ায় কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে। চাকরিরত প্রার্থীগণকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে

উল্লিখিত পদের আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখঃ ৩০/০৫/২০২২

Two mangled buses after they collided head-on on Tangail-Mymensingth highway in Madhupur, Tangail yesterday, killing one of the drivers and injuring at least 25 passengers. Inset, a car fell into a canal from an abandoned bridge in Tongibari, Munshiganj the same day, which killed two teenagers.

The accident took place at Pura Bazar area around 3:30am.

upazila.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



For Shohel, giving his best to every project is more important than chasing stardom. "Fame eventually fades away, but hard work is remembered," he says.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Sharing anecdotes from the sets of that show, Shohel explained that there was an incident where his character's hand was cut, and he had to put his 'bloody finger' into a jar of red chili powder. "We used actual chili powder, and in the next scene, I had to rub my eyes with my fingers. Naturally, my eyes had started to burn and I had tears rolling down my cheeks. It was painful, but thankfully, the scene ended up looking great," he mentions.

His projects, "Boli" and "Unoloukik" (Don't Write Me), and "Taan" were quite experimental. Upon asking whether he would like to keep experimenting, Shohel shared that he wants to explore situational

comedies, biographies, and family dramas with social messages. He hopes to do fullfledged commercial movies as well.

He also commented on the government's draft regulation for digital, social media and OTT platforms: "This act should involve people who are working in the OTT sector. Their absence might affect the people who are genuinely making good content. Freedom of individuals should not be hampered in a democratic country."

His web series for Hoichoi, "Refuge" is currently in post-production, while his films, "Hawa" and "Mayar Jonjal" are slated for release this year.

"We shot 'Hawa' in St Martin's Island for 40 days. One scene in the film required me to be under sea water with our director of

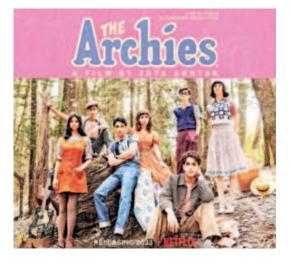
photography for six hours straight. That experience will stay with me forever," shares the "Taqdeer" actor.

For Shohel, giving his best to every project is more important than chasing stardom. "Fame eventually fades away, but hard work is remembered," he says.

"I am not worried about the fact that my fame can evaporate in an instant. Rather, I am terrified of not being able to perform well. In those moments, I even think of giving up acting, but I keep trying until I am satisfied with the outcome."

That being said, if acting does not work out for Shohel somewhere down the line, he would pick travelling as a career.

He will begin working on Robiul Alam Robi's untitled Chorki project this month.



Meet the next generation of Bollywood in Zoya Akhtar's 'The Archies'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

With Bollywood all geared up to welcome the next generation of actors, filmmaker Zoya Akhtar has shared the first look of her much-talkedabout film, "The Archies", starring Suhana Khan (Shah Rukh Khan's daughter), Khushi Kapoor (Sridevi's daughter), and Agastya Nanda (Amitabh Bachchan's grandson).

Suhana is set to play Veronica, while Agastya and Khushi will be playing Archie and Betty

In addition to the trio of star kids, the film will also feature young talented artistes Dot, Mihir Ahuja, Yuvraj Menda, and Vedang Raina in pivotal roles. The Zoya Akhtar directorial, an Indian adaptation of the popular Archie comics, will be a live-action musical set in the 1960s. It is slated for release on Netflix in 2023.

Bubly's 'Prem Puran' with Roshan

Ziaul Roshan and Shobnom Bubly are set to star in the film, "Prem Puran". The romantic movie is jointly directed by Masud Mohiuddin and Mahmood Hasan Shikdar.

Most recently, Bubly was seen in the Chorki original film, "Floor Number 7", directed by Raihan Rafi.

Roshan and Bubly have previously worked together in a number of films, including "Chokh", "Revenge", "Betray", and "Maya: The Love".

OUNTRYWIDE

RAJSHAHI DIVISION

Bad weather hamnering Boro harvest

ANWAR ALI

Rice yield is likely to dwindle to some extent in eight districts of Rajshahi division during this Boro season due to bad weather during the harvest period, officials and farmers said.

Good weather persisted during the sowing and cultivation period, but the storms and rains started partially damaging crops in many areas since the harvest began in mid-April.

Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) which warned farmers of more storms till the end of May is also another reason for crop damage in storms.

Farmers cannot harvest Boro paddy before the storms as many of them cultivate additional crops before the proper sowing period of Boro paddy. This leads to crop damage, they said.

Such as farmers in Rajshahi cultivate potatoes before boro and mustard in the Chalan beel areas covering Natore, Pabna and Sirajganj districts, delaying the boro cultivation, they said.

The DAE has recorded a yield of 3.99 tonnes of rice per hectare as they accounted for a harvest of 31 per cent of 8,20,981 hectares of boro land till Tuesday in Rajshahi and Bogura regions in the division.

The yield was 0.27 tonnes per hectare less than last year's yield of 4.26 tonnes per hectare, DAE officials said.

"The total yield will rise after the harvest of hybrid and high yielding varieties of paddy completes," Mohammad Khayer Uddin Mollah, acting additional director of Rajshahi DAE said.

He admitted there are chances for declining yield this year.

According to growers and DAE officials, farmers of Chalan Beel usually harvest paddy early.

This year when the DAE is asking farmers to harvest early, farmers of plain lands are facing a labour crisis as most farm labourers were visiting Chalan Beel and other low-lying areas where the harvest starts early.

The farm labourers would return home to join the harvest of their respective districts later.

During a visit to Chalan Beel areas of Satpukuria village in Natore recently, this correspondent found that most farmers already harvested their crops.

They were seen engaged in separating paddy from sheaves, stacking piles of straws, and boiling

paddy for making rice.

They would survive the upcoming monsoon with the rice while they would sell the rest.

DAE officials said Boro paddy was cultivated on some 33,000 hectares of land in Chalan Beel areas.

In the three upazilas of Shingra. Boraigram and Gurudaspur, some 86 per cent harvest was completed, but in Sirajganj and Pabna districts, the harvest barely went beyond 35 per cent, DAE officials said.

Hossain Ali Lebu, a farmer, said he suffered a loss of Tk two lakh as he gathered 200 maunds less paddy this season from 30 bighas of his boro

"Storms lashed my paddy sheaves to the ground," he said, adding "This loss is appearing big as cultivation costs have risen with an increase of

He further added that he delayed boro cultivation after harvesting

However, Md Jewel, another farmer, said he managed a good yield on his 150 bighas of land.

"Good weather helped me," he said, adding that he got 20 maunds per bigha yield from local varieties while the hybrid varieties fetched him a yield of 25 to 35 maunds.

Mahabub's home, a group of 15-20 criminals attacked them. The goons hacked them indiscriminately and fled.

Locals rushed the three injured to Daulatpur Upazila Health Complex from where they were shifted to Kushtia General Mahabub Hospital. breathed his last there 1:20am around Thursday.

The two others were undergoing treatment at the hospital yesterday.

Buddha FROM PAGE 12

the people of Bengal since ancient times. Paharpur and Mainamati Shalban Bihar are its shining examples."

He urged the members of the Buddhist community celebrate Buddha Purnima maintaining guidelines to health prevent the future spread of Covid-19.

The prime minister all to work urged generously to further strengthen the practice and bond of harmony in Bangladesh in future.

"Thopethat by upholding and nurturing the ideals of Gautama Buddha, everyone will play a role in building Bangladesh as a peaceful country," she said.

World's

FROM PAGE 12

Victoria Fellner visited Sky Bridge 721 earlier this week as part of a preview event, sharing photos on her Instagram account.

Fellner told CNN Travel that taking her first step on the bridge gave her a "queasy feeling." But this initial fear subsided as she admired the surrounding landscape.

22 AL men FROM PAGE 12 As soon as the van reached Bayan More near reached Bayan More near Methodology by the planning on a micro local planning on

as of Thursday have also been excluded from this list. have enough

vaccines in our stock to inoculate all the eligible recipients with the booster dose," Dr Mowla Baksh Chaudhury, director programme manager of the expanded programme on immunization (EPI), told Mowla said.

planning on a micro level to count the number of

shots in each upazila. "With lower Covid-19 been observing a lower rush for vaccine recipients. So, we are planning, in detail, to bring more people under

meeting in Dhaka with health officials around the eligible people for booster country regarding booster dose administration.

On February 8 last year transmission rates, we have the government introduced a nationwide Covid-19 vaccination campaign initially for 80 percent of the population aged 18 and the booster dose coverage," above. The target was later lowered to 70 percent later.

3 couples die in freak road

The couple on the motorbike -- Anik Raham Babu, 28, and Yasmin Aktar, 19 -- also died on the spot.

The mangled remains of the car landed on Firoj Mollah, 55, and his wife Ruma Begum, 40, who were threshing paddy. They were killed on impact.

The bus flipped on its side on the road, killing its passenger Altab Hossain Highway Police Outpost in Gopalganj.

the accident, he told The Daily Star.

On information, fire and locals rushed to the spot, recovered the bodies and rescued the injured.

Road traffic was suspended on the highway for about half an hour after the accident, said police.

Lelin Saha, 48, younger to him over the phone about an hour before the

passengers were injured in gone for ever."

Deceased neighbour Tinu Mollah said Firoj was a physically service members, police challenged person. He used to thresh paddy with the help of his wife. The accident has left the couple's three schoolgoing children orphaned.

Nayeem Mofazzal Haque, Bhatiapara Police brother of Bashudev, said, Station, said they earlier "My brother was going to recommended that the Khan, 50, said Sirajul Islam, our village home to see authorities set up a in-charge of Bhatiapara my ailing mother. I talked central reservation on this particular section of the highway as accidents occur least 25 bus accident. But he is now here frequently.

Macron starts second term with challenges mounting

AFP, Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron formally began his second term in office yesterday, maintaining suspense about his new government ahead of parliamentary elections next month that will shape his next five

years in power. The 44-year-old scored a solid victory in April 24 presidential polls against far-right leader Marine be able to push through taken his time to name a banner of "Together".

his domestic reform agenda.

The identity of Macron's government is expected to set the tone the president suggesting he intends to name only the second woman prime minister in modern French history.

Speculation has been rife in the French media, with UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay and current majority in parliament to candidates, but Macron has

replacement for outgoing Premier Jean Castex.

"It's been decided, but no one knows who it is,' a presidential advisor campaigning, with told AFP on condition of

> An announcement is expected early next week.

Macron's Republic on the Move party has been renamed Renaissance ahead of the parliamentary polls on June 12 and 19, with several centrist and Labour Minister Elisabeth centre-right parties set Le Pen, but still needs a Borne seen as possible to compete under the collective





A few hundred protesters gather during a demonstration against a possible Nato membership of Sweden outside the ruling Social Democrats party's office in Stockholm, Sweden, yesterday. Sweden on Friday inched closer to a reversal of its decades-long policy of military non-alignment, as a security policy review concluded that joining Nato would reduce the risk of conflict in northern Europe.

ATTACK AT JOURNO'S FUNERAL

Outcry against Israel mounts

AFP, Jerusalem

The US and EU led an international outcry yesterday after Israeli police charged the funeral procession of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and beat pallbearers who almost dropped her coffin.

Thousands of mourners packed Jerusalem's Old City on Friday for the burial of the 51-year-old Al Jazeera journalist, two days after she was killed during an Israeli raid in the occupied West Bank.

Television footage showed pallbearers struggling to stop Abu Akleh's casket from falling to the ground as baton-wielding police charged towards them, grabbing Palestinian flags.

The United States was "deeply troubled to see the images of Israeli police intruding into her funeral procession," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.

The European Union condemned what it said was "unnecessary force" used by

the Israeli police.
Israel and the Palestinians traded blame after
Abu Akleh was shot in the head on Wednesday near Jenin
refugee camp in the northern West Bank. She had been
wearing a helmet and a bulletproof vest marked "Press".

Israel's army said an interim investigation could not determine who fired the fatal bullet, noting stray Palestinian gunfire or Israeli sniper fire aimed at militants

were both possible causes.

The Palestinian public prosecution said an initial probe showed "the only origin of the shooting was the Israeli occupation forces". Al Jazeera said Israel killed her

"deliberately" and "in cold blood". In a rare, unanimous statement, the UN Security Council condemned the killing, calling for "an immediate,

thorough, transparent, and impartial investigation."
Abu Akleh, a Christian and a Palestinian-American,
was a highly respected reporter and her funeral drew
massive crowds. The Jerusalem Red Crescent said 33
people were injured in Friday's mayhem, of whom six
were hospitalised. The Israeli police said they arrested six

The United States, European Union and United Nations have backed calls for a full investigation into her killing. Israel has publicly called for a joint probe, which the Palestinian Authority has rejected.

ASEAN SUMMIT IN WASHINGTON

US hails 'new era'

Myanmar junta slams summit snub, lauds ties with China

AGENCIES

US President Joe Biden said on Friday a first summit in Washington with leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) marked the launch of a "new era" in the relationship between the United States and the 10-nation bloc.

In a joint 28-point "vision statement" after a two-day meeting, the two sides took what analysts called a symbolic step of committing to raise their relationship from a strategic partnership to a "comprehensive strategic partnership" in November.

On Ukraine they reaffirmed "respect for sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity," wording that a regional expert said went further than past Asean statements. The statement did not condemn Russia by name for its Feb 24 invasion.

The summit marked the first time Asean leaders gathered as a group in Washington and their first meeting hosted by a US president since 2016.

Biden's administration hopes the effort will show that the United States remains focused on the Indo-Pacific and the long-term challenge of China, which it views as its main competitor, despite Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

He was also hoping to persuade Asean countries to toughen their stance on Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Biden told the Asean leaders that "a great deal of history of our world in the next 50 years is going to be written in the Asean countries, and our relationship with you is the future, in the coming years and decades."

Biden called the US-Asean partnership "critical" and said: "We're launching a new era - a new era - in US-Asean relations."

Vice President Kamala Harris said the United States would remain in Southeast Asia for "generations" and stressed the need to maintain freedom of the seas, which the United States says is challenged by China.



"The United States and Asean have shared a vision for this region, and together we will guard against threats to international rules and norms," Harris said.

Neither she nor Biden mentioned China by name. The United States has accused China of using coercion against its neighbors.

Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Biden hosted a summit dinner at the White House on Thursday, and his administration promised \$150 million for areas including infrastructure, security, pandemic preparedness and clean energy.

New US commitments will include deployment of a Coast Guard vessel to the region to help counter what the United States and regional countries have described as China's illegal fishing. Still, US spending pales in comparison to that of China, which in November alone pledged \$1.5 billion in development assistance for Asean over three years to fight Covid and fuel economic recovery.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's junta on Friday slammed the United States for snubbing it at a regional summit and meeting with opposition leaders, and instead lauded its ties with "powerful" China.

"In the Asia-Pacific region, China is a powerful country. Our country is dealing with and having relations with powerful China and India," he said.

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed elected UAE president

AFP, Abu Dhabi

The UAE's long-time de facto ruler
Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed
Al Nahyan was elected as
president yesterday, official
media said, a day after the
death of former leader
Sheikh Khalifa. The 61-yearold was unanimously
elected by the Federal
Supreme Council, WAM news
agency said, becoming the ruler
of the oil-rich country founded by

his father in 1971. Sheikh Mohamed, often known as 'MBZ', met members of the Federal Supreme Council, made up of rulers of the UAE's seven emirates, as the country enters a period of mourning for his half-brother Sheikh Khalifa. Sheikh Mohamed's ascension, which was widely expected, formalises his position as leader of the desert state of 10 million after years of calling the shots while Sheikh Khalifa was sidelined by poor health.

US 'working to understand Turkey's position'

AFP, Washington

Washington is "working to clarify Turkey's position" after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed opposition to Finland and Sweden joining Nato, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Friday. The idea of the two nations becoming members of the transatlantic alliance had received "broad support from Nato member countries," Psaki said. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby likewise said the United States is working to "better understand" Ankara's stance. Erdogan told journalists on Friday that "we do not have a positive opinion" about the two countries joining the alliance. Turkey has long accused Nordic countries, in particular Sweden, which has a strong Turkish immigrant community, of harboring extremist Kurdish groups as well as supporters of Fethullah Gulen, the US-based preacher wanted over the failed 2016 coup. To gain Nato membership, all the 30 members of the alliance must agree unanimously to extend a formal invitation.

Tripura CM Bilab Dev resigns amid party infighting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Chief Minister of India's BJP-ruled Tripura state Biplab Kumar Deb yesterday resigned from the post amidst serious infighting in the party's state unit one year ahead of fresh assembly elections there. Deb said he has submitted his resignation to Governor S N Arya whom he met at the Raj Bhavan in Agartala, capital city of Tripura.

Later in the day, the BJP appointed Dr Manik Saha as his replacement. Saha, who is a dentist by profession, was elected as a Rajya Sabha MP just last month and is also the Tripura state president of the BJP. Deb took to Twitter to congratulate his successor and said Tripura will prosper under PM Modi's "vision and leadership". Deb was appointed the chief minister after the BJP stormed to power in 2018, ending 25 years of Left Front rule in Tripura.



"The spread of the malignant epidemic (Covid-19) is a great turmoil to fall on our country since the founding. But if we don't lose focus in implementing epidemic polic..., we can more than overcome the crisis."

Kim Jong Un as North Korea reports 21 new deaths

RUSSIA REFERENDUM Georgia's breakaway region to vote in July

AFP, Moscow

The leader of Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia on Friday set July 17 as a date for a referendum on joining Russia.

"Anatoly Bibilov signed a decree on holding a referendum in the Republic of South Ossetia," his office said in a statement, citing his people's "historic aspiration" to join Russia.

South Ossetia was at the centre of the Russian-Georgian war in 2008 after which the Kremlin recognised the territory — along with another separatist region, Abkhazia — as an independent state and stationed military bases there.

Bibilov lost his bid for re-election earlier this month. Russia has expressed hope the incoming leader, Alan Gagloev, will preserve "continuity" in ties with Moscow.

The announcement came amid Russia's military campaign in Ukraine, where separatist regions of Donetsk and Lugansk have also expressed interest in joining Russia.

In August 2008, Russia launched an assault against Georgia which was battling pro-Russian militia in South Ossetia. The fighting ended five days later with a European Union-mediated ceasefire but claimed more than 700 lives and displaced tens of thousands of ethnic Georgians.



Child migrant Eliana, 4, from Guatemala, is being carried towards a member of the Texas Army National Guard, after she and other asylumseeking migrants waded across the Rio Grande river into the United States from Mexico in Roma, Texas, US, on Friday.

EDITORIAL

The Baily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Drives against oil hoarders alone will not work

Greater scrutiny and control essential to keep oil prices stable

E appreciate the government's ongoing drives against illegal hoarders who continue to sell edible oils at prices much higher than what's printed on the bottles. Reportedly, cooking oil almost disappeared from the retail shops across the country before Eid-ul-Fitr, even before the government hiked their prices. Having created an artificial crisis in the market, the hoarders then started selling the oils—bought way before the new prices were imposed—at much higher prices. This has created immense sufferings for the ordinary people who are already struggling to buy essential food items due to increased prices.

Amid such a situation, the government started drives against the hoarders, and between Monday and Thursday last week, seized over 6,34,000 litres of edible oil from warehouses and shops across the country. The Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP), an agency of the commerce ministry which is conducting the drives, has also fined the hoarders for such illegal activities. While conducting such drives is no doubt important, the question remains as to whether this would be enough to stop the illegal hoarders and bring down prices in the retail market.

Reportedly, over the past year, the prices of edible oils have gone up eight times. And after the latest increase in prices, many consumers have turned to alternative sources such as mustard oil, as it is comparatively cheaper than soybean and other oils, given that mustard oil is produced locally with locally produced ingredients. But shockingly, the companies have now also increased the price of this oil to make extra profits. Reportedly, mustard oil prices of different brands have increased by up to Tk 80 per litre in the local market.

The situation is really concerning and the government must do everything to keep the cooking oil market stable. While the DNCRP must conduct regular drives in all districts of the country to prevent the hoarders from exploiting consumers, strict directives must be given to the companies producing oils to not increase prices at will violating the rules.

Simultaneously, the government needs to identify the syndicates responsible for creating such artificial crises, and make sure the masterminds behind them are brought to book—as by the amount of hoarded oil that is being discovered, it is apparent that there is some sort of coordination going on between well-connected traders, dealers and importers, leading to this scenario. Additionally, the government should sell edible oils at subsidised prices to the poor through its open market sales (OMS) programmes, and look for alternative markets to buy the product from at cheaper prices.

Floating hospital brings hope to rural backwaters

A commendable initiative that deserves our full support

TORIES of selfless service are few and far between in this age of unbound greed and self-gratification, yet they restore our faith in humanity. One such story, published in this daily on Saturday, highlights the vital contributions of a floating hospital that sails through rivers to far-flung areas and offers healthcare services to the common people. Aptly named Jiban Tari, the hospital, the first of its kind to be launched in Bangladesh in 1999 by the non-profit Impact Foundation Bangladesh (IFB), provides specialised health check-ups and services for eyes, ENT, orthopaedics and physical deformity to the disadvantaged population.

Reportedly, the three-deck floating hospital has an accommodation facility for 32 full-time residential staff members, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, medical technologists and support staff, with two fully-fledged operation theatres to perform surgeries on board. With the resources available to them, the hospital authorities say they have served patients in 32 locations in 22 districts, while 700,000 patients have received medical services and more than 50,000 have undergone surgeries.

One can well imagine the rigorous background work that goes into preparations for sailing for a particular destination and obtaining permission from the civil, police and health authorities. It is heartening to know that the hospital has operated even during the pandemic, providing medical services and running awareness campaigns on Covid-19. We also appreciate the fact that the hospital trains school teachers on how to conduct basic eye check-ups on students and community leaders on basic health and hygiene. For a floating establishment on the move around the rural backwaters, the question of having access to updated information is a pertinent one. In this connection, we're glad to know that foreign surgeons come on visits to provide training to the health providers and help in ensuring quality treatment and care at the hospital. Such trainings and exchanges help

to keep its staff abreast of the latest medical knowledge. The Jiban Tari initiative is thus a remarkable example that shows us what the collective will of humanity can achieve if inspired properly and guided in the right direction. Understandably, discipline and dedication are required to make such a venture successful. It is not business as usual for a group of people living on a small ship for months on end and serving the sick. They deserve our unconditional support and recognition.



ILLUSTRATION: ANWAR SOHEL

Return of enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killing?



ON THE SHORES OF (IN)JUSTICE

CR Abrar is an academic and a member of Nagorik, a platform for human rights and the rule of law.

CR ABRAR

The decision

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War.

 Γ was a sombre occasion at the Dhaka Reporters Unity premises on April 30. At a press conference, Yasmin Nijhum claimed that a group of men in plainclothes introducing themselves as members of a law enforcement agency picked up her 44-year-old husband Mohsin Gazi from the city's Shewrapara area on April 19. She further informed that the family was advised by the perpetrators that since her husband would be returned within three days, they need not report the matter to any authority. More than 10 days after his disappearance, as Mohsin did not return and his loved ones had no information about his whereabouts, Nijhum made a fervent plea at the press conference that at least Mohsin "should be shown arrested".

Nijhum reported that at around 2:45am on that day, a group of six to seven men came in three white microbuses to their house. Their landlord was informed by the group that they had come to pick up Mohsin and claimed to have an arrest warrant issued against his village address in Bhola (it was neither shown nor presented to the family). One of the men displayed an identity card. However, when Nijhum's brother took a photo of the card, he was forced to delete it and reset his phone. Nijhum claimed that the police refused to file any case and only agreed to register a general diary, that too "on condition that no law enforcement agency will be mentioned in the document", Nijhum alleged. The officer in charge of the Kafrul police station declined to comment on the allegation that they had asked the family not to mention any enforcement agency's name in the GD.

The press conference was a prompt and bold expression of solidarity by the members of Mayer Dak with the family of Mohsin, the latest victim of alleged involuntary disappearance in Bangladesh. Soon after the outbreak of the news of his disappearance, the Mayer Dak leadership convened the press conference to spread the message about the latest victim and exert pressure on the authorities that Mohsin be produced before the court or at least shown arrested as demanded by his spouse. At the press conference, the family stressed that they had credible information that the victim was in custody of a particular unit of an elite law enforcement agency in Dhaka. Throughout the day, despite such brave claims, the state agency maintained a stoic silence.

A day after the press conference, Mohsin was "shown arrested", curiously by Rab 8 in the faraway southern town of Barishal. The commanding officer of Rab 8 pleaded ignorance of the claims that the family had made about him being involuntarily disappeared from his Dhaka residence. A press release by the unit stated that Mohsin Gazi was found in a mahogany orchard based on a "tip-off" as he and his "accomplice robbers" were taking shelter there "carrying illegal and locally made weapons". A number of items including cleavers, pistol, shooter gun, rifle and several bullets were claimed to have been recovered from the group. Rab also brought about allegations of extortion, theft, intimidation, abduction and hostage taking against "Mohsin and his gang".

While the charges against Mohsin are matters for the police to establish in the court of law, questions abound. For example, how can an individual who was allegedly apprehended by a team of six or seven persons claiming to be members of a law enforcement agency (with at least one person displaying identity card)using at least three similar microbuses, in the wee hours of the morning, from the middle of Dhaka city, after informing the landlord and the members of the family of the apprehended individual about the purpose of their mission, and promising to bring him back in three days, with the individual essentially being involuntarily disappeared for more than 10 days, only to be discovered in the southern city of Barishal—be involved in a conspiracy with weapons along with a group of accomplices in a mahogany orchard? While the concerned unit of the law enforcement agency may feel confident with the crafted narrative, discerning observers would find such claims to be preposterous and derisory. There is little doubt among the members of the family and those who witnessed the arrest of Mohsin in Shewrapara on April 19 that he was involuntarily disappeared. Surely, he remained outside the protection of the law during the interim period.

The US sanctions on Rab and seven of its key current and former officials have irked, if not rattled, the Bangladesh government. Unfortunately, the Bangladesh government has continued to deny knowledge of or involvement in such phenomena. In line with this approach, it termed the US move as "outlandish" and "regrettable" and its foreign minister publicly solicited Indian support to get rid of the sanctions.

There was a sharp drop in the number of incidents of both alleged involuntary disappearances and extrajudicial killings after the imposition of the sanctions, bringing relief among the citizenry. The Mohsin Gazi episode appears to have brought an end to that feeling of respite. The lull that accompanied the US sanctions (imposed on December 10, 2021) on grounds of alleged extrajudicial killings also appeared to have come to an end when one Raju, 35, succumbed to Rab action in Cumilla on April 18. In a separate case, Kawser Ali Mondal (45) of Joypurhat died after a shootout with Rab in Manikganj four days later. The Rab claimed it had to open fire as the force came under attack by the miscreants. While members of law enforcement agencies are indisputably justified to take stern action if they come under attack, including using firearms, one is perplexed as to why ordinary individuals would be coerced to sign documents by state agencies to declare that they had "witnessed gunfight", whereas in reality, they had not seen any such occurrence. Two witnesses of the case, Rifat Mahmud (20), and Saiful Islam (37), a CNG driver, had to sign documents at Rab's prodding, but admitted to the press that although

they had seen a dead body, they were not

witness to any gunfight. The locals also reported that they were not aware of any incident of gunfight with the Rab either (The Daily Star, April 22, 2022). These grievous incidents in the third week of

April 2022 are indeed alarming. At the Mayer Dak press conference, family members of at least a dozen disappeared persons demanded information about their loved ones along with that of Mohsin. They asked why members of law enforcement agencies refuse to furnish their identity documents and arrest warrants when they come to apprehend such individuals, why the police refuse to take cases when family members specifically name and identify the perpetrators, why the authorities do not investigate properly, and why the public representatives do not discuss such flagrant violations of rights on the floor of the parliament. If the claims by the government that its functionaries are not engaged in such heinous practices are tenable, then does the onus not rest on the state to account for more than 600 cases of involuntary disappearances over the last decade or so? The unwarranted and unsubstantiated statements of senior functionaries of the state including ministers that the victims are "hiding" after swindling in business, or after extramarital affairs, or have gone overseas without the knowledge of the family and the like, are an affront to victim families' sentiments. The families challenged the authorities to prove a single such case.

Bemoaning the disappearance of her husband, a wife said, "they have taken away the roof from over my head". Years have passed by, yet many families do not know whether their loved ones are dead or alive. "If he has gone, then I would like to hold a milad (the last rite)", said one mother. "At least they should show us his final resting place", was the desperate plea of a father. A boy wanted to know why his father does not accompany him to his school like his other mates. Likewise, little Lilly wanted her father to choose her dress for the then-upcoming Eid, a wish that will never come to fruition. Other family members highlighted mundane aspects of their lived experience without their loved ones. "My husband was in timber trade and we have enough savings in bank to tide us through. But we cannot access the money as we cannot get a succession certificate and thus have to live on the charity of my extended family", narrated another wife. Property settlement of many households remains pending for

The failure of the mainstream society to extend moral support to the victim families is palpable. The decision of the National Press Club authorities to deny permission to use the venue for the Mayer Dak press conference only reflects the level of impediment and non-cooperation that these families face. Likewise, the silence of the mainstream civil society, the keepers of national conscience, on such gross violations of human rights is an affront to the spirit of the Liberation War. The time has come for the state to account for the whereabouts of every involuntarily disappeared person and, instead of trying to secure external support to remove sanctions, set up an independent and credible investigation in all cases of involuntary disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

Celebrating Fulbright Program on the golden jubilee of US-Bangla partnership



Bhattacharva is a non-resident fellow at the Centre for Global Development (CGD), Washington, DC, and distinguished fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), **DEBAPRIYA BHATTACHARYA**

ECENTLY, Bangladesh and the United States have celebrated half a century of their multifaceted partnership. It would be quite opportune to point out that the Fulbright Program, the flagship academic exchange program of the US government, played a significant role in providing critical substance to this partnership. It has boosted technical knowledge and intercultural skills of Bangladeshi academics and other professionals, and prepared a couple of generations for nation-building pursuits. Concurrently, a large group of experts from the US have acquired positive changes in their professional interactive approaches and contextual sensitivities by being in Bangladesh under the program.

Over the 75 years of its existence, the Fulbright program granted awards annually to nearly 8,000 students and scholars from 160 countries of the world as well as the US. Since its inception, more than 400,000 Fulbright alumni have studied, taught and conducted research in each other's countries. The program is well-known for merit-based selection and academic prestige; its alumni include 60 Nobel Prize winners, 89 Pulitzer Prize winners, and 40 current or former state or government heads. Over the five decades, hundreds of members of Bangladesh's knowledge system, including this author, have had taken full advantage of this window of opportunity.

My association with the Fulbright program had been a family affair. I was a Senior Fulbright Fellow at the Center for Global Development (CGD), Washington, D.C., during 2004-05. In the recent past, CGD has elected me as one of its Non-Resident Fellows. On the other hand, my younger brother, Dr Debadarshi (Dipen) Bhattacharya, a professor of astrophysics who has worked for NASA and is a science-fiction writer, was a Fulbright Fellow from the US at BRAC University during 2006-07.

The program was created in 1946, in the context of the post-World War II, through legislation moved by Senator J William Fulbright. He was an influential statesman and the longest-serving chair (1959-1974) of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US Senate. Democrat Fulbright's visionary leadership on

international relations greatly contributed to the creation of the United Nations as well as its peacekeeping initiatives. His efforts and contributions towards enhancing mutual understanding and partnership were recognised through the setting up of the prestigious Fulbright program. He passed away in 1995 at the

Senator Fulbright's influence on me predates my participation in the program. I was struck by his basic philosophy, which in many ways defines the ethos of the program, and this is best expressed in his own words: "In the long course of history, having people who understand your thought is much greater security than another submarine". On another occasion, he pointed out that "as a conservative power, the United States has a vital interest in upholding and expanding the reign of law in international relations". What is interesting is that he related the rule of law in international relations to domestic democratic polity. No wonder he asserted that "to be a statesman, you must first get elected".

But, as a civil society person engaged in policy activism, my favourite quote from the writings of Senator Fulbright was the following: "In a democracy, dissent is an act of faith." In the era of diminishing democratic space, particularly for civil society, this saying remains of enduring relevance for our leaders. I wish our leaders took on board the senator's observation that "the citizen who criticises his country is paying it an implied tribute". Indeed, it is time to do a fresh reading of not only the apostles of democratic dispensation, such as Benjamin Franklin, but also of modern thinkers like J William Fulbright, who articulated some of the fundamental values of a rule-based liberal economy and

Over the last 50 years, the US-Bangla partnership has reorganised itself not only on strong footings but has also been energised by new momentum. Over the last two decades, the US has consistently been the number one export destination for Bangladesh. Bangladesh enjoys an annual trade surplus with the US to the tune of USD 5.9 billion (2021). This is despite the fact that since 2013, after the Rana Plaza incident, Bangladesh is not a beneficiary of the US Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) which provides for preferential market access to export products from developing countries.

The US is among the top three sources of remittance for Bangladesh. Over the last decade, it has also remained as one of the top five sources of foreign direct investment (FDI) for Bangladesh.



REPRESENTATIONAL PHOTO: BIGSTOCK

The Fulbright program has not only evolved over the five decades as a mainstay of the US-Bangla partnership but has also emerged as a strong lever in Bangladesh's quests, inter alia, to leave the group of Least **Developed Countries** (LDCs). mitigate the adverse impact of climate change, and prepare for the 4IR.

The net annual official development assistance (ODA) from the US to Bangladesh increased to almost USD 310 million annually by 2020. The partnership reached a new height during the pandemic, which included supply of vaccines by the US and Bangladesh exporting personal protection equipment (PPE) to the American market. The US remains a steadfast supporter of Bangladesh's efforts to host the Rohingya refugees and send them back to Myanmar. It has already provided more than USD 1.7 billion to this end.

The bilateral partnership is evolving within the institutional framework provided by the Bangladesh-US Partnership Dialogue (since 2012), the Bangladesh-US Security Dialogue (since 2012), and the Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement or TICFA (since 2014).

However, the significance of the Fulbright program for US-Bangla partnership needs to be explored within the mentioned dimensions and framework of the bilateral relationship and, more specifically, in the area of education. The US is one of the top four bilateral providers in terms of ODA commitments to education, accounting for about 5 percent of the total commitment. From 2011-2020, the average annual commitment of the US to Bangladesh's education sector was USD 7.17 million.

In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the contribution of the US is quite pronounced in the delivery of SDG 4 (Quality Education). Specifically, US support had been focused on target 4.4.b, which is to increase the number of scholarships to developing countries for enrolment in higher education. Bangladesh is the fastest growing country in terms of sending international students to the US. In the 2019-2020 academic year, over 8,800 Bangladeshi students studied in the US, with more than 75 percent of them studying in STEM fields (41 percent in engineering, over 19 percent in mathematics/computer science, and 14 percent in on-the-job training). Moreover, to improve early-grade reading and expand schooling to dropout children, USAID works with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education of Bangladesh to invest in teacher training and production of teaching and learning materials.

To conclude, the Fulbright program has not only evolved over the five decades as a mainstay of the US-Bangla partnership but has also emerged as a strong lever in Bangladesh's quests, inter alia, to leave the group of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), mitigate the adverse impact of climate change, and prepare for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

The darker side of RTI in Bangladesh

SHAMSUL BARI AND RUHI NAZ

Dr Shamsul Bari and Ruhi Naz are Chairman and Assistant Director (RTI), respectively, of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh, RIB. Email: rib@citech

■ ODAY, we turn away from the positive and encouraging side of the Right to Information movement in Bangladesh, depicted in our previous column (The Daily Star, April 16, 2022), to peer into the shadows.

Union Parishad Chairman threatens to beat up RTI applicant: The case stemmed from an RTI application submitted to the Designated Officer (DO) for RTI of a Union Parishad (UP) in Nawabganj Upazila, Dinajpur District, on February 6, 2022. Harunor Rashid, a local journalist, sought the following information: the number of Succession Certificates issued by the UP during the calendar year 2021; the amount

10 Homer's

17 Jockey Arcaro

40 "Certainly!"

neighbor

16 Dwells

of fees levied for their issuance; and February 17, 2022. The Secretary of the

receiving RTI application: Rita Akhter of Godagari Upazila of Rajshahi district

the government account to which the money was deposited. While waiting for a response, the applicant happened to visit the UP office on some other business on UP, who is also the DO, spotted Harunor and informed the Chairman, According to local media, the Chairman apparently lashed out at him for his audacity to ask for such information. He used the "most filthy language, threatened to beat him up and threw him out of the office." Such behaviour is bound to scare prospective users of the law.

Railway official enraged upon had submitted an RTI request to the

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 1 Brass band members 6 "Paradise Lost" figure 11 Of service 12 Banish 13 Submerged 14 Puzzled 15 Looked lasciviously 17 Pole worker 19 Bear's lair 20 Capt.'s superior 23 Bonehead 25 Flank 26 Deli staples 28 Annual race, for short 29 army exercises 30 Snaky shape

31 Sheltered side

32 Spot 33 Volcanic rock 35 Yellow gem 38 Like Santa's 41 In the know 42 Bert's buddy

44 Oozes **DOWN** 1 Soaking spot 2 Salt Lake City player 3 Wallets 4 Baby wipe additive

5 Clinched 6 Common dice roll 7 Cut drastically 8 Box office buys, in slang

offering

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18 Beef cuts 20 Grinding item 43 Job bonuses 21 "Skyfall" singer 22 Track great Owens 24 Jeans feature 25 Runner on snow 27 Folds 31 Takes it easy 33 Pound sound 34 Collected stories 35 Keg need 36 Need to pay 37 Hole number 9 Brewpub 39 Pointer

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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Since there are clear dereliction of duties by many public officials, the overarching supervisory role of the Cabinet **Division of** the Prime Minister's Office over public bodies could be put to use for their amelioration.

DO of the local office of the Railway Department, seeking information on three counts. One, what actions were taken by the authorities to combat black marketing of railway tickets; two, rules authorising ticket-checkers to recheck passenger-tickets at the exit gate; and three, railway policy/rules, if any, to deal with poor behaviour of transgender passengers on trains. After passing through several hands, the application ended up with an officer who called the applicant on the phone and asked about her background, profession, and reason for seeking the information. He allegedly went into a rage and asked the applicant whether she had visited the station recently and was aware of various measures undertaken by the authorities to combat black-marketing and so on. He was reportedly extremely rude to the applicant and was annoyed by the fact that she used the RTI Act, which he felt was an instrument to harass public officials. If what we gathered is correct, it is indeed sad that government officials hold such a misconception about the purpose of RTI. This must change for the law to succeed.

Designated Officer angered by an RTI application from a person who resides in another area: The case arose from an RTI application submitted by one Quamruzzaman Pasha, a resident of Sariakandi of Bogura District, to the DO of the Environment Directorate Office of Moulovibazar Sadar Upazila of Sylhet district. He asked for some information on the air-pollution situation in Amtoil Union under the Upazila. He wished to know what measures were undertaken by the authorities to protect local inhabitants from the harmful effects of factory emission in the Union and receive reports on factory visits by concerned officials. Upon receiving the application, the DO reportedly called the applicant and asked what interest he had in seeking information on an area where he did not reside. She further told the applicant that she had no time to visit the concerned

areas nor to respond to his RTI request for information covered by official secrecy. The DO was obviously unaware of the scope of the law, the lack of geographical limitation on its application countrywide, and requirement to provide reason for seeking information under it.

Our investigations revealed that applicants face a variety of reactions from irate officials who feel uncomfortable to deal with RTI requests. For example, DOs may call and ask them to withdraw their applications or face dire consequences; employ other tactics to withdraw requests; invite them to their office and behave rudely with them; claim that the information sought falls under the jurisdiction of other units or under some exempt category, etc. All these to avoid responding in writing.

At the same time, however, we discovered a few examples of positive attitude of DOs towards applicants. In some instances, the DOs sought further information from applicants themselves to pursue a wrongdoing or guidance to locate the desired information. In others, DOs would call the applicants to convey that the information was dispatched. Some would even praise applicants for using the law to improve governance.

It is indeed a mixed bag. Though the negative experiences clearly outnumber the positive ones, the latter indicate hope for the future. It is important, therefore, that the negative aspects are identified on an objective basis and redressed properly. Normally one would expect the Information Commission (IC) to deal with them. But unfortunately, our enquiries also revealed many complaints against the IC itself. This emphasises the need for the development of a close interaction mechanism between the IC and the civil society for promotion of RTI law in the country. And since there are clear dereliction of duties by many public officials, the overarching supervisory role of the Cabinet Division of the Prime Minister's Office over public bodies could be put to use for their amelioration.

Find out if you are dehydrated

Dehydration occurs when your body is unable to carry out its normal **functions** due to a lack of water and other fluids. It is a most prevalent issue that is mostly ignored until serious adverse outcomes occur. DR NAZIF MAHBUB

A lot of people get sick, and some even die as a consequence of dehydration. It is estimated that one in nine people around the world does not have access to clean drinking water, and dehydration has taken the lives of 760,000 children in developing countries.

You will become dehydrated if you do not restore lost fluids. You lose water every day by sweating, breathing, urinating, defecating, crying, and saliva (spit). Drinking or eating water-rich meals usually restores lost fluids.

The human body is roughly 75 per cent water. Without this water, it cannot survive. Water is found inside cells, within blood vessels, and between cells. Water loss is increased by fever, Diarrhoea, vomiting, sweating a lot, a lot of peeing (Diabetes and some medications like water pills also called diuretics — can make you pee more often.). Thirst is not always a good predictor of bodily water needs. Many people, especially older people, are not thirsty until dehydrated. So, drink more water in hot weather or while sick.

Dehydration symptoms vary with age. Dry mouth and tongue, no tears when sobbing, and no wet diapers for a long time

are indicators of dehydration in infants and combating dehydration is to drink enough voung children. Dehydration symptoms in adults include severe thirst, infrequent urination, dark urine, weariness, and dizziness. Symptoms of extreme dehydration include fast heartbeat, rapid breathing, fainting, tiredness, loss of energy, disorientation, and irritability.

People are more susceptible to dehydration than others:

• Senior citizens. Some people lose their thirst sense as they age, and as a result, they do not drink enough water.

• Infants and young children are more prone to suffer from diarrhoea or vomiting. • People who have conditions that cause them to urinate

frequently, such as diabetes, cystic fibrosis, or renal disease People who take medications that induce them to urinate or sweat

more frequently • People who exercise or work outside in hot

or sweat more

weather The key to fluids:

• Every day, drink plenty of water. Because everyone's needs vary, see your doctor about how much water you should drink each day.

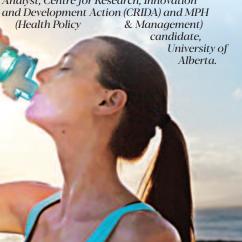
• When the weather is hot or you are unwell, drink more water.

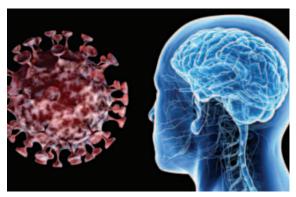
• Sports drinks might be beneficial if you are exercising in the heat and sweating a lot of minerals.

Avoid sugary and caffeinated

For most healthy people, following your thirst is a good daily guideline.

Dr Nazif Mahbub is a Research & Policy Analyst, Centre for Research, Innovation





Even mild COVID-19 can lead to substantial brain changes

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans from before and after the COVID-19 diagnosis show adverse brain changes. In a new study from the U.K. Biobank, two magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans and cognitive testing were performed on people as part of a longitudinal population study predated the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 401 people, positive tests for SARS-CoV-2 occurred between the two MRIs (during the first 18 months of the pandemic); second MRI scans were performed an average of 141 days after positive SARS-CoV-2 tests in this group.

Compared with controls, people with COVID-19 had more reduction in grey matter thickness in the orbitofrontal cortex and parahippocampal gyrus, more tissue damage in regions connected to the olfactory cortex, and greater reduction in global brain size, and greater cognitive decline. Similar changes were not seen in a small group of participants who had developed non-COVID pneumonias between their two scans.

This study, combined with recent studies of SARS-CoV-2 infection of primates, provides strong evidence that even mild COVID-19 can be associated with brain changes.

The shocking extent of exploitative formula milk marketing

chronic

STAR HEALTH DESK

Formula milk companies pay social media platforms and influencers to directly access pregnant women and new mothers. The \$55 billion worldwide formula milk market targets new mothers with targeted social media material often not recognised as advertising.

A recent World Health Organisation (WHO) report titled Scope and impact of digital marketing strategies for promoting breast-milk substitutes outline digital marketing techniques to influence new parents' feeding

To deliver targeted advertising to new moms and pregnant women, formula milk firms can buy or collect personal information using technologies like apps and virtual support groups (or 'baby clubs').

The report summarises findings from a new study that gathered and analysed 4 million social media postings about new-born feeding between January and June 2021. These posts reached 2.47 billion people and generated more than 12 million likes, shares or comments.

Formula milk corporations post to social media 90 times each day, reaching 229 million people, three times as many as non-commercial accounts that promote breastfeeding.

As a result of this widespread marketing, moms are less likely to exclusively breastfeed as recommended by WHO. Commercial milk formula advertising should have ended decades ago. It is outrageous that formula milk firms are now using more effective and

sinister marketing strategies to increase sales. The report drew on previous multi-country

research on mothers' and health professionals' experiences of formula milk marketing and social listening research on public online communications. The studies illustrate how misinformation regarding breastfeeding and breast milk impairs women's confidence to effectively

The global digital marketing of formula milk violates the 1981 World Health Assembly's International Code of Marketing of

Breast-milk Substitutes (the Code). The Code is a landmark public health agreement aimed to safeguard the public and mothers from aggressive infant food industry marketing methods that harm breastfeeding.

Despite substantial evidence that exclusive and continuous breastfeeding improves children, moms, and community health, far too few children are breastfed exclusively.

These marketing methods may reduce the quantity of formula milk sold, increasing profitability.

Because national monitoring and health authorities can ignore these forms of digital marketing, new approaches to Code implementation and enforcement are required. Currently, crossborder marketing can circumvent national legislation.

WHO has urged the infant food industry to stop exploitative formula milk marketing and governments from protecting new children and families by banning all formula milk advertising and promotion.



Vegan diets boost weight loss, lower blood sugar in adults with overweight or type 2 diabetes

A 12-week vegan diet may result in clinically meaningful weight loss and improve blood sugar control in overweight adults and those with type 2 diabetes, according to a meta-analysis of 11 randomised trials involving almost 800 participants (aged 18 or older).

However, vegan diets rich in fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes and seeds, with no all-animal derived foods, did not affect blood pressure or triglycerides compared to other diets.

For this study, the researchers analysed the effect of vegan diets on other types of diets on cardiometabolic risk factors - body weight, body mass index [BMI], blood sugar levels, systolic and diastolic blood pressure, total cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, and triglycerides.

Compared with control diets, vegan diets significantly reduced body weight (effect average $-4.1 \,\mathrm{kg}$) and BMI (-1.38 $\,\mathrm{kg/m2}$). But the effects on blood sugar level (-0.18 %-points), total cholesterol (-0.30 mmol/L) and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (-0.24 mmol/L) were

Further analyses found even greater body weight and BMI reductions when vegan diets were compared with continuing a normal diet without dietary changes than other intervention diets.

Tips for maintaining good eyesight

DR RAMISHA MALIHA

Keeping your vision healthy entails more than just receiving regular vision screenings. Your entire health might affect your eve health. Here are six tips for keeping your eyesight healthy.

Eat right: Eat meals rich in omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin C, and E. These nutrients may help prevent macular degeneration and cataracts.

Wear safety glasses: It is estimated that over 2.5 million eye injuries occur each year, making it critical to wear protective eyewear. Wear protective eyewear or safety glasses to avoid anything coming into contact with your eyes.

Wear sunglasses: The best approach to keep your eyes healthy is to get a good pair of sunglasses that block UV radiation.

Discard old makeup: Bacteria thrive in liquid makeup. To avoid eve infections, replace your goods every 3 months.

Take screen breaks: Long-term computer, tablet, or phone use can cause eyestrain, dry eyes, neck and shoulder discomfort, and headaches. To prevent them, you must take a 20-minute screen

Get regular eye screening: Everyone should receive regular eye exams. Your doctor may advise you to see an ophthalmologist during the screening if they suspect a vision or eye problem.

Eye health is vital. Follow these tips to maintain your eyes healthy and see your best.

E-mail: ramisha.maliha@thedailystar.net



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Tigers focus to flip fortunes at home

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI FROM CHATTOGRAM

Shakib Al Hasan and a few others raised a hand in the air directed towards the sky during the practice session yesterday, pointing out the rain clouds but by then the cloud of Shakib's unavailability had left the side.

Bangladesh team had been waiting on the wings for a decision on Shakib's availability for the first Test today in Chattogram. Earlier, the all-rounder was ruled out of the first Test after returning home from the USA, having tested positive for Covid-19. Under dramatic circumstances, Shakib twice underwent tests on his own accord on Thursday and returned negative for the virus before he underwent another test at a BCB-affiliated facility on Friday to get another negative test before joining the side on Friday night.

Shakib took part in yesterday's optional practice session for the Tigers and batted at the nets for a while. He looked a little jittery and perhaps opted for a few big shots to get himself going after returning to cricket for the first time since appearing in the recently-concluded Dhaka Premier League for Legends of Rupganj. He took on the spinners, went for a few uppish drives over mid-off and although rain had interrupted proceedings, Shakib might have felt he had enough of an outing with the bat to get ready for the first Test. Later at a press conference, captain Mominul Haque confirmed that Shakib will be playing.

Mominul will be looking to turn the tides of their recent record at home, having lost all of the previous three Tests in Chattogram. The bitter defeat against Afghanistan in 2019 was followed by the embarrassment against West Indies in 2020 before they capitulated to Pakistan's Hasan Ali and Shaheen Shah Afridi in the last Test played here in 2021.

The past four years' home record is dismal and gives an idea of Bangladesh's struggles of taking advantage The past four years' home record is dismal and gives an idea of Bangladesh's struggles of taking advantage of home conditions. During this period, Bangladesh's home record in 12 matches stands at four wins, seven losses and a draw. Two wins apiece came against Zimbabwe and the West Indies while the defeats came against Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Pakistan and West



of home conditions. During this period, Bangladesh's home record in 12 matches stands at four wins, seven losses and a draw. Two wins apiece came against Zimbabwe and the West Indies while the defeats came against Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, Pakistan and West Indies. Spin or pace, the Tigers' batters have been unable to apply themselves over Tests in both innings.

Indies.

Asked if they are looking to change the curve, Mominul said: "Of course, we play to win and we have the same plan. We aren't thinking of what happened

The wicket will be in focus but there are suggestions that it will be pretty flat. Mominul agreed that the demands from the bowlers will be more than usual but could not ignore the recent batting debacles.

He urged that his side wanted to dominate proceedings. "We are focusing on how we will play over five days and dominate. Instead of thinking of all five days, we will take it one day at a time. "Batters want to overcome in every series and we are working on these things. We're not thinking of what happened in the previous series. The conditions are very different and what's important is how we can adapt here. What's important is how we can use the lessons from the previous series," the skipper said.

Shakib's inclusion will open up the option of five bowlers in the line-up. "Shakib bhai is mentally very strong. You can understand someone's fitness by watching their batting. I think he is a hundred per cent fit. We will decide whether we go with four or five bowlers after inspecting the pitch tomorrow morning. Shakib bhai's presence always gives us comfort in regards to team combination. We will decide tomorrow whether we pick three or two pacers."

In an attempt to change fortunes at home, Mominul and Co will have to dig deep but that Test aggression Mominul had talked about will also have to flow tactically.

Lankans planning 'out of the box'

STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

West Ham vs Manchester City

Tottenham vs Burnley

Live from 05:00 pm

Live from 07:00 pm

SPORTS REPORTER, from Chattogram

Gujarat Titans

Test

Live after end of Bangladesh

Lucknow Super Giants vs

Rajasthan Royals

Live from 08:00 pm

Troubles had escalated at home but Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne appeared fully aware of the challenges at hand, a day before his side take on Bangladesh in the first Test in Chattogram today.

While his counterpart Mominul Haque was looking to take things a day at a time, Karunaratne knew his side have the edge even in Bangladeshi conditions. Sri Lanka are yet to lose to the Tigers in Bangladesh in the red-ball format, but Karunaratne believes that their experience on Chattogram surfaces can help them bring a result into the question on what, in all likelihood, will be a flat deck. While there would be more of the same approach from batters, the bowlers will have to come up with something different.

"Similar conditions here, so we know how it's going to be in these tracks. It's a flat wicket here in Chittagong, so we have to score big runs to put pressure on the opposition," said Karunaratne.

"If you look at the last Test here, there were thousands of runs scored. So, it seems a pretty flat wicket. When you do the homework right, we can make some change here. If we can do that, we can go to Dhaka on a winning note."

Plenty of runs were scored the last time Sri Lanka played here. The Lankans identified that they may need to force a result here in order to give themselves a chance to seal or at least draw the series in Dhaka. Taking 20 wickets would be the toughest job.

"It's not easy. You have to work hard. Flat wicket will not give that much to the bowlers but if you are smart enough then you can take wickets here," he said.

While Bangladesh may look to keep things simple and wait for Sri Lanka to commit errors, the Lankans want to do something out of the box in order to give themselves the best chance.

"If there is not much in the wicket, then we have to think and try something out of the box. That's what we are planning for this kind of wicket. Let's see. We think we can do much better than the previous years."

Meanwhile, having returned negative on Covid test, ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan got back to the side after he had been ruled out of the series on Tuesday. Karunaratne said they already had devised their plans thinking Shakib will play.

"When we came here, we knew the Bangladesh squad and Shakib was there. We knew he would play and we took preparations accordingly. If he could not play that might be an advantage for us but there is no sudden change of plans for us at the moment."



Winning is the best legacy for Pep

REUTERS, Manchester

Manchester City may appear to be a relentless winning-machine, but manager Pep Guardiola wants his side's legacy to be that their period of Premier League dominance was "fun" as the team close in on their sixth title.

City lead the standings on 89 points, three ahead of Liverpool with two games to play. Thanks to their superior goal difference, a win against West Ham United on Sunday would all but assure them of a second successive league triumph. Despite amassing eight trophies during his tenure, Guardiola, who has yet to extend his contract beyond 2023, wants his side to be remembered for their style of play and sense of joy.

"We have fun. That is the best legacy, when we are in something in our lives, doesn't matter if professional, you have fun," the Spaniard told a news conference on Friday.

"Football is nice because behind you is a lot of people, our fans. I want City fans to say in that period we were fun, we play good, this is the best legacy. Emotional, give something unique watching our games, that is the best reward"

City's title rivals Liverpool played the FA Cup final against Chelsea on Saturday and won't be in league action again until Tuesday against Southampton.

By then, City could be six points ahead but Guardiola was not taking a win at West Ham for granted.

"West Ham (have) done two extraordinary seasons, this season in the Europa League... An incredible season, so strong in all departments, set pieces, the quality upfront, with (Manuel) Lanzini, (Pablo) Fornals, (Jarrod) Bowen," he said.

"A top side, difficult, but we know how important it is to get three points. An incredible step to try and finish the job at home (in final game) with our people."



Poland's Iga Swiatek signs autographs after defeating Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka 6-2, 6-1 in the semifinal of the Rome Open in Rome on Saturday. The world number one took one hour and 16 minutes to claim her 27th win on the bounce, a tally last reached by Serena Williams in 2015.

wants to leave Bayern

Lewandowski

REUTERS, Wolfsburg

Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski has informed the club's boss that he wants to leave and not extend his contract with the German champions, Bayern sports director Hasan Salihamidzic said on Saturday.

"I spoke with Lewa. In that discussion he informed me that he does not want to accept our offer to extend the contract and that we would like to leave the club," Salihamidzic told Sky Germany ahead of Bayern's final game of the Bundesliga season at VfL Wolfsburg.

"He said he wants to do something else. But our position has not changed. The fact is he has a contract to June 30, 2023."

The 33-year-old Pole joined in 2014 from Borussia Dortmund and has won the German league every year since then as well as the Champions League.

PHOTO: AF







3 couples die in freak road crash

Three more killed in the pileup in Gopalganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Lives of three couples and three others came to a tragic end in a three-vehicle pileup in Goplaganj's Kashiani upazila yesterday.

A chain of events lead to the tragic accident. Locals and sources said a couple was threshing paddy on the side of the Dhaka-Khulna highway in Dakshin Fukra area around 11:00am. Some hay eventually got on the highway which a couple on a motorbike tried to swerve right to avoid. A car was trying to overtake the bike at that very moment and it had to move right to avoid hitting the bike. But it put the vehicle squarely in front of a bus of Rajib Paribahan, which was heading for Dhaka from Pirojpur.

The head-on collision flung the car on to the motorbike and the thrashing machine the couple was

Bashudev Saha, 52, an anesthesiologist of Birdem in Dhaka, along with his wife Sibani Saha, 44, and son Sapnil Saha, 20, who were in the car and going to Gopalganj to visit Bashudev's ailing mother, died on the spot. So did car driver Ajijur Islam, 44.

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The mangled remains of a barely recognisable car by the side of Dhaka-Khulna highway in Dakshin Fukra area of Gopalganj's Kashiani upazila after it hit a bus and then was tossed on to a motorbike and a thrashing machine. The accident left nine people dead and 25

Buddha Purnima today

UNB, Dhaka

Buddha Purnima, the biggest religious festival of the Buddhist community, will be celebrated across the country today amid festivities after two years of Covid-induced restrictions.

Buddha Purnima marks the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha. On this day in 563 BC, Buddha was born as Siddhartha Gautama in Kopilabostu at the foothill of the Himalayas.

He attained supreme enlightenment at the age of 35 and finally departed into "nirvana" at the age of 80 in 483 BC.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages greeting the Buddhist community on the occasion

President Hamid said, "Buddhist civilization and its culture have been deeply intertwined with

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JUBO JOTE LEADER MURDER 22 AL men sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Twenty-two leaders and activists of the ruling Awami League and its associated bodies have been accused in a case of killing Jatiya Jubo Jote leader Mahabub Khan

Mahabub's father Enamul Haque filed the case with Daulatpur Police Station in Kushtia on Friday night, a day after the murder.

Police said they arrested three of the accused in Daulatpur town on Friday night. There are also 8-9 unnamed accused in the case.

Among the 22 are Daulatpur upazila AL Joint General Secretary Selim Choudhury, his brothers Asaduzzaman Loton Choudhury, executive committee member of the same committee, Token Choudhury, president of Daulatpur upazila Jubo League, Poloton Choudhury, Tushon Choudhury and Swapan Choudhury.

The six are also brothers of the former AL lawmaker from Kushtia-1, Rezaul Haq Choudhury.

Mahabub, 37, general secretary of Daulatpur pazila Jativa Jubo Jote, the youth wing of the Jativa Samajtantrik Dal, died of hacking injuries at the Kushtia General Hospital early Thursday, around two and half hours after he was attacked near his home in Daulatpur

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Selim Choudhury said the case was a "conspiracy" against his family and it was a politically motivated one. He said the family will fight the legal battle.

Jabid Hasan, OC of Daulatpur Police Station, said they started the investigation, but were yet to detect the motive behind the murder.

Police are interrogating the arrestees named Sohan, Najibul and Mehedi.

According to the case statement, Mahabub was returning home from Alla Dargah Bazar in Daulatpur town on a motorised rickshaw van around 11:00pm on Wednesday. He was accompanied by two Jubo Jote

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War could be over by year end

Claims Ukraine intel chief as resistance slows Russian advances in the east; Moscow pulls plug on power to Finland

AGENCIES

The war in Ukraine could reach a "breaking point" by August and end in defeat for Russia before the end of the year, Kyiv's head of military intelligence said yesterday, as fierce fighting raged in Ukraine's east, slowing down

a hoped-for Russian advance. The G7 group

of the world's top industrialised nations meanwhile reiterated it would "never recognise the borders Russia has attempted to redraw through aggression and pledged more sanctions to tighten the screw on Moscow.

Russia, which sent in troops to Ukraine on

February 24, has increasingly turned its attention to eastern Ukraine since the end of March, after failing to take the capital Kyiv.

Western analysts believe President Vladimir Putin has his sights on annexing southern and eastern Ukraine in the months ahead but his troops have appeared to be encountering stiff resistance.

The governor of the eastern Lugansk region, Serhiy Gaidai, said Ukrainian forces had prevented Russian attempts to cross a river and encircle the

city of Severodonetsk.

"There's heavy fighting on the border with Donetsk region," Gaidai said, reporting big Russian losses of equipment and personnel.

"From interceptions (phone calls), we understand that a whole (Russian) battalion has

refused to attack, because they see what's happening."

Aerial images showed dozens of destroyed armoured vehicles on the river bank and wrecked pontoon bridges.

UK military intelligence also said Russian forces had sustained heavy losses as they attempted the river crossing.

Kharkiv regional governor Oleh Synegubov meanwhile said in a video on Telegram that Ukrainian forces were counter-attacking in the direction of the

northeastern city of Izium. The Ukrainian General Staff said troops had managed to push Russian troops out of the

Kharkiv, a priority target for Moscow. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday said his troops would fight to recapture all occupied territory, and those under siege.

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COVID-19 BOOSTER Special campaign to start this month

MOUDUD AHMMED SUJAN

The health directorate is going to conduct a special campaign this month to inoculate around five crore people, aged 18 and above, who have received their second dose of Covid-19 vaccines at least four months ago. Officials said they have enough vaccines in

stock for the campaign.

It will be similar to the previous special campaign, which was held at the union level in rural areas and ward level in municipalities in February and March, they said.

"The date [for the special booster doze campaign] is yet to be fixed. We have been waiting for the health minister's return from abroad to finalise it," Dr Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star

The minister is expected to return home tonight from an official visit to the World Bank headquarters in New York, according to a ministry official.

As of Thursday, around 11.68 crore adults 68.51 percent of the total population -- have received the second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. However, not all will be eligible for the booster, health officials said.

As per the DGHS's Covid-19 vaccine administration protocol, any second dose vaccine recipient can get a booster jab with an interval of at least four months -- as recommended by the World Health Organization.

In that case, the number of eligible booster recipients will be around 4.6 crore, according to the DGHS data.

Around 1.35 crore people who already have

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The Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection in Chattogram conducted raids at different stores yesterday and fined several stores for hoarding edible oil and selling those at a higher price. In the photo taken during one such raid at the Karnaphuli Market in the city's Choumohoni area, people are seen elated after having been able to buy cooking oil at MRP.

World's longest suspension bridge opens

CNN ONLINE

Walking from one mountain to another, suspended high above ground with only a vast valley yawning below, isn't for the fainthearted.

But thrill-seekers -- and lovers of infrastructure will be flocking to the Dolní Morava vacation resort in the northeast of the Czech Republic to scale the new world's longest suspension footbridge.

Under construction for the past two years, the 721-meter-long-span (2,365 feet), appropriately named Sky Bridge 721, officially opened on Friday. The walkway promises spectacular views of the cloud-shrouded Jeseníky mountains, and an overall electrifying, albeit slightly terrifying, experience.

Austrian blogger

REPORT ON TEEN GANGS Journo stabbed in 'revenge'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A journalist and his companion were stabbed allegedly by a teen gang in Narayanganj on Friday

Rashid Chowdhury, 28, executive editor of Dainik Agrabani Pratidin, was attacked for publishing a news on teen gangs, said Syed Sifat Al Rahman, general secretary of Narayanganj City Press Club.

Jashim Uddin, 38, a yarn trader, who was with Rashid at the time, was also stabbed, said Sifat, adding that they were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with critical injuries.

Quoting the injured, Sifat said the two of them were going to Chasara when a group of teenagers stopped them and stabbed them indiscriminately. Locals rescued them hearing their screams, but the attackers managed to flee the scene, he

Torikul Islam, inspector of Fatullah Model Police Station, said legal action will be taken in

Earlier on May 11, video footage of teenage boys brandishing firearms and attacking other teens went viral on social media. A news article was published about the incident in Dainik Agrabani Pratidin.