



P5 Stranded on a hillock as bridge collapses



P7 Sri Lanka troops open fire to contain fuel riots



B1 Inflation soars to eight-year high

It may get even worse

Water levels forecast to rise; cry for help grows louder in flood-hit northern, northeastern dists

DWOHA CHOWDHURY and MINTU DESHWARA

The floods wreaking havoc in the country's northern and north-eastern districts may worsen as water levels in already overflowing rivers could continue to rise over the next two days, according to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre.

"The Brahmaputra-Jamuna, Ganges-Padma, Surma, Koshiyara, Teesta, Dharla, Dudhkumar and all other major rivers may continue rising for the next 48 hours," said an FFWC forecast released at 6:00pm yesterday.

In Sylhet, Sunamganj and Netrakona districts, the situation may get worse in the next 24 hours due to moderate to heavy rainfall in the northern and north-eastern regions of the country along with the adjoining Indian states of Assam, Meghalaya and West Bengal.

The rush of water from upstream in India as well as heavy rainfall in the region have left large swathes of Sylhet division and northern regions inundated, affecting lakhs of people.

The FFWC has also forecast that the situation in low-lying areas in Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Bogra, Jamalpur and Sirajganj districts could deteriorate further.

Flood water may even inundate low-lying areas of the country's central districts like Tangail, Munshiganj and Shariatpur, the forecast added.

Water of nine rivers across the country was flowing above the danger level yesterday morning, the bulletin said, adding that 11 districts have so far been affected by the ongoing flood.

Meanwhile, due to flash floods, thousands of people of the north-eastern region have been facing acute crises of food and drinking water.

The cry for relief is intensifying in flood-hit areas despite the government agencies working to provide relief.

"We have taken shelter on the road as our house has been submerged. But we have not gotten any food assistance from the government till now. A kind person gave us some food," said Akbar Hossain, who took shelter on the Sylhet-Companiganj Road in Shalutikar area of Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila.

"Hundreds of people have taken shelter in the government primary school in Chailla Afzalabad union of our upazila. But we have not been given any relief. We cannot even buy food as shops have been closed for days," said Swadhin Pintu, a resident of Chhatak upazila in Sunamganj.

However, government officials concerned in Sylhet and Sunamganj districts said around three lakh people and around one lakh cattle have taken shelter in 717 flood centres in the two worst-hit districts.

They said Tk 65 lakh in cash, 1,062 tonnes of rice and around 12,900 sacks of dry food have so far been distributed among flood victims in the two districts.

Besides, cooked foods have been distributed among 30,000 affected people, they said, adding that 260 medical teams have been working to provide medical services to victims.

"We have taken shelter on the road as our house has been submerged. But we have not gotten any food assistance from the government till now."



With floodwater swamping their homes, people from Dakkhin Surma upazila wade through knee-deep water on Bangabir road in Chandipul area to reach Sylhet city. Seeking food and shelter, many flood-hit people are trying to move to the city from different parts of the district. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Floods coming to the heartland

STAR REPORT

Flood situation worsened in the northern districts yesterday as all major rivers were flowing above the danger mark.

Floodwater has already made way to some parts of Tangail, and the low-lying areas of Munshiganj and Shariatpur could be flooded within 24 hours, said a Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) report issued at 6:00pm yesterday.

Water levels of all major rivers are likely to rise in the next 24 hours as northern and northeastern parts of the country, along with Indian states of Assam and Meghalaya, will see heavy to very heavy rains, said the report.

Talking to The Daily Star, FFWC Executive Engineer Arifuzzaman Bhuyan said the flood situation will start improving within a week.

In Kurigram, at least 20 villages in Nageshwari upazila were flooded as the 100-metre flood control dam of the Water Development Board (WDB) collapsed due to onrush of water, reports our Lalmonirhat correspondent.

Most parts of Nageshwari town have already been inundated with floodwater entering fresh areas of the upazila.

More than 1.5 lakh people in nine upazilas of Kurigram and around 50,000 people in five upazilas of Lalmonirhat were marooned as of yesterday.

Flood situation deteriorated in Sirajganj yesterday with the Jamuna flowing above danger mark at almost all points in the district.

"Water level [of the river] may continue to rise till June 22..." Md Nasir Uddin, sub-divisional engineer of the WDB in Sirajganj, told this newspaper.

Almost all char areas in Sirajganj Sadar, Kazipur, Belkuchi, Shahzadpur and Chowhali upazila were already flooded, he said.

Nasir further said that around one lakh people were still stranded in five upazilas of the district.



PM to visit flood-hit districts tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to visit the flood-affected areas in Sylhet, Sunamganj and Netrakona tomorrow.

Sylhet Divisional Commissioner Mosharrar Hossain, who was informed by the PMO over phone, confirmed this to our Sylhet correspondent yesterday evening.

The details in this regard are yet to be officially announced.

The PM will travel by helicopter, accompanied

Malls, stores close at 8pm from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shopping centres and stores will shut at 8:00pm every day from today until further notice as the government looks to conserve power and energy amid the rising prices in the global market for the Russia-Ukraine war.

The Bangladesh Labour Act already stipulates the closure of shops at 8:00pm. At present, many shops stay open until 10:00pm.

Kitchen markets, transport services, emergency service providers and restaurants, however, can stay open beyond 8:00pm, as per the announcement made after yesterday's meeting between Monnujan Sufian, the state minister of labour and employment, and leaders of different business associations.

The trading hour restriction was instructed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 17 with the view to saving power and energy amid the elevated prices in the global market.

At the meeting, Mohd Sher Ali, additional secretary of the ministry of power, energy and mineral resources, said the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation is incurring losses of Tk 110 crore per day for crude oil, The Daily Star

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Don't miss today's special issue **BANGLADESH REFRIGERATOR INDUSTRY INSIGHTS**

Nat'l highways should be off limits to bikes

Recommends the committee probing road crashes

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Motorcycles should be banned on national highways to reduce the number of accidents, recommended a committee that was formed by the government to probe road crashes.

The two-wheelers can be allowed only if the national highways have separate service lanes, added the committee.

Among some others, this proposal was placed as the committee found motorcycle accidents as a major reason behind the rise in fatalities during the last Eid vacation.

The recommendation was discussed at a meeting of the Road Transport and Highways Division yesterday.

The division was considering a ban on bikes for two to three days before Eid-ul-Azha, the meeting sources said.

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Rohingya refugees walk a "Go home campaign" rally demanding repatriation at Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar yesterday. Tens of thousands of Rohingyas in the refugee camps demonstrated ahead of the World Refugee Day today. Story on page 5. PHOTO: AFP

ROHINGYA RETURN Talks get nowhere

Refugees left in limbo while humanitarian funds shrinking

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Nearly five years into the largest Rohingya influx, the process of repatriation remains confined only to talks with the international funding declining for the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals.

The bilateral talks between Bangladesh and Myanmar to initiate the repatriation had been suspended for over two years amid the military rule in the neighbouring country and also the coronavirus pandemic.

The dialogue resumed this January but it has yet to yield any definitive outcome.

On Tuesday, in the fifth meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG), formed in 2017 for the repatriation of Rohingyas, Bangladesh wanted Myanmar to expedite the verification of refugees to fast-track their repatriation.

Both Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed to work on addressing problems over verification and holding

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WORLD REFUGEE DAY



Top left, Army Chief General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed distributing relief materials among flood-affected people in Sylhet's Companiganj yesterday; bottom left, flood-affected people going from one place to another using a raft made of banana trees in Kurigram Sadar upazila; people commuting on a bike on a submerged road in Sylhet.

PHOTO: ISPR/STAR/REUTERS

BNP slams govt for 'inadequate' support for flood victims

UNB, Dhaka

Slamming the government for inadequate allocation of money and relief for flood victims, BNP yesterday called upon the government to focus on easing sufferings of disaster-affected people by stopping the grand opening of Padma Bridge.

"Hundreds of crores of taka are being allocated for the grand celebration of Padma Bridge opening. But the allocation for nearly one crore flood-hit people in the country's Sylhet, Sunamganj, Netrokona and northern districts is totally inadequate," said party Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

He said the government has so far provided 100 tonnes of rice, Tk 30 lakh and dry food worth Tk 5,000 for the flood victims. "They also assured of allocating Tk 60 lakh. It means only Tk 1.5 per person."

"We demand that the Padma Bridge inaugural festivities be stopped. You please stop the ostentatious display to get public attention," he said during a press conference at BNP's Nayapaltan central office.

Ukraine war could last for years

Warns Nato chief; Zelensky vows to retake south from Russian forces

AGENCIES

The war in Ukraine could last for years, the head of Nato said yesterday, calling for steadfast support from Ukraine's allies as President Zelensky vowed that his forces "will not give away the south to anyone" after visit to the southern frontline.

Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said supplying state-of-the-art weaponry to Ukrainian troops would boost the chance of freeing its eastern region of Donbas from Russian control, Germany's Bild am Sonntag newspaper reported.

After failing to take the capital Kyiv early on in the war, Russian forces have focused efforts in recent weeks on trying to take complete control of the Donbas, parts of which were already under the control of Russian-backed separatists before the February 24 invasion.

"We must prepare for the fact that it could take years. We must not let up in supporting Ukraine. Even if the costs are high, not only for military support, also because of rising energy and food prices," Stoltenberg was quoted as

saying.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson also said on Saturday it is important Britain provide support for the long haul, warning of a risk of "Ukraine fatigue" as the war drags on. In an opinion piece in London's Sunday Times, Johnson said this meant

"We must not let up in supporting Ukraine. Even if the costs are high, not only for military support, also because of rising energy and food prices."
Nato chief

ensuring "Ukraine receives weapons, equipment, ammunition and training more rapidly than the invader".

"Everything will depend on whether Ukraine can strengthen its ability to defend its soil faster than Russia can renew its capacity to attack," he wrote.

Zelensky said he had visited troops in several places, including the southern Mykolaiv region, about 550 km south of Kyiv.

"I talked to our defenders - the military, the police, the National Guard," he said in a video on the Telegram message app yesterday that appeared to have been recorded on a moving train.

"Their mood is assured: they all do not doubt our victory," Zelensky said. "We will not give the south to anyone, and all that is ours we will take back."

Mykolaiv is a key target for Russia as it lies on the way to the strategic Black Sea port of Odessa, reports AFP.

Meanwhile, the eastern industrial city of Severodonetsk faced heavy artillery and rocket fire again.

Analysts at the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, wrote in a note that "Russian forces will likely be able to seize Severodonetsk in the coming weeks, but at the cost of concentrating most of their available forces in this small area".

Serhiy Gaidai, the governor of Luhansk, told Ukrainian television: "All Russian claims that they control the town are a lie. They control the main part of the town, but not the whole town."

Main Eid jamaat at 8am

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main jamaat of Eid-ul-Azha will be held at 8:00am on the Eid day at the National Eidgah in the capital if the weather is favourable.

In case of inclement weather or any other unavoidable reason, the main congregation of Eid will be held at 8:30am at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

The decision was taken at an inter-ministerial meeting held at the meeting room of the Ministry of Religious Affairs yesterday.

State Minister for Religion Md Faridul Haque Khan presided over the meeting, during which various decisions were taken for the celebration of Eid.

Eid-ul-Azha is expected to be observed on July 9, subject to the sighting of the moon.

Verdict on Tarique, wife's fugitive status on June 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will deliver its verdict on June 26 on whether BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman, who have been in London since 2008, are fugitives in connection with a Tk 4.82 crore corruption case filed during the caretaker government in 2007.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Md Ejarul Haque Akondo yesterday held a hearing on the issue and fixed the date.

The question was raised before the bench on June 5 when it was dealing with three separate writ petitions filed 15 years ago by Tarique and Zubaida challenging the filing and initiation of the case under the then Emergency Power Rules (EPR).

PM to visit

FROM PAGE 1

by central Awami League leaders in charge of the respective districts, said Biplab Barua, AL office secretary.

Meanwhile, Hasina yesterday said the Padma Bridge will be a blessing to the people of the South, according to a UNB report.

"I think the inauguration of Padma Bridge on June 25 will come as a blessing from Allah, as we will be able to establish rapid communication with the southern region and promptly help the people in case of floods [and other natural disasters]."

She said this at a reception for 2021 SAFF Champions - the Bangladesh Under-19 Women National Football Team - at her office in the capital.

Noting that the country's north-east has been massively hit by floods this time, she said such deluges will affect the southern regions too.

The premier said she opened the Bangabandhu Bridge over the Jamuna just before the long-lasting 1998 flood across the country.

"The flood had affected the southern region and the people of this area got help from the northern districts as the bridge helped maintain communication for uninterrupted transportation of goods and other essentials."

The PM said crossing the river like the Padma becomes dangerous due to strong current during such floods and disrupts the communication.

"When the Padma Bridge opens, we'll get the scope to

continue relief operations and provide other assistance and medicines in the flood-hit areas."

She said the government has taken all measures, including providing relief and assistance to the flood-hit people by the Army, Navy, Air Force, and all government agencies concerned.

Besides, leaders and activists of the ruling Awami League and its affiliates are also helping the flood victims in their respective localities, said Hasina, also the AL president.

"When the water recedes from the north-east, other regions downstream will be flooded. So, our Mymensingh and Rangpur divisions are also likely to face it. We [the government] are taking precautionary measures in this regard," she said, adding they have also taken preparations for the post-flood situation.

About sports, she emphasised on the arrangement of inter-college and inter-university competitions to pick players for national sports teams.

The PM also urged the industrialists and businesspeople to come forward in helping the players and thus promote sports.

"It is not right that you would just do business, set up industries and make money. You will have to do something for the country."

Zahid Ahsan Russel, state minister for Youth and Sports, and Kazi Salahuddin, president of Bangladesh Football Federation, also spoke.

Talks get nowhere

FROM PAGE 1

regular meetings of JWG and Technical Working Group for early commencement of Rohingya return.

Experts think that in the name of verification, Myanmar is basically buying time, and if the root causes of the Rohingya genocide are not addressed, the repatriation will not begin anytime soon.

They also said the international community must put pressure on the Myanmar rulers to take back Rohingyas and grant them citizenship.

"Western countries imposed a number of sanctions on Russia over the Ukraine crisis. If half the sanctions were for Myanmar, the military government would have started the repatriation," Prof Imtiaz Ahmed of Dhaka University international relations department told The Daily Star yesterday.

He, however, warned that the Myanmar government may start a token repatriation but Bangladesh should be very cautious.

"Through this token repatriation, the Myanmar government will try to prove that there was no genocide in that country. So, the Rohingyas should be given citizenship by the Myanmar government first and the rest will follow," said Prof Imtiaz, also director at the Centre for Genocide Studies, Dhaka University.

Bangladesh had handed over the names of 8.4 lakh Rohingyas to Myanmar but so far only about 42,000 have been verified.

Despite a number of attempts, the Rohingyas

could not be repatriated as they refused to return on the grounds that the conditions in Rakhine State were not conducive and there was no guarantee of citizenship back home.

In January's technical-level meeting of "Ad-Hoc Task Force for Verification of the Displaced Persons from Rakhine", Bangladesh expressed dismay over the slow pace of verification of past residency by Myanmar.

Dhaka also offered all cooperation under the three bilateral instruments for fast completion of the verification process.

In the meantime, humanitarian agencies need more than \$881 million this year for humanitarian support to Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char, and also the host communities, according to the UNHCR.

But as of last month, only 13 percent of the fund required for the Joint Response Plan has been received.

The situation is so grave that United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi in a visit to the Rohingya camp appealed to the world for sustained and predictable support to Rohingya refugees and the local host communities in Bangladesh.

"The world must remember the crisis that Rohingya refugees and their hosts have been facing for the last five years. The refugees' lives depend on how the international community responds in caring for them," Grandi said, after visiting the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan

Char island, on May 25.

He also said, "The Rohingyas refugees I met reiterated their desire to return home when conditions allow. The world must work to address the root causes of their flight and to translate those dreams into reality."

Nearly 7,50,000 Rohingyas faced a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State in August 2017 and took shelter in Bangladesh to join around three lakh others who fled previous waves of persecutions.

Despite global pressure, including a genocide case under trial at the International Court of Justice, the Rohingya repatriation did not happen.

"Repatriation is a critical issue for both the government and the Rohingyas," said Jahangirnagar University International Relations Professor Shahab Enam Khan.

"Bangladesh has pursued a multi-track approach to facilitate repatriation, but the process continues to remain stalled due to a lack of meaningful commitment and initiatives from the Myanmar side, particularly Tatmadaw [the armed forces of Myanmar]."

He thinks repatriation will become appealing to the Rohingyas only if Myanmar guarantees that none of them will end up in internally displaced person (IDP) camps or become subject to further persecution.

To change the stalemate in Rakhine State, opening channels of communication

with Myanmar's national unity government in exile or perhaps empowering the Rohingyas to negotiate with the Tatmadaw seems to be a necessity, Prof Shahab added.

"The global community should take note that the Rohingya issue can go out of control for the regional countries with far-fetching spillover effects," he told this correspondent in a WhatsApp message.

Major General (Retd) ANM Muniruzzaman, president of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), said the whole dynamics of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh is changing.

"Primarily, the reason for the change is their longer stay in Bangladesh without any practical hope of going back to Myanmar."

R Rohingyas are now becoming a source of security threat, which is manifested in various activities like drug peddling, human trafficking, presence of small arms presence and trafficking and other criminal activities, he added.

"There is a potential link with other groups outside Bangladesh. The Rohingya refugee crisis is now entering a phase where they are becoming a security threat for Bangladesh and also for the region."

According to sources in law enforcement agencies, a total of 104 were killed, 89 women were raped, 52 abduction incidents were reported, 34 cases of human trafficking were recorded in the last four years and Rohingyas were involved in

all these incidents.

Besides, the presence of a Myanmar insurgent group called Arsa in Bangladesh has been widely debated in recent time as refugees and experts believe its members are active in the Cox's Bazar Rohingya camps.

The issue came to the fore prominently after the murder of popular Rohingya leader Mohib Ullah last year.

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

Malls, stores

FROM PAGE 1

learnt from those in attendance.

The monthly losses on gas imports have reached Tk 2,500 crore from Tk 1,500 crore.

"Not only that, the crisis has become so acute that we can't import even after having money," Ali said.

Helal Uddin, president of the Bangladesh Dokan Malik Samity, said they have always been respectful of the government's decisions.

"We don't disagree with the Prime Minister's directive. We will implement it tomorrow," he said, while requesting the government to extend the duration by two hours to 10 pm from July 1 to July 10 for Eid-ul-Adha shopping.

In response, Monnujan said they will send the proposal of the Dokan Malik Samity to the prime minister for approval.

It may get

FROM PAGE 1

Sylhet's Divisional Commissioner Muhammad Mosharraf Hossain said at least four million people have been affected by the flood in the region and the number is increasing.

Locals said many people have taken shelter on nearby highways or river banks as the flood centres are either overcrowded or located far away from their homes.

Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy, police, Border Guard Bangladesh and several other agencies along with local administration have been working to rescue stranded people.

Meanwhile, train services on the Dhaka-Sylhet route resumed yesterday noon after suspension of around 24 hours as the flood water receded in some areas, said railway officials.

Electricity supply also resumed in some areas of Sylhet city since Saturday night, said locals.

Spanish PM faces regional election test in Andalusia

AFP, Seville

Andalusia votes yesterday in an early regional election that the incumbent conservative Popular Party is expected to win comfortably, dealing a blow to Spain's Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez ahead of a national vote expected at the end of 2023.

Univ student dies in fire at Niketan flat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A private university student died after a fire originated at a flat in Dhaka's Niketan area yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Mashrur Ahmed (23), who recently graduated from Computer Science and Engineering department of Brac University.

The youth, from Bogura, arrived at his sister's house a couple of days ago to collect his certificates from the university and attend a friend's wedding.

His sister's family was at their village home when the fire originated around 7:00am on the fifth floor of the building.

On information, two firefighting units rushed to the spot, doused the fire and recovered the youth in an unconscious state, said Md Rajib, senior station officer of Tejgaon Fire Station.

He was rushed to Sheikh Hasina National Institute

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Grabbers have been filling up this wetland in the capital's Demra area. They have also built different settlements in some of the occupied portions. Although experts have warned that this illegal act would make the capital highly vulnerable to earthquakes and floods, their operations still go on at full throttle. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Education Act to finally see the light

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday told parliament that the draft Education Act will be sent to Cabinet Division for approval in principle after finalising it on June 23.

She made the comments in reply to a question from Jatiya Party MP Shameem Haider Patwari.

The education ministry took the initiative to prepare an education law in line with the Education Policy 2010, which asked a subcommittee of the education policy implementation committee to draft a law on January 26, 2011.

In December 2016, the ministry sent a draft to the Cabinet Division. However, it was taken back after much criticism over legitimising private coaching as "shadow education".

According to the draft act, ban on printing, publishing, and marketing notebooks and guidebooks will be imposed. If violated, a punishment of a maximum imprisonment of three years or a maximum fine of Tk 5 lakh

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PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 20

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-52	8-17
JAMAAAT 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



111th birth anniv of Sufia Kamal today

BSS, Dhaka

Today is the 111th birthday of Sufia Kamal, a renowned poet, social reformer and pioneer of women's rights movement in Bangladesh.

Marking the day, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages recalling the poet's contributions to emancipation of women.

Besides, various socio-cultural organisations have chalked out programmes on the occasion.

PADMA BRIDGE

All set for grand opening

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

No truck or covered van would be allowed to operate on highways connected to the Padma Bridge -- from the morning of June 24 to that of June 26 -- to facilitate the inauguration of the Bridge on June 25.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on June 25, will inaugurate the country's longest bridge. It will be opened to the public at 6:00am on the following day.

The authorities will not collect tolls from the vehicles for using the three bridges on Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway on June 25 to avoid traffic congestion at these points.

The three bridges are Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge (Buriganga Bridge-1 at Postagola), Dhaleshwari Bridge and Haji Shariatullah Bridge (Ariakha Bridge in Madaripur).

Road Transport and Highway Division under the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges took all the decisions as part of the preparations for the opening of the much-awaited bridge.

Different agencies under the division have already started their work in this regard.

The government is currently busy preparing for the grand opening of the bridge. The bridge division of the ministry will hold a rally at Mawa.

Meanwhile, the ruling Awami League is planning to arrange a massive rally at the Janjira end of the bridge on June 25.

To make the inauguration a success, Road Transport and Highway Division on June 9 held a meeting with its agencies and companies.

As per the meeting's decision and the division's directive, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, on June 15, wrote to the additional inspector general of highway police, to restrict trucks and covered vans on the mentioned highways.



INSTRUCTIONS

PM to inaugurate Padma Bridge on June 25

No trucks or covered vans on connecting highways for 48hrs

No toll collection from 3 bridges on expressway on the opening day

Supply of sufficient number of BRTC buses

Bridge to open to traffic at 6:00am on June 26

Expressway, Bhanga intersections to be decorated with lights

"We have written a letter to the highway police. As per the letter, they will identify the highways that connect the Padma Bridge and take necessary measures," Hemayet Uddin, BRTA deputy director (enforcement), told this correspondent yesterday.

Meanwhile, following the decision taken in the June 9 meeting, RTHD sent a proposal to the finance ministry to arrange for free tolls on the inauguration day.

"We have received the proposal and prepared the documents accordingly. Hopefully, a

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Allocate 2pc of GDP for climate resilience

Demand civil society groups

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society groups have demanded that two percent of the country's GDP be allocated to fight the impacts of climate change. They made the demand in a seminar titled "Adequate Climate Financing for Sustainable Economic Development".

The seminar was organised by Coast Foundation, Centre for Participatory Research and Development and Coastal Development Partnership at Cirdap yesterday.

Coast Director Aminul Hoque said the allocated Tk 30,531 crore as the climate budget is unable to fight the impacts of climate change. All the climate resilience plans prepared by the government require around 2.20 percent of the GDP to be implemented.

"But the current allocation is only 0.69 percent," he said.

Dhirendra Debnath Shambhu, MP and chair of standing committee on ministry of livestock, said, "If coastal people are not protected, all the development will fall flat."

Sharif Jamil, general secretary of Bapa, said the impact of climate change has become more widespread than ever, and the ongoing flood is proof of that.

Dhaka may get flooded too

Says LGRD minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the context of Sylhet and Sunamganj's flood situation, Local Government and Rural Development and Co-operatives (LGRD) Minister Md Tazul Islam yesterday said even the capital, especially its low-lying areas, could inundate rapidly due to heavy rainfall and water from upstream.

The minister made remarks while responding to a query by journalists at an inter-ministerial meeting at his office.

"Upstream water and heavy rainfall are the main causes of flooding in Sylhet and Sunamganj. We were informed that a flood might occur but no government body could see something of this magnitude coming," he said.

He, however, said the government is being as prepared as they can and can deal with the disaster. Two city corporations -- following the direction of the ministry -- are working to recover and dredge canals to prevent such a disaster from occurring in the capital.

Most of the new areas of Dhaka's two city corporations are low-lying, and afflicted with infrastructural problems.

The government has already approved around Tk 4,000 crore for the development of such areas in DNCC, while some DSCC projects are also waiting to be approved, said the minister.

The minister also mentioned that they have formed a committee to monitor the flood situation till June 30 and will extend the period if necessary.

Flood damaged Aush paddy of 22,000 hectares cropland so far

Says agriculture minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 22,000 hectares cropland of Aush paddy have been damaged so far due to recent flood situation in the country, Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque said yesterday.

"We targeted 13 lakh hectares cropland [for Aush cultivation]. So far, saplings of Aush paddy have been planted in 11 lakh hectares [of land]," he said.

He said of around 3.87 lakh hectares of various vegetable cropland, around 5,000 to 7,000 hectares were damaged due to the flood.

He was addressing a seminar on "Agriculture and Media in the Face of Global Food Security" organised by Agriculture Information Service at the capital's Krishibid Institution Bangladesh.

The minister said at present, there is no crop in the field to harvest in Sunamganj district while there is few to harvest in Sylhet district, adding they were monitoring the situation.

He said there was not much damage done to seedbeds. The government has kept sufficient fund ready to bring damaged seedbeds under rehabilitation programme.

Besides, sufficient amount of seeds have been preserved, he said. He, however, expressed concern that deteriorating and prolonged flood situation may make it challenging for Aman cultivation in the days to come.

Presenting a keynote paper, Prof Emeritus MA Sattar Mandal of Agricultural Economics at Bangladesh Agricultural University said Bangladesh's domestic food production is "reasonably okay" while good yield of next Aman season depends on calamities.

He said recent food price inflation is mainly caused by rising wheat and edible oil prices.

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud said media can unearth different issues and build awareness regarding food security.

Agriculture development activist and media personality Shykh Seraj suggested for introducing liquid fertiliser in the country.



With a concerned look on their faces, Hazaribagh locals sit around an open line of Wasa with pitchers and buckets to collect water for daily use. For the last three days, they have been facing much peril as the water supply has been cut off from their homes. Even this water source isn't that reliable as they have to wait for three to four hours at a stretch to fill up a container. This photo was taken on Nilambar Shah Road yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Deteriorating and prolonged flood situation may make it challenging for Aman cultivation in the days to come.

ABDUR RAZZAQUE, Agriculture Minister



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Author: **Prof. Md. Salim Shakur Ph.D**
FRCPS (London, Glasgow, Edinburgh), FRCPC (UK), Senior Consultant, Department of Paediatrics, United Hospital Ltd, Dhaka. Formerly, Professor, Academic Director & Director, Bangladesh Shishu Hospital & Institute, Dhaka.

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Call for Order 16297

Graduation ceremony held at Scholastica

STAR REPORT
A two-day programme marking A level graduation ceremony of Scholastica ended yesterday. A total of 275 students have been accredited with certificates at the ceremony, held in the STM Hall of Uttara Senior Section, said a press release. Shah Rafayet Chowdhury, co-founder and president of Footsteps, was special guest at the event. Section head and Principal Farah Sofhia Ahmed and Head of Academic Affairs Sabina Mustafa delivered speeches. A total of 162 students were awarded with certificates. Twelve of them received "Highest in subject", 34 "High honor" and 33 "Honor" certificates. On Thursday, the Mirpur branch of Scholastica Senior Section hosted its A level graduation ceremony.

Univ student

FROM PAGE 3
of Burn and Plastic Surgery where on-duty doctors declared him dead around 9:30am. The fire official said, "There was a lot of smoke in the room... We are suspecting that the air-conditioner caught fire due to a possible electric short-circuit."
"We are looking into the matter," he added. A school friend of the deceased said Mashrur got results of his bachelor's degree just a week ago. He was supposed to go abroad for higher studies. The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy, said Abul Hasan, officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station.

All set for grand

FROM PAGE 3
gazette would be issued within a day or two," an official of the division said yesterday. Meanwhile, the meeting also asked Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) to arrange a sufficient number of buses for the day. Contacted, BRTC Chairperson Tazul Islam said, "We will supply as many buses as required for the programme."
The June 9-meeting also directed the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) to install a divider on Buriganga Bridge and prepare the Fatulla-Munshiganj-Louhajang road properly. RHD was also asked to decorate Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway - officially known as Jatir Pita Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Highway - and some other structures, including the Bhanga intersection, with lights, billboards and digital banners. All agencies and companies under the division were also asked to decorate their important structures to mark the day. RHD Chief Engineer AKM Manir Hossain Pathan said they have given the necessary instruction to complete all the preparation before the inaugural programme.

Education Act

FROM PAGE 3
or both will be served. Responding to another question Dipu Moni said the government has taken steps to establish 10 government secondary schools in the vicinity of the capital to reduce the pressure of students in Dhaka schools. In reply to a query from State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Zakir Hossain said that there are 5,626 dilapidated primary school buildings and the government has taken steps to develop these schools.

From death row

FROM PAGE 5
hepatitis viruses, paralysis, diabetes, infertility, heart and kidney, the Rab director said. Replying to a query, Moin said this is an old case and the arrest of the accused of such a case can be delayed due to complexity in scrutinising their information, including name and addresses. On March 23 last year, a Dhaka tribunal sentenced Enamul and 13 members of the banned militant group Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Huji) to death and ordered that they be "publicly" executed by the firing squad. The militants planted bombs on the premises of Sheikh Lutfor Rahman Ideal College and a nearby helipad in Kotlilpara where Hasina was supposed to address a rally on July 22, 2000. A sedition case was filed against them for trying to kill Hasina, by planting the 76kg bomb which was found on July 21. Two days later, another 40kg bomb was recovered from the college premises. Mentionable, at least three such death row convicts in the case have been arrested by law enforcers recently.

145 families evicted

FROM PAGE 5
so far listed 835 families living at 17 most risky hills. The hills belong to different government, autonomous, private organisations and individuals. Meanwhile, the Chattogram met office recorded 104.9 mm rainfall in the last 24 hours till yesterday noon. According to the forecast, heavy rain is likely to continue in greater Chattogram, raising the possibility of more landslides. The district administrations has opened 19 makeshift shelters for them.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites proposals to hire technical organization to develop handbook & checklist for 'Model Enterprise Clinic' and guide for 'sustainability of enterprise clinics' and pilot it in 30 enterprise clinics. The bidding documents can be downloaded from the ILO Dhaka website under Procurement Notices at https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/WCMS_367536/lang-en/index.htm. The deadline for submission of proposal is **Wednesday, July 20, 2022, by 04:30 PM (BST time)**.

Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd.
(A Company of Petrobangla)
(Gas Bhaban, Mendibag, Sylhet-3100)

পাশে বাবদে সর্বস্বী যেন এবং সমস্তক প্যাস বিল পরিশোধ করুন।
পদ্মচক্র চক্র করি।
বিনা কারণে প্যাসের চুল্লী জ্বলিয়ে রাখা আর বিপদকে তাক্য একই বিষয়।

Ref. No. 28.16.9100.098.07.006.22/60 Date: 19/06/2022

Invitation for International Tender

01	Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources /EMRD.
02	Agency	: Bangladesh Oil, Gas & Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla).
03	Purchaser name & district	: General Manager (Planning), Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd. (JGTDSL), Sylhet.
04	Invitation for	: Procurement of Regulator, Relief Valve & Slam Shut-off Valve
05	Invitation Ref. No. & date	: 28.16.9100.098.07.006.22/60; Date: 16/06/2022
06	Procurement method	: Open Tendering Method.
07	Budget & source of fund	: Own Fund (Revenue).
08	Tender publication date	: 20-06-2022
09	Tender last selling date	: 02-08-2022 (During office hours on all working days.)
10	Tender closing date & time	: 03-08-2022, 11-00am (BST)
11	Tender opening date & time	: 03-08-2022, 11-15am (BST)
12	Name & address of the offices	
13	(i) Selling tender document	: i) Liaison Office, Jalalabad Gas Transmission & Distribution System Ltd, Petrobangla, Petrocenter (13th Floor), 3, Kawran Bazar CIA, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh. ii) Cash Counter, Gas Bhaban (1st Floor), JGTDSL, Mendibag, Sylhet, Bangladesh.
	(iii) Receiving tender	: Purchase Department, Gas Bhaban (5th Floor), JGTDSL, Mendibag, Sylhet, Bangladesh.
	(iv) Opening tender	: Committee Room, Gas Bhaban (4th Floor), JGTDSL, Mendibag, Sylhet, Bangladesh.
14	Eligibility of tenderer	: (i) The tenderer shall have a minimum of 10 (ten) years of overall international experience in the supply of materials in the oil and gas industries. ii) The tenderer shall have a minimum 05 (five) years of specific experience in supplying gas pipeline materials/ regulating & metering station/regulator to other than the Manufacturer's own country. iii) Valid ISO 9001:2015 Certificate issued to the manufacturer of the related materials (Mandatory). iv) Type test certificate as per OIML guideline issued in favour of manufacturer. v) All other detailed terms & conditions are given in the Tender Document.
15	Brief description of goods	: Regulator, Relief Valve & Slam Shut-off Valve.
16	Price of tender document	: BDT 5,000 (non-refundable)
17	Location	Sylhet, Bangladesh
	Tender security amount	BDT 8,80,000.00 or USD 10,000.00 or equivalent currency.
	Delivery period	90 (ninety) days from the date of receipt of LC.
18	Designation & address of the official inviting tender	: General Manager (Planning), JGTDSL, Gas Bhaban, Mendibag, Sylhet.
19	Contact details for any enquiry	: Purchase Department, JGTDSL, Gas Bhaban (5th Floor), Mendibag, Sylhet Email: dmpurchase13@gmail.com
20	The purchaser reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.	

GD-1289

"শেখ হাসিনার উদ্যোগ, মরে মরে বিদ্যুৎ"

ELECTRICITY GENERATION COMPANY OF BANGLADESH LIMITED
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
Siddhirganj 335 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant, Siddhirganj, Narayanganj.
Tel: 02-997744260; E-mail: zinmat@egcb.com.bd; Web: www.egcb.gov.bd

Ref: 27.27.2666.311.46.018.20.1394 Date: 16/06/2022

e-Tender Notice

Sl No	e-Tender ID	Invitation Ref. No.	Tender Description	Publication Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
01	700197	27.27.2666.311.46.009.22.1310; Date:06/06/2022	Procurement of Workstation/servers, Optical fibre, Ethernet cable and other IT accessories for innovation purpose	12-Jun-2022 23:00:00	03-Jul-2022 11:00:00
02	702341	27.27.2666.311.46.005.22.1300; Date:07/06/2022	Procurement of Network Switches and related accessories for GT, ST, BOP and other system	13-Jun-2022 25:40:00	07-Jul-2022 11:30:00

For detailed information please visit the following link:
• SI No.01: (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/resources/common/ViewTender.jsp?td=700197&h=f>)
• SI No.02: (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd/resources/common/ViewTender.jsp?td=702341&h=f>)
These are online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal. Only registered tenderer in the national e-GP system (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) can submit the tender. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP portal helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Executive Engineer (I&C)
Siddhirganj 335MW CCPP
EGCB Ltd., Siddhirganj, Narayanganj.

সোনালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
প্রধান কার্যালয়
৩৫-৪২, ৪৪, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ

সোনালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর পঞ্চদশ বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভার নোটিশ।

এই মর্মে নোটিশ দেওয়া যাচ্ছে যে, সোনালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর পঞ্চদশ বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা (15th Annual General Meeting) ০৭ জুলাই, ২০২২ তারিখ রোজ বৃহস্পতিবার বেলা ১১-০০ ঘটিকায় অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। উক্ত বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভার আলোচ্য বিষয়সমূহ নিম্নরূপঃ

-ঃ আলোচ্যসূচি ঃ-

- বিগত ২৩ আগস্ট, ২০২১ এ অনুষ্ঠিত সোনালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর চতুর্দশ বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভার কার্যবিবরণী নিশ্চিতকরণ;
- পরিচালকমন্ডলীর প্রতিবেদন এবং নিরীক্ষকের প্রতিবেদনসহ ২০২১ সালের ৩১ ডিসেম্বর সমাপ্ত বছরের স্থিতিপত্র এবং লাভ-ক্ষতির হিসাব গ্রহণ, বিবেচনা ও অনুমোদন;
- ৩১ ডিসেম্বর, ২০২১ সমাপ্ত বছরের লভ্যাংশ ঘোষণা;
- ব্যাংকের পরবর্তী বার্ষিক সাধারণ সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হওয়া পর্যন্ত নিরীক্ষক নিয়োগ এবং তাঁদের পারিশ্রমিক নির্ধারণ;
- পরিচালকমন্ডলীর অবসর গ্রহণ ও পুনর্নির্বাচন; এবং
- সভার চেয়ারম্যানের অনুমোদনক্রমে অন্য যে কোনো বিষয়।

ব্যাংকের সম্মানিত শেয়ারহোল্ডারগণকে উক্ত সভায় অংশগ্রহণ করার জন্য অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।

পরিচালনা পর্ষদের আদেশক্রমে
(ডাঃহিদুল ইসলাম)
কোম্পানি সেক্রেটারি।

GD-1272

IRCON INTERNATIONAL LTD.
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line Project, Khulna, Bangladesh

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No. IRCON/9943/BD.KHU-MON/TENDER/STEEL-RF/144/2022-24 Dt. 19.06.2022

Open Tender in Single packet bid system are invited from Best Bidder approved in railway projects/other govt. department of Bangladesh for "Supply of HYSB (Grade Fe-500) Steel reinforcement bars of various dia. conforming to IS 1786-1985 for Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line Project" (Quantity - 415 MT).

Estimated Cost of work : USD 4,03,342.69
Earnest Money Deposit : Not Applicable
Completion Period : 01 (One) month
Cost of Tender Document : Tk. 5,000/-
Last Date & Time for Bid Submission: Dt. 27.06.2022 upto 15.00 Hrs. Opening at 15.30 Hrs.
For further details and updates, Bidders may visit IRCON office, House No. 411, Road No. 4, Sonadanga RA, Phase-2, Khulna-9100, Project Manager/KMRLP Ircon International Ltd.
Contact No.01783965380, email at kmprbd9043@ircon.org

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Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science & Technology University

Office of the Director
Planning, Development & Works
www.director.pdw@bsmrstu.edu.bd

Ref. No. BSMRSTU/R/PD&W/R/2021-22/834 Date: 16/06/2022

e-Tender Notice

Sl. No.	Tender Id	Name of work	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
1	708963	Printing of Different Item in BSMRSTU, Gopalganj.	04-07-2022 Time 17.00	05-07-2022 Time 14.00	05-07-2022 Time 14.00

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

Deputy Director
Planning, Development & Works
BSMRSTU, Gopalganj-8100

GD-1268

EDCL ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka- 1208

PRESS TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tender are hereby invited from Genuine Manufacturers/Importers/Authorized dealers/Suppliers for supply of following item for EDCL, Dhaka on urgent basis:

Sl No	Tender No. & Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last Date of Closing & Opening
01.	EDCL (Dhaka)/PUR/ Press Ten./2022/230 Date: 19/06/2022	Validation equipments for HEPA Filter Efficiency Check & Integrity test of Engineering Department. (Details as per enclosed Technical Specification)	TK. 1250.00/set (Non-refundable)	Closing : 30/06/2022 At 12.00PM Opening : 30/06/2022 At 12.30PM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited (EDCL), Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The Tender will be accompanied by an amount of Earnest Money @ 2.5% through of Bank Draft Pay Order from any Schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of "Essential Drugs Company Ltd." without which the tender will be considered as non-responsive. The successful bidder shall furnish an unconditional performance Bond/ Bank Guarantee to the tune of 10% of the contract price within 05 (Five) working days after received of Purchase Order. It shall remain valid for 12 (twelve) months after the completion of the contract.

Essential Drugs Company Limited authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

General Manager
Procurement Deptt.
For: Managing Director

Size:-(6" x 4)

'Let's go home; let's go to Myanmar'

Say Rohingyas at rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Thousands of Rohingyas yesterday held a rally in Ukhaia of Cox's Bazar -- to tell the world that they want to go back to their homeland Myanmar, marking World Refugee Day.

Rohingyas joined the rally in front of the Balukhali 18 camp in-charge's office -- holding the national flag of Myanmar and banners and festoons with different demands.

The Rohingya community organised the rally on the first day of "Let's Go Home" (Bari Cholo) campaign launched at 23 camps -- 21 in Ukhaia and two in Teknaf upazila, an official of a government intelligence agency told The Daily Star.

They also handed out leaflets with their seven-point demand which includes repatriation of Rohingyas to Myanmar at the earliest, cancellation of 1982 citizenship act of Myanmar, ensuring dignity and security of Rohingyas in Myanmar, and ending of persecution of innocent people of Myanmar.

Additional law enforcers have been deployed and members of different intelligence agencies were also put on alert ahead of their programme.

One of the organisers, Zahid Hossain said, "June 20 is World Refugee Day. Ahead of the day, we want to inform the world -- through peaceful rallies -- that the Rohingyas are citizens of Myanmar."

"The State of Arakan (now Rakhine State) is our birthplace. We want to return to our homeland," he further said.



Under the instruction of the Chattogram District Administration, a worker strikes down the home of one of the 145 families living under the slope of the Foy's Lake hills yesterday. The decision was taken after four people were killed in a landslide recently. The authorities have jotted down a total of 835 families at risk of being landslide victims.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

LANDSLIDE RISK

145 families evicted from Ctg hills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

After a landslide killed four people recently, Chattogram District Administration yesterday evicted 145 families from hills near Foy's Lake.

Masud Rana, assistant commissioner (land) of the Chandgaon circle; Omar Faruk, AC (land) of Kattoli circle; and Al Amin, AC land of Agrabad circle, led the drive.

The utility connections were severed so that the occupants cannot return to the hills, said Plabon Kumar Biswas, staff officer of the administration.

The local administration asked them to move to safer places. According to the district administration, 28 hills in the district are vulnerable to landslide during the monsoon.

The authorities have

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Lightning strikes kill 4 in 2 districts

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed in lightning strikes in Cox's Bazar and Noakhali yesterday, according to reports from our local correspondents.

The deceased were identified as Md Imtiaz (25), Abdul Karim (30), Md Ali (40) and Abul Kalam Kalu (21).

They all died while fishing during downpour coupled with thunderstorm, said law enforcers and local administration.

In Cox's Bazar, Imtiaz from Chullarpara in Uttar Dhurong was struck by lightning around 11:00am in Kutubdia, said Kutubdia Police Station Officer-in-Charge Omar Haidar.

Abdul Karim from the same village came under lightning strike while he was on his boat, said the OC.

Md Ali from Shorotgona died in lightning strike as he was catching fish during thunderstorm in Pekua area, said Pekua Police Station OC Forhad Ali.

In Noakhali, Abul Kalam Kalu from Domarchar in Hatiya was struck by lightning while he was catching fish in the river Meghna, said Saidul Islam Forhad, member of Purbo Charbata Union Parishad.

Stranded on a hillock

Lone bridge connecting Tripura village to mainland collapses in flood



The only bridge connecting 30 families from the Tripura community to the mainland in Satchhari Nation Park area in Habiganj has collapsed due to the heavy rains and the ongoing flood situation in Sylhet.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

MINTU DESHWARA

Around 30 families from the Tripura community, living on a hillock in Satchhari National Park area in Habiganj's Chunarughat upazila, are in grave trouble. The only bridge connecting them to the mainland has collapsed due to the stormy winds and flood water flowing down the canal. As a result, they remain stranded on the hillock, unable to move to a safer region.

Local administrations are unable to help them as communication systems are cut off.

However, this incident is not their lone problem. In the last

four years, this community has been affected by landslides caused due to heavy rains. Many houses were destroyed in the process.

Again, some people are crossing the bridge, taking a risk on their lives amid high currents, fearing that the flood situation will only get worse.

Tripura rural headman Chittaranjan Barman said, "Our hillock has been crumbling for seven years now. In the meantime, four families have left as their houses were completely demolished. We have repeatedly urged the government to save this hillock, but to no avail." He said the bridge collapsed when it started

raining from early Tuesday morning. "It's impossible to use the bridge at present as the soil has been removed from underneath its base."

Mahmud Hasan, range officer of Satchhari National Park, said the local administration has been informed about the matter.

Contacted, Chunarughat Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Siddhartha Bhowmik said, "If the bridge is repaired now, it will collapse again if it rains. Technically we can't construct the bridge without building the guide wall, since otherwise it will collapse again. The Water Development Board has sent a proposal for its construction."

'Padma Bridge a milestone' Prof Ainun Nishat tells Barishal conference

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

A conference titled "Padma Bridge and its socio-economic implications" was held at Barishal University yesterday.

The Faculty of Social Sciences of BU organised the international conference at Jibanananda Das Conference Hall.

Dr Ainun Nishat, emeritus professor of Brac University and water resources and climate change specialist, joined the event as chief guest.

Dr Nishat said the Padma Bridge will open the door to possibilities in the southern region. This bridge will be a milestone in making decisions in the economy, he said.

"From the very beginning there were many challenges, the design had to be changed. We were also aware of the environment," he said.

Actions were taken so that there would be no disruption in movement of hilsa in the waters, Dr Nishat added.

He said the bridge will directly benefit four divisions including Barishal and Khulna.

Barishal University Vice Chancellor Prof Md Sadequul Arefin chaired the conference.

Three killed in road accident

UNB, Keraniganj

Three people, including two members of a family, were killed when a private car crashed into an electric pole in Nawbaganj upazila of Keraniganj early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as private car driver Monir Khan Billal (54), Abul Kashem (65) and his granddaughter Farhana (8).

The accident occurred around 4:00am when the car, returning from Dhaka airport after receiving a family member, hit a roadside electric pole on the Dhaka-Nawabganj Dohar regional road.

The accident left six people injured, said Sub-inspector Alamgir Hossain of Nababganj Police Station.

Kashem and Farhana died at a local health complex while Billal at National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) after locals took him there, the police official.

3 workers hurt in gas tank explosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Three workers of a tyre-burning factory were injured as its liquefied gas storage tank exploded in Birampur upazila of Dinajpur yesterday.

Birampur police said the factory was set up at Salbagan village for producing gas to burn tyres. It was being operated illegally, they said.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Parimal Kumar Sarkar echoed the law enforcers.

The workers were burning tyres at the factory since Saturday morning.

Suddenly, the tank exploded, injuring the three -- Roni Mia (18) from Sylhet, Mazedur Rahman (26) and Abdul Kader from Dinajpur.

Locals took them to Birampur Upazila Health Complex. Later, doctors referred them to Rangpur Medical College Hospital as they suffered severe burns.

'From death row convict to imam, cancer specialist'

Rab arrests him after 21 years of being on the run

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sheikh Enamul Haque -- sentenced to death for attempting to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina -- moved to Gazipur from Gopalganj in 2001, changed his name, and had a National ID card made with fake information later on.

He worked as an Imam at a local mosque in Shalna for eight years. By this time, he also taught at a homoeopathy college in the district.

In 2010, he moved to Dhaka from Gazipur and stayed in Uttara and Banasree. In 2015, he set up a homoeopathy college named "IK Homeo College Uttara" and continued running it till 2020.

Later, he set up a "Cancer Cure Centre" at his home in Uttara and started deceiving patients in the name of providing treatment.

Enamul was right under the nose of law enforcers in Gazipur and Dhaka for the last 21 years.

Finally, he was caught.

A team of Rab-1 arrested him from Uttara area on Saturday, Khandaker Al Moin, Rab's Legal and Media wing director, told a press briefing yesterday.

"Enamul had a general education but identified himself as a Qari, (who recites the Quran following proper rules). He worked as an Imam at several mosques in Gazipur," he said.

Apart from treating cancer patients, he claimed to be able to "cure AIDS". In addition, he claimed to be a successful doctor in treating diseases like

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

REMEMBERING

DR. TOUFIQ M. SERAJ

(1956-2019)

Founding Managing Director
SHELTECH GROUP

"It has been three years since you left us and each year has felt like an eternity. You will forever be in our hearts and the fondest of our memories."

SINCE 1988

TWO FILMS IN TWO COUNTRIES

Mithila's silver screen debut

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



I am very proud of the team and our director for deciding to donate the revenue from the film's first week to the flood victims in Sylhet and Sunamganj. It is our responsibility as artistes.

SHARMIN JOYA

Celebrated actress Rafiath Rashid Mithila recently made her silver screen debut in two countries on the same day. Anonno Mamun directorial "Omanush" in Bangladesh, co-starring with Nirab Hossain and Sauvik Kundu's "Ay Khuku Ay" in India, sharing the screen with Prosenjit Chatterjee.

Mithila is currently travelling to Tanzania for professional purposes, and missed the first showing of her projects. She shared her expectation, response and experience from working on the films with *The Daily Star*.

"I am excited as two of my projects have been released simultaneously, in two countries," said the actress. "However, I would have been happier if I could watch the premiere with my team."

Mithila's web project "Montu Pilot" has also recently released in Hoichoi, and the production is receiving a good response from audiences.

The actress shared that she will be

returning by the end of this month. Upon asking which film she wishes to watch first, Mithila responded, "It will depend on which country I land in first," she said.

While working on both films, Mithila garnered unique experiences from both the roles. "In 'Omanush' I played the role of a girl from the urban elite class, who was brought up in the USA and I spoke Bangla in an English accent," she says. "On the other hand, in 'Ay Khuku Ay', even though I have only a little screen time, I had to train myself on the mannerisms of a small town, lower middle-class mother."

According to Mithila, "Omanush" is a commercial film, intended for the mass audience, but its storyline makes the film unique from other commercial projects. "The entire film was shot inside a jungle, and it was quite challenging to adapt to shooting in that type of location," said Mithila. She also shared that she also liked Nirab's role and makeover for the film.

A lot of films have been releasing lately, mostly after the pandemic, and the artiste is hopeful about the film industry. "I think our film industry is being revived, as in a post-pandemic world there are a lot more films being released, which is a positive sign," she added.

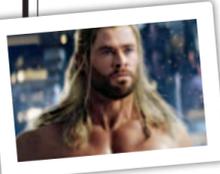
"We have many talented directors and artistes who are working in both OTT and on the big screen."

Mithila is currently awaiting a few upcoming releases. She shared that the first lot of Gias Uddin Selim's directorial "Kajol Rekha" has already been shot, they are currently waiting for the film to be completed. "I have also signed up for a role in a children's film, funded by the government, around the same time. Titled 'Nitishastro', the movie is slated to be released in July. "Maya", another project, will be releasing soon in Kolkata, and "Jole Jole Tara" currently awaits to be released in Bangladesh.

Chris Hemsworth's latest 'Thor' movie may be his last Marvel outing

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Hollywood star Chris Hemsworth portrayed the lovable God of Thunder "Thor" for over 11 years in eight films. However, the actor feels it's about time he leaves the Marvel Cinematic Universe for good.



During an interview with *Wired*, the actor was asked what will be his last Marvel movie. In his reply, he hinted that "Thor: Love and Thunder" might be his last movie.

"Well the last I shot was Thor: Love and Thunder and it might be my last Marvel movie, I don't know. It was a wild and fun and wacky experience, as all Taika Waititi movies are," said Hemsworth to the international platform.

Hemsworth debuted in the world of the Marvel Cinematic Universe with his superhit movie "Thor" in 2011.

During a disaster, saving animals is also the state's responsibility:

Jaya Ahsan



Jaya Ahsan is simultaneously lighting up Dhallywood and Tollywood with her acting chops, with successful movies on both sides of the border.

The star is voicing out for both people and animals who are the victims of the recent floods in Sylhet and Sunamganj.

In a Facebook post yesterday, she wrote, "According to the Disaster Management Act 2012, it is the state's responsibility to help animals, as well as people, during a natural disaster."

Jaya, who usually never opens up about negative comments by netizens, said in an interview to the *Times of India*: "I want to tell these people, if you have the courage, come face-to-face and say them to me. Why are you polluting social media?"

NEWS

Flood shelters Not all in press council on board

FROM PAGE 12
A positivity rate below five percent for two weeks at a stretch reflects the virus transmission was under control, according to the World Health Organisation.

The country witnessed the third wave of Covid-19 in January-March this year. After that, the positivity rate came below one percent. Since June 2, the transmission has steadily been rising.

With the latest count, the total number of confirmed cases rose to 19,56,327. With no Covid-related deaths reported yesterday, the number of fatalities remained unchanged at 29,131.

Floods coming

FROM PAGE 1
Meanwhile, Sirajganj district administration yesterday discussed necessary steps to provide relief materials to the flood-affected people, said Md Akteruzzaman, district relief and rehabilitation officer.

At least 10 villages in Tangail's Kalihati were inundated after an embankment of the WDB collapsed in Basail area.

The villages include Analiabari, Nordohi, Bhawal, Deopur, Bilchaya, Bhabla and Deolabari, said Salla union parishad Chairman Abdul Alim.

Low-lying and char areas in the district got submerged as the water level of the Jamuna river kept rising, reports our correspondent from Tangail.

Ataul Gani, deputy commissioner in Tangail, said they have already made all necessary preparations to tackle the flood situation.

FROM PAGE 12
the journalists in a new kind of quagmire using freshly enacted laws. We are responsible journalists and we practise objective journalism."

Iqbal Sobhan, editor of *The Daily Observer* and the prime minister's former information adviser, said, "This committee has not discussed the amendment. However, earlier committees have had discussions in this

Unity needed to see off hard times

FROM PAGE 12
pandemic, the two countries have worked closer than ever before.

At the meeting, Momen said that in view of the growing mutual dependency of their economies, the two countries need collective efforts to recover from the economic devastations caused by the pandemic and disruption of supply chain due to the Ukraine war.

Bangladesh, he said, has made a strong recovery from the pandemic but the volatility of markets following the Ukraine conflict is a cause for concern.

"We need collective,

regard. At the moment, the Council is basically a toothless tiger. They can only rebuke someone once their wrongdoing is proven.

"This law will put a stop to malicious journalism. I firmly believe that if someone does something wrong, they should definitely be fined. Those who practice objective journalism will not be affected."

"Before penalising someone, each and every

collaborative efforts to sustain our economic growth and maintain peace, security and stability in the region."

In the last 12 years, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Bangladesh government has taken "bold steps towards strengthening our relations with India in depth and dimensions," Momen said.

Jaishankar said India looked forward to working with Bangladesh to take bilateral ties to new domains -- Artificial Intelligence, cyber security, start-ups and Fintech.

He said the two countries also need to work

aspect will be thoroughly examined. The penalty amount will be determined based on the gravity of the crime. Ten lakh is just the maximum. In certain cases, the fine will be much less."

Utpal Kumar Sarker, executive committee member of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalist, said, "The amendment of this law was not in committee meeting agenda. This law cannot exist. We are against it and

we do not support it in any way.

"One cannot penalise journalists Tk 10 lakh. However, if a journalist is at fault, there should be a provision for imposing a punishment."

Mustafiz Shafi, editor of *Protidin* Bangladesh, told *The Daily Star*, "I do not know about this issue. I was included in the current committee as a member, but I have not been invited to any meetings so far."

Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity says at least 416 people were killed in 372 road accidents in 15 days from April 26 this year.

Of them, 145 people were killed in 164 accidents involving motorcycles, meaning motorcycles were involved in 44.08 percent of the crashes and 34.85 percent of the deaths, it said.

Road Safety Foundation portrayed a similar picture. The absence of adequate public transport, a hike in bus fares, and traffic congestion are pushing people to buy two-wheelers, which is considered as a risky mode of transport, experts said.

However, the government imposed bans on such vehicles on 22 national highways in 2015.

In this situation, the number of deaths involving bike accidents has risen sharply, which was evident during the Eid rush. Other recommendations include taking action against reckless driving and illegal overtaking; installing traffic signs and marking risky points.

Nat'l highways

FROM PAGE 1
Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader will take the final decision in this regard, they said.

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Palestinian shot dead by Israeli forces in W Bank

AFP, Ramallah

A Palestinian worker was shot dead by Israeli forces yesterday while crossing a security barrier in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian sources said.

The Palestinian health ministry identified the man killed as Nabil Ghanem, 53, from the West Bank city of Nablus.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said Ghanem was among the tens of thousands of West Bank Palestinians who regularly seek work in Israel. An Israeli army spokesperson said forces had shot at "a suspect who vandalised the security fence".

Ghanem's killing comes amid a spike in Israeli-Palestinian violence.

19 people, mostly Israeli civilians -- including 18 inside Israel and a Jewish settler -- have been killed in attacks by Palestinians and Israeli Arabs since late March.

Israeli security forces have responded with raids inside Israel and in the West Bank. Forty-five Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank.



Children of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan react to the camera from inside their makeshift tent on the outskirts of Lahore, Pakistan, yesterday, on the eve of 'World Refugee Day'

PHOTO: AFP

Macron battles for control of House as France votes

REUTERS, Paris

Voting was underway in France yesterday in a parliamentary election that could deprive newly re-elected centrist President Emmanuel Macron of the absolute majority he needs to govern with a free hand.

Initial projections were expected at 1800 GMT from the election that could change the face of French politics.

If Sunday's vote does not give his camp an outright majority it would open a period of uncertainty that could be resolved by a degree of power-sharing among parties unheard of in France over the past decades -- or result in political paralysis and repeat elections down the line.

Pollsters predict Macron's camp will end up with the biggest number of seats, but say it is in no way guaranteed to reach the 289 threshold for an absolute majority.

Lanka troops open fire to contain fuel riots

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's military opened fire to contain rioting at a fuel station, officials said yesterday as unprecedented queues for petrol and diesel were seen across the bankrupt country.

Troops fired in Visuvamadu, 365 kilometres north of Colombo, on Saturday night as their guard point was pelted with stones, army spokesman Nilantha Premaratne said. "A group of 20 to 30 people pelted stones and damaged an army truck," Premaratne told AFP.

Police said four civilians and three soldiers were wounded when the army opened fire for the first time to quell unrest linked to the worsening economic crisis.

As the pump ran out of petrol,



motorists began to protest and the situation escalated into a clash with troops, police said.

Sri Lanka is suffering its worst economic crisis since independence, with the country unable to find dollars to import essentials, including food, fuel and medicines.

The nation's 22 million population has been enduring acute shortages and long queues for scarce supplies

while President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has for months resisted calls to step down over mismanagement.

Sri Lanka has deployed armed police and troops to guard fuel stations.

Police said clashes involving motorists erupted at three locations over the weekend. At least six constables were wounded in one clash while seven motorists were arrested.

The government declared a two-week shutdown of state institutions and schools in a bid to reduce commuting and conserve depleting fuel stocks in the impoverished nation.

The country is also facing record high inflation and lengthy power blackouts. Four out of five people in Sri Lanka have started skipping meals as they cannot afford to eat, the UN has said.

NEW MILITARY HIRING PLAN India set to start enrolment this month: officials

REUTERS, New Delhi

Enrolment under India's new armed services recruitment plan will commence this month, top defence officials said yesterday, despite protests against a scheme that will drastically cut tenure and offer fewer service benefits at the end of contract. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government on June 14 set out a policy called Agnipath, or "path of fire", designed to bring more people into the military on four-year contracts to lower the average age of India's 1.38 million-strong armed forces. The scheme sparked violent protests in northern and eastern parts of the country, with thousands of young men attacking train coaches, burning tyres and clashing with officials, after which the government tweaked some of the rules. Under Agnipath, 46,000 cadets will be recruited this year, and only 25 percent will be kept on at the end of their four-year terms.

108 migrants rescued off Greece, 4 missing

REUTERS, Athens

Greece's coastguard continued to search for four missing migrants off the island of Mykonos yesterday after rescuing another 108 migrants on a sailboat that sent a distress signal late on Saturday, officials said. A coastguard vessel located the sailboat about 1.8 nautical miles southeast of Delos, a small island near Mykonos. The sailboat



was taking in water and was towed safely to a Mykonos port. Mykonos is a popular island in the Aegean sea known for its vibrant nightlife. The nationality of the 108 rescued migrants, among them 24 women

and 21 children, had not yet been determined, coastguard officials said. None wore life vests.

Greece is the main route into the European Union for asylum-seekers arriving from Turkey.

KABUL SIKH TEMPLE ATTACK IS claims responsibility

AFP, Kabul

The Islamic State claimed responsibility for an attack on a Sikh temple in Afghanistan that killed one community member and a Taliban fighter. The attack follows a visit by an Indian delegation to Kabul to discuss the distribution of humanitarian aid from India to Afghanistan. Afghan and Indian media reports said the delegation discussed with Taliban officials the possibility of reopening the Indian embassy, which shut after the Islamists seized power in August last year. The number of bombings across Afghanistan has dropped since the Taliban returned to power, but several attacks -- many targeting minority communities -- have rocked the country in recent months, including several claimed by IS.

Time is now the vital factor. Everything will depend on whether Ukraine can strengthen its ability to defend its soil faster than Russia can renew its capacity to attack. Our task is to enlist time on Ukraine's side.



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Prime Minister's Office
Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority
Dhaka Export Processing Zone
Ashulia, Savar, Dhaka-1349.
(www.bepza.gov.bd)

Ref. No. 03.06.2672.333.018.003.20-8259 Date: 15-06-2022

Auction Notice (2nd Call)

Sealed auctions are hereby invited from the interested National/Foreign Buyers/Companies in order to sell inventoried & Valuated Structure, Machinery, Equipment & other Assets by auction "as and where basis" of terminated Sweaters, Cardigan, Pool Over & other knitting items manufacturing industry named M/s. Avant Garde Fashion Ltd., Plot # 170-176, DEPZ (Ext. Zone) or to operate the enterprise. To participate in the auction the terms & conditions are stated below:

Terms & Conditions:

- Interested Persons/Organizations/ Existing enterprises of EPZ(s) (Local/Joint Venture/Foreign) or any other interested persons/organizations from outside EPZ can take part in this auction who are interested to purchase the Structure, Machinery, Equipment & other Assets "as and where basis" of the company by observing the existing rules and regulations in this regard.
- Successful bidder will have to pay VAT, TAX and other payable fees as per custom rules for the duty free imported Assets of existing Assets of industry to be taken out to the Domestic Tariff Area (DTA).
- Auction documents attached with a single pay order/bank draft/FDD from any schedule bank of an amount of 15% as earnest money (non-refundable for successful bidder & refundable for unsuccessful bidder) must be submitted in favour of BEPZA. Auction documents without earnest money will be treated as rejected.
- Inventoried Structure, Machinery, equipment & other Assets under the inventory list may be seen on 24/07/2022, 25/07/2022 & 26/07/2022 from 10.00 AM to 3.00 PM. Information regarding the visit and the list of Assets may be collected by contacting with the Executive Director, Dhaka EPZ directly.
- If the auction is accepted by the Authority, the successful bidder will have to pay the remaining 85% amount of the quoted price along with applicable TAX & VAT within 15 days to BEPZA through Pay Order/Bank Draft/FDD. Accordingly, the delivery of Structure, Machineries, Equipment & other Assets will have to be taken as per Customs & BEPZA rules.
- Auction Schedule may be bought by paying Tk. 5,000.00 (non-refundable) within 27/07/2022 during office hours from the Accounts Department of Dhaka EPZ, Chattogram EPZ, Adamjee EPZ, Mongla EPZ, Cumilla EPZ, Karnaphuli EPZ, Ishwardi EPZ, Uttara EPZ & Accounts Department of BEPZA Executive Office, Dhaka.
- Auction schedule may be dropped into the auction box kept at the office of Executive Director, Dhaka EPZ on 28/07/2022 from 10.00 am to 12.00 pm and Submitted Auction documents will be opened in the same date at 12:30 pm at the office of Executive Director, Dhaka EPZ in presence of the bidders (if any). Updated copy of VAT, TIN and Trade License shall have to be attached with the Auction schedule; but this condition may be relaxed by the Authority in case of fully new 100% foreign owned company interested to invest in the EPZ.
- Persons/Organizations/Investors who are interested to operate the closed industry will get priority in auction.
- Successful bidder will have to take permission to operate the industrial unit in the EPZ by following the project sanctioning procedure of BEPZA as per rules.
- The Authority reserves the right to accept any auction or reject any or all of the submitted auctions without showing any reason. The Authority also reserves the right to cancel the Auction and accordingly take next action if the desired rates are not obtained.

(Md. Abus Sobhan)
Executive Director
Phone: 02996689002
E-Mail: ed.depz@bepza.gov.bd

GD-1266

North-West Power Generation Company Ltd.
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Office of the Project Director
Rupsha 800MW Combined Cycle Power Plant Project, NWPGL, Dhaka.
Tel: 02-9145291-92; ext.-301, Fax: N/A, E-mail: pdlwg.nwpgcl@gmail.com

Ref: 27.28.0000.306.07.001.22.548 Date: 12-Jun-2022

eTender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the following procurements:

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Invitation Reference No.	Tender Description	Publication Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
1	709409	27.28.0000.306.07.001.22.548	Construction of Mosque under Rupsha 800MW Combined Cycle Power Plant Project in Khalishpur, Khulna	20-Jun-2022 09:59 A.M	05-Jul-2022 09:59 A.M

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

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

(Md. Mashiur Rahman)
Project Director (Chief Engineer)
Rupsha 800 MW CCPP Project
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GD-1271

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Time to put flood rescue on a war footing

Coordinated efforts needed to save life and minimise damage

IF the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Sylhet division has made one thing clear, it is the poor state of preparedness of a region prone to floods and a country otherwise known for handling flooding. True, the scale and intensity of the ongoing flood itself surprised many, with the state minister for disaster management and relief describing it as a once-in-122-years weather event. But that it caught us totally off guard is a sad reflection on our capabilities. The government's failure to translate satellite warnings into early evacuations on the ground, or to deliver emergency relief in cut-off villages on time, should be seen as what it is: a failure.

As of Saturday night, as much as 72 percent of the entire division, including the hardest-hit Sylhet and Sunamganj districts, went under water following heavy rains in the north-eastern region as well as upstream India's Meghalaya and Assam states. According to an estimate, some 64 upazilas of 10 districts have been affected so far. Communications have snapped, power supply has been cut off, and medical services suffered disruptions in most areas. People are struggling to get food, drinking water and shelter. Children and elderly people are said to be particularly at risk. And the situation may deteriorate further before it improves, with medium to heavy rainfall predicted to continue until Tuesday or Wednesday, by which time the flood may reach further inland.

But, in all fairness, a disaster of this scale cannot be tackled by the civil administration alone. At the moment, Bangladesh Army, Navy, Coast Guard, firefighters, law enforcers and local council representatives are cooperating with the administration to run rescue operations. The ministry of disaster management and relief has reportedly allocated 400 tonnes of rice, 41,000 packets of dry food and Tk 2.25 crore in cash as relief for the flood-hit people. These figures need to be improved, much improved, if all those who remain stranded or are in flood centres now are to be properly served. What has been particularly encouraging to see is the citizens-led initiatives to reach emergency relief and medicines to those in need.

The priority now is to streamline all such initiatives to make the maximum impact in terms of saving life and minimising damage. For that to happen, the government must take the lead. The next few days will be vital, even after floodwater begins to recede, because it may take some time before all means of online and offline communications are restored and we have the full picture of the devastations. We urge the government to place its rescue efforts on a war footing considering the emergency, and do everything necessary to take control of the flood situation as soon as possible.

Fix the issue of syndication for Malaysian labour market

Why not let all legitimate recruiting agencies send workers there?

AN alliance of recruiting agencies has called on the governments of Bangladesh and Malaysia to allow all valid local agencies to send workers to Malaysia. The issue of sending workers to the country has been a troublesome one for some time. There have been plenty of allegations of mismanagement and corruption in the past, followed by promises of reforms from both governments. But those reforms eventually failed to work with the Malaysian side cancelling the arrangements. The Malaysian government previously alleged that many Bangladeshi workers who went to the country struggled to find work because of mismanagement. Thus, it stopped accepting workers from Bangladesh saying that a government-to-government (G2G) agreement would solve it.

That again didn't work over allegations of mismanagement, as the agreement only allowed a 10-company syndicate to send workers. The Malaysian government then closed the facility for three years, only to now reopen it under the same syndication system – this time with 25 companies included. We fail to understand why, having previously complained that syndicates were causing issues, the Malaysian government would revert to the idea of recreating one. We are equally taken aback by the Malaysian human resources minister's remarks over the issue.

First, during his visit to Bangladesh, he told the media that the selection of recruiting agencies would be as per the decision of his country's cabinet. Then, after returning to Malaysia, he reportedly said it was not an issue to be discussed in the cabinet, leaving doubt over how the recruiting agencies would be selected. Needless to say, there are legitimate concerns, particularly given past experiences, that lack of clarity in this regard would mostly harm potential Bangladeshi migrant workers. Previously, many migrant workers had to pay huge sums of money – beyond what the government agreement required off them – to go to Malaysia. Such situations led to the agreement getting cancelled, which again cost them. Therefore, why is it that the two governments are willing to return to an arrangement that leaves scope for corruption and mismanagement to potentially ruin a beneficial arrangement?

Many of the past instances of mismanagement, it has to be said, happened on the Malaysian side. Thus, we call on the Malaysian government to fix those issues, and consider allowing all valid Bangladeshi recruiting agencies to send workers. The Bangladesh government, on the other hand, needs to ensure that it fully addresses the possibility of corruption on its end, so that these hard-working people can get jobs in Malaysia with any hassle. That will benefit both countries.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

Confronting genocidal regime and global apathy

The Rohingya perspective



ON THE SHORES OF (IN)JUSTICE

Dr CR Abrar is an academic and heads the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU).

CR ABRAR

“WE have been victims of genocide for decades and acknowledged as the most persecuted minority, yet the world has cared little about our legitimate rights and claims. It is time we took charge of our own destiny.” This was the clear and unequivocal message of an assembly of Rohingya elders who met in the historic city of Sarajevo last month, a city that experienced the brutality of another genocidal regime almost three decades ago. Ironically, in the latter case, the genocide was brought to an end by the collective resolve and decisive action of some of the most powerful nations in the world.

This conclave of influential Rohingya leaders from across the world, including the US, Canada, the UK, Germany, Australia, Japan and Bangladesh, was held at a time when atrocities by the military regime of Burma (Myanmar) continues against the Rohingya people, rendering tens of thousands displaced and a huge number fleeing the shores of Arakan (Rakhine). It happened when millions of Rohingyas live in dire and uncertain conditions in other countries (many without legal status), when tens of thousands, without any protection structure, remain vulnerable to human traffickers and smugglers, when their welcome and hospitality in the host countries become increasingly tenuous. The meeting took place when countries that once embraced Rohingya refugees inspired by humanitarianism now begin to show signs of compassion fatigue and express their irritation of Rohingya presence in the land openly, when the mandated body to ensure global peace and security, the UN, persistently fails to ensure any redress, and when a section of powerful states unashamedly continue to bolster the genocidal regime, while others dither to recognise the mass atrocity against the Rohingyas as genocide and act accordingly.

The Rohingya leaders reminded the world that the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness are inalienable rights of every human being, and such rights cannot be suspended, usurped or violated by any government, people or community. They further reminded the world that the global community has committed that the perpetrators of genocide and crimes against humanity, whether state or non-state actors, and those who aid and abet such acts must be held accountable and must face justice individually and collectively, and it is the duty of all actors to prevent torture, atrocities, acts of genocide and mass violence and restore, protect, promote and respect human rights for all.

At a time when the Rohingya issue appears to be losing global interest, the leaders demanded that the international community firmly keep the cause at the forefront of their diplomatic agenda, including that of the UN Security Council, General Assembly, and Human Rights Council. Expressing satisfaction with the positive

developments at the International Court of Justice and the recent determination of Burmese state crimes in Arakan as genocide by the US, they expressed deep concern at the continued genocidal acts by the Burmese authorities in Arakan and at the lack of progress to bring about a political solution.

The Rohingya elders called upon the international community to

commit to rescind the discriminatory citizenship law to ensure equal rights and status of the Rohingyas as Burmese citizens, upholding the sociocultural, political, and economic rights of the population, and accept the UN Fact Finding Mission's report and recognise the Rohingya genocide. They also urged the NUG to act through its National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) to include the Rohingyas as a representative ethnic group and include them and other affected minorities in designing an inclusive federal democratic Myanmar.

In view of the ongoing armed conflict between the Arakan Army and the Burmese government in Arakan, the Rohingya leaders called upon the United League of Arakan and the Arakan Army to uphold and respect the human rights of the Rohingya people, and to cease the ongoing violence, harassment and seizure of Rohingya lands and imposition of arbitrary tax and create enabling conditions for peaceful coexistence of the communities.

While they acknowledged the generous admission and support granted to Rohingya refugees by several countries, especially Bangladesh, the leaders urged those countries to continue to extend their support and protection of all refugees, including women, children, the elderly, widows and persons with disabilities, and called upon them to continue to treat the Rohingyas with compassion, guided by humanitarianism and international standards. They further urged the countries to provide appropriate documentation to the Rohingyas in irregular status so that their rights and dignity are protected, to offer amnesty to those in detention for irregular entry, and to uphold the principle of family unity. In view of recent moves by some states to forcibly deport Rohingyas to Burma, the leaders appealed to desist from such acts as the life and liberty of such returnees could be at risk. They reminded the states that such deportation amounts to the violation of the principle of non-refoulement, an important tenet in international human rights law.

In order to make effective and fruitful use of resources mobilised to support the refugees, the Rohingya leaders urged engaging the refugees in the planning and decision-making processes on matters that affect them and their community, in line with the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees.

At the Sarajevo meeting, the Rohingya elders called upon all host countries to uphold the rule of law and international norms and practice in the treatment of Rohingyas, including their right to education, skill development, health, work, security and freedom of movement. They appealed to the Bangladesh government to ensure proper and credible investigation into cases of killings, arson, harassment and violence involving Rohingya refugees and provide them with access to justice; to ensure that any relocation of Rohingya refugees to Bhasan Char is voluntary and informed, and the rights of the people on the site are upheld and respected; and to allow registered NGOs and donor agencies safe and unhindered access to continue to provide humanitarian aid to the refugees.

Despite facing immeasurable hardships and challenges for generations, the Rohingyas have shown a remarkable degree of resilience and fortitude. They also demonstrated their commitment to non-violence to realise their political goals. However, the continued genocidal practices of the Burmese regime with relative impunity and the accompanying apathy of the global community have begun to take a toll on such an approach. The world must acknowledge that it is unfair to expect the Rohingyas to continue to adhere to non-violent methods when they are subjected to extreme violence and gross injustice for generations. They must acknowledge that all peoples are entitled to exercise the right to self-determination and the right to self-defence when faced with existential threat. History is replete with evidence, including that of Bangladeshis, that if those rights are denied, then the affected people have the right to resort to arms, and the Rohingyas are no exception.



▲ After decades of inaction on the world's part in redressing their plight, the Rohingyas now want to take charge of their own fate.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

comprehensively investigate the ongoing acts of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes in Burma, and demand the prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators of such violations, and to protect the Rohingyas from further harm.

To ensure accountability of atrocities, the Rohingya elders extended their support to the establishment of an Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) by the UN Human Rights Council through Resolution 39/2 to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law committed in Myanmar since 2011. The leaders also urged the international community to extend solidarity and support to the Gambia as it defends its case referral to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and to explore all avenues of justice and accountability for the Rohingya people, including through invoking universal jurisdiction.

The Rohingya leaders called upon all states – individually and collectively as well as on regional and international bodies, including Asean, Bimstec and the OIC – to impose targeted sanctions on those individuals in the Burmese military regime that are responsible for the atrocious crimes, until such time as the state ends genocide, recognises the Rohingya ethnic identity under the Burmese state framework, restores citizenship rights to the Rohingyas, rescinds oppressive and apartheid kinds of laws, and returns properties and land to the displaced Rohingya people and other affected minorities.

At a time when moves are afoot for repatriation of some refugees from Bangladesh to Burma at the behest of a powerful state without ensuring due protection, the leaders underscored that it is the duty of the international community to ensure that the Burmese authorities create enabling conditions in Arakan for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees and those forcibly displaced within Burma. They also demanded that refugees should be repatriated only after ensuring their protection in Burma and securing informed consent of the individuals and households concerned. They unequivocally stressed that the right to return to one's homeland is an inalienable right of every person, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1966 International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Reacting to the international community's high but unrealistic expectation from the National Unity Government (NUG) in Burma, the Rohingya leaders noted that its Rohingya policy lacks direction, coherence and transparency. They demanded that

the NUG must publicly

As of August 25, 2021, nearly 890,000 Rohingya refugees have found shelter at the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, according to the UNHCR.

FILE PHOTO: AFP



Government urgently needs to arrange relief for all flood-hit people



M ASADUZZAMAN

Dr M Asaduzzaman is former research director, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

WE have not seen such devastating floods in the country since 1988. Every year during monsoon, the haor areas of Sylhet and Sunamganj districts experience flooding – but it has never been this catastrophic. Within a very short period of time, the entirety of the two districts were flooded. It is impossible to describe how

inadequate compared to the needs of the people.

The lack of coordination among different government agencies has always been a major barrier in implementing any plan effectively. That has also been the case during this flood. As we know, and has been reported in the newspapers, there were forewarnings that the flood situation would get worse. Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) knew about it around 15 days ago and informed the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) about it so that they could take measures to save the crops, etc. But we do not know if the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) had this information. Had all the government agencies concerned worked together, the

Why not declare Sylhet, Sunamganj as ‘disaster zones’?



DWOHA CHOWDHURY

Dwaha Chowdhury is a journalist at The Daily Star.

IT was pitch-dark when I entered Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital on Saturday afternoon. The ground floor was submerged in knee-high floodwater. I climbed up the stairs to the first floor to find an elderly patient named Ana Miah lying on the floor. As the ground floor of the hospital got flooded that morning, all the patients

to be rescued. Even the shelters in the remote areas are waiting for relief.

All means of connectivity are gone. One can hardly find a boat to wade through the flood; the boatmen who are willing to give a ride are asking for an exorbitant amount of fare. Sylhet Deputy Commissioner Md Mozibur Rahman said even the administration is struggling to find boats to extend rescue and relief work to the remote areas. Police, army, navy and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel, as well as the general public, are trying to provide help in any way possible.

But what shocks me is the nonchalant attitude of our public representatives. Most of the MPs, upazila and union chairmen, and city and municipality

What shocks me is the nonchalant attitude of our public representatives. Most of the MPs, upazila and union chairmen, and city and municipality councillors are absent in this moment of crisis.

councillors are absent in this moment of crisis. Only a few people, like Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmed, were seen coming to his constituency to extend humanitarian support to the distressed people.

And I have been seeing a general lacklustre attitude towards flood management for a while. Since the flash floods in 2017 destroyed Boro harvest in the country's northeast region, I have been constantly searching for a concrete explanation as to why floods have been so devastating in the region in recent times.

The answer is complex. Experts have tried to explain it in many ways, but it boils down to a combination of climate change, destruction of hills, deforestation, unplanned development work in the wetlands, and the massive loss of navigability in all the rivers in the upper and lower Meghna basin.

All of these reasons are the results of human actions.

Has the government come up with any solutions to manage floods? I see none. After repeated calls from concerned citizens, it is rather disappointing to see the government only focused on infrastructural development, with little to no concern about conserving nature and the environment.

Several concerned organisations and citizens have already urged the authorities to declare the flood-affected areas as a “disaster zone,” per the Disaster Management Act, 2012. Doing so will empower the local administrations to work more extensively and ease getting adequate support from all government offices.

The flood is just the beginning of the disaster. It will take months to rehabilitate the affected population and rebuild what has been damaged by the calamity. I hope the authorities concerned are preparing for that.



were moved to the first floor. Ana Miah was struggling to breathe, no oxygen available for him as the central oxygen line had been disconnected, thanks to the power outage that engulfed not just the hospital, but the entire Sylhet district.

While this is the scenario in the city, one can only imagine the suffering the people in the remote areas of Sylhet and Sunamganj have been enduring since Wednesday. Just imagine: Your house is under floodwater, there's no electricity, your phone is out of charge and mobile network, there's no food or any hope of being rescued.

People from outside the flooded region, who have family members and/or friends stranded in the area, are similarly distressed as they can't contact their loved ones. Social media is swamped with posts from worried users seeking any update about their stranded loved ones or any information of rescue attempts.

After several attempts, I managed to establish contact with some remote areas. All I heard was people in distress, pleading

▲ **Sylhet railway station and its surrounding areas are submerged in waist-high floodwater.**

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

The first thing that the government should have done as the flood situation was getting out of control was declare a local emergency and engage the army and others to immediately start helping people with relief and additional emergency services.

badly the people have been suffering, as they have been living under the open sky for days now. They are waiting desperately for food and shelter. But surprisingly, the government does not seem to have an efficient relief management plan for the victims. We have seen in the media that there is a shortage of relief, especially baby food, in the affected areas, which should not have been the case. We have seen how the local government officials are seeking assistance from people. In the current circumstances, the government must immediately provide the flood-hit people with dry foods such as biscuits, breads, pulled rice, and safe water so that people can at least survive. The government must gear up its relief operations.

I think the first thing that the government should have done as the flood situation was getting out of control was declare a local emergency and engage the army and others to immediately start helping people with relief and additional emergency services. I remember, in 1988, people in Dhaka got united to help the flood victims across the country – they made roti for them and went to the regions to help the victims. This time the situation may not be as bad, but still the government's measures seem to be very

damages done by the floods could have been reduced.

We have also heard that many of the development projects taken in that region are actually making the flood situation worse. People are particularly mentioning the all-weather road going through the haor area which has become a major barrier for the water from upstream to flow downstream. The government must look into these allegations and correct the faults that have been created in the name of development. We also know how the rivers and water bodies in the Sylhet and Sunamganj areas have been grabbed and filled up over the years. The Surma River has literally been choked up by plastic pollution. Don't our authorities know these facts? If they do, what have they done to save these water bodies? And, will we take any lesson from this devastating flood that has been wreaking havoc in Sylhet and Sunamganj?

Already many other districts have been affected by flood. And we do not know when the situation in Sylhet and Sunamganj will improve. For now, the government's only priority should be to save lives by providing the affected people with food, water, medicine, and shelter.

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Office of the Patiya Pourashava

Patiya, Chattogram

E-mail: xen.patiya.pou@lged.gov.com

Memo No. 00.00.1561.033.09.05.2022-380

Dated: 19-06-2022.

e-GP Tender Amendment Notice

It is hereby informed all concerned that the e-GP tender called of Patiya Municipality Memorandum No. 00.00.1561.033.09.01.2022-296 dated: 22/05/2022 has been amended as follows due to unavoidable reasons.

01	Tender ID	696638
02	Name of Project	Patiya Pourashava Infrastructure Development Project (PPIDP).
03	Package No.	PPIDP/CC-04
04	Description of works	Construction of 03-storied (With 5-storied Foundation) Munsif Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisarad Community Resource Centre.
05	Amendment/Corrigendum	Old Value New Value
Corrigendum made of BOQ Item No. 21 & following date		
Document last selling date & time	22/06/2022 17:00	03/07/2022 17:00
Meeting end date & time	15/06/2022 17:00	21/06/2022 17:00
Closing date & time	23/06/2022 15:00	04/07/2022 15:00
Opening date & time	23/06/2022 15:00	04/07/2022 15:00
Last date & time for tender/proposal security submission	23/06/2022 12:00	04/07/2022 12:00

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

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

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

Sd/-

Parakram Chakma
Executive Engineer

Patiya Pourashava, Chattogram

GD-1270

ADMISSION ANNOUNCEMENT

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For details please contact the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka. Telephone # 58613295, 01850211315, 01825008319

The faculty reserves the right to change the terms of this advertisement if found contrary to the rules of Executive MBA program.



Deborah Zannat at Fakir Nahir Shah's Hemashram in 2016. Photo: Olivier Remualdo, All rights reserved

A novice's sadhusongo

Sadhusongos are strange occurrences. People from all walks of life temporarily leave their worries behind, and join together in a time-space beyond ordinary time and space. Some off-times were also offered at different times during the event, which gave me an opportunity to try my hand at turning chappattis (rotis), and take short walks around the village. The attraction of two foreigners in this remote village did not allow for any time alone, and rather than fight the current, I chose to "go with the flow".

DEBORAH ZANNAT

In the early 2000's, a concept restaurant was opened in my birth-town, Paris, France, named "In the Dark" ("Dans le Noir"). Clients enter a completely dark space, and are served a set menu which, obviously, they cannot see. I have never been to this restaurant. But when I think back on the first time I came to Bangladesh in early 2016, springs to mind what I imagine a dinner at "In the Dark". As a yoga teacher and lifelong spiritual seeker, I had come to Bangladesh compelled by curiosity: I wanted to see a sadhusongo. There was no set plan, only the contact of a contact in Dhaka, and a strong belief in luck (or fate, however one may choose to call it). Through some online research and after watching a video produced by UNESCO, I knew these were festivities organised by members of the lineage of the world famous spiritual master Lalon of Cheuriya (Kushtia), which tend to last 24 hours, take place in remote villages, and include music and food. Little was I prepared for what I was about to witness, and the subsequent upheaval it provoked in my life.

I was accompanied by a close friend of mine, Olivier Remualdo, who took the pictures that illustrate this article. Both Olivier and I had spent extensive time in South Asia, him as a professional photographer, me as a *sadhak* and academic researcher. As most Western city-dwellers who have previously visited the sub-continent, we were expecting sensory overload, and a chaotic loss of personal space and privacy, even possibly agency. The godlike importance of hospitality is not specific to the region, nor does it generally entail being taken on as the host's own – guests tend to remain foreigners, however well they may be welcome.

the use of woodfire to cook, the intense smell of the earth and the exuberant vegetation, in which so many insects and birds find shelter. Our first night on that sadhusongo adventure was spent at Hem Ashram, the akhra of the sadhu who is now my guru, Fakir Nahir Shah. Razon Fakir, one of his close disciples, who became my husband in 2017, cooked rice with reverence on an earthen stove outside, under an overarching sky lit both by myriad stars and fireflies. The feeling of peace and wonder, of having finally reached home, did not require

human beings. And so, the food is not tasted as it is cooked, nor is it consumed until it reaches the plate of the sadhus, very much as "prasad" is offered in temples all over the sub-continent. In sadhusongos, the taste that can be felt on the tongue, the smell of the food, as nice as it may be, is not nearly as satisfying as the deep taste that awakens within the soul. Having spent time in yoga ashrams in Europe and India, I had read about these concepts, the philosophy of this type of cooking and taking food. As a long-term vegetarian, I was already

which I dispelled by some jesting. Smile is an international currency that does not require any knowledge of economics.

The path of the Baul-Fakirs of Bengal is often described as "humanism". But it not only places the human being at the centre of life. It has also displaced most of the region's religious practices, to refocus them on special humans who, as a result of their spiritual application and the grace of their guru and lineage, have developed the qualities that liberate humanity from its instinctive nature. According to the core teachings of the Baul-Fakirs, a list of qualities – named the ten directions, to echo the ten directions of the world, in a microcosm-macrocosm mirror-play typical of esoteric lineages – are to be acquired by the disciples for them to be considered religiously accomplished. Another two sets of three concepts complete the injunction. The final set, namely faith, unity and discipline, crowns the previous thirteen aspects. They imply that personal achievements and social participation are, again, different scales imbricated like old-fashioned Russian nested dolls. As the different chapters of the event unfold, mainly through music, discussions, devotional prostrations, offerings and the sharing of meals, these three qualities are embodied, and revealed.

I remember being particularly mesmerised by the songs of devotion after the evening prostrations, sung as one voice, highlighted only by the clapping of hands. The only words I could understand then, which were repeated time and again, were "guru" and "Lalon"... but the atmosphere that was created still resonates in my heart every time I now join my voice to the group. Not speaking the language, not having previous knowledge of the culture, led me to feel these three qualities, unity, discipline and faith, particularly strongly. The last musical moment of the event, in the early afternoon of the second day, which culminated in what could be called ecstatic dance as flower petals were showered in an atmosphere heavy with incense smoke, made me feel as if we were all cells of the same being, each with their own path and responsibility, each as vital as the other. I guess most people who label themselves as "humanists" like to say that they believe we are all one. The category who prefers pointing fingers would say the human race is only divided because of politics, greed and egotism. The more spiritual type will quote ignorance, fear and confusion. In a sadhusongo, or on a larger scale, in the society of sadhus, simplicity is a keyword, that enables very different people to share what can be described as the most basic aspects of the human life, creating this simple joy of being together. To reach this state beyond language, beyond culture, beyond discomfort, was for me a turning point. It lifted up a veil, and revealed a space deep within that I had merely glimpsed from afar. A peaceful sense of gratitude was made present, and I held on to it dearly.

After the event, we went back to Hem Ashram. And a crazy decision starting to emerge from deep within: I had to engage in this path. I had to partake in these three qualities. Whatever the cost. And this oath I took with myself then, in February 2016, still carries me to this day, through the good and the bad, through trials tougher than I could ever have imagined, and moments of joy more intense than I thought I had the strength to bear. Here and abroad, people inevitably ask me what I possibly could have gained by leaving my luxurious life in beautiful Paris, to settle in conservative countryside Bangladesh. I usually suggest they ask me what I have lost. And the answer is, everything that can weigh down a human being longing not for unreined freedom, but for inner liberation. Paraphrasing Nietzsche, "it takes chaos to birth a dancing star". Or in other words, it is "In the Dark" that light is created.

Deborah Zannat is a Baul-Fakir disciple, Lalon Shah's lineage.



Bowing to the gurus during "bhakti" (Arshinagar, Ada Baria, February 2016). Photo: Olivier Remualdo, All rights reserved.

any language. Looks and smiles were enough.

We made for the sadhusongo the next morning, on a "pakhi van". The sight of the fields filled with fully-grown tobacco plants, and the smell of smoke as they are being processed by hand in small adobe houses, induced an even deeper sensorial release. We were greeted by Fakir Mohorom Shah, the sadhu who was organising the sadhusongo, on the occasion of his wife's death anniversary. After a short walk on a narrow dirt path raised between two ponds, we were seated in a large makeshift tent, in which other members of the congregation were already settled. Within a few moments, everyone was called to sit in line, as a group of disciples started organising the washing of hands and plates, and the distribution of the lunch dishes, rice, vegetable curry and lentil soup. Thick incense smoke was passed in heavy earthen holders to sanctify the meal, one plate after another. The sadhu gave a short benediction, then started eating, and so did we.

No one will doubt the stark difference in taste, in emotion and in intention between

convinced that in the sustenance department, we should eat to stay alive, healthily and happily, rather than live to eat. However, this lunch was my very first direct experience of what is called "seba", or "devotional service", as it can be related to food. The deep experience of "seba" was renewed as many times as we were served food. Two traditional meals even now summon up strong sensorial memories pertaining to that very first time I tasted them: jhal muri in the evening, rice pops mixed with fresh cilantro, thinly cut green chilli and mustard oil; and the breakfast of chira, or rice porridge, with banana ripened on the tree and homemade hyperlocal fresh cow's milk yogurt.

Sadhusongos are strange occurrences. People from all walks of life temporarily leave their worries behind, and join together in a time-space beyond ordinary time and space. Some off-times were also offered at different times during the event, which gave me an opportunity to try my hand at turning chappattis (rotis), and take short walks around the village. The attraction of two foreigners in this remote village did not allow for any time alone, and rather than fight the current, I chose to "go with the flow". I started listening more closely to the rhythm of Bengali, which I was finding particularly pleasing. For some reason, Bengali reminded me of Spanish. As I later dedicated myself to learn the language, I was able to understand Spanish and Bengali grammar do have some common points. But for the time-being, children and women would point at different items around us, and enunciate the Bengali word, sometimes even remembering the English translation. As a very independent-minded self-relying Western city-dweller accustomed to solitude, the sheer concentration of population was both exhilarating and tiring. Many people in the villages never get to meet a foreigner, and their spontaneous curiosity led to some laughs, as well as some unease. One occurrence of the latter was waking up from a short nap and being met by the face of a woman staring at me from a few inches. One occurrence of the former was being dressed up in a white saree in the fashion of the fakiranis by one of the aunties, and the shape of my lean, sporty body prompting awkward looks and probes,



Deborah Zannat receiving a blessing from Fakir Nahir Shah (Arshinagar, Ada Baria, February 2016). Photo: Olivier Remualdo, All rights reserved.

commercial food and home-made food. But as I was to understand later, in this community food is prepared as devotion. The acts of cooking and eating are entirely turned towards the inner God, an offering to this deep mysterious presence within the heart of



Deborah Zannat and Olivier Remualdo with Fakir Nahir Shah on the "pakhi van" to the sadhusongo, February 2016.

As we embarked on a bus from Dhaka to a village of which we didn't know the name, let alone the location on a map, I absolutely had no idea that I was about to find a place I could truly call home. I have referenced "In the Dark", as I then did not understand Bengali, and participating in an intimate sadhusongo in a small village at the border with India relying only on sensorial observation, empathy and intuition was a profound experience that I will try to summon up here. I understand that the society which has subsequently embraced me, and the festivities to which I now regularly take part, are as foreign to some Bangladeshis as it was to me then. May this article be as interesting to the reader as if I was inviting them to this concept restaurant – the degree being different, of course.

Most living beings rely on their senses to organise their surroundings, and give meaning to the world and their own life within it. The sensory overload that can be felt in the villages in Kushtia is firstly provoked by the vigorous relationship to the elements: the strong presence of water and the ever-blowing wind,

Star

DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 20, 2022, ASHAR 6, 1429 BS

SPORT

Hurkacz brushes aside MEDVEDEV

World number one Daniil Medvedev lost his second straight ATP grass-court final when he was brushed aside by Poland's Hubert Hurkacz in Halle on Sunday. Medvedev had few answers as he crashed to defeat inside 64 minutes as Hurkacz offered no respite in a 6-1, 6-4 victory.



'Not the Roach factor, it's our vulnerability against movement'

SPORTS REPORTER

West Indies quick Kumar Roach was once again the tormentor-in-chief against Bangladesh in Antigua. The 33-year-old right-arm pacer made a last-minute entry to the playing eleven after passing a fitness test and ultimately made a big impact with a match haul of seven wickets, six of which were those of Bangladesh's top-order batters.

If we look at Roach's records against Bangladesh - 41 wickets in 10 Tests - a question might come to someone's mind: Why Bangladesh batters have repeatedly struggled against the veteran pacer?

Rather than pointing to the 'Roach-factor', former Bangladesh captain turned selector Habibur Bashar said it is the batters' apparent frailty against pace and movement as the main reason behind the continuous batting meltdowns.

"You have to praise Roach for his brilliant effort. But it's not only the Roach factor rather any sort of movement apparently creates anxiety among our top-order batters. A little bit of seam, swing and even turn for spinners can confuse most of our batters," opined Bashar.

To back his claim, Bashar also reminded how the same batters succumbed to South Africa's spin duo of Simon Harmer and Keshav Maharaj in the away series in March-April and surrendered to Sri Lankan pace duo Asitha Fernando Kasun Rajitha at home in the recent Test series.

"We are not good against spin away from home and interestingly, we struggled against pace at our home. So how can we say that one pace bowler turned a demon for us? It's very difficult to find the exact answer to why our batters failed to cope with minimum movement from the pitch," Bashar added.

ROACH'S RECORD AGAINST BANGLADESH



West Indies pacer Kumar Roach has scalped 41 wickets in 10 Tests at 19.60 average against Bangladesh. Roach bagged 36 wickets in six home Tests, 12 of those in the two Tests in Antigua. His career-best Test figures of six for 48 came against Bangladesh in Grenada in 2009.

Roach mentioned during a post-match discussion with the commentators that he made the green patches on the surface do the work for him, something that Bashar thought could have been neutralised if the batters were able to stick to the basics.

"See, Roach kept things very simple and tight. But our batters could not do the simple things to avoid the mistakes of the past. If you just go through the pattern of dismissals in recent Tests, you will find a lot of similarities and [Najmul Hossain] Shanto is the best example of it," said Bashar.

Roach informed that he focused on his skill development when he realised he could not generate as much pace as he did at the start of his career and Bashar wondered whether the Bangladesh batters worked to hone their skills.

"When you continue to repeat the mistakes, you wonder if the batters did their homework. It's very important for any player to analyse his game but most of our batters' approach hardly indicated that," Bashar added.

Maybe it is time for Bangladesh top-order batters to take a leaf out of Roach's operating manual, stated clearly in a statement he made: "I love my stats. I look at my stats every night. Even if I am not playing."

"[The toss] of course played a significant part. That said, we needed to apply ourselves better. Going into lunch six wickets down wasn't a good thing. That first session killed the match for us. We have been having a lot of collapses and it doesn't help the bowlers. All of the bowlers bowled their heart out. Nurul (Hasan) showed a lot of character. I was quite positive while batting and I wasn't thinking what the ball would do. If it was there to be hit, I did."

Shakib Al Hasan

"I thought Bangladesh bowled well. We batted more than 100 overs which was quite good as well. Roach bowled well. Roach is a champion and he adds a lot to the team. It (the win) motivates us to push ourselves more. Very pleasing to see Campbell get a half-century. He has good ability."

Kraigg Brathwaite



Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan congratulates two overnight West Indies batters Jermaine Blackwood and John Campbell, who took 26 minutes on the fourth morning of the first Test to confirm a seven-wicket win at the Vivian Richards Cricket Stadium in Antigua yesterday.

PHOTO:AFP

'We missed out on an opportunity'

SPORTS REPORTER

Captain Shakib Al Hasan said all Bangladesh batters have got some technical flaws and the visitors need to display a combined effort to change their fortune in Test format as Bangladesh faced a comprehensive seven-wicket defeat over West Indies in the first of the two-match Test series in Antigua yesterday.

Bangladesh were bundled out for just 103 in the first innings and batting remained the main area of concern for the Tigers in the second innings as well.

On five occasions in their last five Tests, Bangladesh lost their top five batters inside fifty or less runs on the board. According to Shakib, it is not just about the mental aspect but the technical flaws need to be rectified quickly in order to change the fortune of his side.

"There are a lot of technical problems and I think we don't have many technically sound players in our team. Everyone has got some technical flaws and they have to find a way on how to score runs and stay in the crease, which is very important," Shakib told the media after the game yesterday.

According to the Tigers new Test captain, the first hour of the first innings was crucial as the visitors were never able to come back since then. However, Shakib also finds some positives as he praised the bowling department and urged the batters to give something for the bowlers to fight

for. "But overall I am happy with the overall game as I won't say there were higher expectations than that. I think we had the ability to do something good and we missed out on an opportunity," he said.

The question was there for Shakib, who scored fifties in both the innings, on how to work on the technical aspects of the batters. Shakib said that it's the coaches' job and rather he would want to stick to his own responsibility and urged others to play their roles properly.

The 35-year-old also stated that despite the poor show from all the batters the Tigers were not far behind and a tally of 500-550 runs in two innings could have helped the visitors become more competitive in the match.

Meanwhile, Mominul Haque continued his poor form and the left hander was dismissed on naught and four in the two innings and the question was there on whether Mominul needed a mental break in the second Test. Shakib replied, "It's hard for me to say but the thing is I always talk with him and will have it again and if he [Mominul Haque] thinks he needs a break, that can happen."

"But we have just finished a game, so it won't be a good thing to come to a decision now. Since we have a couple of days before we start training in St Lucia, we may be able to think about what should be done for the betterment of our team."

SCORES IN BRIEF (1ST TEST)

WEST INDIES vs BANGLADESH

BANGLADESH: First Innings -- 103 all out and Second Innings -- 245 all out (Shakib 63, Nurul 64, Joy 42; Roach 5-53, Joseph 3-55)

West Indies: First Innings -- 265 all out and Second Innings -- 88 for 3 (Campbell 58 not out, Blackwood 26 not out; Khaled 3-27, Shakib 0-3)

Result: West Indies won by 7 wickets
Player-of-the-match: Kumar Roach

PRIME MINISTER STRESSES ON RURAL SPORTS

UNB, DHAKA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday said that it is essential to put more emphasis on the country's rural sports. The premier was addressing a reception accorded to the 2021 SAFF Champion Bangladesh Under-19 Women National Football Team at her office in the city.

Noting that her government introduced the Bangabandhu Gold Cup and Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Gold Cup at the primary school level, she emphasized on arrangement of inter-college and inter-university competitions to pick players for the national teams.

"I think inter-school and inter-college competitions should be started soon. We'll do everything what is necessary for this," she said.



Hasina said her government is constructing a mini-stadium in every upazila for development of all types of sports. The construction works of mini-stadiums continue in 186 upazilas, she said.

She directed the sports ministry to come up with a fresh project to construct the mini-stadiums in other upazilas. "I don't want the delay (in construction of the mini-stadiums). I want the mini-stadiums ready in 493 Upazilas", she said.

The PM urged the industrialists and businesspeople to come forward in helping the players and thus promote sports.

"It is not right that you would just do business, set up industries and make money. You will have to do something for the country," said the prime minister. In the function, the financial honorariums were provided to a total of 88

sportspersons, including 33 members of the team.

The 55 other sportspersons include 33 from 'Mujib Borsho FIFA International Football Series 2020 and 22 from Bangabandhu 4-Nation Physically Challenged Cricket Tournament 2022.

SAFF-2021 Champion Women U-19 National Football Team's Captain Maria Manda, player Monika Chakma and chief trainer Golam Rabbani Choto, Bangladesh Physically Challenged Cricket Team Captain Faisal Khan and Bangladesh National Football Team Captain Jamal Bhuyan received cheque of financial honorariums from the prime minister.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel and Bangladesh Football Federation President Kazi Salahuddin also spoke at the function.

Nissanka helps SL cruise past Aus

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka went 2-1 up on Sunday as they cruised to a six-wicket victory over Australia in the third one-day international thanks to a brilliant Pathum Nissanka century.

Set a tricky 292 to win after a Travis Head 70, the hosts won comfortably with nine balls to spare in Colombo, in their second straight victory in the five-match series.

Maxwell bowled Niroshan Dickwella for 25 but Nissanka and Kusal Mendis ground down the injury-depleted Australian attack of Josh Hazlewood, Jhye Richardson and Matthew Kuhnemann.

Mendis retired hurt unbeaten on 87 and was replaced by Dhananjaya de Silva who made 25, but Nissanka clung on until almost the end, caught off Richardson for 137 off 147 balls.

Richardson then bowled captain Dasun Shanaka for a duck, but Charith Asalanka - with an ice-cold six in the penultimate over off Hazlewood - and Chamika Karunaratne saw Sri Lanka home.

Earlier Australia braved a spin onslaught by Sri Lanka to reach 291-6 in their 50 overs after being invited to bat first.

Vandersay ended with figures of 3 for 49. Already missing Marcus Stoinis, Kane Richardson and Mitchell Starc, Australia left out Steve Smith after the batsman injured his left quad batting in Thursday's 26-run defeat in Pallekele.

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JP against EVM use in nat'l polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition in parliament Jatiya Party yesterday said they did not want the use of electronic voting machines in the next national election.

Leaders of JP said this at a views-exchange programme on the EVMs with the Election Commission at the latter's office in the capital.

"We informed the commission that there is no need of using EVMs in elections," JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnun told The Daily Star after the programme.

"A public perception is that using EVMs in polls means there is a scope of manipulation and a special party can do something," he said at the event.

He added that if the EC holds the polls to all 300 constituencies via EVMs, it would create a "haphazard situation" as voters were not ready for that.

Sheikh Shahidul Islam, general secretary of another faction of Jatiya Party, said if the commission conducts polls through EVMs in some parliamentary seats and the rest with traditional ballot papers, it would be "discriminatory".

Bangladesh Nationalist Front President Abul Kalam Azad said the problem was "goons" forcibly pressing the EVM buttons for the voters, not the EVM itself.

At the programme, Shameem Haidar, acting secretary general of Zaker Party, proposed introduction of e-voting so that people can cast vote from home.

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A motorcyclist struggles to keep balance of his vehicle while going over fallen cables in front of the Wasa Bhaban in the capital's Karwan Bazar. The Dhaka North City Corporation cut off TV and internet cables installed illegally on both sides of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday, but did not remove those from the paths. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

RIISING COVID RATE

Flood shelters left vulnerable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate yesterday reported 7.38 percent Covid positivity rate, the highest in the last four months.

A top health official said the transmission might spread faster among people living in shelter centres in the flood-hit areas for not following health safety rules properly.

Most of the cases in the latest spike, however, show "mild illness" with lower hospitalisation rate and no mortality, the official said.

Prof Tahmina Shirin, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, told The Daily Star, "The transmission has been increasing. But it may be faster among those living in shelter centres."

"The rise in transmission was obvious as none of us was maintaining health rules, though the Covid-19 has not been eliminated from the country."

Urging people to wear masks, she stressed the need for taking extra caution for immunocompromised people.

The Covid-19 cases in the flood-affected Sylhet division, meanwhile, were not reported yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

The previous day, only 39 samples were tested in the division.

Yesterday, 596 new Covid cases were detected countrywide, which is also the highest after March 4 when 604 cases were logged.

Yesterday's positivity rate was the highest after February 20 when the rate was 7.82 percent.

Over 86 percent of the tests were done in Dhaka city yesterday.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

FINING JURNOS UP TO TK 10 LAKH

Not all in press council on board

SUMON ALI

The Press Council Act-1974 is being amended with a provision of fining a journalist up to Tk 10 lakh for participating in illegal activities.

Bangladesh Press Council Chairman Justice Nizamul Huq Nasim confirmed it to The Daily Star.

"The work to amend this act began in 2016. I joined the Council in 2021... I have heard that this [proposed amendment] is with the Cabinet Division now."

Upon the cabinet's approval, it will be placed before parliament.

He further said all the journalist-representatives in the Council have agreed to the proposed amendment. "Our records say so."

Justice Nasim said that this issue has been regularly discussed with the current committee as well.

"We have no record stating that the members have opposed this," he added.

Meanwhile, senior journalist Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, who is currently a member of the Council, said that no such discussion took place during the meetings of the current Council.

"This Council was formed in late 2021 and this issue did not crop up. A discussion to increase penalties and empower the Council took place five years ago but I don't know when such an amendment was formulated. I don't know what was recommended."

"I cannot comment on it without seeing it," said Bulbul, who was also in the Council of 2017.

"The intention was to enhance the power of the council. As per the existing law, if a journalist gets accused, the council can rebuke them. The publications which will go against the sacred statute of journalism can be spared if they admit their wrongdoing. At the same time, repeat offenders can also be exposed to exponentially harsh punishments."

"However, Press Council cases can only be filed against organizations, not against any journalist."

Saiful Alam, editor of Dainik Jugantor, said, "The current committee had five meetings, but amending the law was not discussed in any of them. Individuals who were part of the committee five years ago had talked about enhancing the judicial authority of the council."

"However, I do not know anything about the 10 lakh taka fine issue being included in the amendment."

Regardless of the situation, journalists should always work independently, he opined.

He said, "We never move away from this demand. We are against each and every impediment that comes in front of independent journalism. It is not even appropriate to think about controlling journalism with so many different laws."

"There are many laws already. I am not for putting

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

INDO-BANGLA JCC MEET

Unity needed to see off hard times

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Bangladesh and India yesterday agreed to work closely to further strengthen cooperation in the areas of common rivers and water resource management.

The two countries have also pledged to expand collaboration on cyber security, IT and food security.

The decisions were taken at the seventh Joint Commission meeting, co-chaired by Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi.

The return of the forcibly displaced people (Rohingya refugees) to Myanmar from Bangladesh is of great importance, a joint statement said.

The two foreign ministers reviewed all areas of ongoing cooperation, including the implementation of decisions taken during the visits of Indian President Ram Nath Kovind in December last year and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March 2021.

They also reviewed decisions taken at the virtual summit between the prime ministers of the two countries in December 2020 as well as the last virtual meeting of the JCC in September 2020.

This was the first in-person JCC meeting convened since the onset of the pandemic.

The ministers expressed satisfaction that despite challenges posed by the Covid-19

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



An under-construction bridge over the Louhajang river collapsed in Tangail town on Friday night. Locals allege it was due to poor construction work. The bridge is being constructed at the cost of Tk 3.6 crore.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

Windies thump Tigers to take 1-0 lead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As expected, it did not take long for West Indies to wrap up the game against Bangladesh as the Caribbean side romped to a seven-wicket victory inside just 30 minutes on the fourth morning of the Antigua Test on Sunday.

With that win, West Indies also took a 1-0 lead in the two-match series, inflicting on the Tigers their fifth defeat in last six Tests. Bangladesh also linger at the bottom of the ICC World Test Championship 2021-2023 with 16 points from seven defeats, one win and a draw in nine matches.

Chasing a meagre 84-run target, the Windies overnight batters -- John Campbell and Jermaine Blackwood -- took only seven overs to take the

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Boxing class in Mexico breaks Guinness record

AFP, Mexico City



Mexico City has set a world record for hosting the largest boxing class ever, with 14,299 people taking part in a massive lesson in the capital's central plaza, Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum announced Saturday.

That huge turnout easily surpassed the previous record, set in Moscow in 2017 when 3,000 people showed up for boxing class.

After Saturday's attendance figure was certified by a Guinness World Records team, Sheinbaum posted a video thanking "the champions and those who made this great triumph possible."

Hundreds of people had gathered early for

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