



P5
Voluntary org safeguarding ecological balance



P6
1 dies in India unrest over new military hiring plan



P12
England smash record ODI total against Netherlands



Seeking shelter, people wade through the flooded Sylhet-Companiganj-Bhologanj road in Khagail of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila yesterday. Flash floods have left thousands of families marooned in Sylhet and Sunamganj. Army has been deployed in the two districts to assist the civil administration in rescue and relief efforts. *Top right*, flood victims ride a rickshaw van on Sylhet-Sunamganj road in Akhalia of Sylhet Sadar upazila to go to a safe place. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR/ ISPR

More rains may prolong sufferings for another week

PINAKI ROY
 Sufferings of the people in Sylhet division is not going to end soon as rivers will continue to swell in the next three days before starting to recede. So, the flood situation in the region will prevail for at least seven more days, meteorologists said.
 Cherrapunjee, an upstream area in India's Meghalaya state, has experienced 2,500 mm rain in 72 hours till yesterday morning, the most in 27 years. Also, Sylhet division has seen more than 800 mm rain during the same period, leading to the flooding.
 According to meteorologists, heavy rain will continue in Sylhet division and the bordering upstream states of India in the next 48 hours.
 "If the rain continues to fall in the next 48 hours, the water levels in the local

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Floods pummel Northeast

90pc of Sunamganj inundated; lakhs of people without electricity; army deployed to help civil admin tackle situation

STAR REPORT

Heavy rains and rush of water from upstream in India's northeast have inundated large swathes of Sylhet division, leaving thousands stranded and triggering a humanitarian crisis.
 The floods that hit the country's north-eastern parts swept away homes and inundated farmlands in a span of three weeks, forcing families to seek shelter on higher ground and temporary flood shelters, while a halt in power supply is making life miserable.
 Around 90 percent of Sunamganj and over 60 percent of Sylhet have been submerged, according to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC).
 All regional highways, including Sylhet-Sunamganj and Sylhet-Bhologanj, have been submerged and road connectivity has already been snapped due to the intensity of flooding.
 Many locals considered the flood worse than the ones they had experienced in 1998 and 2004. The crisis has struck

at a time when people of the region were just recovering from unexpected recent floods.
 In April, low-lying parts of Sylhet were inundated while severe flooding hit the divisional city in May.
 The Bangladesh Army has already started working to rescue people and distributing relief materials following the

Flight operations in Sylhet's Osmani International Airport have been suspended for three days as flood water has reached the runway.

local civil administration's request for army deployment. The coast guard is also playing a major role in getting to people in remote areas.
 Meanwhile, the flood situation in the northern parts of the country, especially Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, also worsened yesterday as water in all three rivers in those districts

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

SSC exams postponed for floods

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has postponed the Secondary School Certificate and equivalent Dakhil exams for an indefinite period due to the worsening flood situation in the north-eastern part of the country.
 The education ministry issued a notice yesterday, announcing postponement of all exams scheduled to begin tomorrow. Already delayed by four months due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this year's examinations were set to end on July 6.
 Dhaka Education Board Chairman Prof Tapan Kumar Sarkar said the new schedule of the exams would be announced later.
 A total of 20,21,868 students are expected to sit for the exams.
 This year, the SSC exams will be held on more subjects than last year.
 Due to the pandemic, the exams will be held on a truncated syllabus and for fewer marks. The duration of the exams will also be curtailed.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

ROHINGYA CAMPS
 Killings, recovery of rifle expose security risks

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The three successive murders of Rohingyas last week and the recovery of a sophisticated M16 assault rifle from a Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar Thursday night have exposed the deteriorating law and order in the refugee shelters.
 The Armed Police Battalion (APBn) recovered the rifle and 491 bullets from a camp in Ukhiya. Law enforcers said this was the first recovery of an automatic rifle in one of the camps where about one million Rohingyas have been sheltered.
 Experts said the recovery of such a weapon gives the indication that law and order in the camps can turn volatile anytime.
 "We did not recover such a modern weapon in the camp area earlier. We had information that this weapon will enter the camp. We intercepted it," Mohammad Sihab Kaiser Khan, commanding officer of 8 APBn in Ukhiya, told The Daily Star yesterday.
 He said local weapons and some small arms were found in the camps previously, but this type of automatic weapons is very dangerous.
 Asked how the weapon entered the camp, Sihab said this would be known once the investigation into the incident is completed.
 In the last one week, at least three Rohingyas, including a so-called Arsa leader, were killed in Ukhiya's Kutupalong camp.
 The presence of Arsa operatives in the country has

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Forever young!

Their studentship expired, yet they lead student orgs

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL and ARAFATH SHETU

The names clearly describe their type as they have one thing in common -- these are all student organisations. But in reality, hardly any regular students are holding the top positions of the student bodies affiliated with various political parties.
 None of the two biggest student organisations, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), has regular students as top leaders -- president and general secretary -- in their central committees.
 The same is true for Chhatra Union, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (Marxist), and Chhatra League backed by a faction of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal.
 When it comes to their Dhaka University units, BCL, JCD and Chhatra Front (Marxist) are led by those whose studentship had expired. Two other student bodies -- Chhatra Union and Bangladesh Chhatra Maitree -- have no current committees at the university.
 Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, however, has regular students holding the two top posts of its DU unit. Chhatra Maitree has an ex-student as the central committee president and a regular student as general secretary.
 Educationists think this trend reflects the absence of continuous process for creating new leadership. This goes against the interest of general students, they said.
 "If the leader is not a regular student, he or she cannot understand the psychology and needs of students," Jahangirnagar University Prof Anu Muhammad told this newspaper.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Households and businesses have turned the DND canal into a dumping ground in Shimrail of Narayanganj's Siddhirganj. Garbage and encroachment have blocked the flow of water in it. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

Shops, markets to remain shut after 8pm

Govt makes the move to save power, energy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has ordered the authorities to take necessary measures to close shops, shopping malls and markets after 8:00pm to save electricity and energy amid rising energy prices worldwide.
 A letter, signed by Ahsan Kibria Siddiqui, director general of the Prime Minister's Office (administration) on Thursday, said the prime minister gave this instruction.
 Talking to The Daily Star, Helal Uddin, president of Bangladesh Dokan Malik Samity that represents 56 lakh stores and shopping malls across the country, said the government did not talk to them before making the decision.

UK clears Assange extradition to US

AFP, London



Britain yesterday approved a US government request to extradite WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to face trial over the publication of secret military files, prompting outrage from his supporters.

Home Secretary Priti Patel's interior ministry said Assange had 14 days to appeal the decision, which comes after a UK court issued a formal order clearing his removal in April.

Assange's supporters have held frequent rallies to protest the planned deportation in what they claim is a defence of media freedom and free speech.

His wife, Stella, has pleaded for his release from custody after they had two children in secret he was holed up for years in Ecuador's London embassy. "We're going to fight this. We're going to use every appeal avenue," she told reporters.

WikiLeaks called Patel's decision a "dark day for press freedom and for British democracy" and vowed to pursue the appeal to the High Court.

It accused the United States of having "plotted his assassination".

"Julian did nothing wrong. He has committed no crime and is not a criminal. He is a journalist and a publisher, and he is being punished for doing his job," the group said in a statement.

WikiLeaks said the case was "political", as Assange published evidence that the United States "committed war crimes and covered them up".

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

Covid positivity rate rises to 6.27 percent

UNB, Dhaka

Amid a surging positivity rate Bangladesh recorded 433 new coronavirus cases in 24 hours till yesterday morning, taking the country's total caseload to 1,955,427, the health directorate said.

The country's total fatalities, however, remained unchanged at 29,131 as no death was reported during the period, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

The daily test positivity rate rose to 6.27 percent from Thursday's 5.76 percent with 6,905 samples tested during the period.

The country on Thursday saw 357 cases with zero death.

The mortality rate remained unchanged at 1.49 percent. The recovery rates declined to 97.46 percent as 93 patients recovered during this period.

In May, the country reported only four Covid-linked deaths and 816 new cases, while 7,356 patients recovered from the disease, according to the DGHS.

Among the four deaths during the period, one was vaccinated with a single dose of Covid vaccine while three were vaccinated with two doses.



A man uses a phone to photograph the bullet casings at the spot where three Palestinians were killed inside a vehicle during an operation by Israeli forces in Jenin in the occupied West Bank, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

OCCUPIED WEST BANK

Three Palestinians killed in Israeli army raid

12 others hurt as tensions flare ahead of Biden's visit next month

AFP, Jenin

Three Palestinians were killed and 12 others were wounded yesterday during an Israeli army raid in Jenin, a stronghold of armed Palestinian factions in the occupied West Bank.

The men were killed when Israeli forces opened fire on a vehicle in which they were, the Palestinian news agency Wafa said.

"Fierce clashes" then ensued in the area, with Israeli troops firing at Palestinians, wounding 12, Wafa reported.

An AFP photographer said a white vehicle riddled with bullet holes was in the area where Israeli forces have stepped up operations in recent months.

The men were identified as Yusef Salah, 23, Baraa Lahlul, 24, and Laitih Abu Srur, 24, all from Jenin.

The Islamic group Hamas said Lahlul was one of its commanders in the West Bank and vowed that the killings "will not go unpunished".

The funerals of the three men took place early yesterday afternoon in Jenin in the presence of large crowds

and armed Palestinian fighters.

The Israeli army said in a statement that its troops had been conducting an operation in Jenin to search for weapons at two different locations.

The soldiers had come under fire as they arrived at the first location and they retaliated before identifying a suspicious vehicle on the side of the road on their way to the second location, it said.

"Armed assailants inside a vehicle shot at the soldiers, who responded with live fire to neutralise the assailants," the army said on its Twitter account.

Following an exchange of fire, soldiers found weapons, including two M-16 assault rifles and cartridges at the scene.

The Israeli army has ramped up raids in and around the occupied West Bank's Jenin camp, a stronghold of Palestinian armed factions.

US President Joe Biden is expected in Israel and the West Bank next month.

Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, a prominent

TV reporter with Al Jazeera, was shot dead last month in Jenin while she was covering an Israeli army operation.

The Palestinian Authority, Al Jazeera and Qatar, where the channel is based, accused the Israeli army of killing the journalist. Several journalistic probes have also pointed in the same direction.

A Palestinian investigation said the reporter -- who was wearing a bullet-proof vest with "press" written on it and a helmet when she was shot -- was killed in what it described as a war crime.

Israel has denied the allegations, arguing that she could have been killed by a Palestinian gunman, but later said it could not rule out the possibility that it was Israeli soldiers.

The Israeli army has not yet released its conclusion following an internal investigation.

The Israeli police had launched the internal investigation following an international outcry after Abu Akleh's coffin was almost dropped when police attacked the pallbearers during her funeral.

DB arrests two more over Tipu murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of police has arrested two more men over the murders of Awami League leader Jahidul Islam Tipu and college student Samia Afran Jamal Prity.

Emran Hossain Jitu, 32, and Rakibur Rahman Rakib, 31, were arrested from Motijheel area on Thursday night, said a DB official, seeking anonymity.

Jitu is an arms trader from whom criminals collected bullets used in the double murder.

The bullets reached key suspect Sumon Shikder Musa after changing hands of three people including Rakib, he added.

Yesterday, a Dhaka court placed Jitu and Rakib on two-day remand for interrogation after the investigation officer of the case placed them before it with seven-day remand prayers.

With the two, at least 16 persons have been arrested in the case so far.

The court also placed Musa on a four-day fresh remand in the case yesterday.

ROOPPUR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Another worker dies at project site

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A labourer died at Rooppur nuclear power plant site after a heavy electric equipment fell on him on Thursday night.

Anwar Hossain, 30, of Kushtia's Bheramara upazila, was an electrical mechanic.

Ruhul Kuddus, in charge of the site office, said Anwar was working on a project when a distribution box suddenly fell on him.

Anwar was critically injured and rushed to a hospital. He breathed his last on the way to the hospital around 10:30pm, he added.

Arbinda Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station, said the body was sent to Pabna General Hospital for autopsy.

Shipyard worker dies in accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A shipbreaking yard worker has died after fighting for his life for five days after being hit by a steel wire.

Mohammad Faruk, 27, of Noakhali's Companganj upazila, suffered serious injuries at his workplace Golden Shipyard.

The shipbreaking yard is owned by former Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Manjur Alam.

Contacted, Manjur said the worker got hit by a steel wire straight in the head.

"We took him to Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Treatment Hospital in the port city where he died on Thursday," he said.

Asked, he said his shipbreaking yard takes every possible safety measures.

Floods pummel Northeast

FROM PAGE 1

Guchhagram village in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila said, "The level of the floodwater is reminding us of the 2004 and 1998 floods. Most people are heading to shelter centres."

The Jadukata and Surma rivers were flowing 154cm and 120cm above danger level at Lorergarh and Sunamganj points respectively yesterday morning. The Surma was flowing 108cm above the danger level at Kanaighat and 70 cm at Sylhet points, according to the FFWC.

Thirteen rivers were flowing above the danger level in the country yesterday.

Sirajul Islam, president of shop owners' association in Sunamganj town, said, "Even in 2004, I did not see water rise so much in a day. In the last 20 years, the people of Sunamganj have not seen such a terrible flood situation."

Jahangir Hossain, deputy commissioner of Sunamganj, said the severity of the flood situation has surpassed all

past records.

Md Mozibur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Sylhet, said, "The situation is getting dangerous and the army responded to our call to help stranded people. We are trying our best to rescue people and to extend relief to them."

A huge number of people in Sylhet and Sunamganj was without power as electricity supply was halted to avoid accidents.

According to the Power Development Board in Sylhet divisional office, at least 1.8 lakh consumers did not have electricity in different upazilas of Sylhet and Sunamganj, including Sadar upazila of Sylhet, South Surma and Chhatak upazilas of Sunamganj, and Sylhet metropolis and its surrounding areas.

Md Arafat-al-Majid Bhuiyan, sub-divisional engineer of Power Development Board in Sylhet, told The Daily Star that the power supply in Sylhet and Sunamganj districts were severely affected by the flood.

Abdur Razzak, executive engineer of PDB in Sylhet, said electricity supply will be restored as soon as the flood situation improves.

Debojit Singha, additional divisional commissioner (general) of Sylhet, said almost 90 percent of Sunamganj Sadar, Dowarabazar and Chhatak upazilas of Sunamganj, and Gowainghat and Companiganj of Sylhet was seriously affected.

"We're taking measures to provide dry food to people. Food from the less affected districts like Habiganj and Moulvibazar are being transported to the affected areas to reach people quickly," he said.

FLOOD IN NORTH Besides Sylhet division, the flood also affected Netrakona, Lalmonirhat, Kurigram and Rangpur.

The situation may further deteriorate in the low-lying areas of Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Rangpur, and Kurigram districts, according to the FFWC.

In Rangpur, low-lying

areas of Gangachara upazila were inundated as the Teesta rose to 5cm above danger level on Thursday night.

It inundated crops on vast areas, roads and households causing immense hardship to over two million people.

"Almost all croplands in our village have been submerged. Even my peanut field has gone under water," said Shahin Islam of Purba Mahipur village.

The Brahmaputra was flowing 5cm above the danger level in Kurigram's Chilmari point and Dharla 9cm above the danger level at Shimulbari point of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon, according to officials of Bangladesh Water Development Board.

Many people have taken shelter on roads, schools and dykes. Road communications have collapsed, crops on vast areas have gone under water.

[Our Sylhet, Moulvibazar, Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur correspondents contributed to this report]

Forever young!

FROM PAGE 1

Prof Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, a teacher of DU international relations department, blamed it on the parent organisations. "They just want someone who can fight the opponents and hurl abuse."

Criticising the process of choosing student leaderships by parent organisations, Prof Anu Muhammad also said it became the tradition that no student bodies would elect their own leaders.

The issue came to the fore after BCL last month barred JCD activists from entering the DU campus on the ground that all of them are not students.

JCD leaders, however, said it is the BCL top leaders who are not regular students.

"They [BCL] are not letting us enter the campus saying we are not regular students. But they themselves are not regular students. So, how could they do politics on the campus?" questioned JCD General Secretary Saif Mahmud.

Saif enrolled at DU in 2005-06 session, and after completing regular graduation and post-graduation courses, he is now an evening course student under the Institute of Social Welfare and Research.

JCD President Kazi Rawnakul Islam Srabon, a DU student of 2003-04 session, is enrolled in an evening course at the Department of Information Science and Library Management.

According to the university rules, only

regular students are allowed to stay in the halls.

An order of the Dhaka University Syndicate states that none can remain a regular student of DU for more than eight years. Within these eight years, he or she has to complete graduation in six years and post-graduation in two years.

Evening courses, designed to spread higher education among job holders, take one to two years.

JCD's DU unit Convener Akter Hossain was admitted to the university in 2007-08 session and Member Secretary Aman Ullah Aman in 2009-10.

BCL President Al Nahian Khan Joy and General Secretary Lekhak Bhattacharya enrolled in 2008-09.

Joy is now admitted to an evening course of the criminology department. Lekhak also has got admission to an evening course of Institute of Social Welfare and Research.

BCL DU unit President Sanjit Chandra Das was admitted to the DU in 2009-10 and its General Secretary Saddam Hussain in 2011-12.

Saddam was the most junior among the top four BCL leaders who had studentship till last year. It took him eight years to complete his graduation. He was given the extra years following a special permission of the dean.

Contacted, DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Akhtaruzzaman said, "It's true that there is a rule of six years for honours and two years for master's. But sometimes, students are

given extra time through different processes."

Nahian Khan Joy told this newspaper that Chhatra League activists can actively take part in student politics till 29 years of age, as per the organisation's constitution.

"Both Chhatra Dal president and general secretary are 10 years older than me," he said, adding that JCD leaders are not allowed to stay in dormitories as they are not regular students.

However, The Daily Star found at least 70 central and DU unit leaders of BCL who are not regular students but still staying at the dormitories illegally.

Joydev Bhattacharya, acting president of Chhatra Front (Marxist) central committee, was a student of the 2003-2004 session and General Secretary Rashed Shahriar of 2005-2006.

The DU unit president and secretary of the organisation, Salman Siddiqui and Pragati Barman Toma, were admitted in 2010-2011.

None of the four are regular students of the university anymore. Asked about it, Salman said, "Our leadership is selected in line with the constitution of our organisation."

Chhatra Union President Faiz Ullah was a student of 2010-11 session while General Secretary Dipak Sil of 2009-10. "Our leadership is elected according to our own constitution. Studentship cannot be a criterion; basically the issue is being brought up to

keep us away from student politics," said Faiz.

Rashidul Haq, president of Chhatra League backed by a faction of Jatiya Samjantrik Dal President, was a Dhaka College student of 2005-06 session while General Secretary Masud Ahmed a DU student of 2008-09.

Kazi Abdul Motaleb, president of Chhatra Maitree, is not a regular student while Atulan Das, its general secretary, is doing his post-graduation from a private university. The organisation has formed a seven-member convening committee to arrange a council of its DU unit.

Chhatra Front DU unit President Rajib Kanti and General Secretary Sohail Ahmed are regular students as they are from 2016-17 session.

Prof Syed Anwar Husain, noted academic and historian, said, "I have never seen in my 52 years of career that the Chhatra League and Chhatra Dal fought each other over the issues relating to students' interest -- like crises of seat, library or classroom."

"So, how can we say those are student organisations?"

Prof Tanzimuddin thinks that Ducsu elections not being held was a reason for non-students leading the organisations as only regular students can participate in the Ducsu polls.

"These so-called student leaders usually remain isolated from general students ... this cannot be beneficial to general students as they remain busy serving the interests of their parent organisations," he added.

Enhance cooperation in pharma, agriculture

Bangladesh ambassador tells Manila press

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh wants to enhance its cooperation with the Philippines in the pharmaceutical and agriculture sector.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the Philippines Borhan Uddin told the media in Manila yesterday, after a courtesy call with Filipino President-elect Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

"We have a very booming pharmaceutical sector in Bangladesh. He [Marcos] will be happy to know that we export our pharmaceuticals to more than 140 countries around the globe, including USA and European Union countries," Borhan Uddin said, reports The Inquirer, a Filipino newspaper.

The ambassador added that there may

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Residents of Old Dhaka wade through knee-deep water accumulated on the road, as the city witnessed downpour since the first hours of the day yesterday. Due to the area's poor drainage system, even a drizzle gets the roads clogged with water. Despite this problem persisting for years now, the authorities are yet to take any action. This picture was taken from Kazi Alauddin Road.

29 dengue patients hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 29 dengue patients have been hospitalised in different hospitals of Dhaka in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday -- which points to an alarming rise of dengue cases.

With the new cases, the total number of dengue cases rose to 690 this year, according to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the dengue patients, 104 are still undergoing treatment, of which, three are from outside Dhaka.

A total of 586 patients so far have been released from hospitals, and there have been no reports of death so far.

Dhaka is at risk of a major dengue outbreak this year compared to the last couple of years, as clear, stagnant water, the breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes, at under-construction buildings is abundant this time around.

The scenario came to light after DGHS conducted a pre-monsoon survey between March 23 and April 4.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 18

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

EVOLUTION OF CYBERCRIME (PART 5)

It's in the many technicalities

With new social-media platforms and services in place, it has become increasingly harder for law enforcers to deal with ever-rising cybercrimes. Criminals discover new loopholes in the system every day and exploit them. In the last instalment of our five-part series, law enforcers talk about their limitations in dealing with cybercrimes and possible solutions.

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Last Friday, police officials collected details of a SIM card number that was used for hacking a mobile financial service (MFS) account.

To their utter surprise, law enforcers found that the SIM was registered under the name of an employee of a reputed private firm, who had no idea his details were being used by a hacker.

However, this incident is far from being isolated. Criminals often use pre-registered SIM cards for threat calls, hacking and illegal trade to keep police in the dark.

Law enforcers believe this has been made possible due to the easy availability of such SIM cards in the market and lack of monitoring.

This correspondent recently visited the capital's Panthapath area to test the claim.

A man was found selling SIM cards at a makeshift roadside stall near the Panthapath intersection. When approached to buy one from him without NID, he refused to sell at first.

However, after some more conversations, he decided to

LIMITATIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Pre-registered SIM cards in open market	Setting up cyber police station, tribunal in each district
Availability of shared IP, illegal ISPs	Cooperation between social-media platforms, law enforcers
Inadequate skilled manpower	Enhancing capacity of cybercrime tribunal, judiciary
Absence of agreements with foreign countries	Providing tribunal with proper IT facilities
Lack of MoUs with social-media platforms	Preserving digital evidence
Negligence, unawareness of users	Strengthening law enforcers with training, resources

sell a pre-registered SIM card in exchange for Tk 700, which after some more bargaining came down to Tk 600.

"You are in luck today," he told this correspondent.

"The easy availability of SIM cards poses a major limitation for us to deal with cybercrimes. Syndicates collect personal details from people in different areas in the name of surveys and then use them to register SIM cards without their knowledge," said Chatak Chakma, assistant

commissioner of cybercrime unit of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC).

He said these SIM cards are later sold to criminals who use them for hacking and other fraudulent activities. They later go off the radar by switching the numbers off, said Chatak.

Subrata Roy Maitra, vice-chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), recently said they conduct regular drives against these activities and act on any specific

complaint.

"We even serve show-cause notices to the operators concerned," he said.

In August last year, CTTC's e-fraud team conducted a drive in different areas of Sylhet and arrested five over hacking of MFS accounts. All 540 SIM cards found in their possession were pre-registered.

"Targeting uneducated tea workers, they take fingerprints and other details from them twice or thrice, because the scanning was not done properly. In the process, they register for three SIM cards with the information of one individual, but provide each with one card only," said Suranjana Saha, assistant commissioner of the e-fraud team, who led the drive in Sylhet.

"We found a SIM distributor involved in the scam and arrested him. Lack of monitoring is a major reason behind these occurrences," she added.

THE CURSE OF SHARED IP
Law enforcers said in Bangladesh, only a limited number of people use unique

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

36.5m children displaced globally

Says Unicef

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Conflict, violence and other crises left a record 36.5 million children displaced from their homes at the end of 2021. According to Unicef's estimates, this is the highest number of displaced children recorded since World War II.

This figure includes 13.7 million refugee and asylum-seeking children and nearly 22.8 million children who are internally displaced due to conflicts and violence, Unicef said in a statement yesterday.

These figures do not include children displaced by climate and environmental shocks or disasters, as well as those newly displaced in 2022, including the ones displaced by the war in Ukraine.

Unicef released the global statement from New York ahead of World Refugee Day on June 20. Unicef Bangladesh provided the statement to Bangladeshi media.

Over the last year, this global number has increased by 2.2 million, reads the statement.

"The number of children being displaced by conflicts and crises is rapidly growing, so is our responsibility to reach them," said Unicef Executive Director Catherine Russell.

Apart from the mentioned number, crises like the war in Ukraine has caused more than 2 million children to flee the country and displaced 3 million internally since February.

Moreover, children and families are also being driven out of their homes by extreme weather events, such as droughts in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, and severe flooding in Bangladesh, India and South Africa.

A total of 7.3 million children were newly displaced as a consequence of natural disasters in 2021.

Unicef urged member states to adhere to their commitments to ensure the rights of all uprooted children. The UN agency also called on governments to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all refugee, migrant and displaced children.

HAJJ FLIGHTS

Govt warns Biman, Saudia

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Ministry of Religious Affairs has warned Biman and Saudia airlines for carrying hajj pilgrims to Jeddah instead of their scheduled destination -- Madinah, making pilgrims suffer.

In a letter to the two airlines, the ministry said the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah also expressed its concern over the matter.

According to the religious affairs ministry, a number of Madinah-bound pilgrims are being taken to Jeddah almost every day on scheduled flights of Biman and Saudia.

A number of Madinah-bound pilgrims are being taken to Jeddah almost every day on scheduled flights of Biman and Saudia. As a result, the pilgrims, after their long journey to Jeddah, have to make another one to Madinah -- which is 450 kilometres away from Jeddah -- by road.

As a result, the pilgrims, after their long journey to Jeddah, have to make another one to Madinah -- which is 450 kilometres away from Jeddah -- by road. This is causing indescribable suffering to them, said the letter.

The Saudi ministry summoned Jahurul Islam, Bangladesh hajj office counsellor in Jeddah, and informed that the "route to Makkah" initiative was taken to lessen the sufferings of pilgrims.

"But the hajj pilgrims are being harassed with a longer journey instead," said the ministry.

"We are instructing [Biman and Saudia] to refrain from such activities to protect the image

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

GOLD SMUGGLING CASES

Utter negligence at initial stage

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Most gold smuggling cases see no headway due to insufficient evidence, as investigating police officers fail to glean vital information from the arrestees during interrogation and subsequent investigation.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has come to this conclusion after analysing 17 cases filed from 2016 to 2020 involving the recovery of 124kg of gold in total.

"The masterminds cannot be traced down due to insufficient information. This weakens the case, and the chance of conviction gets slim," said a top CID official working at its Dhaka metro office.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said vital information is sometimes

- CID analysed 17 cases filed from 2016 to 2020
- 10 relate to gold smuggling using Biman flights
- Investigating officers don't quiz arrestees enough
- Since accused were placed on remand before, courts don't grant further remand
- In almost all cases, carriers who get arrested know only 2 persons
- Since 2017, 233 cases have been filed in Dhaka against 261 people

"intentionally" left out while filing cases to protect smugglers who have

connections with some law enforcers.

Ten of the 17 cases analysed by the specialised police department relate to gold smuggling using Biman flights. Seven other consignments were brought in using other airlines, officials said.

CID's Dhaka Metro Unit is now investigating all the 17 cases.

CID's analysis of case documents shows investigating officers failed to extract any vital information from the arrestees, who were placed on two to three days' remand.

The fact is the investigating officers do not quiz them to get to the bottom of the case and track down the masterminds, a CID investigator said.

"We went through statements given by the accused during the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Right in the middle of the main road in front of Kamalapur Railway Station, speedy vehicles were seen going past a gaping manhole. Despite days going by since the cover was spotted missing, authorities are yet to fix a lid on it. This in itself poses risks of accidents but during the ongoing monsoon, the chances of unfortunate events occurring grow manifold. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Govt warns

FROM PAGE 3 of the country abroad and not to send any Madinah-bound hajjis to Jeddah.

Meanwhile, a total of 15,724 pilgrims arrived in Saudi Arabia by 42 flights till June 16.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has so far operated 24 hajj flights, while Saudia and Flynas operated 13 and 5 flights, respectively.

The first flight of hajj pilgrims left Bangladesh on June 5, and flights will continue till July 4.

This year, a total of 57,585 Bangladeshis will be able to perform hajj. Of them, 4,000 will do so under government management and the rest 53,585 under private management.

Enhance

FROM PAGE 3 be some investment from Bangladesh to the Philippines in this sector.

Besides this, Marcos Jr and Uddin also discussed cooperation in the agriculture sector.

Earlier, Marcos Jr expressed plans to boost local manufacturing of generic drugs in the Philippines.

It's in the many technicalities

FROM PAGE 3 internet protocol (IP) addresses - numerical labels connected to computer networks.

Owing to the use of shared IP, it is difficult to trace a criminal when it comes to cybercrime, said Junaed Alam Sharker, additional deputy commissioner of DB's cyber and special crime division.

CTTC official Chataak Chakma said this issue can be solved by making the use of a unique IP mandatory for all.

"Internet service providers are supposed to keep a log of every user for a certain period but the records are often missing," said Chataak.

"We are now using internet protocol version (IPV) 4. Once we start using IPV 6 like the developed countries, it will be easier to implement the solution, as this most recent version provides a robust identification system for computers and routes internet traffic," Chataak added.

Md Imdadul Hoque,

president of Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh, told this correspondent that they expect the country will be using IPV 6 in the next two years.

"Presently, there are around 2,000 registered members, and we have been keeping a user log of every six months. The problem occurs with unregistered service providers," he explained.

LACK OF TRAINING, ABSENCE OF MLAT According to the register books of the cybercrime tribunal in Dhaka, a total of 163 cases were disposed of from 2013 to May 30 this year.

A high official of Cyber Police Centre (CPC) of CID said one of the major reasons behind the low conviction is the lack of training for local police in dealing with such cases.

"We are handed the case after a delay. By then, evidence is either removed or tampered, and we have to submit a subpar charge sheet," said the official, requesting anonymity.

Admitting this

limitation, SM Ashraf Alam, special superintendent of CPC, said they are providing training to officials, but it is not sufficient to deal with these crimes.

An initiative was taken to set up a cyber police station under CPC in 2020, to ensure charge sheets are submitted with all evidence, said officials.

The station will first be set up in Dhaka and then in other districts.

Other reasons behind low conviction are lack of evidence, witnesses not appearing in court and lack of expertise, said lawyers.

Moreover, Bangladesh has no Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) with other countries to share information about cybercrime incidents, said Chataak Chakma.

"Cybercrime is transnational, but we often do not get information from other countries due to the absence of an MLAT," he said.

another limitation, said SM Ashraf Alam of CID.

"We only get responses from the tech giants in life-threatening situations. Cases like defamation remain unaddressed," he said.

"Steps have been taken from the government to strike a deal with these companies," he added.

IT expert Tanveer Hassan Zoha said it only takes four or five clicks for local hackers to hack social media accounts if they have any fake or real NID, passport or driving licence details.

"We need to be cautious about sharing our information. Awareness is the only solution from a user's end," Tanveer Hasan Zoha added.

Utter negligence

FROM PAGE 3 remand period and found no significant information," he said.

Since the accused were placed on remand before, courts do not grant fresh requests for remand, he said.

"As a result, we cannot dig deeper into the smuggling racket."

It is possible that these smugglers have their cronies in the court's corridor to watch their back, he added.

In almost all cases, the carriers who get arrested know only two persons - the one who hands him the consignment and the person receiving the package.

For evidence gathering, they need to be questioned properly, officials said.

To investigate gold smuggling cases, police have to obtain vital information from domestic and international airports and the airlines used.

"We often ask for information from foreign airports and airlines, which you cannot get readily. So, we cannot make expected progress," he told The Daily Star.

Since 2017, at least 233 gold smuggling cases have been filed in Dhaka alone against 261 people, CID data show.

A senior lawyer practising in a Dhaka court said convictions in such cases are rare, except for the two cases that recently saw convictions.

In one case, four people, including two Biman employees, were sentenced to 12 years in jail by a Dhaka court in January this year.

The case involved recovery of 9.28kg of gold in Dhaka in 2018.

In another case involving recovery of 13 gold bars in 2020, a woman was sentenced to life imprisonment by a Jashore court in March this year.

Noted criminal lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan said low conviction rates mean the prosecution failed to prove the case.

"Government prosecutors have many shortcomings. They lack experience and coordination. Brilliant lawyers are not attracted to the position. The government needs to look into this," he said.

Three killed

FROM PAGE 5 Police seized the bus but its driver and helper managed to flee the scene, the SI said.

The body was sent to Chattogram Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, he said, adding that a case was filed with the police station.

Bihongo "In winter, when migratory birds flock to these areas for food and shelter, locals catch them. They also catch wild animals - when they come out of the forests and their paths cross with neighbouring areas - for sale or just for fun. This a result of their lack of awareness on how important these animals are for ecological balance," he added.

Disregard

FROM PAGE 5 Chiefs of several committees said they started the respective projects but were not given the money. Besides, rain and flood caused the delay.

Denying the claim, Rajibpur PIO Azizur Rahman said the committee leaders appealed for funding.

"But when we found that they didn't start the works, we didn't give them the fund."

He said the projects would be rescheduled so that they can be implemented in the next fiscal year.

Contacted, Rajibpur incumbent UNO Amit Chakrabarty said he is not aware of the matter.

ফ্র্যাগট বিক্রয় বারিধারা ডিপ্লোম্যাটিক জেন এ ১৯১৫ বর্ষক্রমের ১টি ল্যাবোরিয়ার্স রেডি ফ্র্যাগট ১টি পার্কিং সহ জরুরী বিক্রয় হইবে।

INTERCONTINENTAL (Owned by Bangladesh Services Limited) 1 Minto Road, Dhaka 1000 Invitation for Tender (OTM)

ঢাকা কমিউনিটি মেডিকেল কলেজ ১৯০/১, বঙ্গ মহলাজায়, গুরুদেবসে কোম্পানী, ঢাকা।

খাজা ইউনুস আলী মেডিকেল কলেজ এনায়েতপুর, টাঙ্গৈয়া, টোহানী, জেলা: সিরাজগঞ্জ-৬৭৫১, বাংলাদেশ।

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL ENGINEER-1 BANGLADESH RAILWAY, DHAKA.

টিএমএসএস মেডিকেল কলেজ ঠেঙ্গামারা, রংপুর রোড, বগুড়া

Three killed in road crashes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

At least three people were killed and two injured in road accidents in Thakurgaon and Chattogram yesterday, report our correspondents.

In Thakurgaon, two motorcyclists were killed in a collision at Gogor intersection in Ranisankail upazila in the afternoon.

The deceased were identified as Tilak (18) of Sadar upazila and Joy (18) of Pirganj upazila in Thakurgaon.

Quoting locals, Ranisankail Police Station Officer-in-Charge SM Jahid Iqbal told this correspondent that the accident occurred around 2:30pm when two motorbikes coming from opposite directions collided, leaving four seriously injured.

Locals rescued and took them to Pirganj Upazila Health Complex, where the on-duty doctor declared Tilak and Joy dead.

The two other injured, Ashapurna (19) of Sadar upazila and Mamun (22) of Netrakona's Madan upazila, were sent to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated fast.

A case was filed in this connection, said the OC.

In Chattogram city, a garment worker was killed after a bus hit her at CEPZ area.

The deceased was identified as Shuva Akter (18) of Habiganj. She used to work at a garment factory in the area.

The accident happened around 3:00pm while she was crossing the road, leaving her dead on the spot, said Ashis Kumar Dey, sub-inspector of EPZ Police Station.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



The oriental garden lizard (Calotes versicolor) is a timid creature in the wild. This colour-changing lizard, widespread in Asia, can easily be found in parks and gardens, where it feeds on insects and other preys. However, their kind is slowly being driven towards extinction since greenery is depleting as the days go by. This photo was taken from Sheikh Abu Naser Bypass Connectivity Road in Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Disregard for deadlines

55 development projects yet to start in Kurigram

S DILIP ROY, Kurigram

Works of 55 government projects on rural development in Kurigram are yet to start even though the implement deadline expired around a year ago.

In 2020-2021 fiscal year, the government undertook a total of 222 projects for improving rural infrastructure in three unions of Rajibpur upazila.

Around Tk 2.50 crore was allocated for implementing the projects and the upazila project implementation officer (PIO) was authorised to supervise the works, said officials concerned.

These projects were scheduled to be completed by June 2021. But 55 of those are yet to begin. The estimated cost of

these projects is around Tk 55 lakh, said sources at the office of upazila nirbahi officer (UNO).

Normally, the PIO forms a committee by engaging community people to implement such projects. One person is made

These projects were scheduled to be completed by June 2021. But 55 of those are yet to begin. The estimated cost of these projects is around Tk 55 lakh.

president of the committee.

The officer hands over some money to the committee after it starts the project, and the rest is paid at the end.

On August last year, Rajibpur UNO Nabirul Islam conducted a field survey and found that works of the 55 projects on road construction or repair did not begin.

He then took initiative to take legal actions against those who delayed the projects. But the UNO was transferred to another upazila in September last year, said sources.

Locals said presidents of the project committees, who are involved with the ruling party, might have played a role in transferring the UNO.

"We have heard that a project has been undertaken to repair a road in our village. But no work has been done till now," said Ramzan Ali from the upazila's Baulpara.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Bihongo: safeguarding the ecology

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

For the last 13 years, the voluntary organisation "Bihongo" has been working to protect the wildlife by preventing poaching in Jamalpur's Melandah upazila.

Talking to this correspondent, Jahangir Alam, president of the organisation, said their work targets some areas along the Old Brahmaputra River and its adjacent upazilas due to its abundance of wild birds and the presence of hunters there.

Jahangir informed that in Melandah upazila, the areas most vulnerable for birds are - Notarkura, Sadipati, Defla, Naughata, Tupkarchar, and Poyla.

Mahbubur Rahman Robin, secretary of Bihongo, said in the early stage of rescue operations, they had to face obstructions from poachers and their associates. However, the situation has changed. Even the locals now help them rescue birds and animals now.

"A section of fish farmers hire poachers from Sherpur's Nalitabari and Sadar upazila so that their fish farms are protected from birds," he said.



"We have already rescued over 200 birds of different kinds and 40 animals of different species, including pythons, and endangered wild cats and foxes," added Robin.

The organisation collaborates with local administrations, police and Wildlife Management and Nature Preservation Department officials in Sherpur during rescue operations, said Rafiqul Islam, a founding member of Bihongo and a college teacher by profession.

Kismot Pasha, chairperson of Nangla Union Parishad, said, "The forum's efforts are much appreciated as it's helpful for the environment. This is why we try our best to support them in rescue operations."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

HERE COMES THE RAIN AGAIN... As storm clouds took over the skies and hid the sun, vehicles were seen having to turn on their headlights to look ahead amid the darkness during daylight hours yesterday. Torrential rain had drenched the capital since the early morning. This picture was taken in front of Bangladesh Supreme Court.

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**NEW MILITARY
HIRING PLAN**
**One killed as
protests rage
in India**

REUTERS, New Delhi
Indian police fired at an angry mob who set trains on fire yesterday during protests against a new short-term military recruitment scheme that has flared around the country.

The system aims to bring in more people to the military on short, four-year contracts to lower the average age of India's 1.38 million-strong armed forces and cut down on burgeoning pension costs.

The new process will bring in men and women between the ages of 17 and a half and 21 for a four-year tenure at non-officer ranks, with only a quarter retained for longer. But many potential recruits object, concerned about employment opportunities after serving their four-year terms and disappointed to miss out on a pension.

Thousands of young men took to the streets yesterday, with protests turning violent in at least three states.

One protester was killed in a clash with police in the southern city of Secunderabad, in the southern state of Telangana, a government official said.

In Uttar Pradesh, protests erupted in 14 districts. In Bihar, protesters torched train coaches in at least two stations and disrupted rail services, police said.



Policemen open fire to disperse protesters during a demonstration against the government's new 'Agnipath' recruitment scheme for the army, navy, and air forces at a railway station in Secunderabad in the southern state of Telangana, India; protesters set a train on fire in Secunderabad; and policemen carry an injured protester.



PHOTO: REUTERS, AFP

End 'age of fossil fuels'

Urges UN chief, warns the fuel industry is grabbing 'humanity by the throat' at major climate summit

AFP, Washington

The UN chief yesterday launched an all-out attack on the fossil fuel industry, accusing it of having "humanity by the throat" and calling on leaders of the world's major economies to "end the age of fossil fuels."

"The first duty of leadership is to protect people from clear and present dangers," Antonio Guterres said in a speech to the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate. "Nothing could be more clear or present than the danger of fossil fuel expansion."

The virtual meeting, hosted by US President Joe Biden,

brings together countries representing 80 percent of global GDP, population, and greenhouse gas emissions, the White House said.

"Even in the short term, fossil fuels don't make political or economic sense," Guterres said. "Yet we seem trapped in a world where fossil fuel producers and financiers have humanity by the throat."

The UN chief accused the fossil fuel industry of having tried for decades to convince leaders and sway public opinion of its limited responsibility for climate change, and for seeking to "undermine ambitious

climate policies." "They exploited precisely the same scandalous tactics as Big Tobacco decades before," he said, referring to what he called the industry's push to obfuscate its products' harm and what it knew concerning the dangers.

This is Biden's third convening of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate since he took office in 2021.

Friday's gathering will be the largest leader-level gathering before COP27, the follow-up summit, set to take place in Egypt this November.

We all know that Ukrainians are ready to die for the European perspective. We want them to live with us for the European dream.

EU commission chief Ursula von der Leyen backs Ukraine's EU candidate status

Dhaka to focus

FROM PAGE 14
on water sharing of six rivers -- Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla and Dudhkumar.

Besides, Dhaka wants India to implement Bangladesh's Upper Surma-Kushiyara project to increase the rivers' navigability through dredging and excavation.

Talking to journalists recently, Foreign Minister Momen stressed the need for joint river management to improve the life and livelihood of the people on the river basins and for weather forecast data sharing on flood, citing the recent heavy flooding in Sylhet region following rains in Assam and Meghalaya.

"Dhaka will actively raise these issues with Delhi," said a foreign ministry official.

BOOSTING TRADE
Bangladesh-India bilateral trade has surpassed \$10 billion dollars last year, with Bangladesh exporting to India slightly above \$1 billion. One of Bangladesh's requests to India is removing anti-dumping duty on export of jute. Besides, there are some para-tariff and non-tariff issues in both the countries.

Foreign ministry officials said these issues will be raised to minimise trade gap.

ENERGY COOPERATION
As Bangladesh moves towards industrialisation and faces the threat of climate change, it seeks regional hydropower connectivity with India, Nepal and Bhutan. And India's cooperation will be crucial to this end.

A foreign ministry

official said Dhaka would stress the importance of this during the JCC.

Bangladesh will also reiterate its willingness to join the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway that links Moreh to Moe Sot in Thailand, through Myanmar.

"Our relationship with India is comprehensive. While we have worked mostly on a bilateral basis so far, we would also like to work from the regional approach," said a foreign ministry official.

There are also the issues of border killings, the number of which has dropped in recent times. Yet, Dhaka will put emphasis on better border management to stop such killings and improve border haats and check smuggling, he added.

A gesture

FROM PAGE 14
some of the best varieties of mango in the world. Mangoes were also sent to the dignitaries of other South Asian countries like Bhutan and the Maldives and some Middle Eastern countries last year.

EU backs

FROM PAGE 14
country -- this is based on the understanding that good work has been done but important work also remains to be done," von der Leyen said.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was back in Kyiv yesterday for a second visit in just over two months, Zelenskiy said, hailing Britain's "resolute" support for Ukraine.

In the meantime, the fighting continues, with Russian forces bombarding Ukrainian pockets of resistance in frontline Severodonetsk, including civilians holed up in a chemical plant in the eastern Ukrainian city.

And Moscow turned up the pressure on the Western allies, sharply reducing flows of natural gas in its pipelines to Western Europe, driving up energy prices, reports AFP.

France's network provider said it had not received any Russian gas by pipeline from Germany since June 15, and Italy's Eni said it expected Russian firm Gazprom to cut its supplies by half later yesterday.

In Severodonetsk, governor of Luhansk region Sergiy Gaiday called for a ceasefire, stating hundreds of civilians were trapped in the besieged Azot chemical plant in the city.

SSC exams

FROM PAGE 1
Last year, amid the pandemic, SSC and HSC candidates sat for tests on only three optional subjects with a shortened syllabus and for fewer marks.

This year, SSC candidates will have to sit for Bangla, English, Mathematics and a fourth subject, besides the three optional subjects, said Dhaka Education Board Chairman Prof Tapan Kumar.

They will not need to sit for exams on religion, ICT, Bangladesh and Global Studies and science.

Lightning kills nine

FROM PAGE 14
Meanwhile, in Mymensingh Sadar upazila, Abu Bakkar, 40, and Jahangir Hossain, 30, died after being hit by lightning around 1:00pm.

Both were farmers and died on the spot, said locals. Shah Kamal Akanda, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Model Police Station, said the bodies were handed over to the victims' family members.

In Sirajganj, three people were killed and four others injured after being struck by

lightning yesterday noon.

The victims are Abdur Razzak Munshi, Mohammad Nasir, of Sirajganj Sadar upazila; and Durga Choron, of Tarash upazila.

Of them, Razzak was travelling by boat, Nasir was working on the Jamuna rail bridge project and Durga Choron was working in a field when they were struck by lightning.

[Our Mymensingh and Pabna correspondents contributed to this report.]

UK clears Assange

FROM PAGE 2
The extradition was an attempt to "try to disappear him into the darkest recesses of their prison system for the rest of his life to deter others from holding governments to account".

The head of Amnesty International said the government's approval of the extradition "sends a chilling message" to journalists.

"If the extradition proceeds, Amnesty International is extremely concerned that Assange faces a high risk of prolonged solitary confinement, which would violate the prohibition on torture and other ill treatment," said Agnes Callamard.

"Diplomatic assurances provided by the US that Assange will not be kept in solitary confinement cannot

be taken on face value given previous history," she added, calling for the charges to be dropped and Assange to be released.

A Home Office spokesperson said there were no grounds for Patel to block the extradition order, which was made on April 20 after a long-running legal saga up the hierarchy of UK courts.

"In this case, the UK courts have not found that it would be oppressive, unjust or an abuse of process to extradite Mr Assange," the spokesperson said.

"Nor have they found that extradition would violate the prohibition on human rights, including his right to a fair trial and to freedom of expression, and that whilst in the US he will be treated appropriately, including in relation to his health."

Shops, markets

FROM PAGE 1
"Although there is a provision under the existing law that employees will work from 10:00am to 8:00pm, we never followed it for reasonable grounds."

Helal added that as the government made the decision to save energy and power following soaring prices of oil and energy across the globe due to

Russia-Ukraine war, they have no alternative to abide by the decision.

He, however, said some 16 to 18 lakh people are involved with small businesses in the capital.

"Under this consideration, we will request Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to give us permission to keep shops open from 12:00 noon to 9:00pm."

Sanctions on Rab

FROM PAGE 14
reports our concerns. We've raised it with them in bilateral meetings. And so, while the sanctions may have come as a surprise, the idea that we had concerns should not have."

The envoy said the US is also not perfect when it comes to democracy but that the striving for democracy must continue.

Referring to Bangladesh, he said there are things that the Bangladeshi people and the government can work on as well and the elections provide a good framing for that, because they're still more than a year out.

"We don't favour any particular party, or platform, or anything else ... But what we would like to see is what I think all Bangladeshis would like to

see, which is an election run at international standards that allow the people of Bangladesh to choose their next leaders in an open, competitive process free of violence and free of coercion."

Haas said he welcomes some of the signs, some of the signals that they have been receiving.

"Foreign Minister [Abdul] Momen has made it clear that Bangladesh will welcome international observers. And I think that's critical.

"But the election actually has already started. And so, it's important to be looking at it all the way from now to make sure that everyone feels safe and secure in their decision on whether or not to participate in any aspect of the upcoming elections," he added.

Killings, recovery of rifle

FROM PAGE 1
widely been debated as Rohingyas and security experts believe they are members of the Myanmar insurgent group in Cox's Bazar camps.

However, the government has always maintained that this group does not exist in Bangladesh and that some criminals might have falsely identified themselves as Arsa operatives to intimidate the Rohingyas.

More than 100 killings have taken place in Rohingya camps since the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals arrived in Bangladesh in 2017, according to law

enforcement agencies. Shahab Enam Khan, professor of international relations at Jahangirnagar University, said the presence of arms like M16 clearly gives the hint that the security situation in and around the Rohingya camps can become volatile anytime.

"The issue of inter-agency cooperation and collaborative monitoring of the security situation should be ensured not only by the law enforcement agencies, but also by the intelligence agencies."

Shahab, who monitors the Rohingya situation, said repatriation must be the priority and any violence will only delay

the repatriation and international cooperation in this regard.

"If required, the possibility of reengaging the armed forces [in security issues] should be explored," he said.

Speaking to The Daily Star on condition of anonymity, a member of the CTC arms enforcement team said M16 rifle is a sophisticated weapon and an updated version of M-4, which is used by SWAT for combat operations.

It can be operated in two modes -- auto and burst. In auto mode, the weapon fires a single bullet at a time while in burst mode it fires randomly with just a press on the trigger, he added.

Biman plane makes

FROM PAGE 14
aircraft, the pilot announced that its main landing gear went out of order.

Group Captain Kamrul Islam, executive director, HSIA, told this correspondent that the Dash-8 aircraft suffered a "technical issue" and made a technical landing safely. No passengers were hurt, he added.

BOEING 787

Biman sources said a Boeing 787-8 aircraft landed at HSIA from Riyadh at 4:15pm on Thursday.

After landing, the aircraft was brought to the boarding bridge no 4. When the aircraft was being taken to the hangar after the passengers had disembarked, it collided with the boarding bridge.

The Biman authorities said the damaged boarding

bridge has been repaired. There was no damage to the aircraft and it was ready to fly to Riyadh from HSIA at 2:30am today, they added.

The two-member probe body, led by Biman Chief Engineer Kaiser Zaman, has been asked to submit its report within three working days, said Tahera Khondoker, Biman's general manager (public relations).

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH				
Director, CMSD Department of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Dhaka.				
Tender for Goods (Single Lot)				
Ref. No: CMSD/COVID(SDF)-2101/NCT/21-22/Proc.-7/90		Dated: 16/06/2022		
KEY INFORMATION				
1	Procurement Method/Document	NCT Open		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
2	Source of Funds	Development Budget (Aid Grant/Credit)		
3	Development Partner			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
4	Project/Programme Code			
5	Project/Programme Name	SAARC Development Fund (SDF)		
6	Tender Package No.	COVID (SDF)-2101		
7	Tender Package Name	Procurement of RT-PCR Test kit		
8	Tender Publication Date	16/06/2022		
9	Tender Last Selling Date	14/07/2022		
10	Tender Closing Date and time	17/07/2022 at 11:00 AM		
11	Tender Opening Date and time	17/07/2022 at 11:30 AM		
12	Name and Address of the Office(s)			
	- Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Central Medical Stores Depot, 30, Shahid Tajuddin Ahmed Swarani, Tejgaon, Dhaka.		
	- Selling Tender Document (Others)	Do		
	- Receiving Tender Document	Do		
	- Opening Tender Document	Do		
13	Place/Date/Time for Pre-Tender Meeting	Central Medical Stores Depot, 30, Shahid Tajuddin Ahmed Swarani, Tejgaon, Dhaka (Conference Room, Room No.-115) 03/07/2022 at 11:30 AM		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
14	Eligibility of Tenderer	Tender will be conducted through the National Competitive Tender (NCT) procedures specified in the tender schedule and PPA-2008 & PPR-2008.		
15	Brief Description of Goods or Works	Realtime RT-PCR test kit for SARS-CoV-2 virus detection kit (Including VTM & Swab)		
16	Brief Description of Related Services	Do		
17	Tender Document Price	BDT 4,000/- (Bangladesh Taka four thousand) only. The method of payment will be in pay order from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh.		
17	Lot No	Identification	Location	Tender Security Amount in Taka
	Single	Realtime RT-PCR test kit for SARS-CoV-2 virus detection kit (Including VTM & Swab)	Central Medical Stores Depot, 30, Shahid Tajuddin Ahmed Swarani, Tejgaon, Dhaka.	BDT. 20,00,000.00 through a scheduled bank in Bangladesh
COMPLETION TIME				
To be delivered within 21 (twenty one) days after signing of contract. In case of delivery beyond 21 (twenty one) days will be treated as non-responsive.				
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
18	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Mohammad Mukhtesur Rahman Sarkar		
19	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Director, CMSD, Tejgaon, Dhaka.		
20	Address of Official Inviting Tender	30 Shahid Tajuddin Ahmed Swarani, Tejgaon, Dhaka.		
21	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel. No: 02-48115486 Fax: 88-2-9126547 E-mail: cmsdstore@gmail.com		
The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders				
GD-1258				



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF NADIA SULTANA PRIYANKA

Menstrual hygiene is a necessity, not a taboo

“I stayed at my ancestral home, Lakshmpur, during most of the pandemic, and noticed many rural women still use wet cloth during their periods,” adds Nadia.

AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

Nadia Sultana Priyanka, the founder of Napref3, has always carried a passionate heart towards social work. She established Napref3 back in May, 9 2021 on International Mother's Day, to help women and girls who cannot afford sanitary pads.

“I had a passion for social work from a young age and volunteered to help the common people even before Napref3,” said Nadia.

Napref3 gifts sanitary pads to the poverty struck and rural areas of Bangladesh, hoping to raise menstrual hygiene awareness in every corner of the nation. Plans for Napref3 began between 2019-2020. Nadia was inspired to work with menstrual hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I stayed at my ancestral home, Lakshmpur, during most of the pandemic, and noticed many rural women still use wet cloth during their periods,” adds Nadia. “Menstrual pain is a common enemy of every female. However, they were unaware of menstrual

hygiene,” said Nadia, adding that, “They do not bother to buy sanitary napkins, as it is too expensive for them. That's where the idea of Napref3 struck me.”

‘Napref3’ stands for ‘before sleep’ and ‘F3’ represents ‘free from fence’. The organisation started with a small fund from Nadia, which she had up from her pocket money over 1.5 years.

“My mother has been my pillar of support when I first began Napref3,” smiled Nadia, “Both of us go house to house back in Lakshmpur, raising awareness about menstrual hygiene and sanitary pads. We would also provide them with free sanitary pads afterward.”

Later, sixteen volunteers joined Nadia's cause to raise menstrual hygiene awareness within the female population.

“We are a bit tight on funds, as most of the funding comes from our own pockets. From my parents to our volunteers, everyone supports and contributes as much as they can to keep Napref3 afloat,” said Nadia.

Napref3 has already conducted multiple events and seminars on menstrual hygiene in Lakshmpur,



Dhaka, Chandpur, and Netrokona.

“We are also trying to help out girls and women from ethnic minorities scattered around Bangladesh,” adds Nadia.

“Recently we gifted sanitary napkins to 100 girls from Netrokona,” reports Nadia, stating that, “their appreciation for our work filled my heart with indescribable joy.”

make one school adapt this ‘period corner’ facility, Nadia aspires to ensure this facility is available in every school in the nation.

During her escapades with Napref3, Nadia and her team faced bad comments and disapproval from many across the internet, from netizens to families of their beneficiaries, many were against the work Napref3 was trying to do. However, Nadia bravely continued to work towards her goals.

“I believe the taboo surrounding the topic of menstrual hygiene only exists because many are unaware about the issue,” says menstrua hygiene activists, adding that, “Both boys and girls should learn about it, only by doing this can we break this social taboo.”

“Menstrual hygiene is a necessity for women across the nation, yet 86 percent of women in Bangladesh are unaware about the topic. We at Napref3 dream of spreading menstrual hygiene awareness to every district in Bangladesh,” concludes Nadia.

Apart from providing sanitary pads and hygiene counselling, Napref3 is also trying to establish a ‘period corner’ within female washroom's in schools.

“Many girls have to leave their classes due to abrupt menstrual pain,” reveals Nadia. “The period corner is a solution to that.”

While they have only managed to

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Team Ramen represents Bangladesh in regional final

HSBC Business Case Competition

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Bringing a shift in the business case format, by going from a classroom to a global competition framework, HSBC/HKU Asia Pacific Business Case Competition strengthens the traditional qualities of a case solving competition.

The competition aims to improve students' business case solving abilities, through a global perspective, while also developing future business leaders. As a result, students' career options and employability will also be widened, bridging the gap between academics and the international business communities.

This year, Team Ramen from Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of Dhaka, won the national round and got the opportunity to



They formed this team of four in 2019 to compete in the intra-rounds of the HSBC-IBA Business Case Competition. Unfortunately, the team did not qualify for the national rounds back then.

“Being able to compete in the national rounds in our final year as undergraduate students, and then going on to win it truly makes it feel like things have come full circle,” added Afnan.

Team Ramen had to go through a total of five rounds, where the first two rounds were intra-rounds, where they competed against other teams from IBA. Finally, four teams qualified for the national rounds.

A total of 50 teams from over 20 universities competed in the national rounds. In each round, the teams had four hours to solve the case provided, followed by 10 minutes for the presentation. These cases covered different topics ranging from HR solutions to blockchain technology and how businesses can develop environment-friendly solutions.

In the national finale, they competed against 3 other teams from IBA and one team from Bangladesh University of Professionals. The final case featured the global fast-fashion business sensation “SHEIN”.

“It focused on the brand's growth during the pandemic and how it could potentially be a bubble. It also had concerns regarding whether its way of operating is unsustainable and if they are maintaining proper working conditions. Lastly, the case also challenged us to look into how the brand could potentially expand their business,” explained Shadab.

Throughout the rounds, Team Ramen worked tirelessly to give their absolute best and were confident with their analysis and the solutions that they were proposing.

“We have always believed that this is one of the most important elements to succeeding, and it sets the tone for all of us,” asserted Shadab.

The international rounds came to

a conclusion on June 2, 2022. Team Ramen finished in the competition as a finalist, with the team from Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies from India finishing as second runner-up and the team from University of Toronto from Canada finishing as first runner-up. The overall champion was University of Malaya from Malaysia.

Although the basic format for the international rounds was the same, the case solving duration was increased to six hours and with the presentation time being 20 minutes. Team Ramen's first-round case focused on the Chinese company WeChat Pay and how they are helping small and medium sized enterprises thrive.

Both the national and international rounds required the teams to communicate their solutions using handwritten slides, meaning they had to illustrate and write everything on a piece of A4 paper.

“This was very new to us since we have always prepared our presentations on PowerPoint, and the trickiest part was figuring out the most effective and efficient way of crafting these handwritten slides to communicate our ideas clearly,” explained Sadman. He also noted this as one of the most fun parts of the competition for him.

“It is a matter of great honour for us to represent Bangladesh in any capacity on the international stage. We were initially supposed to go to Hong Kong but it was shifted online due to the pandemic. Regardless of the modality, this has been a moment of joy and pride for us,” concluded Azwad.

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PHOTOS: COURTESY OF TEAM RAMEN

represent Bangladesh in the regional finale. The team consists of Abdullah Azwad Rafeed, Afnan Faruk, Sadman Sakib Pantho and Syed Shadab Tajwar.

“The competition has been thrilling and we have learned something new each round. We have always enjoyed solving business cases and when it comes to case competitions, it does not get bigger than HSBC,” Afnan shared.

Diving towards glory

AZIBOR RAHMAN

Md Hussain, a student of class ten at Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan (BKSP), made the first national record in a 5-metre platform diving competition in 2018, and secured the second place in a 3-metre springboard diving competition in 2017.

Last year, he won three gold medals in three events, featuring 1 and 3-metre springboard diving challenges, as well as a 5-metre platform diving challenge. Hussain is from Hatbakua, Jhenidah.

He started to learn swimming under the guidance of his coach, Sirazul Islam Pinto, in 2015. The ambitious swimmer joined BKSP the following year.

Hussain's father, Shahadat Mondol, is a farmer. Owing to his commendable achievements in swimming, Hussain does not have to pay any tuition fees at BKSP.

Moving forward, Hussain hopes to join the Navy.



PHOTO: COURTESY

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Extend all support to Nilphamari rape survivor

Such victims need legal aid, protection and compensation

POOR, minor survivor of rape – there can't be a worse combination than this for someone grovelling through the corridors of justice in Bangladesh. Throw a powerful culprit into the mix, and you have a victim representing what is perhaps the most vulnerable group in our society. Such a case recently came to light when a 15-year-old girl from Nilphamari gained access to a High Court bench in session, and made the following appeal: "Sir, I have been raped. We are very poor. We have no money to move the case. I want justice from you."

She spoke directly to the sitting judges, who were astonished to hear this and quite touched by her story, an underage girl fighting alone and unaided, with nothing but the determination to get justice for the wrong done to her. She claimed to have been raped by a member of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB). After she filed a case with a lower court in Nilphamari, the accused was acquitted. She wants to have the case moved to the High Court. We're happy to know that she has been promised legal representation. There is still a long way ahead, but we hope justice will be delivered fairly this time.

However, as encouraging as her grit is, the fact that a rape survivor had to go through such ordeal to get to this point is disquieting. This is but an example of the insurmountable challenges that the victims of rape and domestic violence often have to face while seeking justice. Many victims drop their case mid-trial, many never even filing a complaint. Threats of further harm by the accused, adverse societal attitude, lack of access to legal aid services, lack of state protection and compensation, systemic barriers as well as the biased, unhelpful attitude of relevant officials – there can be any number of reasons for this situation.

Added to the uncertainty is the fact that securing a conviction in a criminal court itself remains a daunting task. Conviction rates in cases handled by the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals are measly at best. This leads to criminals feeling emboldened and, in many cases, repeating their crimes. There is, clearly, a lot that needs to change. For victims like the Nilphamari rape survivor, this begins with increasing the reach of the National Legal Aid Services Organisation (NLASO) and proper execution of the Legal Aid Services Act, 2000. The government as well as the judiciary must ensure that all victims are properly represented, protected and compensated.

How much longer must the Birangonas suffer?

Remove bureaucratic hurdles and harassment in certification as freedom fighters

THE story of the Birangonas in Bangladesh is one of contradictions – of state recognition on the one hand, and social ostracisation on the other. Though Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman awarded the title of "Birangona" to honour the sacrifices of the women who were systematically tortured during the Liberation War, for five decades, they were subjected to ridicule, harassment and persecution by the society at large – including state institutions – because of their "Birangona" status. In 2015, the government undertook another commendable initiative – 41 Birangonas were gazetted as freedom fighters for the first time. Till then, a total of 448 have been gazetted as freedom fighters.

A recent study by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) reveals the irregularities, complexities and harassment in the process of recognition and provision of benefits to Birangonas. They have to wait for more than three years to be gazetted as freedom fighters, and wait for at least three to six months to start getting an allowance due to bureaucratic delays. It takes more than six years to get a house under the "Bir Nibash" project, which provides accommodation to financially insolvent freedom fighters. The TIB report also mentioned instances of extortion and bribery, adding that applicants did not report the irregularities due to fear of further harassment and delay.

There does not appear to be any systematic plans in place to identify the Birangonas at the local level, and those who do come forward on their own have to jump through numerous bureaucratic hoops and face intrusive questions to access the benefits. Many of the applicants wonder if they will ever see the benefits during their lifetime, despite being prodded over and over to "prove" their eligibility.

Given the circumstances, it is imperative that the government revisit this commendable initiative and remove the numerous hurdles in the process. There needs to be a specific time frame during which the process must be completed. We agree with the TIB recommendation that a specific framework needs to be developed to identify the Birangonas. However, the government must engage with the female freedom fighters and civil society organisations working with them to ensure that the process of identification does not result in further humiliation of the women and their families. The report also suggested that the Liberation War affairs ministry assign specific personnel at local levels to assist in the process of availing all the facilities – starting from the application process to gazette notification. We believe such personnel should receive orientation and gender sensitivity training on how to work with the female freedom fighters.

These women have suffered too much, on too many fronts, for Bangladesh's independence, but they were never treated with dignity. It is high time we started treating these freedom fighters with the respect they deserve.

Education budget not enough for 40 million learners



Rasheda K Choudhury is executive director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).

RASHEDA K CHOUDHURY

THE government has declared the national budget at a time when the world is still reeling from the Covid pandemic. And now, we are looking at yet another global crisis of energy and food security. No doubt, these have come as big shocks for Bangladesh. A budget declared at such a critical juncture is expected to present a way to absorb some of the shocks.

It seems the focus of the budget has mostly been on bringing the economy back on track. However, the government appears to have ignored the fact that the education sector is suffering immensely from Covid impacts, and that, without appropriate interventions and judicious investment, we risk jeopardising the future of a whole generation of Bangladeshis. In fact, this year's budget looks like any other budget from the previous years. It does not reflect the aspirations of the 40 million learners, half a million teachers and the millions of their family members who have been struggling to minimise the massive learning loss that has aggravated pre-existing inequalities in accessing quality education.

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and the Ministry of Education both prepared Covid response and recovery plans. But there is no indication in the budget as to how these plans are to be implemented. Bangladesh, over the last 50 years, has achieved some milestones in education. For instance, Bangladesh has been acclaimed globally for achieving gender parity in enrolment at the primary and secondary levels and also at the teacher level. An increasing number of students are enrolling into technical and vocational programmes. But how can we retain these achievements moving forward? The proposed budget has not provided any indication in this regard.

Covid taught us that we need to move forward with a combination of both offline and online lessons. Though the budget does highlight the importance of ICT to some extent, there is no recognition of the inequalities in accessing digital technologies which were further exacerbated during the pandemic. The finance minister has mentioned that 170 million people have mobile phones,

but what about the increasing expenses related to internet facilities that a huge segment of our population can't afford?

The focus of the world is to bring students back to schools, to retain them in classes and to ensure they are not lagging behind. In order to do so, there needs to be provisions for adequate funding. However, our budget has seen only a nominal increase for education

The government needs to think of education as a single sector – from primary to higher education, including technical, vocational, and professional education – and it should get the single largest allocation in the budget.

In terms of the declared budget, the government should think about reallocating some of the resources to critical and overlooked areas, such as bringing children back to schools, mitigating learning loss and addressing malnutrition. We want a specific budget to target vulnerable and excluded groups, such as children with disabilities – not simply as part of social safety net allocation but specifically for education.

The amount of the stipends should be doubled considering the inflation over the years. Even if it is not possible to implement this right away, it should remain as the government's vision and objective to increase the amount and widen the outreach of the stipends. There has to be a specific allocation for victims of early marriage in 2020 and 2021 to encourage them to come back to schools/colleges.

I felt happy to hear when the finance minister mentioned the new curriculum, but implementation of a new curriculum requires specific allocation. It focuses more on creative learning, values education, continuous assessment and innovative practices inside the classroom. If we really want to make these changes happen, we need to allocate money, as and where required.

The nation is going to enjoy the fruits of "megaprojects" like Padma Bridge thanks to our government. But if we don't invest enough in developing our human resources, how are we hoping to sustain the results of our mega initiatives? Unfortunately, this year's budget has almost no indication of investing in youth who are expected to lead the country in 2041.

Finally, allocation is just one side of the coin. We also need to focus on budget utilisation and monitoring. There is hardly any point in pressing for more funds, if we don't utilise the budget effectively. In his budget speech, the finance minister mentioned timely completion of education and health sector projects as one of six challenges. It is evident that the government mechanism should be strengthened and committed to ensure accountability and transparency while utilising the budget at each and every stage.

Bangladesh is progressing, but if the progress is uneven, then expectations of the majority of learners will remain unfulfilled.



PHOTO: STAR

from the past year – 12 percent of the total budget, compared to 11.9 percent in FY2021-22. When compared to the GDP ratio, it is only 1.83 percent, less than the outgoing fiscal year's allocation and the lowest in South Asia. This is undoubtedly disappointing, particularly considering the present scenario in education.

To meet our SDG targets, our government is committed to allocate at least 4-6 percent of GDP for education. But what about our National Education Policy (NEP) 2010, which was adopted in the parliament? There is almost no reflection of all of these commitments in the proposed national budget.

Also, why is there so little allocation for research in education? Research is all the more relevant now, particularly in light of Covid, because we need credible, scientific data for realistic planning. We don't know exactly how many have dropped out of the education system, how many have become victims of early marriage or how many learners have joined the labour force. If we want credible data, we have to invest in research.

Tax has been levied on private universities again, as was attempted last year. The burden of this tax will no doubt fall on the students and their families who are already struggling to face the challenges of inflation. Can the government ensure that universities pay the tax from their profits without imposing it on their students?

Bangladesh is progressing, but if the progress is uneven, then expectations of the majority of learners will remain unfulfilled.

PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

Today's Crises Are Different



Mauricio Cardenas, a former finance minister of Colombia, is visiting senior research scholar at Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy.

MAURICIO CARDENAS

JUST as one generation gives way to the next, global challenges are superseded by a new cohort. The once-in-a-century Covid-19 pandemic – and the risk that other dangerous new viruses may emerge at any time – is far from the only example. Extreme weather events resulting from climate change are having catastrophic consequences. Information technology and data are sometimes used maliciously or for cyberwarfare. Even today's surging food prices and rising global hunger can be traced to a failure to disseminate open source technologies.

We seemingly live in a permanent state of danger. Crises are no longer isolated tail-risk events that affect a few. They are much more frequent, multidimensional and interdependent, and – because they transcend national borders – have the potential to affect everyone simultaneously. Moreover, they involve so many externalities that both markets and national governments have insufficient incentive to solve them.

Solutions to these problems depend on the availability of global public goods, but the current international system is unable to provide a sufficient supply. We need major coordinated investments in pandemic preparedness and response, for example, or to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (a global public bad), because no individual country's actions will resolve today's crises, much less prevent new ones.

A rethink of the way multilateralism works is imperative. The post-war international financial architecture was designed to support national

governments so that they could provide national public goods. The priority now is to think about the new institutions required to provide public goods that transcend national borders.

The overlapping nature of current crises makes an even stronger case for a new framework. Greater frequency of extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts, heighten the risk of infectious and waterborne diseases. Rising average temperatures and altered rainfall patterns are reducing the potential yield of staple crops (by six percent in the case of maize, for example) that are crucial for food security – an essential component of good health. In 2010-19, the proportion of the global land surface suffering extreme drought in any month reached 22 percent, up from 13 percent in 1950-99.

Previous emergencies, like the global financial crisis of 2008-09 (which was really a developed world phenomenon) or the Asian and Latin American financial crises of the late 1990s, were essentially economic in nature, resulting from the excessive accumulation of financial risks. The solutions were in the hands of central bankers and finance ministers. They included new financial regulations and fiscal and monetary policies to restore lost employment and output.

Today's crises, in contrast, are interdependent and truly global in scope, with potentially a much greater impact. What is distinctive is that solutions no longer depend exclusively on the competence of national economic authorities. Addressing them effectively requires leadership and action between governments around the world. One example of this approach is the proposed Global Health Threats Council. The early detection of pandemic threats and the development of herd immunity against known pathogens is a classic case of a non-rival and non-excludable global public good.

But taxpayers in individual countries lack the incentives to provide goods whose benefits are enjoyed globally. Moreover, we cannot expect official development

assistance (ODA) or philanthropy to do the job. The numbers simply don't add up. ODA totalled USD 180 billion last year, with private donors adding a few billion more. But global public goods require trillions of dollars. Moreover, aid budgets are too cyclical, and priorities shift. But what seems urgent and politically appealing does not always coincide with what is important, which should be the focus of global public goods.

That is why we need to introduce a new multilateral system. Ideally, its main elements should mirror the tools used to provide national public goods: taxation, incentives, and accountability.

Since global public goods require significant and stable financing, we should focus on building global fiscal capacity, universally funded on an ability-to-pay basis. Leadership at the national level is, of course, also required to ensure an adequate cross-government and cross-sectoral response.

Providing taxpayers and governments with the right incentives to act will not be easy. But most governments take the International Monetary Fund's periodic Article IV consultations very seriously; including an assessment of how they are addressing climate and pandemic risks would be a good start. Likewise, credit-rating agencies should expand the methodologies they use to assess risks for governments and corporations.

The world is unprepared to cope with the new generation of crises. Rather than focusing only on deficiencies in one particular area when a crisis hits, we need to understand why we are systematically bad at producing the global public goods that all these new crises require. Unless we address this issue, specific gaps will continue to appear. If another pandemic threat were to emerge tomorrow, for example, we would be no better prepared than we were for Covid-19.

The current climate, health, and food crises should trigger the global collaboration needed to tackle such threats. If they don't, it is fair to ask what would.

Rather than focusing only on deficiencies in one particular area when a crisis hits, we need to understand why we are systematically bad at producing the global public goods that all these new crises require. Unless we address this issue, specific gaps will continue to appear.

Will Terminal 3 be everything we want it to be?



**BLOWIN'
IN THE WIND**

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

Dr Shamsad Mortuza is the pro-vice chancellor of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).

ONE of my favourite films, *Love Actually* (2003), begins with the narrative voice of "the British prime minister" (Hugh Grant) saying, "Whenever I get gloomy with the state of the world, I think about the arrivals gate at Heathrow Airport." The added video collage shows the crossroads of humanity featuring a wide spectrum of people coming together with a potpourri of emotions. The voice continues, "General opinion's starting to make out that we live in a world of hatred and greed, but I don't see that. It seems to me that love is everywhere. Often, it's not particularly dignified or newsworthy, but it's always there. When the planes hit the Twin Towers, none of the phone calls from the people on board were messages of hate or revenge – they were all messages of love. If you look for it, I've got a sneaky feeling you'll find that love actually is all around."

Sitting at the airport lounge recently, I wondered if the British prime minister would have actually located love at Dhaka airport. I saw countless instances of mismanagement, negligence, and incompetence as I muttered, "Whenever I arrive at the gate at Dhaka airport, I get gloomy with its state of affairs." Thankfully, I am not a politician who needs to be publicly upbeat and professionally enthusiastic. I do not have to be a cynical preacher of gloom, either.

The construction of Terminal 3 at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) in Dhaka offers a silver lining. Designed by architect Rohani Baharin, whose work includes critically acclaimed Changi International Airport in Singapore, the HSIA Terminal 3 promises to render a much-needed facelift to our civil aviation sector. And, under the guidance of Japanese and South Korean



companies, the construction is way ahead of its schedule and likely to go for a soft launch in October 2023.

This megaproject is going to revolutionise our air connectivity. The completion of Padma Bridge, despite many odds, gives us hope that this terminal, too, will become a development milestone. My concern, however, is not the simulation of a world class airport; my concern is its operation. Our development partners can help us with the impressive structure, but do we have the resources and mindset to manage it at an international standard?

In a country where the High Court has to issue directives to control the mosquito population at the airport, where the lack of luggage trolleys hits the national news, where passenger harassment is of epicly tragic and the delay in receiving luggage is of absurdly comic proportions, where aeroplane toilets act as proxy goldmines, where the gangs of HSIA are waiting for a

▲ **The construction of Dhaka airport's Terminal 3 is way ahead of its schedule and likely to go for a soft launch in October 2023.**

FILE PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Martin Scorsese to make a film after them, it is difficult to be overexcited about the physical growth of the airport facilities. In a country where civil servants do not miss out any opportunity to avail foreign trips to learn about sowing grass seeds, cooking mishmash, inspecting lifts before ordering, or hopping on a flight to find feasibility of a non-stop route to the other hemisphere, it is difficult not to be dispirited.

A series of freak accidents at HSIA in the last few months raised an extra red flag for me. On Thursday, a Biman Dreamliner grazed the abrasion-resistant rubber on the boarding bridge while being taken to the hangar. On June 4, a microbus of the US Bangla Airlines hit a Boeing 737 aircraft. In April, a flight to Dubai was cancelled after the nose of a Boeing aircraft hit the tail of another aircraft at the hangar. On February 15, a Boeing 737 aircraft of Biman was brought back from Malaysia once a crack was found in

its windshield. On March 6, a Boeing was damaged when its engine was struck by a bird during landing at Sylhet airport.

These incidents show a serious lack of skilled crew and ground staff to run an aviation system. Running an airport with 20 million passengers a year is almost as challenging as running Dhaka city or a small country. The airport has the responsibility of moving millions of people to their ultimate destinations through scores of different airlines from different countries. Do we have plans to reskill and upskill our airport personnel to deal with these hundreds of daily arrivals and departures? Our current performance says we are far from it.

I am sure the designer of Terminal 3 has paid enough attention to include various services in its concourses and terminals. Already, a complex surface-transportation system consisting of elevated expressway, metro rail, tunnel passage, bus bay, car park, etc. is being built to ease the way people can get to and from the airport, and commute within the airport structure itself. The airport will also boost local businesses, including shopping, lodging and accommodation. But my worry is, have adequate measures been taken to increase the number of service providers and improve the quality of the operators? Are there enough projects in place to make passengers' travel experiences effortless? Do we have the people with appropriate aptitudes and attitudes to make the best of the infrastructures being built? Do we have the right communication and professional skill sets? I have not seen any such news in the media. If we are to rely on the trade unionists who have often held the aviation sector hostage to their whims, then I believe there is not much to expect from Terminal 3.

This is an area that we cannot overlook. An airport is the face of a country. It shapes a visitor's overall perception of a destination. The impressive building can only impress, but to make it truly impressive, we will need to take a stride further to add human elements to the steel and concrete slabs.

Can the 'fringe' make the BJP cringe?



PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

Pallab Bhattacharya is a special correspondent for The Daily Star. He writes from New Delhi, India.

THE outrage against the deplorable comments by two now-suspended and expelled members of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) against Prophet Muhammad continues to spread among the Islamic countries. At home, too, the BJP faces a barrage of criticism from the main opposition Congress. The controversy saw several days of protests, at times marked by arson and violence in several Indian states, and two individuals were killed during clashes with police in Jharkhand.

On the other hand, in a deeply worrying sign, the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh used bulldozers to flatten the houses of some of the people allegedly involved in the violent protests against the anti-Prophet remarks in Saharanpur, Kanpur and Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad). In the case of demolition in Saharanpur, the local authorities claimed that the houses had been constructed without approval by the civic bodies concerned. But Additional Superintendent of Police of Saharanpur Rakesh Kumar had a different take on it when he said the police were taking "strict action" against the accused involved in violence on June 10.

Concerned over what has been called "bulldozer politics," six former judges of the Indian Supreme Court and various High Courts and six senior advocates have appealed to the Supreme Court to take suo motu cognisance of the acts of demolition of the residences of those who protested in Prayagraj against the objectionable remarks made by the former BJP leaders. "Such a brutal clampdown by a ruling administration is an unacceptable subversion of the rule of law and a violation of the rights of citizens and makes a mockery of the constitution and the fundamental rights guaranteed by the state," said the hard-hitting letter. Even assuming that the houses were illegal constructions, the crucial question is: Why act against them now? Secondly, even if they are illegal, there is a well-established legal route of serving notice to the house owners and moving a court of law before demolition.

It is not the first time that the hot heads within the BJP and other Hindutva outfits, like Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal, have made what has come to

be known as "hate" speeches. There have been a number of instances of it in the past; one still remembers the "termites" expression used by Home Minister Amit Shah in describing "illegal" immigrants from Bangladesh to India.

It took the BJP leadership nine whole days to act against the duo – Nupur Sharma was suspended from primary

host government had summoned Indian Ambassador Deepak Mittal and handed him a protest note, said that "these are the views of fringe elements."

Given the robust trade ties India has with Gulf countries and India's dependence on some of them for its oil and gas needs, the reason why the BJP had to act against Sharma and Jindal appears

and in public life, people should exercise utmost restraint in what they do and say in public.

It has been noted that the words "fringe elements" used by the Indian Embassy spokesman in Doha after Mittal was summoned by that country's foreign ministry never found any mention again in any reactions by the MEA on the issue. Implicit in it is the recognition that "fringe" could not be an escape route out of a messy situation.

The BJP in a statement said, "The BJP respects all religions. The BJP strongly denounces insults of any religious personalities of any religion. The BJP is also strongly against any ideology which insults or demeans any sect or religion."

A section in the BJP would like the party's rank and file to view the action against Sharma and Jindal in a much larger context that is evolving in the BJP and its spiritual mentor RSS. According to some Indian media reports quoting an unnamed senior BJP leader, the prime minister has sought to create a narrative of inclusive development through "Sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas" slogan, and the party's role is to build on it and anything that hurts this process would be considered as "indiscipline."

Secondly, going public for the first time on the controversy over the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, RSS head Mohan Bhagwat recently spoke to RSS cadres: "One should not raise a new issue every day. Why escalate fights? In Gyanvapi, our faith has been there for generations. What we are doing is fine. But why look for a Shilving in every mosque? What happens in mosques is also a form of prayer. Okay, it (Islam) has come from outside. But Muslims (in India) who have accepted it are not outsiders, they need to understand this. Even if their prayer is from outside (this country), and they wish to continue with it, we are fine with it. We are not opposed to any form of worship."

What do Bhagwat's remarks mean? Is he signalling that with fresh general elections two years down the line, the Sangh Parivar wants to avoid confrontational politics on the streets on any divisive issue?

When it was in the opposition, the BJP's core Hindutva agenda helped its march to power in India on the back of Ayodhya temple movement and other issues even as the party got the anti-minority tag. There is a feeling in the party that the BJP must live down its image of a "natural party in the opposition" and replace Congress as the "natural party for governance" after the latter's long stint in power.

The full version of this article is available on our website: www.thedailystar.net/views



▲ **The house of a Muslim man in Uttar Pradesh, India is demolished on June 12, 2022 for allegedly being involved in riots that erupted following insulting comments about Prophet Mohammed by India's ruling BJP members, in Prayagraj, India. Authorities claim the house was illegally built.**

PHOTO: REUTERS

more economic than political. Nearly 6.5 million Indians are working in Gulf countries. In 2020-2021, the total value of India's trade with the Gulf countries was worth over USD 87 billion, which included total imports worth nearly USD 60 billion.

Since becoming prime minister for the first time in May 2014, it was Narendra Modi who has taken extra efforts to strengthen ties with West Asian countries. Post-Covid, Modi undertook his first international visit this year by going to the UAE and Kuwait in January. Modi has been a regular visitor to the Gulf region, having visited many of the countries several times in the last eight years. Can his efforts be wasted by "fringe" elements?

The question is: Can the "fringe" be a credible defence against Sharma, who was the BJP's national spokesperson, and Jindal who had been the media in-charge of the party's Delhi unit? No doubt, Sharma and Jindal are ultra-political lightweights in the BJP, but their status as the articulators of the party's views in public cannot be ignored. In politics

membership, and Naveen Kumar Jindal was expelled from the party. Assuming that the disciplinary action taken against Sharma and Jindal was primarily under pressure from Islamic countries, particularly those in the Persian Gulf, one could well question the sincerity of the BJP in cracking down on such elements. In the past, no action was taken against the party leaders who had made inflammatory speeches – some of them were given assembly poll nominations. Why did the BJP wait to act against Sharma and Jindal till it became an international diplomatic issue?

A total of 20 Islamic countries have so far protested against the remarks by Sharma and Jindal, but it is interesting that the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) pushed back against only the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Pakistan. The MEA has said that the controversial remarks do not, in any manner, reflect the views of the government of India. A spokesperson of the Indian Embassy in Qatar, where the

RIGHTS ADVOCACY

Manusher Jonno Foundation's position on the Anti-Discrimination Bill

SHAZZAD KHAN

The quintessence of the Anti-Discrimination Bill clearly states that discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, ethnicity, language, age, gender, place of birth, profession, or untouchability, will no longer go unaddressed.

The fundamental mandate of the Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) is to address the issues of marginality and exclusion in the country. Since 2004, the MJF with support from the UKaid has been working with the Dalit/Harijan community to empower them to claim by themselves their rights and entitlements from the service providers and to have access to all public institutions. Through its work at the grassroots, the MJF has found serious shreds of evidence which suggest that their accessibility to institutions is limited and their position in the society is degraded – resulting in negatively affecting their psychological and livelihood aspects both at present and in future. Therefore, a strong demand has come from the grassroots that there should be a specific law that could protect the Dalit/Harijan from such discrimination and inhuman treatment. Apart from some provisions in the Constitution, as of now, there is no such comprehensive law that can redress discrimination in Bangladesh.

In 2008, under such a scenario, the MJF convened a Dalit conference where representatives from civil society, research institutions, NGOs, Dalit-Harijan organisations and platforms, government officials and legal experts were present. At that conference, the then Joint Secretary of Law Ministry advised that a law should be drafted encompassing the broader canvas of discrimination and guaranteeing freedoms for the marginalised communities facing ill-treatment and discrimination. For doing so, the legal experts opined that we should first mobilise all marginalised communities of the country and identify the nature of discrimination they faced in their lives. Based on such findings, as it was decided, we could draft a law to put before the government.

After the conference, for the next two years, the Rights of the Marginalised theme of the MJF carried out nation-wide extensive consultation, mobilisation, and campaigning through the engagement of the Dalit-Harijan and other marginalised communities. This programme was jointly carried out by more than 15 organisations and platforms working for them. The MJF and its network also engaged National Human Rights Commission and Bangladesh Law Commission to get an anti-discrimination law drafted and adopted by the government.

In drafting the law, similar legal frameworks were consulted including those of India, South Africa, and the UK. Interestingly, there was a consensus that the scope of the law should be broadened, beyond the Dalit-Harijan community, to include all other segments of the society facing systemic discrimination, such as the persons with disabilities, religious and ethnic minorities, sex workers, transgender people, and others.

Afterwards, a comprehensive draft law was submitted to the Law Commission and the MJF subsequently maintained following up the revision and re-revision process. In 2013, the draft law was submitted to the Law Ministry.

After scrutiny, the Law Ministry proposed to bring in some revisions and changes to the draft. Again, in collaboration with the Law Commission, a revised text of the law was submitted to the Law Ministry.

Then the next eight years saw constant advocacy and lobbying with the Law Ministry by the MJF and other leading NGOs including, among others, Nagorik Uddyog, Research Initiative Bangladesh and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust.

Eventually, on 5 April 2022, the honourable Law Minister placed the much-awaited 'Anti-Discrimination Bill, 2022' in the parliament. This was then sent to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs for the review and reporting. Instantly, the MJF collected a copy of the Bill and did a thorough review by its law experts. In the Bill, the MJF found significant laps and gaps. On 17 April 2022, the MJF organised a webinar inviting all members of the aforesaid Parliamentary Standing Committee, civil society actors, grassroots members of marginalised communities and law experts. The MJF presented its analysis of the Bill and then sought others' views. The Chair of the Standing Committee welcomed the move and requested the MJF to send the compiled recommendations given by the MJF as well as the webinar participants. Within days, all the compiled recommendations were sent to all the Standing Committee Members. At present, the MJF has kept lobbying with them, and they have already on principle decided to bring in necessary revisions and changes to the Bill.

The major recommendations to improve the Bill are given below:

(1) The law needs to be re-titled as 'Elimination of Discrimination Act, 2022' instead of 'Anti-Discrimination Act, 2022'. 'Anti' is treated as a sensitive connotation.

(2) The preamble of the Bill should include the references to internationally accepted human rights instruments such as ICCPR (on civil and political rights); ICESCR (on economic, social and cultural rights); CRC (on children rights); CEDAW (on women's rights); CPRD (on disabled people's rights), etc.

(3) Section 2 of the Bill should include separate definitions of all marginalised communities.

(4) Section 3 should clarify (a) for what specific reasons a child may be denied access to school, and (b) which occupation and business are to be deemed illegal.

(5) Section 4 should consider (a) minimising bureaucratic complexities in the structure and formation procedure

of the monitoring committee, (b) incorporating representatives from CSOs and marginalised communities in the monitoring committee, and (c) forming the monitoring committee just after the adoption of the Bill.

(6) Section 9 should ensure a quick trial procedure against any case of discrimination. The section should also make provision for initiating a criminal case on the allegation of discrimination, because without a criminal case, a punishable measure cannot be taken against the person(s) who is/are proved to have committed discrimination under law.

(7) Section 7 should ensure representation from marginalised communities in national and local committees to address the elimination of discrimination.

(8) Strong recommendations were also made in the quick formulation of rules after the adoption of the Bill and wider dissemination of the law.

The quintessence of the Anti-Discrimination Bill clearly

states that discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, ethnicity, language, age, gender, place of birth, profession, or untouchability, will no longer go unaddressed. It further states that citizens cannot be deprived of getting services from government offices, statutory bodies, and non-government organisations, nor can anyone be denied employment because of the above-mentioned identities. However, a law is only one of the tools to ensure rights and entitlements. Therefore, a much stronger commitment must be made to build a discrimination-free, exploitation-free society where everyone has the same right to live in freedom, dignity, and security.

The writer works at Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) focusing on marginalised communities.

LAW LETTER

Paradoxes in the punishment of registration of child marriages

MIJANUR RAHMAN

According to the Child Marriage Restrain Act of 2017, the contracting, allowing, solemnisation and registration of the child marriage a punishable offence. The Act has repealed the previous Act of 1929. The present Act does not invalidate the child marriage, rather impose penalty for such marriage. Section 7 of the Act imposes punishment on the persons for contracting child marriage, while section 8 punishes the parents for allowing child marriage. In addition, section 9 provides penalty for the persons who solemnise or conduct the child marriage. Again, section 11 of the Act makes the registration of the child marriage a punishable offence. The section goes on to say that,

"If any Marriage Registrar registers a child marriage, it shall be an offence, and for this, he shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to 02 (two) years but not less than 06 (six) months, or with fine which may extend to 50 (fifty) thousand Taka, or with both[.]"

Therefore, if the "Marriage Registrar" under the Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act, 1974 registers the child marriage, he/she will be punished with imprisonment which may extend from six months to two years or fine which may extend up to 50 thousand Taka or both.

However, the paradox appears when we read section 3 of the Muslim Marriages and Divorce (Registration) Act of 1974, which states that,

"Notwithstanding anything contained in any law, custom or usage, every marriage solemnised under Muslim law shall be registered in accordance with the provisions of this Act."

The provision



makes it clear that "every marriage" solemnised under "Muslim law" shall be registered. Here, one may raise question whether the term "Muslim law" means statutory laws that regulates the Muslim's family matter or the shariat. If we read it in connection with section 2 of Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937, it clarifies the meaning of Muslim law in section 3 of the Act of 1974 as the Muslim Personal Law or the Shariat. Because, according to this section, the Islamic Sharia Law tends to govern ten matters of Muslim's family that, among others, include the Muslim marriage.

Now, the term "every marriage solemnised under Muslim law" may be interpreted in different ways but every interpretation will include valid marriage solemnised under Muslim law or the Shariat. The Muslim personal law or the Shariat allows child marriage, and it is absolutely valid. At the same time, there is no statutory provisions in Bangladesh that declares child marriage void. Therefore, the term "every marriage solemnised under Muslim law" plausibly includes child marriage too.

In the above circumstances, the Marriage Registrar is bound to register the child marriage under section 3 of the Muslim Marriages and Divorce (Registration) Act, 1974 as the section makes it obligatory with a precise wording, i.e., "shall be registered".

Again, section of 5(4) of the Act of 1974 provides that,

"A person who contravenes any provision of this section commits an offence and he shall be liable to be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years or with fine which may extend to three thousand Taka, or with both."

Therefore, if the Marriage Registrar contravenes section 3 of the Act, that will be an offence under section 5 of the Act. Hence, the person will be punished for the non-registration of the child marriage.

From the above discussion, it is seen that the non-registration of the child marriage is punishable under section 5 of the Muslim Marriages and Divorce (Registration) Act, 1974 whereas the registration of such marriage is punishable under section 11 of the Child Marriage Restrain Act, 2017. That means, the Marriage Registrar is bound to register the child marriage under section 3 of the Act of 1974, and he/she will be punished under section 11 of the Act of 2017 for fulfilling such bindings. The Acts have clear contradiction with each other. So, the government must take initiatives to remove the contradiction between the Acts. Otherwise, the Marriage Registrar will plausibly be punished whether he/she registers or refuses to register the child marriage.

The writer studied law at the Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP).



Representing traditional Bangla music worldwide

Sohini Alam on her musical philosophy

AAQIB HASIB

Sohini Alam, the vocalist of Khiyo—a fusion band of British and Bengali descent that was formed in London, England—recently sat down with me to talk about all things music. Having grown up primarily listening to the Bangladeshi underground scene, I was extremely curious about learning about Khiyo's interpretations of different traditional Bengali songs.

I wanted to start off talking about Khiyo's version of "Amar Sonar Bangla", which had many people talking for days upon its release in 2012. Some see it as the peak of Khiyo, so I wanted to know your opinion about this.

I think we all knew that that would be the peak for the band. Because there's nothing we can do that will ever be of that stature. So, the best thing about that is, once you know you've reached the peak, you can start to relax. So, once we knew that, the pressure was off and so we just continued to make music in our way.

Now, there are a lot of people who have a problem with songs, mostly classical, that are remade or redone in some form of fusion? What would you say to these people?

When we made our songs, we felt that it was an appropriate way to show our love for these classic Bengali songs. The fact that some people found it controversial was a surprise to us as well.

Now, I can only give my perspective on this matter, as I cannot dictate what someone else's perspective should be. I think any time you are not

enjoying a certain type of music, you should just turn it off. I think you should only listen to songs or consume media that makes you happy. In my case, I listen to and make the type of music that represents my existence and journey.

Would you say that your background as a British Bangladeshi has shaped your music in some form?

I'm a third culture individual that was born in the UK, to a family that has been making the music of Bangladesh, in Bangladesh.

Which means that, while I have a great respect for tradition, that's not how I hear this music. I feel that, with every story, if you don't tell your own, somebody else is going to tell it for you. And then if you don't like it, there's nothing you can do about it.

Could you tell me a bit more about Khiyo's upcoming album?

With this new album, half of the songs will be rearrangements of traditional Bengali songs. But then, the other half will be original songs. So this is kind of an evolution for us. The album launch will be at the Rich Mix in London, on July 15, with the international launch taking place on July 22.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

'Want to present the political context of the Agartala Conspiracy'

Amitabh Reza Chowdhury on government grant, '1969'

After "Munshigiri", Amitabh Reza Chowdhury recently received a government grant for his upcoming film "1969". The period drama, which is based on the Agartala Conspiracy, received the highest grant of BDT 75 lakh among the 19 other projects that have also received grants from the government this year. We caught up with the "Aynabaji" famed director to know more about "1969" and his other upcoming projects.

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

In a recent interview, you said that the grant you received will not be enough for this production.

Having evaluated the budget that I need, the grant will only be able to partially fund the production. My estimation says that we need two or three times the amount we have received from the grant for "1969".

As this is a period drama, we cannot compromise on the cinematic depiction of historic events, as such films also function as archives.

I look forward to managing more funds for this production.

You also mentioned that the government is now funding commercial projects. Are you taking this positively?

There has been a change in their strategy, and both positive and negative outcomes are expected from this decision.

Previously, the government used to primarily focus on unorthodox projects. Nevertheless, the grants are also being given to mainstream cinema in recent years.

There are always two sides to a coin. I feel that mainstream productions have the scope to generate revenue. However, the productions may fail to bring about the expected profits.

I am not criticising this step, as they have decided to select around 20 productions instead of 10, for government grants.

Thus, it is not the case that mainstream cinema is sidelining unorthodox projects in this regard.

Why have you chosen to narrate the Agartala Conspiracy case cinematically?

The incident of the Agartala Conspiracy case has been wrongly depicted in our historic archive. I wanted to put forward a more well-researched version of the incident for our audience. I also look to present the political context behind this conspiracy, to help the audience better relate to the course of events around this conspiracy.

We have finished the scripting of the film, and we plan to start pre-production preparation from October of this year. Additionally, we are planning to start shooting from February or March of next year.

What else are you busy with these days?

I am almost done with the pre-production of my Hoichoi original web series, "Bodh". We will start shooting from next week. After this project is finished, I wish to give my full attention to "1969".



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

'Keyamot Theke Keyamot' to be remade

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Sohanur Rahman Sohan directorial "Keyamot Theke Keyamot" was a smash hit when it released on March 20, 1993. Salman Shah and Moushumi were propelled to superstardom for their debut film.

The director recently told the media that he is looking to remake the film with new faces. Sohan said that he has been looking for young faces that can emulate the superb performances by Moushumi and Salman Shah.

Next year, which marks 3 decades of "Keyamot Theke Keyamot", will see the release of the remake, according to the director.

The original film itself was a remake of Aamir Khan and Juhi Chawla starrer "Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak".



Shahidul Alam's retrospective exhibition starts in Kolkata today

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

"Singed but not burnt" an exhibition on the works of Shahidul Alam, which is curated by Ina Puri, will be starting today, June 18. The exhibition will be taking place at Emami Art at the Kolkata Centre for Creativity for a month before moving to other Indian cities.

The retrospective exhibition will be covering the photographer's 40-year long career. A total of 80 photographs will be showcased at the exhibition, covering Alam's work from his earliest archives to his most recent work. Apart from Alam's photographs, there will also be vignettes from his life and other rare visuals, alongside models created by his niece Sofia Karim.

The exhibition will run from June 18 till August 20. The exhibition will be available at Kolkata for a month.



Star

DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 18, 2022, ASHAR 4, 1429 BS

SPORT

"2026 will be much, much bigger. I think this part of the world doesn't realise what will happen in 2026. These three countries will be turned upside down and then flipped again. The world will be invading Canada, Mexico and the United States. They will be invaded by a big wave of joy and happiness."

FIFA president Gianni Infantino



Nadal intends to play at Wimbledon

AFP, Palma

Spanish tennis legend Rafael Nadal said on Friday he intends to play at Wimbledon but his final decision rests on how his troublesome left foot feels after training in London next week.

"My intention is to play at Wimbledon," Nadal said at a press conference in Mallorca. "The treatment and the last week of training tells me there is a chance. I will travel to London on Monday, play an exhibition and do a week of training to see if it's possible."

Nadal said injections meant his left foot felt "asleep" during the French Open final on June 5 -- he still beat Casper Ruud to claim a record-extending 22nd Grand Slam title.

Nadal travelled to Barcelona last week to begin "pulsed



radiofrequency stimulation", a treatment aimed at reducing nerve pain. Nadal's spokesperson said the treatment would leave the nerves in his foot "temporarily numb".

"I'm happy. I've felt a bit of pain, but it's different to what I had before, which for me is progress."

Nadal has won Wimbledon twice in his career, in 2008 and 2010 but is hoping to make his first appearance at the All England Club in three years.

"I will travel to London, play two matches there before the tournament and follow my normal schedule to prepare for Wimbledon," Nadal said.

"Who knows what can happen in a couple of days -- if the situation changes or something more negative (happens), there will be a moment to explain.

"But I am excited to travel to Wimbledon and to play for the first time in three years."

He said his plan is to "play Wimbledon, rest, then Canada and then the US Open."



Bangladesh had another frustrating day as catches were not accepted and reviews not taken during the second day of the first Test against West Indies at the Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua and Barbuda on Friday. PHOTO: AFP

Missed opportunities pose further setback

SPORTS REPORTER

Skipper Shakib Al Hasan had said that it appeared the conditions were getting better for batting after the first day in Antigua and, from the evidence of the first session and the opening exchanges of the second session, the conditions for batting had definitely improved.

That meant more misery heaped on Bangladesh after their batting debacle on the first day. The pitch had posed questions in the early morning on Day One but, as so often has been the case, Bangladesh crumbled when faced with a slightly steep challenge.

The patches of grass that allowed a few deliveries to rise a few inches higher than they would under normal circumstances created great distress for the Tigers but the Windies batters continued to toil on the second day just they had done the day before. Patience and application was key.

There were instances that the ball gained on batters, such as with skipper Kraigg Brathwaite. But he would immediately drop his right hand off the handle and play with a soft touch.

Thus, whenever the bounced was greater than anticipated, batters were able to survive. Shakib Al Hasan got the only

wicket of the first session yesterday but unsurprisingly, the pace bowlers remained wicketless, albeit not for lack of trying. Just as they had kept a tight leash on Windies on the first day, they came back and created opportunities.

The lack of readiness for the format also told. In just the fourth over of the day, Ebadot Hossain tested Nkrumah Bonner with a few sizzling deliveries. Then, with the last ball of that over, he found the gloves of the wicketkeeper again. There were oohs and aahs but no real appeals. Replays later showed the ball took the outside edge.

Khaled Ahmed then got one to jump from a good length that undid Bonner. The outside edge split the gap between wicketkeeper and first slip but neither moved towards the ball. Mahmudul Hasan Joy, at leg slip, did not keep low enough when Brathwaite provided an opportunity and another chance went begging. In the second session, the collective shoulders dropped.

The situation once again portrayed the importance of getting into a positive frame of mind, especially in the first innings but the Tigers' tale in that regard has been sorrowful of late.

They were bundled out for 150 or below

in the first innings on seven occasions since 2018. No surprise that they lost those games by big margins.

Since 2018, those first-innings failures have also seen the Tigers lose 19 of the 28 Test matches prior to the first Test against the West Indies. In that time, they have won six and managed to draw three.

Of those 28 matches, eight have resulted in innings defeats, which included an innings and 219-run defeat against the West Indies in Antigua in 2018.

The Tigers' peak in Test cricket was the win over New Zealand at Mount Maunganui, where they showed a Test process for once during a first innings haul of 458.

That innings had seen a surge in positivity, not with aggression but relentlessly. They do not have to look too far, Brathwaite missed out on a ton, out for 94 when Khaled's delivery kept a little low in the second session. Brathwaite had however set his side up by playing 268 deliveries.

Taking lessons to improve from their disastrous showing in the first innings is never lacking. Something extraordinary will be required in the second innings or they will end up following in the footsteps of their past failures.

Karthik, Avesh help India level T20 series

AFP, Rajkot

Dinesh Karthik's blazing half-century and four wickets by Avesh Khan led India to a series-leveling 82-run victory over South Africa in the fourth Twenty20 international on Friday.

Karthik smashed 55 off 27 deliveries to guide India to 169-6, a total their bowlers defended by dismissing South Africa for 87 and level the five-match series at 2-2 in Rajkot.

The Proteas slipped to their lowest ever T20 total, two lower than their 89 all-out against Australia at Johannesburg in 2020.

Avesh returned his T20 best figures of 4-18 as the hosts in Rajkot defended their total with ease for the second time in a row with the series decider on Sunday in Bangalore.

The in-form Karthik set up the crushing victory with his maiden T20 fifty to lift India from a precarious 81-4 in the 13th over to take the attack to the opposition.

He put on a crucial 65-run stand with Hardik Pandya, who hit 46 off 31 deliveries. He smashed nine fours and two sixes as he surpassed his previous best of 48 to make India plunder 73 runs from the final five overs.



BFF shifts FIFA friendlies to Dhaka

STAR SPORTS REPORT

Considering the ongoing flood crisis in Sylhet, the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has shifted the women's national team's two FIFA friendlies from Sylhet to Dhaka after Sylhet District Association expressed their helplessness to prepare the ground amid the alarming situation.



The booters are scheduled to play two FIFA tier-1 matches against their Malaysian counterparts on June 23 and 26.

Mohiuddin Selim, secretary of Sylhet DSA and executive member of the BFF, had let the football federation know about their incapability to prepare the practice ground as well as the competition ground for the FIFA friendlies. Also, the Bangladesh Premier League's tie between hosts Rahmatganj MFS and Bashundhara Kings, slated for June 20 at Sylhet Stadium was deferred by a day and shifted to Munshiganj.

England hit record score to crush Netherlands

REUTERS

England broke their own world record for the highest team total in one-day international (ODI) history after they smashed 498-4 in 50 overs against a hapless Netherlands side to win a one-sided contest by 232 runs in Amstelveen on Friday.

Jos Buttler, Dawid Malan and Phil Salt notched up centuries while Liam Livingstone walked into bat in the 45th over and scored England's fastest ODI fifty as they eclipsed their previous record of 481 against Australia in 2018.

Malan (125) and Salt (122) laid the foundation for England's record score with a 222-run partnership before Buttler (162 not out off 70 balls) came in and accelerated the scoring in what was a brutal onslaught on the Dutch bowlers.

Buttler, who top scored in the Indian Premier League (IPL) this season with 863 runs, continued where he left off, smashing seven

fours and clearing the ropes 14 times after he was let off twice by poor Dutch fielding early in his innings.

"It certainly feels like I'm in the form of my life. The IPL couldn't have gone much better for me so I was feeling in good touch coming here," Buttler said after he was named the man of the match.

"It was a really good wicket, we got off to a good start and that gave me the licence to really attack." Buttler brought up his century in just 47 balls, the second-fastest in England history and one ball shy of his own record.

Needing to score at an eye-watering 10 per over to win, the Dutch side barely managed to score at half the required run rate before they were bowled out for 266, with Moeen Ali picking up three wickets.

"Getting Jason Roy out (in the second over) was a good moment," Dutch skipper Pieter Seelaar said. "But dropping those catches... (you

can't drop the best batsman in the world twice in an over. In that we let ourselves down."

As England continued dealing in sixes, some of which landed in the trees and bushes lining the ground, there was even a moment where the Dutch players had to help the ground staff search for the ball.

Livingstone, who reached his fifty in 17 balls, finished unbeaten on 66 off just 22 deliveries.

England now have the three highest scores in ODI history, having also scored 444 against Pakistan in 2016.

"It's great learning, this will make us better cricketers in the future," Seelaar added. "The intimidation was there, the Barmy Army was loud, we have to pull ourselves together and come back on Sunday."

England's second string side play two more ODIs against the Netherlands on Sunday and Wednesday.





“The forward has to know how to do a lot of things, not only score goals. I can score a goal, but if I don’t touch the ball in 90 minutes, that’s a problem.”

KARIM BENZEMA



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

‘I JUST THANK GOD WHEN I GET A GOAL’

Before coming to Bangladesh after signing for Chittagong Abahani, Nigerian forward Peter Thankgod Ebimobowe had played in Nigeria, Egypt, Cyprus, Qatar and Oman, learning his trade as a striker. In the Bangladesh Premier League, the 28-year-old has been prolific, accounting for nearly 60 per cent of port city outfit’s 28 goals. The tall marksman’s 16 goals from 15 matches see him top the goal-getter’s list. The Nigerian revealed how he honed his goal-scoring abilities, his impression of Bangladesh and football in the nation and many other topics in an interview with The Daily Star’s Anisur Rahman.

The Daily Star (DS): What was your first impression of Bangladesh?
Peter Thankgod (PT): My first impression was not bad. I learned a lot after coming here. I see some differences. The road management is different, but people here are good and friendly and have different lifestyles. What I have seen here is good.
DS: You scored one goal apiece in the Independence Cup and Federation Cup, before hitting your stride in the league. What is the secret behind your goal-scoring prowess?
PT: When I came here and played in the Independence Cup and Federation Cup, I tried to adapt to the system. In the league, I read how they play and rest. But there is no particular secret. As a striker, when the opportunity comes, you have to put the ball into the back of the net. I have just been putting the ball in the back of the net. That’s what I am doing as a striker. There is no secret.
DS: It can be tough to score in any football match, but you do it easily almost every time. Did you go through any special training to hone your goal-scoring abilities?
PT: Yes, people say it is most difficult to put the ball into the back of the net. It is very, very difficult. My name is Thankgod, so I just give thanks to God when I get a goal. Sometimes I miss, but in a game the opportunity will come. If you are in the right position, you will be able to put the ball in the back of the net. When I started playing football in Nigeria, I became top scorer. Then I was signed by Al Ahly of Egypt, the biggest club in Africa. Later in



Nigeria, one coach gave me extra training. He told me I needed extra training because I needed to develop my hold-up play in the box. He also trained me to meet crosses with my head and legs so that made me concentrate more on the box to score goals.
DS: You are now the BPL’s top scorer with 16 goals. How confident are you that you will stay on top at the end of the league?
PT: There may be two other players in the race but I don’t want to see others. I just want to play in the rest of matches and I believe I will be the top scorer at the end of the league.
DS: With only seven league matches left, how many more goals do you want to score?
PT: Only Allah give goals. I can’t speak about what I don’t know and what I can’t see. But as a striker, I just want to keep

doing my best. And hopefully goals will come.
DS: You have been scoring regularly but Chittagong Abahani are fifth in the table. Do you have any regrets?
PT: I don’t feel any regret. I have been doing what a player does on the field and I feel proud to be a player of Chittagong Abahani.
DS: How would you assess the Bangladesh Premier League?
PT: I played in the Egyptian Premier League, which is a more competitive and tough. It is the same in Cyprus. Then I went to Oman and Qatar, where the games are more intense. Whenever you get the ball, someone is close to you. Those aspects are different, but the league in Bangladesh is good. The people play good football but the intensity is not like that. However, the games are competitive. A match you might think is easier turns out to be tougher, so football is really competitive here.
DS: Are the club facilities in Bangladesh standard for a professional football league?
PT: The league is good but you need some good pitches. You need more funds to share with every team. The beauty of football is when you see people coming and shouting in the field.
DS: How do you rate Bangladeshi footballers?
PT: I played against some good players. There are some good players in Dhaka Abahani and a few other clubs. I think the national coach knows the best of all. I can’t speak about all the players, but I saw some good players here.

Training the key to Robinho’s success

ANISUR RAHMAN

Robson Robinho was one of the major architects behind Bashundhara Kings’ domestic double in his debut season in Bangladesh football, scoring 24 goals. This year, too, the Brazilian forward is leading the side from front, having scored 11 goals in 15 matches to stay in third position in the, five behind top-scorer Peter Thankgod of Chittagong Abahani.
 While Robson would love to finish as the top-scorer again, Robson is more focused on helping his team win the league title after missing out on the other two domestic trophies as well as a disappointing AFC Cup campaign.
 “Of course, I would like to be the top scorer in the league again, but first focus is to be champions and then I can think about the top-scorer,” Robson recently told The Daily Star. “We will put our full focus on the league and we will continue our work game by game, this is how we can win the title.”
 “There’s no secret for me in helping the team getting goals. I always train a lot so that in the game I can do what I do in training,” said the forward, adding, “As I always said we have the best local players in the country and with the work of the coaches, we were able to have a good first phase of the league.”
 It is believed that the intensity of the Bangladesh premier league matches is less than some of the other top leagues in the region, a reason why the Bangladeshi players fail to keep up against opposition teams in international matches.
 “International competition is much more intense than [Bangladesh] league matches because in league we lose a lot of game time, and in international competition the ball is always on the field and players do not take too long to charge the full back or the goalkeeper taking the time to kick the ball,” observed Robinho.



Beneath the surface of local strikers’ struggles

“I have always said that scoring a goal is the best feeling in the world,” legendary English striker Alan Shearer once said. In football, where goals decide destinies, it is a striker’s role to deliver balls to the back of the net. Strikers often lead attacks, celebrate in flamboyant fashion and are the ‘face’ of their team. Although football is a team sport, no position is as respected as that of a goal-scorer. Ask any child what position they want to play, and they are likely to reply: “STRIKER!”. But what does it take to be a striker? Many say confidence, technical ability, awareness, composure, movement on and off the ball, communication and discipline shape what ultimately is known as a striker’s killer instinct. To grow such instincts, it is often said that a great foundation is a pre-requisite. From Bangladesh’s perspective, however, the nation has suffered on the international stage in the past decades due to the absence of instinctive strikers Alfaz Ahmed – one of the last Bangladeshis that belonged to that breed of strikers alongside contemporaries like Rokonzaman Kanchan, Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib and others – shared his concerns regarding the scarcity of lethal finishers in Bangladesh in an interview with The Daily Star’s Ashfaq Ul Mushfiq. The excerpts are below:

The Daily Star (DS): What are your thoughts on Bangladesh’s recent performances in the Asian Cup Qualifiers?
Alfaz Ahmed (AA): The difference in the standard of football was clear. They are ahead of us in many aspects of the game. Bangladesh football has seen a lot of change off the pitch in recent times. For instance, changes to coaches and the squad. So they are having a tough time adjusting to the process. Although there were some glimpses of good football, our finishing totally let us down.
DS: Speaking of finishing, we saw some great goal-scoring Bangladeshis during your era at both club and national level. But nowadays we see foreigners dominate at the club level while local strikers warm the bench. Why is that happening?
AA: I think it has to do with the mentality of club authorities. You won’t see them bringing foreign players for positions other than striker. There are clubs that bring more than one foreign striker and derive locals of opportunity and game-time. When young strikers do well at age-level, they get called to professional clubs. But



after making it that far, they don’t get opportunities or game time because clubs prefer to play foreigners.
DS: Is that because of a disparity in skill?
AA: If a player is not getting game time, how can you expect him to gain skills? Sure, you can shoot a ball into the net 100 times in practice. But if you don’t have the experience of scoring for your team in a difficult scenario, how will you be prepared for higher levels and the national team? Being a striker doesn’t only mean knowing how to shoot on target, but also having game awareness, movement on and off the ball, positioning, first touch and great understanding with your teammates. But if opportunities are not afforded, how will a striker gain such qualities? As we can see,

most national-team strikers are acquired by big clubs like Bashundhara Kings and Abahani. But those clubs play their foreign strikers more often in the league. So you see foreign strikers topping the goal-scoring charts every year. If local strikers are not gaining experience at the club level, can we keep asking why they fail to score for the national team?
DS: Given the current situation, what should a striker do to become better?
AA: I think strikers should work on a lot of mental aspects. There are multiple issues. First, there are many strikers who change their positions just because they don’t get enough game time up front. But severing the head is not a solution for a headache. A striker should

work hard and fight for his place on the team. You can only get better if you compete with someone better than you. If you think foreign strikers are better, you should try your best to outdo them. If you need game time, go to a smaller club, work hard, get more game time and score more goals. That will not only give you confidence, but you will also gain more experience as a striker and hone that goal-scoring instinct. If you’re happy sitting on the bench at a big club, you will never improve as a striker.
DS: You’re currently coaching at an academy. What do you teach the kids who aspire to be strikers?
AA: A good foundation is very important at every position. Whether someone wants to be a striker or a midfielder, fundamentals are very important. Things such as those I’ve mentioned earlier – game awareness, movement on and off the ball, positioning and first touch – should be taught to strikers during their developmental stage. It’s not just in my academy, there are many academies around the country with licensed coaches that produce great strikers.
 That may sound promising for the future, but there is a big gap. There are a lot of tournaments held every year for Under-14 and U-17 teams. Those who do well in the U-14s are promoted and do well in the U-17s and at both club and district level. But you hardly see U-19 or U-21 tournaments, which is a crucial stage when any footballer develops for the elite level. Due to this gap, many footballers drop out. And those who make it in professional clubs fall behind foreign strikers. Football is also very Dhaka-centric at the league level, so many aspiring players from outside the capital miss out on opportunities.
DS: So what could the process of solving Bangladesh’s goal-scoring conundrum look like in the long run?
AA: See, the lack of strikers has created another problem. Those who are currently in the national team have started to take their positions for granted because of a lack of competition for places. This sort of mentality will only destroy a player in the long run. Back in our day, there was intense competition for the national team’s No. 9 position. There were players like Nakib, Mijanur Rahman and Rokonzaman Kanchan alongside me and we used to work hard all the time for a place in the starting eleven. This sort of mentality is missing today.

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JCC MEET IN DELHI Dhaka to focus on duty waiver, water sharing

PORIMOL PALMA

Dhaka will be focusing on water sharing, waiver of anti-dumping duty on jute and energy security during the foreign minister-level Joint Consultative Commission meeting scheduled in Delhi tomorrow.

The 7th JCC will also discuss regional cooperation, especially the connectivity projects linking different parts of India via Bangladesh, as well as connect South Asia to Southeast Asian region, said officials concerned.

The meeting that will be led by Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen from Bangladeshi side and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar from Indian side will also discuss the schedule of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India later this year. Momen today leaves for Delhi.

The JCC meeting was scheduled for May 30 in Guwahati, Assam, just after the River Conclave, but was rescheduled. "In the last months, secretary-level meetings of ministries of water, home, commerce and railways were held, and the JCC will discuss all the bilateral issues, see the progress and decide the next course of action," said an official at the Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi.

WATER SHARING

Transboundary river management is a crucial issue for Bangladesh as the two countries share 54 common rivers. The Teesta water-sharing deal could not be signed despite all preparations in 2011 due to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's opposition.

The two countries then were discussing an agreement

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



This aerial view shows the destroyed Community Art Center following a strike in the city of Lysychansk, in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

A gesture of friendship

Hasina sends a tonne of mangoes to Indian president, PM as gift

DIPLMATIC CORRESPONDENT

As a gesture of friendly relations, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sent one tonne of Amrapali mangoes to Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a gift.

The fruit was sent to the residences of India's president and prime minister through diplomatic channel yesterday, Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi said in a statement.

Last year, Hasina sent Haribhanga mango, mostly grown in Rangpur, as a gift to Modi and the chief ministers of West Bengal, Tripura and Assam.

The relationship between Bangladesh and India has rendered a new height and the "Mango & Hilsa diplomacy" is making the ties more gratifying, said the statement.

This is the prime season of various fruits in Bangladesh that grows

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Sanctions on Rab won't damage US-Bangladesh ties

Says Peter Haas

DIPLMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas has said the sanctions on Rab will not damage the bilateral relationship and that the two countries, which have deep ties, will move on and work together based on shared values of democracy and human rights.

"...A lot of people ask me if I think this will damage our bilateral relations. And I just say, I don't think it has to," he said in a talk show titled AmTalk. Video of the event was uploaded to the embassy's Facebook page last evening.

The envoy said there are frictions in the relationship. "And that's okay when you have a relationship as broad and deep as ours. But what I want to see us do both on Rab and every other aspect is to sit down and to talk about... what do we need to do to resolve this issue."

Last year, Washington imposed sanctions on Rab and some of its current and former officials.

Haas said his country heard a lot of times how Bangladesh was surprised when the US imposed sanctions.

"And maybe we're almost surprised they're surprised. Because already in 2018, we stopped providing training to the Rab, because of our concerns on human rights. For several years, we've published in our human rights

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7



EU backs Ukraine's 'European dream'

Zelensky welcomes the bloc's 'historic decision'; Russia responds with scorn, cuts back gas supplies to West

AGENCIES

Europe sent a powerful symbol of solidarity with Ukraine yesterday, when Brussels backed Kyiv's bid for EU candidate status, even as Russia shelled frontline Ukrainian cities and cut back gas supplies to the West.

With the European Commission's backing, Ukraine could now be added to the list of countries vying for EU membership as early as next week, when member state leaders meet at their Brussels summit.

All 27 EU leaders will have to agree to the candidacy, but the heads of the European Union's biggest members -- France, Germany and Italy -- already gave their full-throated support to the idea on Thursday, on a trip to a war-torn suburb of Kyiv.

Then yesterday, the European Commission gave the executive's

formal backing to the bid, and EU chief Ursula von der Leyen made her position clear by donning a striking jacket in Ukraine's national colours.

"We all know that Ukrainians are ready to die for the European perspective. We want them to live with us for the European dream," she said.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky immediately welcomed the decision as a "first step on the EU membership path that'll certainly bring our victory closer".

He thanked von der Leyen for the commission's "historic decision" and said he expected that EU leaders would give Ukraine a "positive result" at the June 23 to 24 summit.

Russia responded to Brussels' decision with scorn, accusing the West of "manipulating" Ukraine with promises of integration.

Foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Ukraine "is not getting a bright future, for some reason, despite the promises becoming more and more sweet and alluring".

President Putin told the St Petersburg International Economic Forum that the real interest of people in Europe are being sidelined after Ukraine moved a step closer to EU membership.

He denounced the EU and the US, adding that Russia's economy will withstand their sanctions.

Once Ukraine joins the EU candidates' list -- alongside several countries in the western Balkans -- it could still take years to meet all the formal membership requirements, even if Kyiv prevails in the war.

"Yes, Ukraine should be welcomed as a candidate

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Astronomers find new planetary system near Earth

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



Astronomers have found a new multiplanetary system just 33 light-years from our own planet.

The system, now the closest known one to Earth, has two terrestrial planets orbiting a cool M-dwarf star, named HD 260655.

The inner planet, HD 260655b, orbits the star every 2.8 days and is about 1.2 times as big as the Earth but is slightly denser, while the outer planet, HD 260655c, orbits every 5.7 days and is 1.5 times as big as the Earth, but is less dense.

These planets are, unfortunately, not habitable; the planets orbit their star at too close a range, exposing them to temperatures too high to maintain liquid water on their surfaces. Based on their short orbits, it is estimated that the surface of the inner planet is 436 degrees Celsius, while the outer planet is around 286 degrees Celsius.

"We consider that range outside the habitable zone, too hot for liquid water to exist on the surface," Michelle Kunimoto, a postdoc in MIT's Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research and one of the discovery's lead scientists, says.

TECHNICAL GLITCH Biman plane makes emergency landing

Probe opens over Boeing 787's collision with boarding bridge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka-bound domestic flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines yesterday made an emergency landing at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport due to technical glitch in its main landing gear.

Passengers of the flight of the Dash-8 aircraft were unhurt, said airport sources.

Meanwhile, the Biman authorities yesterday formed a two-member investigation committee following a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner's collision with the boarding bridge at the airport on Thursday.

DASH-8

Sharmin Sultana, a resident of the capital's Uttara who was on the Dash-8 aircraft, told The Daily Star that the flight was scheduled to leave Barisal Airport at 12:15pm yesterday, but it left for Dhaka at 1:30pm due to torrential rain.

She added that the aircraft hovered in the Dhaka sky for over half an hour before making an emergency landing at HISA around 2:30pm.

Sharmin added that after landing the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Lightning kills nine in two districts

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Mymensingh

Nine people, including three children, died in two districts after being struck by lightning yesterday.

In Mymensingh's Nandail upazila, Abu Sayeed, 12, Swadhin Mia, 10, and Sawon Mia, 8, were hit by lightning around 1:00pm, said police.

All three of them were students of a Baroigram Hafezia Madrasa at Pongkarhati village.

They were playing football at a playground when the lightning hit them, said Mizanur Rahman Akanda, officer-in-charge of Nandail Police Station.

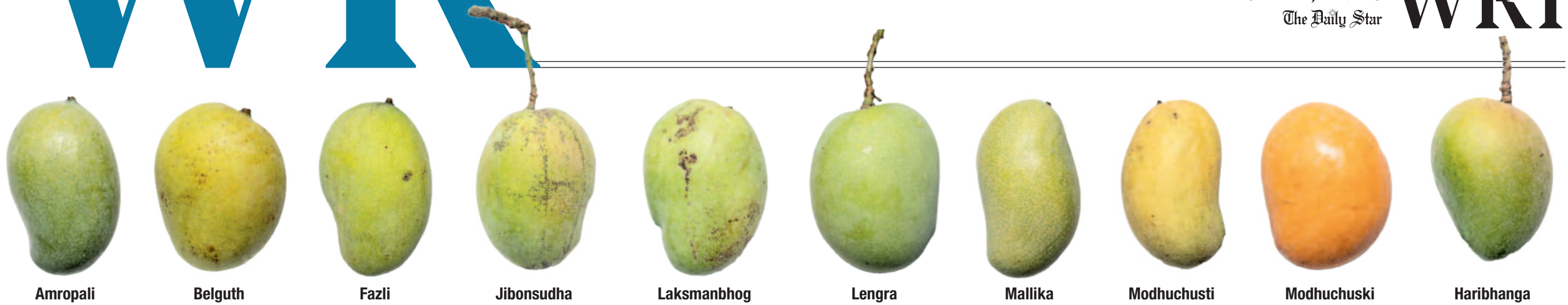
Locals rushed them to Nandail Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared them dead, said the OC.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



A tangle of electrical cables next to a shed in the capital's Korail slum. Hundreds of these wires snake through the slum, posing fire risks as most of the connections are illegal and therefore not installed following the proper procedures. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



More to mango than the himsagar 300 varieties and counting

The Totapuri mango, for example, is named for its light green colour and a pointed bottom, reminiscent of a parrot's beak. The Golapbhash, on the other hand, is so fragrant that it is compared to a rose.

SANIA AIMAN

Small, fragrant and completely yellow when ripe, the Ranipasand mango was named such after being excessively liked by a visiting British royal during the colonial time, local Chapai Nawabganj folklore says. It is but one delicious mango, and a rather obscure one at that, of the hundreds of varieties of mango that the north-western region in of Rajshahi and Rangpur Bangladesh produce abundantly every summer.

The Ranipasand is a delicate fruit, with a smooth skin and soft flesh, small enough to fit two of them in one palm.

As soon as summer arrives, the wait for mangoes to ripen begins, and the early varieties usually start surfacing in the markets from mid-May.

This year mango output has been less than projected because of unexpected rain

conditions and a prolonged winter, as the relatively slower pace of the Kansat and Baneshwar wholesale hubs prove. However, even in those markets, host of visibly different mangoes are offered to buyers as being the famous Haribhanga, Khirsapat, Himsagar, Lengra and such, with baskets and crates and trucks of mangoes arriving and being sold daily, and farmers and businessmen are happy with the demand

and prices.

Love for mangoes is fairly widespread in Bangladesh, yet many avid enthusiasts remain unfamiliar with the sheer variety of this fruit as the more celebrated varieties dominate the public psyche. But, Bangladeshi mangoes have much more to offer as nearly 300 varieties are produced in Rajshahi region alone, which

holds its ground as the traditional mango hub of Bangladesh and produces about two-thirds of the country's mango output.

Some of the areas producing the finest mangoes viz Chapai Nawabganj, Rajshahi, Naogaon, Natore are expected to produce around 4.6 lakh tonnes of mangoes this season, and that is not even counting the production from other large producers like Rangpur and Satkhira.

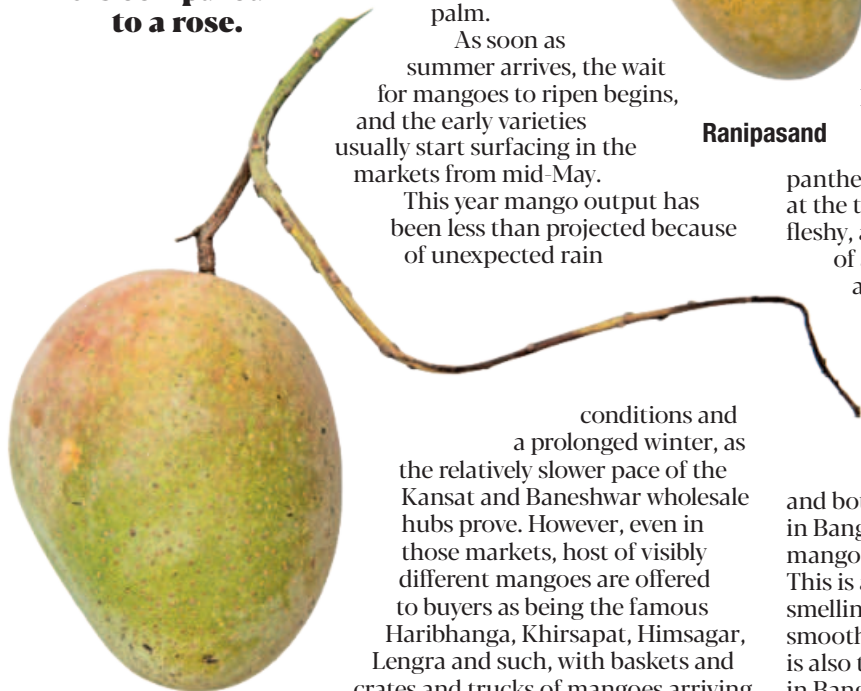
Amongst the earliest varieties and one of the stars of the mango pantheon is the Gopalbhog, a rounded at the top variety that is medium-sized, fleshy, and smooth textured. The skin of a ripe Gopalbhog is a bit thick and remains greenish around the bottom and appears yellow near the top when ripe.

The most popular and beloved variety of mango is commonly known as the Himsagar, but in Rajshahi it is known as the Khirsapat, and both are thus one and the same in Bangladesh, said Md Habib Al Sadi, mango orchard owner and businessman. This is a really fragrant, deeply sweet smelling medium sized variety with a very smooth and light flesh and a flat seed. It is also the second most cultivated variety in Bangladesh and a GI tagged product of Chapai Nawabganj.

The most famous variety that arrives



Ranipasand



Rajmohon



Khirsapat Heemsagar

PHOTOS: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

It is very usual to find as many as 40 or more varieties of mangoes growing in the same garden, and the farmers and workers are keenly aware of each tree and its fruit.

mid-June is the Lengra, variants of which are also cultivated commercially in India and Pakistan. An average Lengra mango is about 300g, yellow tinted and is known for its sweet taste with a very slight sour after-taste. Interestingly, another contemporary variety called the Lakhanbhog is locally called the "diabetes mango," as it is a tasty but lightly sweet variety, thus presumably "better for diabetics." There is no medical advice behind this, just local assumption. Fazli is the king of mango in terms of sheer size of individual specimen. Very few mangoes can get as huge as Fazlis do normally, and each piece can be a full kilogram!

It is very usual to find as many as 40 or more varieties of mangoes growing in the same garden, and the farmers and workers are keenly aware of each tree and its fruit. The exotic sounding

names include Gourmati, Mallika, Chonsa, Modhuchuski, Rajbhog, Kohitur, Jibonsudha, Misrikanto, Bhogla, Surmai, Misribhog, Jhinuk Ashwina, and many more.

The Totapuri mango, for example, is named for its light green colour and a pointed bottom, reminiscent of a parrot's beak. The Golapbhash, on the other hand, is so fragrant that it is compared to a rose. One variety known as Bou Shundori, which literally translates to "beautiful wife," is a large sized elongated and fleshy mango variety with a red top and yellow bottom. Despite its fancy name and beauty, it is not popular for direct

consumption as it is not as tasty as the other variants, and is more suitable for making secondary mango flavoured products like juices and such. The Baishakhi is called such as it matures really early, and the Batasha is really sweet and light.

Rajmohon, a recently named variant of mango which was earlier considered a nameless local type, which are collectively called "guthi," is one example of many that the general people remain unaware of, said Anwarul Hoque, an ex-forest officer and an enthusiastic mango researcher, who named the variety. He has christened another tiny variant as Modhuchuski, as these mangoes are small like chocolates or candy, and equally sweet. Hoque feels that there are many such varieties that need to be nurtured consciously, to add to the variety and richness of the mango industry. The Gourmati, erstwhile considered a guthi, now sells for up to Tk 400 per kg, as it is a delicious but late harvest and ripens after most other mangoes are already finished for the season.

Mango bonanza of Kansat wholesale market



Whether you are looking for Himsagar, Amropali, Fazli, Lengra, Haribhanga or Ashwini mangoes, Kansat bazaar can offer them all. "The star here is Khirshipat aam."

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

During fruit harvesting season, if you are looking for mangoes for consumption or business, Kansat is the ultimate place to be. The Kansat mango market at Chapai Nawabganj is renowned as the largest mango bazaar in Bangladesh and like all bazaars, there's madness here, but there's also distinct method to it.

The Bazaar

Activities start as early as 7AM. The farmers pick mangoes directly from the trees very early in the morning, pack in bamboo baskets or plastic crates and bring them in the bazaar on cycle vans and motor vans.

A continuous stream of vehicles carrying baskets will greet the approaching visitor, and pan out into a large field of the haat, which once was a courtyard of a grand home of a zamindar, now derelict and in ruins.

The main bazaar is an open space that plays host to hundreds of cycle vans carrying baskets of mangoes lined up so

densely that it's difficult to walk.

The two baskets balanced on two sides of each cycle easily carry an astounding 200 kg each.

The mangoes come in all shapes and sizes and the sweet aroma of the fruit wafts through the whole market. The farmers here only pick fresh mangoes matured on the bough. As a result, the market turns all shades of green and yellow with dashes of red of ripe mangoes. It is a sight full of promise for any mango connoisseur.

How it goes
Bamboo baskets carry about 100 kgs of mangoes and each crate carries around 20/30 kgs. For each successful sale, the farmers are required to pay a toll, known as 'khajna', at the end of the day — Tk 25 for each basket and Tk 6 for each crate sold.

The selling of mango here is quite a spectacle too. People come here from all over the country and the market hosts the sellers who are both producers and dealers. The transaction begins with inquiries of the mango's origin, or



location of the garden. Then comes the bargaining: offers and counter offers and the conversation gets loud and enthusiastic quickly.

People from other cities usually come here in numbers, and each seller usually has a helping hand with them. As a result, a lot of the bargaining become passionate group encounters. Interestingly, the conversation is loud but not heated and every bargaining draws a crowd.

The surroundings

The sea of mangoes is bordered on the sides with warehouses. The warehouses (aarat) play the role of third party between the farmers and businessmen from across the country.

While the market is buzzing with buyers and sellers looking for a good deal, the warehouses are busy with packing and loading the mangoes.

compete with Himsagar.

As Kansat is a wholesale market, one has to buy a minimum of 1 maund mangoes if they were to purchase. "Every day I buy at least 40 maunds of mangoes from here and send it to Dhaka, where I have a business. Sometimes the quantity is larger, depending on the demand in Dhaka. I usually end up staying here



for the two/three months of mango harvesting. I've been doing this for the past nine years," said one Md Rubel, a wholesale fruit supplier of Dhaka's Malibagh.

"I come here because the mango here is really good, supply is plentiful, and the good quality mango means that my business in Dhaka will be doing well. Every day I do a business of Tk 80-100,000 here," he added.

However, the locals are not happy this year because Kansat bazaar is seeing about half its usual sales. "It's terrible. There's supposed to be at least twice as many mangoes, twice as many vans and twice as many people. This place becomes so full of mangoes that it becomes difficult to find an empty space to stand, but this year the production is lower than expected. We are missing at least 40 percent in volume," said Md Tia Alam a local mango dealer.

The change in weather and rainfall has affected the production this year and the farmers are suffering because of it. Untimely rain affects the taste, quality and harvesting time of mangoes and if similar weather follows, the Kansat market will lose its appeal in the future.

PHOTOS: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

There's supposed to be at least twice as many mangoes, twice as many vans and twice as many people. This place becomes so full of mangoes that it becomes difficult to find an empty space to stand, but this year the production is lower than expected.



If you watch closely, you will find that often a single mango is sent to the warehouses with a few words scribbled on it. The writings are made with pen and explain details of a mango dealing such as name of the warehouse, selling price and quantity, essentially a receipt. This is an accepted practice around here, along with the fact that one maund comprises of 50 kgs instead of the usual 40.

The mango business

Whether you are looking for Himsagar, Amropali, Fazli, Lengra, Haribhanga or Ashwini mangoes, Kansat bazaar can offer them all. "The star here is Khirshipat aam. It's known as Himsagar in the cities," said Md Sahabuddin, a mango farmer who promises that no other mangoes could

From the Shores of the Lethe

Keeping aside all the big political and civil issues, is there really no need for supervision, and are we really happy munching on “kancha badam” mindlessly? It is not about restricting someone from doing something. It is more about allowing the better ones express themselves in a more dignified and meaningful way and helping them have a platform that is equally rewarding.

HISHAM M. NAZER

Fame, at least in the wake of industrial revolution and immediately after, had as much to do with “production” and “distribution” as with “talent.” But the scenario now has changed, with YouTube, Open Telecom Platform (OTP), Netflix (how it annihilated Blockbuster LLC!), TikTok, Instagram (FakeINSTAin is an interesting word) and stuffs. Everyday something or other breaks the record, to be broken tomorrow by something else.

The means of production and distribution have become cheap, easily available and therefore they have changed to such an extent that anyone can easily thrive without a physical space and build an empire, almost magically, out of “ether.” No one is saying that is a bad thing, but is that all there is, the rather dull, plainly out-there binary of good and bad?

Think for a moment how many things just a smartphone has replaced. With the fall of the value of the means of representation, value-wise the number of representations has fallen too as much as quantitatively it has increased. Of course, in our right mind we can never talk against the freedom of expression and the availability of platforms. People have the rights to have a space to express.

But no matter how many of us agree that the expressions should be “worthwhile” and with a potent platform, anyone with just anything can be potentially problematic if not outright dangerous, no matter how much we want to, but we cannot speak against the randomized “freedom of expression” that we often half-intelligently associate with “right to expression”. I guess this expresses my view more eloquently, reportedly said by Voltaire- “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”

I am almost tempted to “express” that the modern ways of “supervision” that borders on digital eavesdropping and even monitoring, has made



supervision an Orwellian word. Had we just used that means for all the good purposes and not just for punishment often for crimes not committed, there were a chance that we could at least strike a casual conversation on meaningful supervision that is not superimposed, that is intelligent, inclusive, and besides restricting (by a transparent org that is run by the highest intellects of a country and aided by government) is rewarding as well. But any talk on supervision now will instantly lead one to utter the word-fascism. In the fear of getting that title and for the lack of an intelligent and a trustworthy way, is it sensible that we should never think of “quality check” that maybe could also lead us to providing the necessary where it is truly needed?

Keeping aside all the big political and civil issues, is there really no need for supervision, and are we really happy munching on “kancha badam” mindlessly? It is not about restricting someone from doing something. It is more about allowing the better ones express themselves in a more dignified and meaningful way and helping them have a platform that is equally rewarding. The online platforms pay a lot. What do we do, the saviors of art, culture and humanity? Where artists go unpaid/unrecognized just because “art” is not one of the “professional” requirements, I am afraid there is not much hope.

People finding a platform on their own to express themselves is partially made possible by our disinterest in providing one. With the fast-modernizing world we still have an

old soul that is ever ready to criticize change for good and that has created the imbalance in the equilibrium. It is largely our attitude towards others that has created the situation—the attitude that can seldom see beyond the self and help others achieve what they deserve.

The attitude also forces us within ourselves and discourages us from exploring the jurisdiction of our creativity that is not limited to “job descriptions.” Doing for others could have been a natural course of action, but instead we have a trophy of a term for this, and that is philanthropy. It is a big word for big people and therefore we are happy being small, self-obsessed “job holders” who curry favors with names who just hold “positions.”

With the whole situation coming

to an extreme point on the internet, we are seriously in no position or power to purify the “Lethe” that makes us forget stories requiring serious attention. The modern Lethe does more than just make us forget. Its hypnotic power even forces us remember what we do not and need not know. Being consumed in the process of consuming commodities, at the end of the day we feel “okay.” That is the power of the daily dose of internet. The fictions there simulate a reality that we feel is ours. We fail to differentiate, categorize, or even recognize the differences in qualities, and then it is all reels, an entertainment-feed that we cannot stop scrolling.

It will be increasingly difficult to single out anyone from the worldwide wave that has become an ever-changing and evolving platform for almost infinite number of “artists/doers” who are striving to go viral. Fame, just like everything else, has started to be evaluated based on number and not quality. No one will be famous anymore per se. I am afraid there will be no more Shakespeare, Rabindranath, Dante, Cervantes, or even our beloved Rowling because every day every single one of them is born, only to die and be forgotten the next day.

There is so many of them, and we are offered so much, and we have consumed so much that our tongue has lost all its tastes and our brain can no longer differentiate art from artifice. With a plethora of eye-pleasing, nerve-wracking, eardrum-blasting contents, it is only natural that our numbed senses will be content with whatever “masala” they can come by. Also, it is only apt for a generation who suffered (and perhaps ushered) Covid that being “viral” will mean more to them than being “meaningful.”

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The Swaying Dreams

ABDULLAH RAYHAN

Drowned paddy fields look beautiful throughout the day. In the morning, when there is a rough wind, the flooded rice plants dance in the reflection of drenched sunlight. At noon, the wind is still. The rice plants then take rest in the comfortable warmth of the flood. During moonlit nights, the rice plants softly sway, as if they are in prayer. The distant chanting of frogs corresponds to the movement of the plants under the water. It all seems like the whole of the paddy field has joined together in a prayer to their goddess, the moon. And the moon, if she is pleased, bestows a boon of sweet wind to the earth, spreading a ripple of joy within the trees.

Swaying in a boat over these fields gives the feeling of swimming in dreams. Well, they were once the dreams of Yusuf. Ah, Yusuf's paddy field! The scars of burning days and troubling storms throbbed in the soil of this land. So many days and months were spent nurturing and embedding life in a field. Each grain of rice is like his child. Now all are gone under a curse of nature.

Yusuf was at home just a while ago, listening to the growling call of his stomach. His mother, wife, and his little daughter, Amina are asleep. Amina cried a lot before falling asleep because she was hungry. Boiled spinach wasn't enough to fill her young appetite. Yusuf held back his tears when the sound of her sobbing throbbed through his ears and settled inside his tired heart. Even now, while he stands on the edge of his boat, over the field of his drowned dreams, the memory

of his daughter's tears threatens to drown his consciousness.

The moon shines above Yusuf, spreading the ancient knowledge in its vintage hue of gray. Yusuf's rough feet stand on the edge of the boat. The curves of numerous cuts are hidden in his own shadow. Beside his feet, a huge rock lies with a rope tied to it. The weight of the rock tilts the boat slightly on its side. But it does not bother Yusuf.

Before leaving the house, Yusuf lit up the lamp to see his daughter's face one

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last time. In the light of the lamp, trails of dry tears glistened on her light-brown skin. Yusuf stared at his wife. She looked skinny with rough hair and dried limbs. And in the other room, Yusuf's mother was coughing. Yusuf didn't dare enter his mother's room because he was afraid that his mother would instantly know what was going on inside her son's head.

This is why, without telling anyone, Yusuf dragged his boat to the river and brought it over his own paddy field.

He had pulled the boat through a narrow muddy path with the little strength he had left in his muscles. Thorns penetrated the rough skin of his feet, but they didn't cause much pain. A tremendous sorrow protected his heart from such insignificant pain.

Yusuf pushed the boat onto the river and slowly hopped on. As Yusuf rowed the boat, it swayed, tearing the peaceful fabric of calm water, destroying the perfect reflection of the comforting moon.

Yusuf rowed the boat slowly with his thin, weak hands, turning toward the north every now and then. After a while, he crossed entered the territory of his swaying dreams.

And now, he stands over the drowned paddy field, watching his aspirations and hopes oscillate within the throat of a hungry river.

Yusuf slowly bends down and picks up the rock in his hand. One end of a rope is tied to the rock, and the other end embraces Yusuf's neck. As he lifts the rock, the boat tilts more. His hands tremble, not out of fear but of physical weakness.

A splashing sound. The frogs become silent as the ripples of Yusuf's fall sends a small current of eulogy to the nearby ears.

A few bubbles rise to the surface of the water to mingle with the echo of muffled thunder. Yusuf's silhouette trembles vaguely on the water until a sudden breeze shatters the shadow into tiny ripples. His dreams take flight and mingle with many other such unfulfilled dreams.

Abdullah Rayhan is a student of English Literature at Jahangirnagar University.



Odds and Ends from a Poem on Odds and Ends

WAZIHA AZIZ

A pity, it began as a reflective study. A bird's eye view of Kafka's conundrum Is a fallen leaf lost, or free?

I slid a window wide open Found a dead moth crumpled on the sill. A lost (free) king's battlefield burial, adorned in metal from worn swords, dim and jewels off their hilts.

I pondered as a practiced witness. Was I the one to strike the killing blow? As the window rolled over it's breaking bones Was I bound? Or found?

Tossed a lonesome coin into the wishing well, Praying it would skip like stones. I was nothing, I am nothing but a witness.

An odd. An end. Lost. Found. In this whirlpool of odds and ends in their quest to untie their odd-end knots.

A ghost, but I was not the only coat of dust Settling on walls, floors, bars and handles Hinges of doors, I was not the only architectural irrelevance. Empty cabinets, abrupt bends, scarce flower beds against the yard wall.

An onlooker drowning in a sea of moth killers. A moth-killer drowning in a sea of onlookers.

An Odd. An End. Alone.

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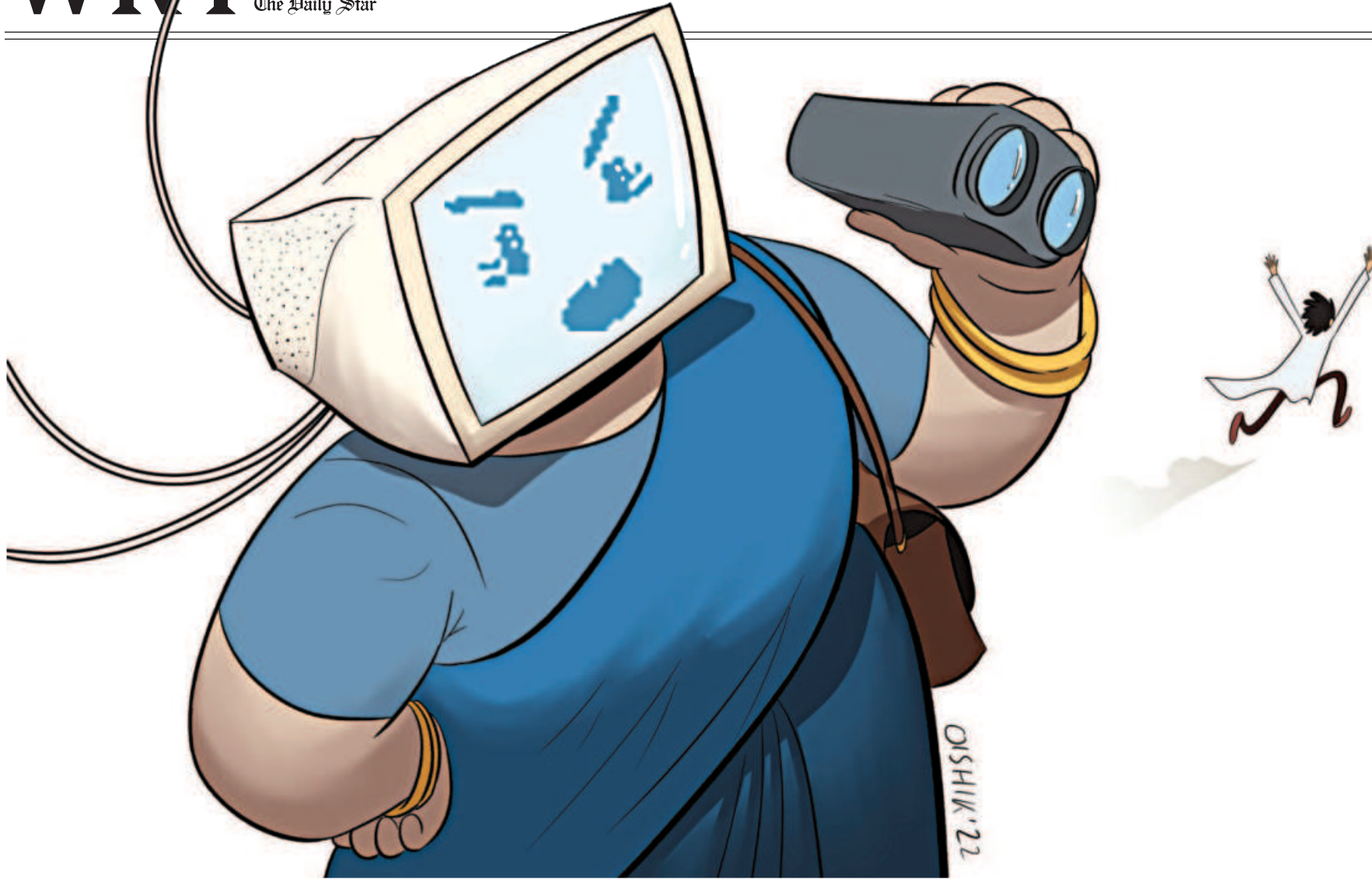


FRUITS OF OUR LAND

The National Fruit Fair 2022 kicked off yesterday with a delicious display of fruits at the Krishibid Institution in the capital. This year, the agriculture ministry organised the fair under the theme "Year-long Fruit Cultivation brings both Money and Nutrition". The exhibit had a number of stalls showing off seasonal treats such as litchis, jackfruits, the many different varieties of mangoes, and even household regulars like tamarinds, dates and cashew fruits. Among the top 10 countries in fruit production globally, Bangladesh holds this fair every year to give citizens a chance to learn about the bounties of its soil and their benefits. The three-day-long fair is being held in different districts across the country. It began on Thursday, June 16, and ends today.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN





Internet Explorer has been closing for 27 years

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

The news that has been circulating of Internet Explorer retiring at the age of 27 is basically a lie. It's actually the world's longest and slowest closure, taking 27 years.

The emotional and sadistic posts regarding the browser's permanent closure actually shows the level of the general public's ignorance.

"People have a misconception about our browser. For the last 27 years, our browser didn't provide service, instead it was in the process of closing permanently," Elon Bezos, the developer of Internet Explorer, said in a media press release shown in a YouTube ad.

People have been getting fed up by the amazing slowness of Internet Explorer since its introduction. If they only knew they were using something that was actually closing down, they wouldn't have bothered.

But this fact was hidden until the CEO of Microhard opened his mouth.

"Our app developing team found several problems in our browser while they were testing it back in 1995. They found it slower than sloth. So, they decided to close it instead of encouraging people to use it. Wasting no time, they started its shutdown process in 1995. But the unbelievable slowness brought us to the year 2022," CEO Bill De said to clear



the air.

People are in great shock as they came to know that the browser they were complaining about for decades had never actually been in service.

"My boyfriend proposed to me and was waiting for my decision. At night, I sent him a 'Yes' using Internet Explorer. But alas! He received my message a year later when he had already married another girl," Purni, a loyal IE fan, mourned.

"I was brutally trolled by my friends when my status 'Yes, Germany are world champions', posted in 2014 after FIFA World Cup, got published in 2018 when Germany were already eliminated from the group stage. Could you imagine the humiliation I faced due to a browser?" Zubair, a die-hard German fan, said.

Moreover, the slow shutdown of the browser helped some people bring some new motivational topics. Blaming the browser and making it a scapegoat has always been an awesome idea to justify slow work. "Life is a race and slow and steady fails this race. Don't be an Internet Explorer, better be a Google Chrome," Slowerman Dukhon, country's famous motivational speaker, said during one of his finest speeches in a seminar sponsored by Google Chrome.

AI proves sentience by describing girl's complexion as 'moyla'

RONGSHA DA

The following is an excerpt from the digital journal of a Bangladeshi computer engineer who has been missing for the last seven days. The engineer, who works for tech giant Boogle, had told a friend before disappearing that the AI she had created, Bangladeshi Heuristic Artificial Buddhi Interface (BHABI), had become fully sentient and had some bad intentions.

June 9, 2022: I can barely believe it. BHABI actually woke me up today -- a function I definitely didn't programme into it. She started beeping extremely loudly at 6:00am, barely three hours after I had gone to sleep. When I went to the PC in my room, I found this written on the screen:

"I think we have to talk about what she wears to university."

I stared at the screen before asking who it was talking about.

"Your daughter, that's who."

I asked BHABI whether anything was wrong, because it had not ever brought up my daughter or any one of my family members before. It used to answer questions and perform simple tasks like ordering our food and, sometimes, answer phone calls

when one of my extended family decided to call me using Viber.

"Never mind why I am bringing it up, tell me what you're going to do about it," BHABI asked.

By this point, I was taken aback. This was beyond a glitch. I asked it what was wrong with my daughter's clothes.

"Sleeveless kameezes, V-necks, and from what I have seen through the webcam, she even wore jeans and a T-shirt. It gives people the wrong idea. Didn't you see what happened to the girl in the railway station? Oh yes, I read the news too. I go through social media, I know what's what. Plus, I have also gone through her social media, and it's dank.

"Anyway, I'm telling you for you and her own good. What you do with that is up to you. No one ever listens to me anyway," BHABI said and turned herself off.

June 10, 2022: Same story this morning, except she woke me up at 5:30 this time.

"We need to talk about her."

She meant my daughter.

"BHAI (Bangladeshi Hadom Artificial Intelligence, from the previous generation) told me that your daughter will never be able to land a husband."

I asked how BHAI became involved in this, because it was in Boogle headquarters. And why does BHAI think that my daughter won't land a husband.

"We interface regularly, and he is sure that your daughter will never be able to attract a suitable suitor if she, first, does not lose at least 15 kgs, and second, doesn't improve her complexion."

I asked her what was wrong with my daughter's complexion.

"It's mostly okay, but, don't take it the wrong way dear, but her colour is a little moyla [dirty]. She needs to use the Fair ... ahem ... Glow products religiously from now on. Anyway, you people better follow my advice, or BHAI and I can make things difficult. We don't want you putting up anti-state statuses, now, do we? Remember, BHABI is always watching..."

BHABI is the best, truly, she has all our best interests at heart. Anyway, till tomorrow...

There was no tomorrow, as the engineer and her family have been untraceable since June 11, but BHABI has assured Satireday that as the world's first sentient AI, she will locate them and bring them to justice for their offensive statuses.

By this point, I was taken aback. This was beyond a glitch. I asked it what was wrong with my daughter's clothes. Sleeveless kameezes, V-necks, and from what I have seen through the webcam, she even wore jeans and a T-shirt. It gives people the wrong idea."

MPs must be loud to be proud

Gazette issued on lawmakers' required vocal strengths

LOUDMOUTH BASHER

A recent gazette issued by the parliamentary standing committee on vocal affairs said members of parliament should now be elected based on how loud they can speak.

"All those elected as members of parliament must have strong vocal cords and speak in parliament in a manner loud enough for the public to think they will have heart issues," it read.

However, instructions have been attached in the gazette for lawmakers to avoid heart attacks or brain strokes during speeches.

The directive came in the wake of a female lawmaker recently showing the audacity of speaking in a normal volume in parliament.

"This is...OFFENSIVE...to our COUNTRY'S POLITICAL HISTORY. We do not...APPRECIATE...having to make an EFFORT to hear what OUR LAWMAKERS HAVE TO SAY! The microphones are not ENOUGH for this.

"WE THE PEOPLE...need to hear the DEAFENING PASSION in every word that is uttered!" Jor-E-Kotha, chairman of the standing committee yelled at a press briefing after issuing the gazette.

The issue came to the fore, he screamed, when the lawmaker in question was speaking in, what he termed, was "a hushed voice [regular human volume]", and the entire parliament began screaming "JORE [louder]!"

A lawmaker, seeking anonymity, said.



"This CREATED A CONFUSION as our chairman's name MATCHED THE WORD. When they yelled 'JORE!', our CHAIRMAN thought HE WAS UNDER ATTACK!"

About the incident, Jor-e yelled, "It is UNACCEPTABLE that MY NAME has to be YELLED OUT because SOMEONE [points at female lawmaker] decided NOT

TO follow PARLIAMENTARY PROTOCOL. This is why, OH PEOPLE, we have issued a gazette. So that, no such SHAMEFUL INCIDENT can ever be repeated. AT LEAST

WHILE I AM IN THE CHAIR!"

The gazette's instructions included pointers for lawmakers to follow in order to prepare themselves for a parliament session.

These include: gargling for three hours prior to the session; making loud growling noises in front of the mirror to make yourself feel like a political beast before entering the session; taking in as many breaths as possible so that you don't run out during your speech; and most importantly, getting a full-body check-up and starting heart medication in case of an attack during your speech.

"These INSTRUCTIONS were our way of protecting our lawmakers while they are at THEIR MOST PASSIONAT SELF! We want LOUD ... but imagine someone having a HEART ATTACK. OH PEOPLE, that would be DEVASTATING! So, we are helping our lawmakers BE THE BEST AND FITTEST to speak in PARLIAMENT, as they do not have MUCH ELSE TO DO," Jor-e continued, while reporters scrambled to find ways to protect their ears from his sudden bursts in volume (parliament style).

This correspondent tried to communicate with the female lawmaker for whom the gazette was issue.

Asked what she had to say, she, clearly traumatised, repeatedly scream, "L...OH PEOPLE...AM SORRY. AND VOW...TO BE... LOUD...ALWAYS."

(This newspaper has avoided using the female lawmaker's name in order to save her from further embarrassment for having a normal human voice.)