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Let's Co-Create!





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Padma Bridge a symbol of nat'l pride

Says PM; 'no room for doubt about work quality'



UNB, BSS, Dhaka

Describing the Padma Bridge as the symbol of national pride, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said no one can raise questions about the quality of the bridge which opens on Saturday.

"We have not compromised on the construction standards of the Padma Bridge. It has been built using the world's latest technology and materials. The total construction process has been completed maintaining the highest standards," she said.

The PM was speaking at a press conference at her office in the capital.

Citing remarks of some critics of the government over the bridge issue, Hasina said, "I hope no one can raise any criticism of the quality of the Padma Bridge."

Replying to a question, she said Bangladesh got back its dignity with the construction of its longest bridge with its own funds in a brave move after the World Bank withdrew from the project.

"I thank them [World Bank]. Because we constructed the Padma Bridge with our own funds with courage after that incident took place."

The premier said Bangladesh will never bow down to any pressure, rather it will march forward with the strength of the people.

Hasina said the government has constructed the bridge overcoming all conspiracies and obstacles. She thanked the country's people and expressed gratitude to them for standing by her government.

Talking about the cost of the bridge, Hasina said as per the revised DPP, the total allocation is Tk 30,193.39 crore, but the allocation for the main bridge is Tk 12,133.39 crore (including Tk 1,000 crore for installation of 400-KV electricity transmission line and gas pipeline).

She explained the reasons behind the rise in project cost. Those include increasing the length of the bridge from 5.8 km to 6.15 km, changing

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In this photo released by state-run news agency Bakhtar, Afghans look at destruction caused by an earthquake in the province of Paktika, eastern Afghanistan, yesterday.

PHOTO: CNN

Earthquake kills 1,000 in Afghanistan

Toll expected to rise; hundreds more injured in the country's deadliest tremor in 20 years

AGENCIES

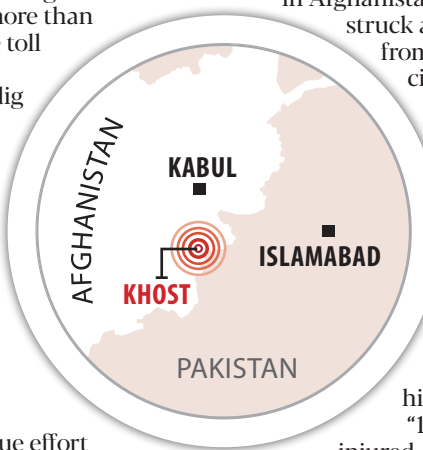
The death toll from a powerful earthquake in Afghanistan yesterday hit 1,000, disaster management officials said, with more than 600 injured and the toll expected to grow as desperate rescuers dig through collapsed dwellings.

Houses were reduced to rubble and bodies swathed in blankets lay on the ground, photographs on Afghan media showed.

Helicopters were deployed in the rescue effort to reach the injured and fly in medical supplies and food, interior ministry official Salahuddin Ayubi said. "The death toll is likely to rise as

some of the villages are in remote areas in the mountains and it will take some time to collect details," he said.

Yesterday's quake was the deadliest in Afghanistan since 2002. It struck about 44 km (27 miles) from the southeastern city of Khost, near the border with Pakistan, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said.



Disaster management officials said at least 1,000 are dead and 600 injured. However, local officials put the number of injured higher.

"1,000 dead, 1,500 injured, and this number might go up, many families have been lost. Injured people have been taken to Kabul and Gardez," Mohammad Amin Hozafa, information

and culture director of Paktika, told Reuters.

"People are digging grave after grave," he said. "It is raining also, and all houses are destroyed. People are still trapped under the rubble."

Photographs and video clips posted on social media showed scores of badly damaged mud houses in remote rural areas. Some footage showed local residents loading victims into a military helicopter.

Most of the confirmed deaths were in the eastern province of Paktika, where 255 people were killed and more than 200 injured, Ayubi added. In the province of Khost, 25 were dead and 90 had been taken to hospital.

Haibatullah Akhundzada, the supreme leader of the ruling Taliban, offered his condolences in a statement.

Mounting a rescue operation will prove a major test for the Taliban, who took over the country last August and have been cut off from much

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A week on, relief still elusive

42 confirmed dead in floods

STAR REPORT

At least 42 people have died in the devastating floods that have hit the country's northern and northeastern districts, while lakhs are stranded as new areas are inundated every day.

The Directorate General of Health Services in a press briefing yesterday said 13 people died in Sylhet, five each in Sunamganj, Mymensingh, Netrakona and Jamalpur, three each in Sherpur and Moulvibazar, two in Kurigram and one in Lalmonirhat between May 17 and June 22.

Meanwhile, the cry for relief is intensifying in flood-affected areas as thousands of people are still awaiting relief materials even after more than a week of flooding.

"There has been chest-high water in our village for the last six days, but no one gave us anything. Give us something!"

This was the plea of a middle-aged woman from Majergaon village upon seeing a correspondent of this newspaper on Banglabazar British Road in Sunamganj's Dowerabazar upazila.

She finally received some relief around the same time the correspondent reached the spot.

"This is the first relief we received since we took shelter on the road."

It took five hours by boat to reach the spot from Gobindaganj area of Chhatak upazila. A

Bangladesh Army speedboat with relief materials also reached the spot yesterday for the first time after a week of flooding.

But according to Debajit Singha, additional divisional commissioner of Sylhet, there are many villages in the bordering areas of Sunamganj where no help, even from the army, could reach.

"We could not reach remote villages or establish contact with them for the first three or four days. But now that mobile networks have been back up, we have learnt that no one actually went hungry as locals came forward with support and youths played an important role in standing beside the affected people," he said.

The flood situation is improving in Sylhet and Sunamganj, but deteriorating in Moulvibazar and Habiganj in the northeast and Kurigram, Sirajganj, Bogura, Gaibandha and Tangail in the north, according to yesterday's bulletin of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre.

"It's been seven days since we are in the flood shelter after our village was flooded, but no relief has reached us," said 65-year-old Nabir Hossain of Purbo Daikhavara char in Kurigram's Ulipur upazila on the bank of the Brahmaputra.

Azizul Haque of Bamongram village in Sirajganj's Shahzadpur upazila said, "I first lost my house in the floodwater and then the house we took shelter in was flooded. We are now barely surviving and in need of food and drinking water."

Jahurul Islam of Manik Bair char in Sariakandi upazila in Bogura said, "The swelling Jamuna river not only flooded but also eroded 200 houses. We have nowhere to take shelter and no safe place to go."

Meanwhile, in Tangail, many people were seen taking

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"I first lost my house in the floodwater and then the house we took shelter in was flooded. We are now barely surviving."
Azizul Haque of Sirajganj

Businesses get loan repayment relief

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

Large industries, SMEs and the flood-hit agriculture sector will enjoy a flexible loan repayment facility up to December this year as Bangladesh Bank yesterday revived the partial loan moratorium amid a deepening economic crisis.

The central bank move came after the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the country's apex trade body, pushed for a relaxed loan classification policy till December.

The managing directors of banks and economists, however, opposed any relaxation of the loan repayment rules since it worsens the financial health of lenders and nurtures a bad habit among borrowers.

They argued that though the relaxed loan repayment facility brings down the amount of bad loans for the time being, it ultimately pushes up the amount of defaulted loans.

Yesterday, the BB said it noticed that borrowers are struggling to repay loans due to the hike in prices of raw materials and other inputs as well as transport costs.

It pointed to the negative impacts of the lingering coronavirus pandemic, rising virus infections, floods in the northern and northeastern regions and escalated commodity prices globally for the Russian-Ukraine war.

The deferral support is aimed at retaining the momentum in economic activities and the credit growth in the private sector, the BB said in a notice.

As per the BB's latest instructions, borrowers in large industries would be able to avoid falling into the defaulted loan category by repaying half of the loans payable for the April-June period.

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Flood affected people stretch their arms to collect relief material near a flooded area following heavy monsoon rainfalls on the outskirts of Sylhet yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

3 reportedly shot dead in CHT

Police say no bodies or evidence found yet

STAR REPORT

Unidentified armed criminals reportedly gunned down three people and injured three more, including a child, in a remote hilly area of Rangamati's Bilaichari upazila on Tuesday evening.

Police and locals said the incident took place at Saijam Para in Ward-2 of Baratholi union.

However, upon visiting the spot yesterday police and army officials could not find any bodies there.

One of the dead was identified by locals as Sitaram Tripura of the Tripura community.

The Daily Star could not independently verify the identities of the dead or the injured.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Mir Mudasser

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An aerial view of the houses submerged in water from the overflowing Jamuna river at Khatiyamari char under Chaluabari union of Bogura's Sariakandi upazila. Twenty-five thousand people have been stranded by the floods in the union, and over the last week about 100 houses have been washed away, according to local administration. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

1,135 new Covid cases recorded

Doctor dies; coronavirus sub-variant found in Jashore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of daily Covid-19 cases in the country crossed 1,000 mark after nearly four months, with 1,135 new cases reported in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

On February 25, the country logged 1,409 cases and 11 deaths.

Besides, another Covid-related death was recorded during the 24-hour period.

The daily positivity rate rose to 13.30 percent yesterday, up from 11.03 percent on Tuesday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

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Lysychansk under 'massive' bombardment

Ukrainian drone strikes oil refinery inside Russia

AGENCIES

"Massive" Russian bombardment of the strategic eastern city of Lysychansk and key city Severodonetsk has been "hell" for soldiers there, Kyiv said, while insisting that defenders would hold "as long as necessary".

Moscow's troops have been pummeling eastern Ukraine for weeks and are slowly advancing, despite fierce resistance from the outgunned Ukrainian military.

With President Vladimir Putin's forces tightening their grip on the strategically important city

of Severodonetsk in the Donbas, its twin city of Lysychansk is now coming under heavier bombardment.

"The Russian army is massively shelling Lysychansk," Sergiy Gaiday, governor of the Lugansk region, which includes both cities, wrote on Telegram.

"They are just destroying everything there... They destroyed buildings and unfortunately there are casualties."

He later wrote that "it's just hell out there" after four months of shelling in Severodonetsk, across

the Donets river -- while adding that "our boys are holding their positions and will continue to hold on as long as necessary".

Russian forces have been occupying villages in the area, and taking control of the two cities would give Moscow control of the whole of Lugansk, allowing them to press further into the Donbas, reports AFP.

On the Russian side, authorities in the Ukraine-bordering Rostov region said yesterday that a fire at an oil refinery might have been caused by a Ukrainian drone strike.

ADB okays \$41.4m grant for Rohingyas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Asian Development Bank yesterday approved a \$41.4 million grant to help improve infrastructure and manage the basic needs of Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh.

With the grant, 200 water and sanitation facilities will be built and a piped water supply system will be established in Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar, the ADB said in a press release.

It will, among others, upgrade four health care facilities for severe acute respiratory infection, expand six primary health care and diagnostic centres in Teknaf and improve skills of healthcare workers in the district.

To strengthen disaster resilience and help protect displaced persons, six school-cum-cyclone shelters in local primary schools and one multipurpose cyclone shelter, which will also function as a Covid-19 isolation centre, will be constructed.

Besides, about 13 kilometres of rural access roads leading to the camp facilities will be upgraded.

SSC, equivalent exams likely after Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Already postponed multiple times due to floods and coronavirus, this year's SSC and its equivalent Dakhil exams may take place after the Eid-ul-Azha.

Because of the delay in holding the SSC exams, the HSC and its equivalent Alim exams may be delayed too, said top officials of the Secondary and Higher Education Division yesterday.

On June 17, the authorities postponed the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and its equivalent exams for an indefinite period as the floods in the country's northeast worsened.

The exams were scheduled to be held from June 19 to July 6.

Earlier, it was deferred by about four months because of the coronavirus pandemic. Usually, the SSC exams take place in February.

DSA case: BNP leader Alal gets anticipatory bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted six weeks' anticipatory bail to BNP Joint Secretary General Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal in a case filed under the Digital Security Act for making derogatory comments about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The HC also directed Alal to surrender before the trial court in six weeks.

The bench of Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim and Justice Shahed Nuruddin passed the order.

Saiful Islam, president of Khulna Sadar Thana Awami League, lodged the case against Alal on December 13 last year over making derogatory remarks on Hasina at a meeting in Khulna on October 1.

Footage of the BNP leader making the comments went viral on social media.

A week on, relief still elusive

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shelter on the embankment along the Jamuna.

"We do not know where to go and no assistance has reached us," said Jorina Begum of Konabari village of the district's Bhuapur upazila.

Rafiqul Islam, president of Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila Awami League, said, "While visiting a shelter at Bhukshimoil union, I learned that around 40 families in the centre were going hungry for the last three days as they last received some dry food before that. I urge

the government to allocate more for the flood-affected people."

While thousands of people are in dire need of relief, the local administration, even with the army's help, is struggling to reach remote areas due to adverse conditions.

Karim Mahmud Limon, a social worker of Purba Jafong union in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila, said, "There are many villages in the upazila where no government and private relief reached. Hundreds of local youths are working

round the clock with the help of solvent people, but we have barely reached 10 percent of the flood victims."

Kabir Ahmed, a member of Companiganj upazila in Sylhet, said, "The villages located farthest from the main roads are suffering the most. For around 4,000 people in three villages in my ward, I received only 70 sacks of food aid and one tonne of rice, which is woefully inadequate. Relief from private organisations is also not reaching us as this area is remote."

Major AWM Hasibul Hasanof Sylhet region of Bangladesh Army said, "Strong current, excessive rain and the risk of losing navigability hampered relief works in the early days of flooding in Sylhet and Sunamganj. Now, as the water level has reduced in some parts, we are reaching the farthest areas with relief." [Moudud Ahmed Sujon, Dwaha Chowdhury, Mintu Deshwara, Mirza Shakil, Humayun Kabir, S Dilip Roy and Mostafa Shabuj contributed to this report]

Padma Bridge a symbol of nat'l pride

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the design to keep the scope for river vessel movement under its 37 spans, incorporating steel structures instead of concrete ones and enhancing the depth of the piling works.

The rise in the cost for rehabilitation of the people who lost land to the project and compensation against acquired land are also among other reasons.

The PM said her government takes up every project following proper assessment of the returns. Though the World Bank cancelled its funding for the Padma Bridge project, Bangladesh has been able to get the fund back for other projects, she added.

Lambasting those who criticised the government for construction of the bridge with own funds, Hasina said they have a lack of self-confidence. "But I am the daughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I say what I can do. Inshallah, I must do what I say."

Responding to a question over the construction of a second Padma bridge between Manikganj and Rajbari, the PM said its necessity must be assessed first.

Regarding the possibility of lodging a case against the conspirators over cancellation of the WB funding for Padma Bridge, she said, "Time will say what to do."

About launching an investigation against Prof Muhammad Yunus over donating \$6 million to a foundation (Clinton Foundation), the PM said, "You journalists can carry out the investigation as you are doing such kinds of work."

She said if she started the probe, journalists would say the investigation was being done out of vengeance.

"We have 54 private banks and they have managing directors. How many MDs have the financial capacity to donate such a huge amount of money to a foundation? So, it will be better to get the matter investigated by the

journalists."

The PM said she has more information about how much money Prof Yunus has in banks and how much money is being laundered by him.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, said she does not want to stay in power snatching people's votes.

She said she is the person who has been outspoken against military dictators, has carried out movements, embraced jail, repression, and faced bomb and grenade attacks. "The development of the country has been possible as I am able to protect democracy and maintain its continuation."

She urged all to see the changes in the country since 2009.

The premier said, "Is there not a single qualified leader of the BNP in Bangladesh so that they can make him the party chairman?"

Turning to the flood situation in the country's northeast, the PM said the government will construct bridges and culverts at all

the identified points of roads for the drainage of flood water in order to prevent such calamities in future.

Noting that the flood has affected 11 districts, Hasina said the flood water was channeled smoothly after cutting roads at different points at her directive.

"I will construct bridges or culverts at those points where the roads were cut or damaged so that water does not get stagnant there anymore in future."

The PM said the government has taken timely measures to ease the sufferings of the flood-affected people.

She said she has also directed the authorities to take steps to face the post-flood situation, particularly to prevent post-flood diseases and to boost crop production.

Senior Awami League leader Amir Hossain Amu, Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud, and PM's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus were present, among others.



A fire from a gas processing plant continues to burn behind a field of wheat after the plant was hit by shelling a few days prior in Andriivka in the Kharkiv region as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues in Ukraine.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Earthquake kills 1,000 in Afghanistan

FROM PAGE 1
international assistance because of sanctions.

Shaking was felt by about 119 million people in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India, the EMSC said on Twitter, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties in Pakistan.

The EMSC put the earthquake's magnitude at 6.1, though the USGC said it was 5.9.

Adding to the challenge for Afghan authorities is recent flooding in many regions, which the disaster agency said had killed 11,

injured 50 and blocked stretches of highway.

The disaster comes as Afghanistan grapples with a severe economic crisis since the Taliban took over as US-led international forces withdrew following two decades of war.

In response to the Taliban takeover, many nations imposed sanctions on Afghanistan's banking sector and cut billions of dollars worth of development aid.

Humanitarian aid has continued, however, with international agencies, such as the United Nations,

operating.

The United Nations' humanitarian agency said it was scrambling to get emergency shelter, trauma care and food aid to the scene of the deadly earthquake, reports AFP.

Unicef, the UN children's agency, has also deployed at least 12 teams of health workers to Gayan, and several mobile health and nutrition teams to Barmal district in Paktika province and Spera district in Khost province, OCHA said.

A foreign ministry spokesman said the Taliban would welcome

international help. Neighbouring Pakistan said it was working to extend assistance.

Large parts of South Asia are seismically active because a tectonic plate known as the Indian plate is pushing north into the Eurasian plate.

In 2015, an earthquake struck the remote Afghan northeast, killing several hundred people in Afghanistan and nearby northern Pakistan.

In January, an earthquake struck western Afghanistan, killing more than 20 people.

Collective effort need of the hour

Say speakers on preventing
dengue outbreak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Collective efforts are very important to save people from dengue. Everyone will have to come forward to destroy all breeding sources of Aedes mosquitoes, said speakers at a dialogue yesterday.

"It is very difficult to control Aedes mosquitoes by applying insecticides. Reduction of the source is the most important aspect of controlling the carriers from spreading," said Prof Kabirul Bashar, entomologist of Jahangirnagar University who presented the keynote paper at the dialogue organised by Dhaka Utility Reporters Association (DURA) at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Prof Bashar said a total of 108 dengue patients are now undergoing treatment in different hospitals, of whom 48 are in Mugda hospital.

The authorities will have to take immediate and extensive measures to find out where they live and act accordingly to eliminate the sources, he added.

Urging everyone to come forward to prevent dengue, DSCC mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh said Dhaka residents will have to be more aware and responsible to destroy breeding sources of Aedes mosquitoes.

"We are prepared with our manpower, insecticides and logistics and most importantly, our devotion and sense of responsibility," he said.

"We want to control Aedes mosquitoes properly in time. But if we are not helped by everyone, then it will be really difficult for us," said the mayor.

Adil Mohammad Khan, former general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said climate change

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Although BIWTA demarcated Turag River's boundaries, illegal business of construction materials, like sand and stones, was seen booming inside the range. This photo was taken recently from Gabtoli.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

AL's 73rd anniv today

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League (AL), one of the country's oldest political parties, has drawn up an elaborate programme to celebrate its 73rd founding anniversary today.

The anniversary programme will begin with hoisting the national and party flags atop all party offices, including the central office.



Later, glowing tributes will be paid to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on a small scale by placing wreaths at his portrait in Dhanmondi at 8:00am.

Besides, a delegation of AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC), led by presidium member Lt Col (ret'd) Muhammad Faruq Khan, will place wreaths at the mausoleum of Bangabandhu at Tungipara at 10:30am, maintaining health

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Fear of flood looms over Dhaka's low-lying areas

DIPAN NANDY

"For the last one week, the water has been rising here. It's increased by, like, two feet. We're fearing that we may get flooded, at a time when the water in Sylhet is receding."

Md Enamul, a resident of Beraid, on the bank of Balu River, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"In 1988 and 1998, we witnessed terrible floods. This year, we are fearing a similar situation," he said.

It's not just Balu River; water level of other rivers around Dhaka is gradually increasing.

However, the water has not yet spilled onto the land yet. But if it does, several low-lying areas will be submerged, experts said.

Rivers' Name	Maximum Level	Danger Level	Level on Tuesday	Level on Wednesday
Turag	8.35m	5.96m	3.78m	3.86m
Balu	7.13m	5.75m	3.63m	3.70m
Shitalakkhya	6.93m	5.50m	3.44m	3.53m
Dhaleshwari	12.80m	11.40m	9.53m	9.66m
Buriganga	7.58m	6m	3.32m	3.30m

Source: Forecasting and Warning Centre, Water Development Board

According to Water Development Board's Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre, the water of Turag, Balu, Shitalakkhya, Dhaleshwari and Buriganga is rising.

Normally, water from some parts of the city drains into various lakes, including Hatirjheel. But as the water reaches closer to the danger level, the drainage system will increasingly be obstructed. According to the flood forecasting centre, the maximum water level of Balu is 7.13 metres; 5.75 metres is considered the danger level. Yesterday, the water level was 3.70 metres.

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**PRAYER
TIMING
JUNE 23**

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

BR launches app for buying tickets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway (BR) yesterday launched the mobile app "Rail Sheba" to provide online-ticketing services.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan launched the app at a programme at Rail Bhaban.

The app has been developed by BR's vendor firm, which will be led by Shohoz from now on. Passengers will be able to buy train tickets using the app. They can also do this using BR's e-ticket website.

Meanwhile, the minister said BR will start selling advance train tickets from July 1, ahead of Eid-ul-Azha. Tickets for July 5 will be sold on July 1. Tickets for July 6, 7, 8 and 9 will be sold on July 2, 3, 4 and 5, respectively.

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Walking through this stretch of the footpath at Mirpur-10 is an ordeal for pedestrians. Roadside stalls, and the customers standing in front of them, hog a major part of the walkway, forcing people to squeeze by. This photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Their tactic: inhumane torture

Two members of Iraq-based syndicate, who abducted
expats for ransom, held in Dhaka; two victims rescued

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Twenty-seven-year-old Apel Ali went to Iraq on February 26, 2018, and started working at a hotel in Baghdad.

Things were going fine for him, until June 14 this year.

Around 11:15am, Apel called his wife Shilpi Khatun and informed her that some Bangladeshi expatriates in Iraq kidnapped him and were torturing him for a ransom of Tk 1 lakh.

The kidnapers provided some numbers with mobile financial service (MFS) accounts in Bangladesh and instructed Apel's family to deposit the money. As per the demand, they made the deposit in the evening.

However, the deal was not over yet for them. The syndicate did not release Apel as promised. Instead, they called his wife Shilpi again and asked for another deposit. This time, the demand amounted to Tk 5 lakh.

According to the two rescued victims, they were subjected to inhumane physical torture. Often they would leave them with little to no food or water for two to three days at a stretch.

Apel's father then sought assistance from the economic and human trafficking team of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit. CTTC started investigating and managed to arrest two members of the syndicate from the capital's Motijheel and Narayanganj district on Monday.

Arrestee Imran Hossain (27) is a Bangladeshi agent of the syndicate -- responsible for collecting money through MFS. Another arrestee Alamgir Hossain (30) is an associate of Imran in the ransom collection.

Following the arrest, the syndicate was finally forced to release Apel and another Bangladeshi

▶▶ Syndicate has Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Iraqi members

▶▶ It has a network in all districts of Bangladesh

▶▶ Transactions worth over Tk 7 lakh found in last month

▶▶ 2 Bangladeshis rescued; 7 still under traffickers' custody

▶▶ Money collected through MFS then sent to Iraq by hundi

victim Sher Ali. The two victims are currently under the custody of the Bangladeshi embassy in Iraq.

CTTC, from the information collected from the recently released victims, came to know that the syndicate has held at least seven more Bangladeshi victims captive.

Confirming the development, Tohidul Islam, CTTC additional deputy commissioner, told this correspondent yesterday that efforts are now underway to rescue the other victims.

"We are also trying to identify other syndicate members in Bangladesh," he said.

A case was filed regarding the arrest with Motijheel Police Station on Tuesday.

UNBEARABLE TORTURE

Investigators said these syndicates have been involved in abducting Bangladeshis in Iraq and torturing them for ransom for a long time.

According to the two rescued victims, they were subjected to inhumane physical torture. Often they would leave them with little to no food or water for two to three days at a stretch.

But that's not where it stops. The two victims informed the investigators that syndicate members have even killed multiple victims by

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Publisher of excellence Speakers remember Mohiuddin Ahmed at memorial event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers, publishers, authors and people from different sectors remembered veteran author, editor and founder of University Press Limited (UPL) Mohiuddin Ahmed yesterday, on the occasion of his first death anniversary.



UPL organised the memorial lecture at its premises in the afternoon. Around 50 people participated in the programme and shared their memories involving the noted publisher. Speakers said Ahmed was a publisher of excellence. He brought out something special through his career.

Badiuddin Nazir, editor of UPL, presented the keynote paper and said Ahmed invested most of his lifetime in UPL.

He had even taken a loan just to build UPL, which later made a significant impact in the publishing sector.

While speaking, researcher-essayist Mofidul Hoque said Ahmed was a blessing to work with. He was like a "lighthouse" when it came to ethics and strategies in the book business.

Mahrukh Mohiuddin, managing director of UPL and daughter of Ahmed, expressed gratitude to the participants.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Chisty can perform duties as Satkhira mayor, says HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared way for Satkhira Municipality Mayor Tazkin Ahmed Chisty, a local BNP leader, to discharge his official duties.

The HC bench of Justice Zafar Ahmed and Justice Md Akhtaruzzaman delivered the order following a petition filed by Chisty, challenging the legality of the government order of suspension.

The local government ministry on June 15 suspended him on charge of irregularities and corruption of Tk 3 crore.

Tazkin's lawyer Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal told the court that his client did not commit any irregularity. The government suspended him on political grounds, the lawyer argued.

Raushan to return home on June 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition leader Raushan Ershad will return to the country on June 27 after eight months of treatment in a Bangkok hospital.

"Raushan Ershad's physical condition has improved and she is stable now. After completing treatment in Bangkok's Bumrungrad International Hospital, she will return to Dhaka on June 27," Mamun Hasan, assistant private secretary of the opposition leader told this correspondent.

After the end of the ongoing budget session of parliament, Raushan will leave Dhaka for Bangkok on July 4 for a routine check-up.

Raushan has been suffering from respiratory problems and was flown to Bangkok by an air ambulance on November 5 last year.

STUDENT'S DEATH PBI given time again to finish probe

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again asked Police Bureau of Investigation to submit -- by July 13 -- the probe report in a case filed against Bashundhara Group MD Sayem Sobhan Anvir and seven others over the rape and murder of a college student.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Begum Yasmin Ara passed the order after IO Md Alauddin, an inspector of PBI, failed to submit the report. With this, PBI took 14 dates to submit it.

Police recovered the body of the 21-year-old in a Gulshan flat on April 26 last year. Her elder sister on September 6 filed the case bringing allegations of rape and murder.

Their tactic: inhumane

FROM PAGE 3
pushing them off the roof after not getting the ransom money from their family members. However, the official investigating the case said they are yet to verify the claim.

FIVE MILLION IN RANSOM PER MONTH

Investigators found over Tk 7 lakh has been collected by arrestee Imran alone in the last one month, according to some bank documents and MFS transaction history seized from him.

Investigators have also managed to identify four others involved with the syndicate, named Bablu, Jehad, Foysal and Maruf.

Through the information provided by the rescued victims, investigators claimed that the amount collected as ransom by the entire syndicate in the last month amounts to Tk 5 million.

However, the real amount is much higher as the syndicate has a connection and members in all the districts of the country, said a CTTC high official involved with the investigation.

"They are also involved in human trafficking. They used to send people to Iran, Turkey and Greece by illegal means," said the official, requesting anonymity.

"We have collected some names and information regarding the syndicate's activities in Gaibandha, Brahmanbaria, Chattogram, Narayanganj, Chandpur and Munshiganj, which we are currently analysing," he said.

Sources said in 2012, Imran went to Qatar and then came back to Bangladesh after seven years. The other members of the syndicate are his close relatives.

Shehab Uddin, one of the masterminds of the syndicate, went to Iraq in July last year and now leading the illegal activities.

The investigators did not disclose the names of other syndicate members as the investigation is still ongoing.

"We have also been tipped that some Pakistani and Iraqi nationals are also involved with the syndicate. We are trying to verify the information," said another

official of the CTTC unit, requesting anonymity.

The official said the syndicate confines people at a place located just 30 minutes away from Baghdad's centre. "It would be possible to run these activities in such a locality without involving locals," the officer added.

BCC, WDB

FROM PAGE 5
WDB join hands and work together." Echoing him, Shah Sajeda, convener of Sachetan Nagorik Committee, said it is unfortunate that conflict between the two organisations has held the re-excavation work.

Syed Farooq Ahmed, chief executive officer of BCC, said WDB should have talked to them before taking such projects in the BCC area.

In this regard, WDB executive engineer said they took the project as part of a mega project WDB is implementing countrywide to re-excavate canals. The Tk 7 crore project is a very small part of the BCC's overall project, he said. "It can be coordinated, hopefully we would be able to start the project soon," he added.

BR launches

FROM PAGE 3
BR will operate six special trains for different destinations from three days ahead of Eid and on Eid day.

This time, tickets would be sold from seven stops in the capital and Gazipur.

Govt working to restore telecom service in flood-hit areas

UNB, Dhaka

The government is working to restore the telecommunication network in the flood-affected areas of the northeastern districts.

A total of 1,255 sites of Grameenphone, Robi, Banglalink, and Teletalk have been reactivated out of 2,008 damaged sites due to flood water. Works are underway to activate the rest 753 affected sites, said a press release of the Post and Telecommunication Ministry yesterday.

Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited has been working to set up 42 VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal) under its own management and army through Bangabandhu Satellite to restore telecommunication systems, including the internet in the flood-affected districts.

Army has already installed six VSAT hubs at Sylhet High Tech Park, Sunamganj deputy commissioner's office, Sunamganj circuit house office, Gobindaganj, Duara Bazar, and Dirai. Two more VSAT hub installations will be completed on Wednesday in Jaintapur and Gowainghat upazilas.

Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited has set up VSAT at various places in Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Netrokona.

Two sued, two sent

FROM PAGE 5

accused Ful Miah (57) raped his neighbour, a speech-impaired teenage girl, on Tuesday afternoon when the victim was alone at her home. When her parents returned home in the evening, she shared the incident with them. Later at night, the victim's father filed a rape case against Ful Miah with Ghoraghat Police Station.

Police arrested Ful Miah from Nurjahanpur village in the same upazila, said OC Mominul Islam.

Ful Miah was produced before the court yesterday, which sent him to jail.

The court sent another man to jail on charge of raping a homemaker around one and a half months ago.

The accused is Golbahar Sheikh (58), resident of Satpara in the same upazila.

In the first week of May, he raped a homemaker, who was his neighbour. On May 9, the victim's husband filed a rape case with Ghoraghat Police Station against Golbahar, who went into hiding.

Police arrested him on Tuesday and produced him before the court that sent him to jail.

AL's 73rd

FROM PAGE 3

protocols. The delegation will include ALCWC members Iqbal Hossain Apu and Syed Abdul Awal Shamim. A discussion will be held at the party's central office on the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue at 10:30am. AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will virtually chair the discussion from Gono Bhaban.

AL General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday urged all to maintain health guidelines during the celebration.

Fear of flood looms

FROM PAGE 3

In other rivers, the water level was higher yesterday than the previous day, which might be a reason for concern.

Arifuzzaman Bhuyan, executive engineer of the centre, however, assured that even if the water rises, there is no possibility of crossing the danger level so far.

At least in the next few days, the danger level will not be crossed, he predicted.

FLOOD THREAT IN LOW-LYING AREAS

Residents of Dhaka's lower parts are now fearing floods. According to them, this time it is raining a lot,

and river water is rising.

Yesterday, in Beraid and Majhina of Rupganj, this correspondent saw that water had risen up to the stairs of Beraid Ghat.

Hare Krishna, the leaseholder of the ghat, told The Daily Star that the water has been rising for the past one week.

Md Alal, a resident of Majhina, said, "In 2020, we witnessed flooded roads. We think we will run into a similar situation this year too, because the water level of Turag and Balu is increasing day by day."

Meanwhile, in some low-lying areas, water accumulated on roads due to heavy rain is

not receding. This is contributing to the rising water level of rivers as well as people's sufferings.

Water is not receding in various areas, including Nardapara, Nagarbari, Chairmanbari, Puranpara, and Shah Kabir Mazar Road, as the drainage system is not operational.

Regarding city corporations' preparedness, Selim Reza, chief executive officer of Dhaka North City Corporation, told The Daily Star, "We have not yet received news of flooding. But we are prepared to drain water if it accumulates in low-lying areas."

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, গোপালগঞ্জ
স্মারক নং-বশেবুবিপ্রবি/প্র/২০২২/৫৯/৯১০ তারিখঃ ২২/০৬/২০২২

গেটহাউজ ভাড়া সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, গোপালগঞ্জ-এর ঢাকাস্থ গেট হাউজ হিসেবে ব্যবহারে জন্য সেগুনবাগিচা, শ্রীপার্বত্য, সার্বজনিক, বানমিতি, কলাবাগান এলাকার ১৪০০ থেকে ২০০০ বর্গফুট প্লটের বাসা ভাড়া আবেদন। বাসা ভাড়া প্রদানে আত্মীয় বাসা মালিকগণকে আগামী ২৬/০৬/২০২২ তারিখ বিকাল ০৫.০০ টার মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারী সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করার জন্য বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

রেজিস্ট্রার (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
ফোনঃ ০১৭৭৬১৫৪০৪০

জিডি-১২৮৮

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT BY BANGLADESH BRANCH OFFICE OF INGERSOLL-RAND NETHERLANDS B.V. (CURRENTLY KNOWN AS TRANE NETHERLANDS B.V.)
23 June 2022

This is to inform all concerned that Ingersoll-Rand Netherlands B.V. (currently known as Trane Netherlands B.V.) has discontinued its operation in Bangladesh in mid 2020 and intends to close its branch office with effect from 30 September 2022.

We request all concerned persons having outstanding claims against the branch office of Ingersoll-Rand Netherlands B.V. (currently known as Trane Netherlands B.V.) in Bangladesh to contact us at the earliest.

Attention: Country Manager, Ingersoll-Rand Netherlands B.V., Bangladesh Branch
Address: UTC Building, 19th Floor, Kawanbazar, Tejgaon, Dhaka 1215, Bangladesh
E-mail: fmrmbv_registered@tranetechnologies.com

This notice is published by the country manager of the branch office of Ingersoll-Rand Netherlands B.V. (currently known as Trane Netherlands B.V.) as per the regulatory requirements of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority.

D-67

World Health Organization Bangladesh

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

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

1. RFP/BAN/2022/016(Re-1): Climate Informed Hospital Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan.

Deadline for the submission of RFP: **14:00hrs, 06 July 2022**

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

For copy of the Hospital Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan 2011, please email at sebanprocurement@who.int

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

ডেলটা মেডিকেল কলেজ ডেন্টাল ইউনিট
২৩/১, দিল্লিগার অফিস কমপ্লেক্স সড়ক (সাবেক পল্লব সড়ক রোড), মিরপুর-১, ঢাকা-১২১৬।
ফোনঃ ৯৮০৪৬৩১, ৯৮০৪৬৩২, ৯৮০৪৬৩৩। ফেক্সঃ ০১৭১৮-৬৯৭৫৭, ০১৭১৮-৬৯৭৫৮, ০১৭১৮-৬৯৭৫৯, ০১৭১৮-৬৯৭৬০।
Web: www.dlmch.edu.bd

২০২১-২০২২ইং শিক্ষাবর্ষে বিডিএস কোর্সে ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকারের স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ের অনুমোদন প্রাপ্ত এবং ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের স্বীকৃত এবং বিএমএজিসি ও বিসিপিএস কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত ডেলটা মেডিকেল কলেজ ডেন্টাল ইউনিটে ২০২১-২০২২ইং শিক্ষাবর্ষে ১ম বর্ষ বিডিএস কোর্সে (৯ম ব্যাচ) ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ভর্তির জন্য কলেজের নিয়মিত ক্রমে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ভর্তির যোগ্যতা :-

- স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়ে পূর্বে সিদ্ধান্ত মোতাবেক স্বাস্থ্য শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তরের নিয়ন্ত্রণে জাতীয়ভাবে অনুষ্ঠিত বিডিএস ভর্তি পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণকারী ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের মধ্যে যে সকল ছাত্র-ছাত্রী উক্ত লিখিত পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম ৪০ বা তদুর্ধ্ব নম্বর (সরকারীভাবে বিডিএস ভর্তির যোগ্যতা অর্জনকারী) পেয়েছে কেবলমাত্র তারা ভর্তির জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবে।
- বিদেশী ছাত্র-ছাত্রী, অস্বচ্ছল ও মেধাবী এবং মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কোটার সরকারী নিয়মানুযায়ী ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ভর্তি করা হবে।

ভর্তি ফর্মসহ সন্মতি ও জমা দান : ২৩ শে জুন ২০২২ইং তারিখ থেকে ৩ রা জুলাই ২০২২ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে (প্রত্যহ সকাল ৮টা হতে বিকাল ৫.০০ টা পর্যন্ত) অফেনরযোগ্য নম্বর ১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা প্রদান সাপেক্ষে ভর্তির ফর্মসহ সন্মতি ও জমা দেয়া হবে।

ফলাফল প্রকাশ:- ৬ই জুলাই, ২০২২ইং তারিখ বেলা ১১:০০টায় কলেজের নোটিশ বোর্ড এবং কলেজের নিজস্ব ওয়েব সাইটে (www.dlmch.edu.bd) ফলাফল প্রকাশিত হবে।

ভর্তি কার্যক্রম চলাবে ৪- ১৪ই জুলাই ২০২২ইং তারিখ হতে ২৮শে জুলাই ২০২২ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত।

বিঃদ্রঃ ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের জন্য পৃথক হোস্টেলের সু-ব্যবস্থা আছে।

প্রিন্সিপাল, জেনারেল অধ্যাপক ডা. নীলম কুমার পাল সৌম্যী
অধ্যক্ষ
ডেলটা মেডিকেল কলেজ।

Collective effort

FROM PAGE 3

and urbanization are key reasons behind the spread of the dengue virus.

At least 27 dengue patients were hospitalised in different hospitals across the country in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, showing an alarming trend of rising dengue cases.

The total number of dengue patients rose to 835, according to the Directorate General of

Health Services (DGHS).

Among the patients, 113 are still undergoing treatment, of whom, five are from outside Dhaka.

A total of 721 patients so far have been released from hospitals and one has died so far. The dialogue was presided by DURA President Ruhul Amin, while Jayashree Bhadrury, acting general secretary of the organisation, moderated the programme.

Publisher of excellence

FROM PAGE 3

Emeritus Professor Dr MA Sattar Mandal, Dhaka University Prof Asif Nazrul, and many others spoke in the memorial programme.

The Daily Star Editor and

Publisher Mahfuz Anam joined the event virtually. In 1975, Ahmed started UPL. Under his leadership, it won the National Book Centre Award 16 times since 1981.

Khulna city chokes

FROM PAGE 5

times a day to attend school and coaching. And for this, she has to endure the dust pollution daily.

"Lack of repair has turned the road into a storehouse for dust and sand. The dust spreads all around the area when trucks and buses move on the road," she said.

"Children are the main victims of the pollution," she added.

Visiting different areas, including Rupsha Shipyard Road, Gallamary Moilapota Road, Sonadanga Natunrasta Road, BIDD Road, Abu Naser Bypass Road and Boyra Mostorm Bypass Road, it was seen that almost all big roads are in awful condition.

Two government hospitals, Khulna Medical College Hospital and Sheikh Abu Naser Specialized Hospital, are situated by Sonadanga Natunrasta Road, along with around 25 clinics.

And so, hundreds of patients breathe air full of dust while visiting the facilities.

Anisur Rahman, conservancy officer of KCC, said KCC has two modern road sweeping trucks, which are equipped with water tanks for spraying roads.

But they are only used on special occasions, like state events, he said. "We generally do not use these machines at construction sites."

Mustafa Saroar, head of urban and regional planning department at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, said lack of coordination among utility providing agencies add to the public's woes. The agencies do not take people's sufferings into account while implementing projects.

"On some occasions, the same roads are dug up several times. On top of that, the dug-up roads are left unattended for

PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

ONE Bank LIMITED
...In Make Things Happen

Corporate HQ
2/F HRC Bhaban, 46 Kawran Bazar C.A., Dhaka-1215

This is for kind information of all concerned that Bangladesh Securities & Exchange Commission (BSEC) in its 828th Commission Meeting held on June 21, 2022 has approved issuance of 7 years Unsecured, Non-convertible, Fully Redeemable, Floating Rate, Subordinated Bond of face value of **BDT 1.00 (one) crore** per unit for total amount of **BDT 400.00 crore** by **ONE Bank Limited** under private placements for Tier-II Capital. Bangladesh Bank had already given their No Objection Certificate (NOC) regarding issuance of the same Subordinated Bond on December 20, 2021. The proceeds will be treated as Tier-II Capital and it will help the Bank grow its Investment and Loan Portfolio.

By order of the Board,
John Sarkar
John Sarkar
DMD & Company Secretary

Dhaka
June 22, 2022

Engineering Division
Khulna University, Khulna
www.ku.ac.bd

Tender No. KUI/ENGG/563/2022
Date: 21/06/2022

Re-Tender Notice No. 13/2021-22

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

Tender ID No.	Name of the works	Tender closing and opening date & time
712831	Construction of Food Court at Khulna University, Khulna	04-July-2022, 3:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to banking hours on e-GP System. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Abdur Razaque
Chief Engineer
Khulna University, Khulna
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GD-1286

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Office of the Executive Engineer
Rajshahi PWD Division-1, Rajshahi
Phone-02588-801406; Fax-02588-801407
www.pwd.gov.bd

Memo No-25.36.8100.110.05.005.22/9449
Date: 22/06/2022.

e-GP Tender Corridendum Notice 18/2021-2022 (OTM)

এতদ্বারা অত্র নম্বর স্মারক নং-25.36.8100.110.05.005.22/9247 Date-06/06/2022. প্রিঃ মাধ্যমে অজ্ঞানকৃত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-১৮/২০২১-২০২২ এর ত্রুটি সংশোধন ও এর কারণে দরপত্র তফসিল কিয়দংশ ও দরপত্র গণপত্রি এর ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নবর্ণিত "ছক" অনুযায়ী পরিবর্তিত হইবে।

S. L.	Tender ID No.	As Published Tender/Proposal Last selling Date and Time	As Amendment	As Published Tender/Proposal Closing & Opening Date and Time	As Amendment
3.	705762	27-Jun-2022 17:00	03-Jul-2022 11:00	28-Jun-2022 11:50	03-Jul-2022 11:50

এই সংশোধনীটি দরপত্রের অপরিহার্য অংশ হিসাবে পরিগণিত হবে।

(Md. Harun Or Roshid)
Executive Engineer
Rajshahi PWD Division-1, Rajshahi.
E-mail: ee_raj1@pwd.gov.bd

GD- 1290



Development works have made the lives of Khulna city residents miserable. Dust from construction sites, which are virtually present everywhere, cover the roads and fill the air. Such a situation is a great threat to people's health and well-being. This photo was taken from Zero Point area yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Khulna city chokes on dust

Ongoing development works behind the pollution

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Khulna city dwellers have been facing intense dust pollution for the last couple of years, as long stretches of roads and drains are being reconstructed under different development projects.

The situation especially deteriorates during dry weather, as no remedial steps are taken by Khulna City Corporation (KCC) and other agencies. But the city produces so much dust that even monsoon does not bring respite.

According to Public Works Department (PWD), KCC is currently developing a drainage system at a cost of Tk 823 crore and a road development project for Tk 607 crore. Of this, works worth Tk 322 crore are being carried out in 31 wards, while Tk 128 crore is being spent on a waterlogging project.

Besides, works of the road department, electricity department, Khulna Development Authority (KDA) and PWD are going on for another Tk 500 crore. These works are continuously polluting the air.

Construction materials have been piled up by homeowners and sand traders almost everywhere, while over 400 sand-laden trucks ply the city daily.

Usually, city corporation authorities are tasked with repairing and carpeting roads after finishing development work. However, service providing government agencies, particularly KCC and Khulna Wasa, often shift responsibility in regards to this issue.

Doly Kundu, a resident and mother of a fifth grader, said her daughter uses Sonadanga Natunrasta Road four

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Two sued, two sent to jail in rape cases

STAR REPORT

A case has been filed against two youths over gang rape of a teenage girl in Noakhali, while two persons were sent to jail yesterday over separate rape incidents in Dinajpur.

The accused in the Noakhali incident are Abu Darda Bappi (25), resident of Basurhat municipality, and his friend Hridoy (28) from Kabihaat municipality.

On June 16, Bappi, who proposed to the victim to marry him, took her to his rented house at Basurhat to discuss their marriage, where Hridoy and Bappi raped her.

They released the victim after threatening her not to disclose the incident, said police.

The victim shared the incident with her family members. On Tuesday night, the victim's mother filed a case against the two, who are currently on the run, said Md Sadequr Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Companyganj Police Station.

The victim has been sent to a hospital and police were conducting raids to arrest the accused, the OC added. Her family alleged that some local influential people were pressuring them to go for a settlement.

Meanwhile in Dinajpur, a court sent two persons to jail over two separate rape incidents at Ghoraghat upazila yesterday.

Ghoraghat Police said

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

When CCC is the problem

City corporation's establishment on Chaktai canal still not demolished

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

In 2000, Chattogram City Corporation constructed a four-storey building in the middle of Chaktai canal, one of the key drainage channels of the port city, without clearance from Chattogram Development Authority (CDA).

For the last two decades, the building has been clogging the drainage system and causing thousands of residents to suffer during the monsoon.

On March 16 this year, the High Court directed the government to evict all the structures built illegally on Chaktai canal within 90 days and ordered to take necessary action against the grabbers.

The HC bench delivered the verdict following a petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh in 2016.

Chattogram's deputy commissioner has submitted a report to the HC in this regard. This correspondent was able to obtain a copy of the report, according to which, there are 48 illegal structures, including the



Chattogram City Corporation constructed this building on Chaktai canal's land in 2000 without approval from the development authority. Currently, 47 other illegal structures also occupy the land.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

“We issued a notice to the city corporation to demolish the building in 2016. However, the CCC is a government agency, so the CDA has a problem evicting the building. We have asked the agency concerned, including the DC office to demolish this building.”

SHAHINUL ISLAM
Chief town planner of CDA

city corporation establishment, residential flats, tin sheds, business establishments and warehouses, have been built on around 20,000 square feet of the canal, chocking the waterway.

The CCC building spans 793 square feet and is used as the revenue office of circle-2. The 6.9km long Chaktai, starting

from the Bahaddarhat point of the city and spanning to the Karnaphuli river, has shrivelled up noticeably due to the rampant encroachment over the years. According to the RS survey, the width of the canal used to be about 65 feet, while the BS survey mentioned it to be 61 feet.

However, according to the DC office report, only 10 to 30 feet can be seen now. During a recent visit to Bahaddarhat, this correspondent found the drainage system in shambles with the canal narrowing every day.

“The canal used to be huge back in the 90s. Boats loaded with goods could ply it,” said Md Alauddin, who has been running a grocery business in the area for 42 years.

CCC, on the other hand, claimed it had spent Tk 6.7 crore for dredging the canal in the last three years.

However, the canal – flowing through Bahaddarhat, Shulokbahar, Chawkbazar, and Bakalia – overflows and inundates the adjoining localities during the monsoon and high tide. These areas remain waterlogged almost all the time.

Shahinul Islam, chief town planner of CDA, said CCC constructed the building without any clearance. “We issued a notice to the city corporation to demolish the building in 2016. However, the CCC is a government agency, so the CDA has a problem evicting the building. We have asked the agency concerned, including the DC office to demolish this building,” said the chief town planner.

Contacted, CCC chief engineer Rafiqul Islam said they are working to increase the canal's depth. “We don't know anything about the CCC establishment on the canal. Also, we have not received any notice. If any such CCC establishment is found to have occupied the canal, it will also be demolished,” he said.

Delwar Mazumder, convener of the Planned Chattogram Forum (PCM), said “It was CCC's responsibility to protect the canal but they occupied it instead.”

“We are working on the HC order. Illegal structures from Chaktai canal will be evicted very soon,” said Chattogram DC Md Mominur Rahman.

DREDGING OF 7 CANALS

BCC, WDB at loggerheads

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

A conflict has arisen between two government agencies over re-excavation of seven important canals flowing through Barishal city, postponing the work.

Barishal City Corporation (BCC) undertook a major project worth Tk 2,600 crore in 2019 to re-excavate and beautify 46 canals, and build walkways on their banks.

BCC sources said the project is still awaiting approval from the Planning Commission.

Meantime, Water Development Board, on April 12, invited tender for re-excavation of seven canals worth around Tk 7 crore. The tender process has recently been completed.

WDB Executive Engineer in Barishal Dipak Ranjan Das said they took the project considering people's suffering.



In the middle of it, BCC sent a letter to the IGRD ministry objecting to WDB's move, said the official. Thus, the process for re-excavating the seven canals has been halted, he added.

The seven canals – Sagardi, Chandmari, Bhatar, Jail, Amanatganj, Palashpur and Rupatali – are dying due to lack of proper maintenance for the last few years.

Once goods were transported through these canals. Now these have become too narrow to use, said Haran, a trader in Chawk Bazar area.

Shekhar Das from the city's Jail canal area echoed him.

Rafiqul Alam, divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), said, “We think this problem will be resolved if BCC and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Country's first police museum inaugurated

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The country's first police museum – “Bangladesh Police Museum” was inaugurated at Hatibandha thana premises in Lalmonirhat yesterday.

Inspector General of Bangladesh Police IGP Benazir Ahmed inaugurated the museum.

The museum will carry the history and tradition of the police force. Various memorabilia and information of the police force will be featured at the museum, said the IGP. There will be seven galleries in the museum.

Of the seven, the first gallery will feature the origins and evolution of policing in the region starting from the Sultanate and Mughal periods, the



British era, all the way up to the Indian subcontinent ahead of partition.

According to police, the building was constructed in 1916 during the British rule, it was initially used as a police station. It was abandoned currently and a new police station was built next to it.

However, Lalmonirhat police later decided to turn it into a police museum, rather than demolishing the building.

This was done under the supervision of Abida Sultana, Lalmonirhat's superintendent of police, who has now been promoted to additional DIG.

Rangpur divisional officers of police and administration were present at the time of the inauguration.



A sergeant checks the papers of a motorbike at Amtala intersection of Barishal city. With vigilance at an all-time high ahead of the inauguration of Padma Bridge, officers of Barishal Metropolitan Police set up check-posts at different points of roads. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Two killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least two people were killed in road accidents in Panchagarh and Dinajpur yesterday.

In Panchagarh, Jahera Khatun (50) was killed after an easy bike hit her while she was crossing a road in Tentulia upazila, said OC Jaherul Islam of Tentulia Police Station. She was declared dead at the local health complex. A case was filed.

In Dinajpur, a motorcyclist was killed on the spot after a truck hit him in Phulbari upazila town. The deceased is Shahidul Islam (55).

Shahidul was going to Phulbari on his bike. As he arrived at Nimtola, a speeding truck hit him around 1:30pm. Police seized the truck but the driver fled the scene, said OC Ashrafur Islam of Phulbari Police Station.

BRICS SUMMIT IN CHINA Putin back on the world stage

CNN ONLINE

When Russian President Vladimir Putin dials into the virtual BRICS summit hosted by Beijing today, it will be his first time attending a forum with the heads of major economies since launching an invasion of Ukraine earlier this year.

For Putin, this could offer a welcome picture: his face beamed onscreen alongside other leaders whose countries make up this acronymous grouping: China's Xi Jinping, India's Narendra Modi, Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro, and South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa — a signal that Russia, though battered by sanctions and remonstrations for the invasion, is not alone.

It's a message that may resonate even more clearly as China and Russia, weeks before the invasion, declared their own relationship to have "no limits," and as each of the BRICS leaders have avoided condemning Russia outright, even as they hold varying levels of interest in not being seen to endorse its actions — and run foul of Western friends.

Below the surface, Putin's invasion is likely to throw another complication into BRICS, a more than a decade-old grouping

of major emerging economies, which already suffers from mistrust between members and mismatched ideologies.

But the decision by the group to press ahead with its 14th annual summit does reflect a view held by BRICS countries on the global order and, by extension, the situation in Ukraine, that departs from that of the West, experts say.

"We're talking about some very major economies whose leadership is willing to be seen with Putin, even if it is only on a virtual platform," said Sushant Singh, a senior fellow at the Center for Policy Research (CPR) in New Delhi.

"The fact that Putin is welcome, he's not a pariah, he's not being pushed out — and this is a normal engagement, which has taken place every year and it's still taking place — that is a big plus for Putin," he said.

Unlike the G7, BRICS is expected to tread carefully when it comes to Ukraine at Thursday's summit, likely speaking in favor of peaceful resolution, even as its members may carefully call for Western countries to examine the impact of their sanctions on the global economy, observers say.

Beijing — this year's host and by far the

most economically powerful of the five nations, which together make up around a quarter of worldwide GDP — appears set to focus on its own agenda: promoting its new global development and security initiatives and pushing back on what it sees as "bloc"-building by the United States.

BRICS countries should "strengthen political mutual trust and security cooperation," coordinate on major international and regional issues, accommodate each other's core interests, and "oppose hegemonism and power politics," Xi said in a speech to BRICS foreign ministers last month, where he called on the group to promote development in this "period of turbulence and transformation."

Since its inception, BRICS, which added South Africa in 2011, has been united in calling for more representation of major emerging economies on the world's stage — and against what it views as a disproportionate dominance of the Western powers. That has meant pushing for reforms at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and, on occasion, making a veiled jab at Nato actions.

It's also seen the countries discussing issues like how to settle trade in their own currencies — outside the US dollar system — an issue that could now take more relevance for BRICS following Western sanctions on Russia, according to Shahar Hameiri, a professor and political economist at the University of Queensland in Australia.



BJP nominates tribal, female politician for India president

REUTERS, Bhubaneswar

A female Indian politician from a tribal community has been nominated as presidential candidate by ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, officials said yesterday.

Droupadi Murmu, 64, a veteran politician who has held senior posts in the eastern state of Odisha, is almost certain to be elected as BJP holds a majority in parliament, say political analysts.

Indian opposition parties said they would back Yashwant Sinha, a former BJP federal finance minister before he turned rebel, as their candidate for the presidential election.

The presidential poll will be held in July.

Myanmar minister attends Asean defence meeting

REUTERS, Phnom Penh

Myanmar's military-appointed defence minister joined a meeting of his Southeast Asian counterparts yesterday, despite pressure from some countries in the regional bloc and pro-democracy groups to exclude the junta from such gatherings.

General Mya Tun Oo is the most senior Myanmar official to attend a ministerial meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian nations (Asean) since the junta was sidelined late last year over its failure to honour a peace plan agreed with Asean.

Divisions persist within the 10-nation bloc over how to deal with the military that seized power in Myanmar last year and has led a bloody crackdown against its opponents.

Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia have urged current chair Cambodia to exclude the junta until progress is made toward ending hostilities.

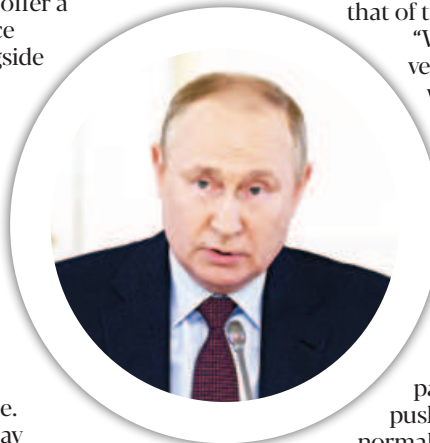
The Malaysian defence ministry said that even though yesterday's meeting involved the military government, "this does not mean Malaysia recognises the (junta) as the legitimate government of Myanmar". Cambodian Defence Minister

Tea Banh said the Myanmar general's presence indicated a unified bloc.

Details of the ministers' discussion were not available but a joint statement shared with media showed all of them pledged support for efforts to "bring about a peaceful transition to normalcy in Myanmar" through a special envoy.

Democracy activists in Myanmar and elsewhere raised concerns that efforts to engage with the junta legitimise it.

All 10 Southeast Asian defence ministers are also due to meet their Chinese and Japanese counterparts virtually later on Wednesday, Tea Banh said.



টেকসই ও নবায়নযোগ্য জ্বালানি উন্নয়ন কর্তৃপক্ষ (স্রেডা) SREDA
বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ
জ্বালানি দক্ষ যন্ত্রপাতি স্থাপনে সহজ শর্তে ঋণ গ্রহণ করুন
জ্বালানি সঞ্চয়ের মাধ্যমে নিজে লাভবান হোন এবং সমৃদ্ধ দেশ গঠনে গর্বিত অংশীদার হোন
সাশ্রয়ে জ্বালানি, সমৃদ্ধ আগামী
"জ্বালানি দক্ষতা ও সংরক্ষণ বৃদ্ধি কার্যক্রমে অর্থায়ন প্রকল্প"
www.sreda.gov.bd

“Because of the geopolitical situation, climate change is being pushed back. ... It's time to start the reality check. We have been planning and planning.”
Egypt's climate Ambassador Mohamed Nasr ahead of COP27

RPCL-NORINCO Intl. Power Limited
Memo No: RNPL/1320/2022/0342 Date: 21-06-2022
Request for Expression of Interest (Eoi) for Coal Transportation including Transshipment for Patuakhali 1320 (2X660) MW Coal Fired Thermal Power Plant Project

- RPCL-NORINCO INTL POWER LIMITED (RNPL), a joint venture company of Rural Power Company Limited (RPCL), Bangladesh and NORINCO International Corporation Ltd., China, incorporated under the laws of Bangladesh and having its principal place of business at: 7th Floor, Atlanta Trade Center, House# 01, Road# 1/A, Sector# 04, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka, Bangladesh is implementing the 1320 (2X 660) MW Coal Fired Thermal Power Plant Project at Nishanbaria, Londa and Dhankhali Mouza, Dhankhali Union, Kalapara Upazilla, Patuakhali district, Bangladesh (the Project).
- Approximate yearly demand = 4.00 million Ton.
- RNPL intends to invite and select experienced internationally reputable professional shipping companies and/or firms (the Applicants) to convey their Expression of Interest (Eoi) to provide Coal Transportation, Transshipment and Barging (the Services) to the power plant which is under construction.
- Through this Request of Eoi, RNPL intends to prepare short-listed companies which are qualified for the Bid stage of the tender process, when further Project information, details on the Services and RNPL's needs will be communicated by means of a Request for Proposal (RFP).
- The Services are not dividable and one contract will be awarded for all Services and shall mainly compose of the following:
 - The Services is expected to cover for 5 years starting from the first shipment of Coal to Project Jetty;
 - Coal ocean transportation, from coal loading ports in Indonesia and Australia respectively, by means of standard bulk vessels.
 - Coal transshipment within Bangladesh which shall close to the Project site, from the ocean transportation vessels to barges;
 - Barging in self-propelled barges up to Project Jetty.
 RNPL will be responsible for discharge of any shipment at the Project Jetty.
- Qualification criteria:
 - The Applicants can be financially sound companies, firms, joint ventures or consortium from all countries except Israel, with proven experience in transshipment and shipping projects for at least 10 years.
 - The Average Annual Turnover for the preceding three Financial Years shall not be less than USD 75m.
 - The Net worth/Paid-up Share Capital (NWT/PUSC) as on the last day of the preceding financial year shall not be less than 1.
- The documents to be submitted shall comprise of:
 - Letter of Expression of Interest;
 - Company profile/brochures, which shall specify its experience in transshipment and shipping projects;
 - Legal documents/incorporation or constitution or joint venture agreement/Trade license, VAT registration certificate etc.;
 - Audited financial report of last three (3) years;
 - Envisaged company structure, organization chart to fulfill the Services.
 Two sets of hard copies (at least one original) of the above-mentioned documents shall be submitted by the Applicants.
- RNPL may, in its absolute discretion but without being under any obligation, update, amend or supplement this Request for Eoi and reserve the right to accept/reject one or all Eois or stop the process of approval at any stage, at its sole discretion and shall bear no liability whatsoever consequence upon such a decision.
- The Applicants shall bear all the costs associated with or relating to the preparation and submission of its Eoi.
- Expression of Interest shall be submitted in English via e-mail and in two hard copies to the following contact before 12.30 PM (BST) on 31st July 2022.
Company Secretary
RPCL-NORINCO INTL POWER LIMITED (RNPL)
7th Floor, Atlanta Trade Center, House# 01, Road# 1/A, Sector# 04, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Phone: +88-01717939084, +88-01552379158
Email: cs@rnpl.com.bd

(Kazi Mohammad Tanvir)
Company Secretary
RPCL-NORINCO Intl Power Limited

RPCL-NORINCO Intl. Power Limited
Memo No: RNPL/1320/2022/0343 Date: 21.06.2022
Invitation for Proposal for Operation and Maintenance Of PATUAKHALI 1320 (2 X 660) MW COAL FIRED THERMAL POWER PLANT

- "RPCL-NORINCO INTL Power Limited" (RNPL), a Joint Venture of Rural Power Company Limited (RPCL), Bangladesh and NORINCO International Cooperation Ltd., China, incorporated to implement on 800 basis the "Patuakhali 1320 (2x660) MW Coal Fired Thermal Power Plant" (the Plant) at Patuakhali, Bangladesh, upon approval of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Power Station will be an ultra-supercritical pulverized coal fired thermal power generating plant.
- The expected initial Operation Date (IOD) of this plant is August 2023 and expected Commercial Operation Date (COD) is December 2023. The current physical progress is around 61%.
- The project consists of two (2) units of Ultra Super Critical Coal Fired Power Plants each with a gross capacity of 660MW firing pulverized coal imported from Indonesia and/or Australia. The OEMs for Boiler and Steam Turbines are Harbin Boiler Company Ltd, China and Dongfang Electric Company Ltd., China respectively. Boiler uses tangential combustion with Dry Low NOx burners. The project incorporates a Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGD) Unit for removal of Sulphur manufactured by China Hualian Engineering Co. Ltd., China.
- Now RPCL-NORINCO INTL Power Limited (RNPL) intends to appoint a qualified Operation and Maintenance Contractor to perform the Operation and Maintenance of the Patuakhali 1320 (2x660) MW Coal Fired Thermal Power Plant. The Contract Period will be: Mobilization Period + Sixty (60) months. The "Mobilization period" will be considered from the effective date of the O&M contract to the Commercial operation Date (COD) of the Plant.
- Only eligible Bidders with the following key qualifications, summarized from the Request for Proposal (RFP), are invited to participate in the Request for Proposals. Bidders are requested to refer to Section III — Qualification Criteria of the Request for Proposals for a full range of criteria prior to submitting their proposals. In case of any discrepancies between this invitation for proposal and the Request for Proposal, the Request for Proposal shall prevail. The bidder needs to fulfill the following criteria:
 - Experience in Operation and Maintenance of Thermal Power Plants for at least ten (10) years prior to the Proposal Closing Date.
 - Currently carrying out Operation and Maintenance of at least two (2) Units of Supercritical Coal Fired Power Plants of Unit Size 600MW or larger capacity and at least one unit at over-seas.
 - The Units must be in operation for at least 3 years and continuous operation for at least one (1) year prior to the Proposal Closing Date without any major unscheduled shutdowns (major defined as shutdown that requires at least seven (7) days of shutdown).
 - The Units with similar configuration (similar configuration defined as Pulverized Coal type boiler having tangential combustion) will earn extra points.
 - Bidders with Ultra-Supercritical Coal Fired Power Plants of unit size 600MW or larger capacity will earn extra points.
 - Bidders with additional experience will earn extra points.
 - Bidders with additional overseas O & M experience at same capacity thermal power plant for at least one (1) year will earn extra points.
 - Bidders must have good working relationship with Dongfang and Harbin and Foxboro Shanghai (major equipment OEMs of Patuakhali 1320(2x660) MW Coal-Fired thermal power Plant Project).
 - Bidders shall have capacity for Power Plant Simulation Training.
- The Request for Proposal will be available from 20 June, 2022 at the following website for information only:
 - https://www.rnpl.com.bd
 - http://www.rpcl.gov.bd
- The interested bidder must collect the Request for Proposal in their name for submission of bid from the following addresses with a non-refundable fee of USD 1,200 (US Dollar one thousand Two Hundred) or BDT 100,000 (One Hundred Thousand Bangladesh Taka) in the form of an international bank draft encashable at any scheduled bank in Bangladesh or in the form of local bank draft/pay order, made payable to the Company Secretary, RNPL.
Company Secretary
RPCL-NORINCO INTL Power Limited (RNPL)
Address: Atlanta Trade Center (7th Floor), House # 01, Road # 1/A, Sector # 04, Uttara, Dhaka-1230, Bangladesh.
Phone: +88-02-48956157, +88-01717939084, +88-01552379158
E-mail: cs@rnpl.com.bd
- The amount of Bid Security shall be US\$ 1 (one) million in the form specified in Request for Proposal and in favor of the Company Secretary, RPCL-NORINCO INTL Power Limited (RNPL)
 - Bid Security shall be valid for 208 (two hundred and eight) days from the last date of submission of proposal.
- Bid Validity shall be 180 (one hundred eighty) days from the last date of submission of proposal.
- Deliver your Proposal to the following address:
Company Secretary
RPCL-NORINCO INTL Power Limited (RNPL)
Address: Atlanta Trade Center (7th Floor), House # 01, Road # 1/A, Sector # 04, Uttara, Dhaka-1230, Bangladesh.
Phone: +88-02-48956157, +88-01717939084, +88-01552379158
E-mail: cs@rnpl.com.bd
- Date and Time for procuring RFP and submission of proposal:

Description	Date	Time
Starting Date and Time for Selling Request for Proposal	23 June, 2022	10:00 AM (BST)
Last Date and Time for Selling Request for Proposal	21 August, 2022	05:00 PM (BST)
Last Date and Time for Submission of Proposal	22 August, 2022	12:00 PM (BST)
- The Employer will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of their Proposals.

(Kazi Mohammad Tanvir)
Company Secretary
RPCL-NORINCO Intl Power Limited



Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman review a guard of honour during a welcome ceremony at the Presidential Palace in Ankara, Turkey, yesterday. Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler took another step out of his international isolation by paying his first visit to Turkey since the 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the kingdom's Istanbul consulate. The talks in Ankara come one month before US President Joe Biden visits Riyadh for a regional summit focused on the energy crunch caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Erdogan's decision to revive ties with one of his biggest rivals is also driven in large part by economics and trade, analysts say.

PHOTO: REUTERS

GUN SAFETY MEASURES IN US Lawmakers agree bipartisan bill

AFP, Washington

US senators unveiled a bill Tuesday addressing the epidemic of gun violence plaguing the country as they locked down a narrow set of reforms that were nevertheless hailed as the first significant firearms controls in a generation.

The cross-party group, which had been working for weeks on the wording of the legislation, voiced confidence that it would have enough support to pass the Senate, and it could be signed into law by President Joe Biden as soon as next week.

The limited proposals don't go as far as reforms called for by Biden, such as an all-out ban on assault rifles.

But Chris Murphy, the senator leading negotiations for Democrats, hailed the bill as the "most significant piece of anti-gun violence legislation in nearly 30 years."

"This bill is going to save thousands of lives," he tweeted.

The lawmakers had been up against the clock -- aware that any delay risked losing the sense of urgency ignited by the fatal shooting of 19 children in Uvalde, Texas and of 10 Black people at a supermarket in Buffalo, upstate New York, both last month.

The last significant federal gun control legislation was passed in 1994, banning the manufacture for civilian use of assault rifles and large capacity ammunition clips.

But it expired a decade later and there has been no serious effort at reform since, despite rising gun violence.

A cross-party group of senators agreed on a framework on June 12 that includes enhanced background checks for buyers aged under 21, \$11 billion in funding for mental health and \$2 billion for school safety programs.

The blueprint also calls for funding to incentivize states to implement "red flag" laws to remove firearms from people considered a threat.

However the National Rifle Association, America's powerful gun rights lobby, rejected the deal.

"We will oppose this gun control legislation because it falls short at every level," the NRA said in a statement. "It does little to truly address violent crime while opening the door to unnecessary burdens on the exercise of Second Amendment freedom by law-abiding gun owners."

The House -- which is also off next week -- would likely stay in session into the weekend or bring representatives back during the break to send the legislation to Biden.



Crisis-hit Lanka plans donor conference

Seeks support from 'historic allies' China, India, Japan



REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka will call China, India and Japan to a donor conference to drum up more foreign assistance and present an interim budget in August, the prime minister said yesterday, amid ongoing negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The island nation of 22 million people is struggling with its worst economic crisis in seven decades, unable to import essentials including food, fuel and medicines because of a severe shortage of foreign exchange.

An interim budget will be presented in August, seeking to put public finances on a more sustainable path and increase funds to the poor who have been hardest hit, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe told parliament.

"The interim budget will set the path forward. This, together with an IMF programme and debt sustainability, will lay the foundation for Sri Lanka to return to economic stability," he said.

In late May, Wickremesinghe had told Reuters he would present an interim budget within six weeks, cutting government spending down "to the bone".

The dearth of basic necessities and spiralling inflation has stroked public unrest, pushing Wickremesinghe's government to redouble efforts to bring in assistance from the likes of the IMF and friendly countries.

"We need the support of India, Japan and China who have been historic allies. We plan to convene a donor conference with the involvement of these countries to find solutions for Sri Lanka's crisis," Wickremesinghe told parliament.

"We will also seek help from the US," he said, adding that his administration will use \$70 million from the World Bank for buying cooking gas, which has been in short supply, setting off sporadic protests.

A high-level delegation from India will arrive on Thursday for talks on additional support from New Delhi, and a team from the US Treasury will visit next week, Wickremesinghe said.

India has so far provided around \$4 billion worth of assistance, the prime minister said, including a \$400 million swap and credit lines totalling \$1.5 billion.

China, which has traditionally jostled with New Delhi for influence over the Indian Ocean island, is considering an appeal from Sri Lanka to renegotiate the terms of a yuan-denominated swap worth \$1.5 billion to fund essential imports.

The government also delayed publication of its first quarter GDP data, due on Wednesday, because its census and statistics department did not receive all required inputs on time, an official said.

"We are working to get the growth numbers out as soon as possible but it will probably take a few days due to delays and staff shortages," said Anura Kumara, director general of the Census and Statistics Department.

Sri Lanka, which suspended payment on \$12 billion of foreign debt in April, is seeking around \$3 billion from the IMF to put its public finances on track and access bridge financing.

France is facing a new Covid wave

REUTERS, Paris

France is facing a new wave of Covid-19 infections fuelled by new variants of the disease, French vaccination chief Alain Fischer said yesterday, as daily new cases reached an almost two-month peak the day before at more than 95,000.

Speaking on France 2 television, he said there was no doubt there was once again an upsurge of the pandemic in the country, adding he was personally in favour of reinstating mandatory face mask wearing on public transport.

Other European countries, especially Portugal, are also seeing an increase, due two new Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5, which, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, are likely to become dominant in the region.

The variants do not appear to carry a higher risk of severe disease than other forms of Omicron but as they are somewhat more infectious than the latter, it could lead to an increase in hospitalisations and deaths, the ECDC said.

There is traditionally a two-week delay between cases and hospitalisation trends and then a similar delay regarding Covid-deaths.

New infections have been steadily rising since the end of May in France, with the seven-day moving average of daily new cases almost tripling between the May 27 figure of 17,705 and Tuesday's 50,402.

That total is nonetheless still seven times lower than the 366,179 record reached at the start of the year.

France's Covid death toll rose by 56 over 24 hours on Tuesday, to reach 149,162.

US embassy in Moscow gets new address, named after Donbas region

AFP, Moscow

Authorities in Moscow said on Wednesday that they have changed the official address of the US embassy building in the Russian capital to one named after pro-Kremlin separatists in Ukraine. "The United States embassy in Russia has a new official address," Moscow city hall said in a statement, saying it had named a previously unnamed open area in front of the embassy's main entrance. It said the embassy is now located at 1 Donetsk People's Republic Square, referring to a breakaway region in eastern Ukraine that Moscow recognised as independent shortly before sending troops there. The embassy's previous address was 8 Bolshoi Devyatinsky Lane. The new address was chosen in a public vote in which nearly 280,000 people participated, the city hall said. In February 2018, a street outside the Russian embassy in Washington was named after Boris Nemtsov, an opposition politician who was shot dead outside the Kremlin in 2015.

Pick a 'courageous' human rights chief NGOs urge UN

GENEVA, Switzerland



Rights groups yesterday appealed for the next UN rights chief to be appointed through a swift, open process, calling for a "courageous" nominee to stand up to powerful countries. More than 60 non-governmental organisations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, sent an open letter to United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres about what they hoped to see in the next high commissioner for human rights. Michelle Bachelet said last week she would not stand for a second term after her mandate ends on August 31, but so far there has been no indication from Guterres on who he has in mind to fill the position. The organisations emphasised the kind of candidate they would like to see, hinting they would prefer a break with Bachelet's discreet, diplomatic style. Bachelet has faced significant criticism over her reluctance to publicly admonish countries, including China, over alleged rights abuses.



The Ukraine crisis sounds an alarm for the world. Facts once again have proven that sanctions are a double-edged sword.

China President Xi Jinping said at the opening ceremony of the BRICS Business Forum via video link

A powerful blow to the tobacco industry

US seeks to reduce nicotine to non-addictive levels in cigarettes

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden's administration on Tuesday announced it would develop a new policy requiring cigarette producers to reduce nicotine to non-addictive levels -- a move that would deal a powerful blow to the tobacco industry.

If successful in its aims, the new US standard could save millions of lives by the end of the century, and shape a future where cigarettes are no longer responsible for addiction and debilitating disease.

The initiative requires the Food and Drug Administration to develop and then publish a rule,

which will likely be contested by industry.

"Nicotine is powerfully addictive," said FDA Commissioner Robert Califf in a statement. "Making cigarettes and other combusted tobacco products minimally addictive or non-addictive would help save lives."

The process is expected to take several years and could be delayed or derailed by litigation, or reversed by a future administration sympathetic to the tobacco lobby.

Nicotine is the "feel good" chemical that hooks people to cigarettes, chewing tobacco,

vaping devices and other tobacco products.

Thousands of other chemicals contained in tobacco and its smoke are responsible for diseases such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes and more.

Though smoking is less prevalent in the United States than in Europe, and has been declining for years, it is still responsible for 480,000 deaths a year in the country, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Some 12.5 percent of all US adults are current cigarette smokers, according to the FDA.

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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Ramp up relief efforts in flood-hit areas

Victims are let down by insufficient aid, slow pace of efforts

WE'RE alarmed by dire reports coming from the flooded north where cries for emergency relief are getting louder amid insufficient aid and slow relief efforts. People in many villages are still stranded, without access to relief, and living in a state of near-starvation. Many, desperate for food, reached out to nearby shelter centres and Union Parishad offices; some got help, some were turned away. The desperation for relief is such that a man in Sylhet died on Tuesday after being injured while jostling for airdropped relief supplies. In Sunamganj, an elderly woman said her family has been drinking floodwater, because of the scarcity of fresh water.

The situation is said to be equally bad across the region. Around 45 lakh people, in all the flood-hit areas combined, have been reportedly affected, and at least 4.04 lakh of them have taken refuge in 1,474 shelters. So far, a total of Tk 2.95 crore, 1,952 tonnes of rice and around 30,000 packets of dry food have been allocated for them. Data shows that, upon distribution, each victim will receive only 0.44 kg rice and Tk 6.55. If the relief is for only those in the shelters, each person will get 4.88 kg rice and Tk 73.75. Even if the Tk 1.2 crore fund added by the PM is counted, this is still a ridiculously small allocation for such a vast number of victims.

Reaching the hardest hit remains an issue, especially in remote areas, but the bigger problem right now is of the lack of preparedness, which is inexcusable at this stage. This is a many-faced disaster, and nothing short of judicious planning coupled with proper allocation of cash and resources will be enough to tackle it. Already, some 41 individuals have been reported to have died in the flood-hit areas, due to drowning, landslides, electrocution and snake bites. As well as the crisis of food and water, survivors, who are mostly farmers or labourers, have to deal with the loss of crops, damage to their property and even water-borne diseases.

We need to prepare better, and quickly, for these problems. But we must first build up a hefty emergency relief fund that will cover all the areas affected, including the northern, north-eastern and north-western districts where flooding still continues or is about to get worse. Not enough money for emergency relief? The government must know that the cost of it will be borne by the people in one way or another. So it must allocate more money and relief goods and ensure their quick and efficient use. It must also prepare for the coming days, when water recedes, because post-flood recovery can be equally daunting.

Stop smuggling of unrefined edible oil

Authorities must be careful as illegal sale of oil may upset market

SMUGGLING of imported goods from mother ships stationed at the outer anchorage of Chattogram port is said to be a regular phenomenon. With the help of unscrupulous ship crew, port staff and security personnel, organised local groups perpetrate such crimes, causing much harm to the importers. Though piracy and armed robbery on ships at the outer anchorage are not that frequent, smuggling of goods continues on a regular basis.

One such story, published by this daily recently, shows how a powerful syndicate has been smuggling unrefined edible oil from mother vessels. It describes the seizure of a lighter vessel carrying 11,000 litres of unrefined edible oil by the river police, as well as the arrest of 12 individuals who failed to produce any valid documents for the cargo. Police said the value of the seized oil is about Tk 8.80 lakh. Smuggling operations like this are usually carried out by powerful godfathers who work from behind the curtain and manage to remain outside the police dragnet.

One such godfather, Harunur Rashid (42), has been reportedly leading the syndicate of smugglers for a long time, yet no step has been taken against him by the law enforcers. Apparently, emboldened by his connections with powerful quarters, he has been using his own vessel to smuggle oil to different points of Karnaphuli River and sell in the open market. Reportedly, although Harun was accused in a smuggling case filed with the Patenga Police Station in February, he has been roaming freely since, and even attended political programmes.

Smugglers do not have to pay any import duty or VAT for the open market sale of smuggled goods. But importers have to pay duties before bringing their merchandise through legal channels. The edible oil market has seen many ups and downs in recent months, with its prices frequently going up, compounding the suffering of ordinary customers. We have witnessed the imposition of hefty fines and even arrest of warehouse owners for hoarding huge quantities of edible oil. In such a volatile market condition, one can imagine how the smuggled oil would contribute to further upsetting the market.

Smuggling is a crime, of course, but open market sale of smuggled goods is potentially detrimental to the normal functioning of a country's economy. Therefore, we expect the authorities to take immediate actions against the syndicates involved in such criminal activities.

How can the WTO help its 'weaker' members?



MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun is the Executive Director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue. Views expressed in this article are personal.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

THE 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) finally took place during June 12-16, 2022 after being cancelled twice due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The MC12 was held at a time of unprecedented global economic downturn.

Prior to the MC12, the Director General of the WTO, Okonjo-Iweala, put forward five possible deliverables for MC12. These are: (i) food security and agriculture; (ii) a fisheries subsidies agreement; (iii) WTO's response to emergencies, including a waiver of certain requirements concerning compulsory licensing for Covid-19 vaccines; (iv) a decision on extending or discontinuing the current moratorium on levying customs duties on electronic transmissions; and (v) WTO reforms.

The WTO has termed the outcome of the MC12 successful, saying that the organisation has secured multilaterally negotiated outcomes on some key trade issues. The "Geneva package" confirms the historical importance of the multilateral trading system and underlines the important role of the WTO in addressing the world's most pressing issues, especially at a time when global solutions are critically.

For least developed countries (LDCs) and developing countries, the Geneva package is a mixed bag. Of course the MC12 is a success, since the past several ministerial meetings failed to conclude any significant agreements. Despite agreements on a few key trade initiatives by 164 member countries of the WTO, the MC12 declaration provides a compromised outcome on some areas.

Food security and agriculture has been the topmost agenda for LDCs and developing countries, particularly in the context of high food prices. More than 80 developing countries were trying to secure a permanent solution to the problem of public stock for protecting farmers' rights and for expanding food security programmes by giving out higher support to farmers. Developed countries wanted to take up the issue in the MC13. The MC12 declaration states that the WTO members recognise the need for adequate food stocks that can contribute to domestic food security and encourage WTO members to release their available surplus on international markets, following the WTO rules. Poor countries, which are disproportionately being affected by the food price hike, are expected to benefit from this measure.

Another important outcome of the MC12 is the agreement on fisheries. This agreement was being negotiated for the last two decades or so. The objective of the negotiation on fisheries subsidies was to reduce and eliminate subsidies and other practices in fishing which led to overcapacity and overfishing. The agreement recognises the appropriate and effective special and differential treatment

for LDCs and developing countries. In case of subsidy to a vessel or operator engaged in illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, the agreement provides exemption to LDCs and developing countries for a period of two years within exclusive economic zones (EEZ). Moreover, in case of subsidies for fishing or fishing-related activities regarding an overfished stock, LDCs and developing countries will be exempted for a period of two years from the

that time, LDCs and developing countries had little idea of the importance and relevance of this decision. They could also not have predicted the growth of electronic commerce and its economic potential. Due to the moratorium on customs duty, LDCs and developing countries are now losing millions of dollars. Therefore, many developing countries such as India, South Africa and Pakistan want an end to this provision as they are losing



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As for a WTO reform, it should uphold its foundational principles, which is to take decision by consensus and protect the interests of LDCs and poor countries through special and differential treatment provisions.

date of entry, to implement this agreement. However, during the negotiating phase, there was a lack of consensus on fisheries subsidies. Developing countries asked for a 25-year transition period for subsidies. The argument is based on the reality that the interests of these countries' fishermen should be protected. They sought a fair, balanced and just outcome on fisheries subsidies for the future of their fishing industries. LDCs and developing countries do not operate large fleets and their fisheries sectors are mostly small-scale and consist of poor fishing communities.

The third issue is the waiver on the agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). India and South Africa made a submission to the Council of TRIPS on October 2, 2020 requesting a temporary "waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of Covid-19." The US was in favour of waiver of patent rights only for Covid vaccines, while several developed countries were against this. The MC12 decision offers a patent waiver for manufacturing Covid vaccines. The waiver does not apply to diagnostics and therapeutics. However, a decision on that will be taken in six months. This decision on patent waiver will last for five years.

Fourth is the issue of the extension of the moratorium on custom duties on e-commerce. Developing countries have been opposing the moratorium and have requested for its withdrawal. The General Council of the WTO established Work Programme on E-commerce in 1998. At

revenue. Hence, they have been opposing any permanent moratorium on custom duties on electronic transmissions. The MC12 agreed on maintaining the current practice of not imposing custom duties on electronic transmissions until the next WTO ministerial conference.

The fifth issue is about WTO reform. Since the WTO works on the principle of the consensus of all its members, it has been very difficult to arrive at decisions during most of its journey since 1995. However, one has to agree that the WTO has successfully provided a framework of trade rules which provides predictability for commercial transactions across borders. It has also provided a platform for amicably settling trade disputes.

On the other hand, this rules-based system has been in crisis for quite some time. The Doha round, launched in 2001, is yet to be completed due to opposition from various blocs. The global financial meltdown of 2008, the ongoing economic crisis in view of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war have given rise to protectionist measures. The role of the WTO and other global institutions has been undermined by their powerful members. However, the WTO is an important public good and it should be strengthened and protected. As for a WTO reform, it should uphold its foundational principles, which is to take decision by consensus and protect the interests of LDCs and poor countries through special and differential treatment provisions.

Inflation, globalisation, and localisation



Debra Efroymsen is the executive director of the Institute of Wellbeing, Bangladesh, and author of "Beyond Apologies: Defining and Achieving an Economics of Wellbeing."

DEBRA EFROYMSON

IT is difficult these days to go anywhere or do anything without thinking or hearing about inflation - what is less obvious is what to do about it. As the price of food, petrol, housing, and just about everything else continues to rise dramatically while salaries fail to follow suit, people are suffering. The problem of dramatically rising prices is not limited to Bangladesh. In the Americas, Europe, Africa, and across Asia, people are struggling to pay for rent, food, and other necessities. According to the United Nations, global inflation is on track to increase to 6.7 percent in 2022, twice the average of 2.9 percent during the previous decade.

There is much speculation about the causes of inflation, including fiscal policy, oil prices, the war in Ukraine, Covid-related supply issues, and corporate greed. Since most of what people consume is produced and transported with fuel, the price of oil affects the price of just about everything else.

No doubt global inflation is due to various causes. But given the fact that inflation is global, and that some of the causes have to do with international trade, it may be worth considering the possibility

that globalisation itself is a cause of inflation. Consider the case of corporate monopolies: without competition, there is no need to keep prices low. And various products are becoming more and more concentrated in the hands of a few corporations. Consider also global trade, wherein some countries export and import nearly the same amount of the same product, be it wheat or beef or vegetables. Shipping products around the world is expensive, more so as oil prices rise. It is the very definition of unsustainable. And it is mandated under global trade agreements.

Imagine instead a very different situation. One in which countries attempted to meet more of their needs locally, and where global trade was restricted to cases where it is necessary rather than mandated. Wherein most food, even in cities, is grown close to the consumers, and people's diet consists mostly of locally available, seasonal items. Where the focus is no longer on traveling as far and fast as possible, on spreading global networks, on foreign exchange and foreign direct investment, but rather on building strong, resilient local economies. Where, when the price of petrol continues to climb, governments shift from providing roads to building bicycle networks and bicycle highways, and to improving conditions for public transit and walking.

Where, rather than being obsessed by all that is foreign, people take pride in what is local.

This is not to say that globalisation brings no benefits. Most of us during Covid-19 have benefited from global communication networks. The global

exchange of information and ideas is often fruitful. But the increasingly globalised world economy is too fragile, too liable to cause suffering throughout the planet when a crisis—like Russia's invasion of Ukraine—occurs.

Local Futures, and its partner organisations around the world (including here in Bangladesh) envision a future that is genuinely sustainable, in which thriving economies need not decimate nature or contribute to dangerous climate emissions. A future where the focus is not on constant growth in the supply of unnecessary stuff but rather on having enough of what people need, and sourcing it, as much as possible, close to home.

In order to share its vision of an economics of happiness, Local Futures celebrates World Localisation Day each year on June 21. While the concept of localisation is always relevant, it is more relevant than ever as we face the crisis of inflation on top of other crises: Climate, environmental destruction, species extinction, pollution, and the ongoing slaughter on our roads, to name a few.

There are solutions to the problems we face, and the best solutions are those that resolve multiple problems simultaneously rather than attempting to tackle problems individually, too often contributing to a new problem while trying to resolve an existing one. A focus on the local would not only help address the epidemic of inflation, but help reduce those other problems. A vastly better alternative to inflation, environmental devastation, and other global and local problems exists - if only we have the courage to pursue it.

While the concept of localisation is always relevant, it is more relevant than ever as we face the crisis of inflation on top of other crises: Climate, environmental destruction, species extinction, pollution, and the ongoing slaughter on our roads, to name a few.

SERAJUL ISLAM CHOUDHURY

Our foremost intellectual and writer in Bangladesh



AZFAR HUSSAIN

Dr Azfar Hussain is currently Summer Distinguished Professor of English & Humanities at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). He is director of the graduate programme in social innovation, and associate professor of integrative, religious, and intercultural studies at Grand Valley State University in Michigan, US. He is also the vice-president of the US based Global Center for Advanced Studies (GCAS).

TODAY – June 23 – marks the 87th birthday of Serajul Islam Choudhury. He was my direct teacher in the English Department of Dhaka University, where I studied as an undergraduate. I also had the privilege of working with him closely in the 1990s when he exemplarily edited a left viewsweekly called *Saptahik Samoy*, one with which I, too, was editorially associated. I happily recall his remarkable editorial acumen and prowess. And, more importantly, I vividly recall his matchless classroom lectures on Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Leo Tolstoy, Joseph Conrad, and DH Lawrence, among others. Those lectures – replete with instructive ideas and illuminating insights – were both powerful and beautiful, ones that effortlessly combined his vast erudition with his passionate commitment to social justice and change. He is by far one of the best teachers I have had in my life.

But, for us, Serajul Islam Choudhury is more than an outstanding classroom lecturer or an accomplished academic as such, although the poet-playwright Syed Shamsul Haque memorably characterised him as “our nation’s teacher.” Literary and cultural critic, historian, sociologist of the everyday, political analyst, essayist, columnist, editor, translator, activist, and even organiser, Serajul Islam Choudhury is our foremost writer in the Bengali language and, of course, our leading intellectual in the country – one who is also our major anticapitalist, anti-imperialist, anticolonial, and antipatriarchal writer – one who has been speaking truth to power for nearly six decades now, and one who can surely be placed in the global tradition of such combative intellectuals as Edward Said, Noam Chomsky, and Angela Davis, to name but a few.

Indeed, Choudhury – an internationalist as he is – has so far survived the unprecedented global pandemic that has swept our planet, while already writing about how this very pandemic exposes and even exploits all kinds of inequalities that also bespeak the naked brutalities and explosive contradictions of the existing system that Choudhury continues to name with clarity and conviction: Capitalism. Indeed, Choudhury is our leading socialist writer and intellectual as well.



Prof Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury

ILLUSTRATION: BIPOB CHAKROBORTY

Serajul Islam Choudhury is more than an outstanding classroom lecturer or an accomplished academic as such, although the poet-playwright Syed Shamsul Haque memorably characterised him as “our nation’s teacher.”

The author of countless articles and more than a hundred books – one who has produced some remarkable works in English as well – Serajul Islam Choudhury dwells on an extraordinarily wide range of themes and topics, questions and concerns, to which I cannot do justice in an exceedingly short piece like this one. Indeed, his thematic preoccupations range across different historical periods in the Indian subcontinent and Bangladesh. One of his major and magisterial works called *Jatiyotabad, Sampradayikata o Janogoner Mukti* (2015) is by far the most interdisciplinarily engaged, wide-ranging historiographical work produced in Bangladesh.

True, Choudhury’s concerns range from the British colonial and Pakistani neocolonial periods to our national liberation movement of 1971 to the mainstream political culture that has evolved in Bangladesh, from Marx to Mao, from Rokeya to Pritilata, from Fanon to Somen Chanda, from Vidyasagar to Bhashani, from Sophocles to Shakespeare, from Socrates to Said, or from Beowulf to Virginia Wolf, not to mention his concerns with Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, and Jibanananda Das as well as his concerns with the ancient Greek epics and with what FR Leavis calls the “great tradition,” to mention but a few.

But Serajul Islam Choudhury always remains characteristically critical of the canonical and the dominant and the Establishment – remaining committed

to the production of demystifying and oppositional knowledge – from the perspectives of those who are oppressed, exploited, marginalised, or what the Latin American writer Eduardo Galeano memorably calls “nobodies.” Indeed, in his works, Choudhury remains concerned – to varying degrees – with Bangladesh’s workers, peasants, women, and minorities, while remaining consistently critical of our national ruling classes and Choudhury’s own class – the middle class. Of course, class itself constitutes his fundamental political concern as well as his analytical horizon, one which, however, remains hospitable to a whole host of interconnected economic, social, and cultural issues that turn out to be the sites of class struggles themselves.

For Choudhury, then, criticism does not merely amount to critical or aesthetic evaluations of individual authors as such. He is the first one to have seen the limits of so-called “New Criticism” and aestheticist criticism in Bangladesh. For him, criticism is rather a larger intellectual and political practice that pays attention to actually existing unequal power relations and production relations that affect the practice of everyday life, while also calling attention to the question of human emancipation itself, something which further constitutes an abiding and overarching theme in Choudhury’s almost entire oeuvre ranging, say, from his earlier work *Nirasroy Grihee* (1977), to *Srence Samay Shahitya* (1986) and

Swadhinata Spriha Sammyer Bhoj (1988), to *Gonototrer Pokkhe Bipokkhe* (1990) and *Rashtra o Kalpokol* (1990), to *Rashtr Malikana* (1997) and *Uponibeshar Sangskriti* (1999), to *Pitritantrikotar Bipokkhe* (2007) and *Pa Raakhi Kothay* (2018), to *Vidyasagar o Koyekti Prosongo* (2021).

And, in almost every work cited above, Choudhury remains politically and intersectionally alive, as he himself tells us: “It’s impossible to discuss culture and society without discussing politics as such” (translation mine). In fact, using the Gramscian contention that culture itself is political and that politics has its own culture, one might say that Choudhury deals with the politics of culture and the culture of politics in his various works. And one of the fundamental conceptual contributions Choudhury makes – via his early landmark intervention called *Unish Shotoker Bangla Goddyer Samajik Byakaran* – is his interdisciplinary notion of what he himself calls “the social grammar of literature,” vectored as it is by the political and the political-economic in the final instance. Indeed, Choudhury is by far the most politically and socially engaged literary and cultural critic in Bangladesh, one for whom interdisciplinarity itself turns out to be a mode of emancipatory praxis. Of course, Choudhury’s role here as a literary and cultural critic can by no means be dissociated from his role as a socialist intellectual.

Now a few words about Serajul Islam Choudhury’s style. Indeed, among the numerous contributions he has made, one major contribution is his style itself. And, for him, style is not only an aesthetic but a political question insofar as it contributes to the power of language that can grip the masses. Choudhury’s prose powerful and beautiful in more senses than one; it attracts, moves, stimulates, even provokes, while, in the first place, it is immensely, even infinitely, and pleasantly readable.

Indeed, Serajul Islam Choudhury remains phenomenally productive and active even in his late eighties, as he tirelessly reads, writes, edits, publishes while also frequently delivering public lectures. It is not for nothing that – probably thinking of people like him – the great Latin American poet and socialist Pablo Neruda ardently announced in his poem “Ode to Age:” “I don’t believe in age.” On his 87th birthday, I wish my teacher a more productive life full of love and light and laughter; and, as my teacher knows well, “it’s beautiful to love the world with eyes/ that have not yet/ been born,” to use the great Guatemalan poet Otto Rene Castillo’s words.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send us your letters to letters@thedailystar.net

Sanitary napkin as a relief item

More and more districts are being flooded in the country, and the affected people are in desperate need of regular relief items. Since a large number of them are women and girls, the government and private organisations providing relief should organise the items considering their needs.

Usually, rice, pulses, *chira*, *muri*, medicine, saline, etc., are given as relief. But the government also

needs to include packets of sanitary napkins among their relief items. Because it is really difficult for the flood affected women and girls to maintain proper menstrual hygiene during crises, a packet of sanitary napkins at this time can be a real blessing for them.

Israt Jahan
Department of English,
Chittagong College



PHOTO: STAR

/Opinion

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CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Checkout act
5 Back biter
10 Seasonal song
12 Spanish resort isle
13 Sung story
14 Kuwaiti coin
15 Caterer's pot
16 Shape with a knife
18 Dot
20 Twisty fish
21 Vengeful goddess
23 Place down
24 Methods
26 Defeat
28 Craze
29 Heroic tale
31 Radius setting
32 Petite

36 Easily broken
39 Crayon
40 Turning tool
41 Lorelei's river
43 Come in
44 More rational
45 Small porch
46 Check out

DOWN

1 Troop member
2 Blue Grotto setting
3 "... we all!"
4 Neither follower
5 Calf-length skirt
6 Death notice
7 Door toppers
8 Flowery

9 Almost never
11 Anarchic
17 That woman
19 Belonging to thee
22 African capital
24 Arrest paper
25 Acknowledge
27 Cereal bit
28 Aesop's output
30 Everybody
33 Baling need
34 Bowling spots
35 Use force
37 Vincent's brother
38 Maryland player, for short
42 Derby, e.g.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

PAGANS AMPERS
OCELOT GOAL
DELETE ARTY
REPAST
RIFT USING
ORO CONIFER
SIRANT IRE
ESTATES EVE
SHINE EDEN
FORMAL
PAID INVADE
EPEE SNIPER
REDS TASTER

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

WHY SHOULD I GIVE YOU A PASS TO TOWN?
TO GET ME OUT OF YOUR HAIR FOR A FEW HOURS
HE'S RIGHT! I DO DESERVE A BREAK!

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT TO BE WHEN I GROW UP.
YOU'LL PROBABLY BE A HARDWORKING TAXPAYER WITH A STEADY JOB AND A FAMILY OF YOUR OWN, LIKE ME.
IS THERE AN OPTION B?

Archaeologists discover

FROM PAGE 14 remains of idols, reliefs and painted plaster," it said in a statement. "This is very exceptional (not only) for the Netherlands, but also internationally," it said, adding that while several Roman sanctuaries were known in the Netherlands, this was the first such complete complex and temple found.

It will boost

FROM PAGE 14 project and they look forward to the blessings of "connectivity, economic progress and easier travel". "It is a major infrastructure project not just in terms of brick and steel," Doraiswami said, adding that it is a symbolic connection between the two parts of Bangladesh. Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Jeremy Bruer has said the Padma Bridge is a major achievement by and for Bangladeshis which should make all of them proud. In a message yesterday, the high commissioner said the bridge should give a significant boost to the national economy. It would reduce travel time and make it easier for people to move around the country to conduct business and to see their families. On behalf of all Australians, the envoy congratulated the government and people of Bangladesh on the completion of this country's largest infrastructure project which will connect 21 Southern districts with Dhaka. Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the long-cherished Padma Bridge on June 25.

Polls will be fair

FROM PAGE 14 authority to assist the EC in carrying out its activities, the PM said. "It is the Awami League that has been playing a leading role in flourishing and advancing the country's democracy. Therefore, the present government led by Awami League has been playing a sincere and positive role in creating a suitable environment for holding a free, fair and acceptable election," said Hasina, also president of ruling Awami League. Saying that election is an essential element in the democratic system, she said the role of AL in protecting Bangladesh's independence, sovereignty and democracy is historical and undeniable. In the written reply, the premier outlined the 11 "significant" measures for conducting the next polls in more acceptable and participatory manner. The measures include the EC formulation law in line with article 118 (1) of the constitution to hold local body and national elections in an acceptable and neutral manner. Hasina added that 22 amendment proposals of opposition parties were accepted during placing of "Appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Bill" that is the first step of making the polls acceptable, free, fair and neutral. She said voter list with photographs has been prepared for an acceptable election. Transparent ballot boxes have been ensured at the polling centres. Besides, electronic voting machines with modern system have been introduced, the PM added. Hasina also replied to other issues, including her government's plan to create awareness at school level to prevent road accidents, recovering grabbed playgrounds in Dhaka and other major cities, modernising the Chattogram Port and upgradation of roads in southern districts. With Speaker Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair, yesterday's question-answer session was tabled.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges
Bridges Division
Bangladesh Bridge Authority
Dhaka Elevated Expressway PPP Project
Setu Bhaban, New Airport Road, Banani
Dhaka-1212
www.bba.gov.bd

Memo No: 50.00.0000.551.00.326.2022-916 Date: 22/06/2022

Invitation of Expression of Interest (EOI)
for
Preparing a Comprehensive Audio-Visual Documentation on "Construction of Dhaka Elevated Expressway PPP Project"

Ministry/ Division	: Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, Bridges Division
Agency	: Bangladesh Bridge Authority
Procuring Entity	: Project Director, Dhaka Elevated Expressway PPP Project
Procuring Entity District	: Dhaka
Project Name	: Dhaka Elevated Expressway PPP Project
EOI for Selection of	: Consulting Firm (s) for "Preparing a Comprehensive Audio-Visual Documentation on Construction of Dhaka Elevated Expressway PPP Project"
EOI Ref No.	: 50.00.0000.551.00.326.2022-916
Date	: 22/06/2022
Procurement Method	: Quality & Cost Based Selection (QCBS)
Source of Fund	: GOB (Development)
EOI Closing / Submission Date & Time	: On or before 3:00 PM on 01/08/2022
EOI Submission Place	: Office of the Project Director, Dhaka Elevated Expressway PPP Project, Bangladesh Bridge Authority, 9 th floor, Setu Bhaban, New Airport Road, Banani, Dhaka-1212.
Brief Description of Assignment	: The Scope of the Assignment include: (i) To study all reports from the inception of the project to the date, collect various documents (audio-video, animation, photographs and documents etc.) from consultant and contractor and prepare a script for filming the salient features, the existing lives and livelihood of local population (socio-economic aspects) and environmental considerations (ecological) also needs to be recorded. (ii) Continuous filming and record keeping of all activities as work progresses. Sub-phased into three months to make documentations manageable and evaluated by the DEEP and BBA. (iii) Record the expectations of the BBA and impact of the lives and livelihood of the local population as well as overall economic/ ecological aspects. Duration shall be 36 (Thirty Six) months from the date of commencement of services.
Experience, Resources and Delivery Capacity Required	: Interested Firm(s) must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (Brochures, registrations, Profile, availability of appropriate skills/experts among staff etc): 1. Background of the firm(s) with general and overall experience including company's brochure. 2. Summary of similar projects/services completed during the last 10 years. This shall be supported by authenticated completion certificate issued by the competent concerned authority. 3. Availability of appropriate skills staff (list of relevant professional staff, their qualification and experience). 4. Average Annual Turn Over of the firm(s) during the last 3 years (Audited financial reports of the firm(s) or Substantiated by relevant documents). 5. Company's Incorporation Certificate/Registration Certificate, Trade License, VAT Registration Certificate, Income Tax Certificate, Bank Solvency Certificate.
Other Details	: Submission of EOI should be in hard bound form bearing the name and address of the EOI no & date and be addressed to the EOI Issuing Authority. The EOI shall be submitted in one original and two copies, duly marked as "ORIGINAL" and/or "COPY" (both copies), in two separate envelopes. All these envelopes shall then be placed in a cover envelope duly marking the name and address of the EOI no & date and be addressed to the EOI issuing Authority. The page no. of the EOI shall be marked serially on every page. In the event of any discrepancy between the original and the copies, the original shall prevail. The EOI's submitted either in loose form or spiral binding shall not be entertained.
Association with Other Local Firm(s)	: Association with other Firm(s): a) Interested firms may associate with other firms (Domestic or International) to enhance their qualifications but should mention whether the association is in the form of "Joint Venture (JV)" or "Sub-Contractor/Sub-Consultancy". In case of association with other firm(s) all members of such "association" shall have real and well defined input of assignment. b) In case of JV, lead partner must have completed at least 01 (one) similar works. c) In addition to the above the JV shall have to comply with the experience mentioned in "Experience, Resources and Delivery Capacity required" collectively. d) The experience of the "sub-contractors/sub-consultants" will not be considered for evaluation. e) Not more than three joint venture partners (including the lead partner) shall be allowed to form a JV for submission of their interest under this EOI. f) In case of JV the authorized representative shall be from the lead partner.
Name of Official Inviting EOI	: A H M S Aktar
Designation of Official Inviting EOI	: Project Director.
Address of Official Inviting EOI	: Office of the Project Director, Dhaka Elevated Expressway PPP Project, Bangladesh Bridge Authority, 9 th floor, Setu Bhaban, New Airport Road, Banani, Dhaka-1212.
Contact Details of Official Inviting EOI	: Phone: +88 02 55040401 Email: pddee2019@gmail.com

The Procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOI's without assigning any reason whatsoever.
The client shall not responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by the firm(s) in connection with the preparation or delivery of the EOI.

(A H M S Aktar)
Project Director
Phone: 55040401
E-mail: pddee2019@gmail.com

Thanks, but no thanks

FROM PAGE 14 alliance government stopped the work of Padma Bridge project at the Mawa end and asked the Japan government to do a feasibility study for Aricha end. "It's a blatant lie. We have proof which is the Japan International Cooperation Agency's complete feasibility report on Mawa-Jajira end. We have the copy of that feasibility study and the report was submitted on March 3, 2004," he said. "When the feasibility report was officially submitted, how can she [the prime minister] say the BNP government stopped the work of Padma Bridge project? They worked later based on that feasibility study."

He said the problem started when the World Bank stopped the funding on a corruption allegation but the prime minister blamed the BNP for it. "But we came to know about it only after the World Bank raised the allegation." Fakhru then presented the details of the feasibility report at the press conference, held at Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office. Replying to Sheikh Hasina's question who will be the prime minister if the BNP comes to power, he said, "Khaleda Zia will be the prime minister if BNP assumes office. In her absence, party's acting chairman Tarique Rahman will be the prime minister."

3 reportedly shot dead

FROM PAGE 1 Hossain, superintendent of police in Rangamati, said, "We have heard that there was a shooting incident in the remote border of Rangamati near the Mizoram province. "After being informed, police and army officials went to the area but did not find any bodies or signs of an attack. He added that he spoke to the upazila chairman who also said he heard the news. "There are no eye witnesses to the incident and so we cannot say for sure what happened." SP Mudasser, however, also said, "We heard that there was one Kuki-Chin National Front engaged in gunfight with JSS workers but it could not be verified as there were no eyewitnesses." Mahmuda Begum, additional superintendent of police (Crime and Operation), said, "We are trying to find out what happened. We will take steps according to the law once we find out what happened and why." Union Parishad Chairman Atu Mong said there are two Tripura

families living in the area where the incident took place. "Several members of the Kuki-Chin party [are said to have] swooped and opened fire on them, leaving three dead and three injured." Seeking anonymity, a local leader of the Tripura community, known as "Karbari", said, "Saijam Para has been divided into two parts - the old and the new. The Kuki-Chin men entered the newer part and opened fire, sensing the presence of JSS activity." Several locals reported hearing sounds of guns being fired in the area around 7:00pm. The group named "Kuki-Chin National Front-KNF", meanwhile, purportedly made a Facebook post taking responsibility for the attack, saying they "launched it on a JSS camp" On the group's "Facebook page", someone identifying himself as Lt Colonel Solomon wrote, "Successful operation of commando Headhunter team", taking responsibility for the casualties.

Blitz against notebooks

FROM PAGE 14 The latest draft act also said a school may arrange additional classes for weaker students subject to the written consent of the parents. The classes will be held either before or after school hours in line with the rules or policies framed by the government or a circular or executive order. Coaching centres for helping jobseekers, admission seekers or English lessons will remain out of the purview of the law, said top education ministry officials. The draft law seeks to take action as per the penal code if any irregularities are detected at non-government educational institutions run by trusts. Asked why took more than 11 years to finalise the draft of the law, he was elusive. "I am also surprised that it took so many years," Siddique added.

Experts applauded the provisions in the draft act. If the government can implement the provisions of banning guidebooks and control the private tuition, it would drastically reduce out-of-pocket expenditure, said KM Enamul Hoque, deputy director of Campaign for Popular Education. In Bangladesh, the share of urban households paying for private tuition increased from 48 percent in 2000 to 67 percent in 2010 while the corresponding share of rural households doubled from 27 percent to 54 percent, according to the UNESCO 2021/2 Global Education Monitoring Report. Overall, the average expenditure increased by 80 percent in real terms. About 7 percent of families in Bangladesh have to borrow to send their children to school, the report added.

Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS)
67, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

No CPS-355/2022/29251 Date: 19-06-2022

Schedule for FCPS Part-I, FCPS Part-II (Final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Specialty), FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS written examinations to be held in July, 2022.

FCPS Part-II (Final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Specialty) and MCPS Examinations.

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
All Subjects	Paper - I	02.07.2022 (Saturday)	9:00 A.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper - II	03.07.2022 (Sunday)	to 12:00 Noon	

FCPS Mid-Term Examination

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
1. Anaesthesiology 2. Medicine & Allied 3. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied 4. Ophthalmology & Allied 5. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery 6. Paediatrics & Allied 7. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation 8. Psychiatry & Allied 9. Surgery & Allied 10. Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery 11. Radiology & Imaging 12. Radiotherapy	Paper - I	02.07.2022 (Saturday)	9:00 A.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper - II	03.07.2022 (Sunday)	to 12:00 Noon	

FCPS Part-I Examination Morning

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
Medicine & Allied	Paper - I	04.07.2022 (Monday)	9:00 A.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper - II	05.07.2022 (Tuesday)	to	
	Paper - III	06.07.2022 (Wednesday)	10:40 A.M.	

Noon

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
1. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied 2. Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery 3. Paediatrics & Allied 4. Radiology & Imaging	Paper - I	04.07.2022 (Monday)	12:00 Noon	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper - II	05.07.2022 (Tuesday)	to	
	Paper - III	06.07.2022 (Wednesday)	01:40 P.M.	

FCPS Part-I Examination Afternoon

Subject	Paper	Date	Time	Venue
1. Anaesthesiology 2. Biochemistry 3. Dental Surgery (Conservative Dentistry & Endodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics & Maxillofacial Orthopedics and Prosthodontics) 4. Dermatology & Venereology 5. Family Medicine 6. Haematology 7. Histopathology 8. Microbiology 9. Ophthalmology & Allied 10. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation 11. Psychiatry & Allied 12. Radiotherapy 13. Surgery & Allied 14. Transfusion Medicine	Paper - I	04.07.2022 (Monday)	3:00 P.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper - II	05.07.2022 (Tuesday)	to	
	Paper - III	06.07.2022 (Wednesday)	04:40 P.M.	

Program for OSPE/IOE/Oral, OSCE/Clinical, Practical & examinations for FCPS Part II (final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Specialty), FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS examinations will be notified on the Notice Board and Website of BCPS well in advance.

The list of the examiners and the name of the venue of the OSPE & IOE, OSCE/Clinical, Oral & Practical examinations will be notified on the Notice Board and Website of BCPS on the day before examination (after 8.30pm).

The Admit Card for the FCPS Part-I examination will be available through online only from 20 June to 06 July 2022, (till completion of the FCPS Part-I examination) and for FCPS Part II (final), Preliminary FCPS Part-II, FCPS (Sub-Specialty), MCPS and FCPS Mid-Term examinations will be available through online only from 20 June to 3 July 2022 (till completion of the written examination). Please visit BCPS website (exams.bcps.edu.bd) and login password protected profile and print admit card. Please contact examinations department if there is any problem related to download of the admit card. **Admit Card of July 2022 session is a prerequisite for entering the examination hall.**

- No Admit Card will be issued after the deadline.
- No Admit Card will be printed and distributed from BCPS campus.

Instructions for Examinees

- Examination hall will be opened one hour before commencement of the examination. Examinees will go directly to the examination hall.
- Examinees are not allowed to stay anywhere other than the examination hall.
- Carrying mobile phones / laptops / table/writer watch / calculator / other electronic devices / bags / parkies / water bottles / beverage cans / lighter / pens / metal objects other than keys by the examinees is prohibited. Carrying such materials shall be subject to expulsion from examination.
- Examinees are not allowed to write anything on the admit card/instruction sheet or keep any other papers. These may lead to cancellation of the paper.
- FCPS Part-II written qualified examinees have to download "Notification Update Form" from BCPS website (www.bcps.edu.bd) immediately after publication of the result and have to send the filled up form back to BCPS 10 days before clinical examination. It is mandatory to submit the form. If found, incorrect information and incomplete form, examination will be held against the candidate.
- NO MASK NO SERVICE.**
- Follow all the safety measures to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

Professor Md. Yitu Miah
Controller of Examinations

Shahosh

A courageous effort or squandered potential?



The team deserves praise for the research, efforts and scrutiny that they went through. For all that to be squandered because of 'rumours' of obscenity would be a real shame.

SHARMIN JOYA

Nazia Haque Orsha and Mustafizur Noor Imran starrer "Shahosh" depicts a story of the locals of Bagerhat. The Sazzad Khan directorial highlights how an urban girl, who becomes a victim of rape, fights for justice and in her journey, her closed ones abandon her. The plot is blended with political conflicts and inter-gang rivalry of the locals.

The film was allegedly subject to controversy for containing inappropriate language and content, and on the first draft, was declared as 'not eligible for display' by the Bangladesh Film Censor Board. Even after receiving a clearance certificate upon alteration, the director decided to release the uncut version of the project on Chorki.

Orsha, who is a brilliant performer, portrayed Nila in this film, a rape victim who faces various hurdles and social stigma, when she decides to speak up.

"Those who have misrepresented the film, quoting it 'inappropriate', have only proved them languish," says the actress. "I initially had this argument with the director and team, that this film is not for the big screens, as our audience is not yet prepared for such kind of storytelling," shares Orsha. "We have a multiplex-based audience, and if we were to present an 'uncut' version of the film, I genuinely believe that OTT was the right place."



The actress informs that the story of the film has been compiled from real-life incidents. "There is a scene where Nila gives a victim impact statement to the lawyer. I went through some real case files, which shattered me as a human being. Nonetheless, reading those gave me some much-needed context."

Mostafizur Noor Imran, who earned critical acclaim for playing Moloy in Ashfaq Nipun's "Mohanagar" has been proving his acting prowess through his stellar performances. The actor, who is seen as Raihan, Nila's husband, holds a powerful philosophy of bringing change through art.

"Our censor board still runs the 1963 act, and I have doubts whether they have any knowledge of world cinema. It has been a long time since we held the film industry hostage," asserts the actor. "There is no needless violence, bloodshed, obscenity in this movie. Neither was there any hidden commentary against the state." He appreciates the team for coming up with a real story showcasing courage.

The director says that he will leave the judgement to the audience. "It is not possible that a project will be liked by all," he says. "However, the response and reviews we are getting is primarily positive. People are appreciating our effort to be courageous," concludes the Sazzad, who told The Daily Star that they will arrange special screenings after Eid.

The team deserves praise for the research, efforts and scrutiny that they went through. For all that to be squandered because of 'rumours' of obscenity would be a real shame.

Léa Seydoux to star in 'Dune: Part II'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



Léa Seydoux will be playing Lady Margot Fenring, an ally to Paul Atride (Timothée Chalamet) in "Dune: Part II". All of the original characters are set to reprise their roles in the film.

New additions to the film include Florence Pugh as Princess Irulan, Christopher Walken as Emperor Shaddam IV, and Austin Butler in the role of House of Harkonnen's heir, Feyd-Rautha Harkonnen. The first movie, "Dune", received a total of 10 Oscar nominations and bagged six awards at the Academy Awards. The movie made USD 400 million worldwide at the box office.

Two films added to government grants list



Dipankar Dipon

Zakir Hossain Raju

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

On June 15, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting published the list of films which received grants from the government in the fiscal year of 2021-22.

A total of 19 feature films received government grants. A week later, on June 21, it was announced that two more films would be added to the existing list. The movies are being produced by the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC).

One of the films, titled "Akash Juddho" (based on the Liberation war) will be directed by Dipankar Dipon, and received BDT 75 lakh in grants. The other film, "Chador" which is directed by Zakir Hossain Raju, received BDT 70 lakh.

According to reports, BFDC had separately applied for the government grant through the ministry. After almost 35 years, BFDC will be producing a film, previously they had produced "Golapi Ekhon Train".

COUNTRYWIDE

Robot Chishti

A MAGICAL REALITY

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A twelve-grader student has invented a robot surprising everyone in the village. Ahsan Habib, 18, of Kaliganj upazila in Lalmonirhat has named it 'Chishti'.

He has been successful to assemble the robot after eight months of efforts. He has engineered it to perfection spending Tk one lakh.

Ahsan Habib, the son of late Maju Mia of Sundrahabi village in the upazila, is a student of Kaliganj Govt Karim Uddin Public College. Despite being a student of humanities department, he has a scientific bent of mind, locals said.

Chishti is able to ambulate and can answer to questions. It can also carry light weight.

Ahsan Habib also made a small robot in 2017 while studying at Tusbhandar RMMP Govt Boys' High School. He won the first prize

in the district by displaying it in the science fair.

Habib said that he has been obsessed with tinkering with technical staff since his school days. He has gathered the technical know-how of making robot watching videos on YouTube.

However, his success didn't come in a single day as he had to taste failure on a number of occasions. He finally succeeded in making a robot in 2017.

He also said his progress on the project was halted in the middle and he resumed his mission robot Chishti in October last year.

"I haven't fully prepared the robot yet. There is more work to be done. I'm trying my level best," he said.

Habib said that the robot he made is similar to the structure of human body and it can answer to questions fluently.

Once it sees a person, it can remember the person and keep a log of people's images and words.

"My robot can shake hands and make gestures," he said. "If I give government support, I will be able to build more advanced robots. Financial instability is my main obstacle," he said.

Habib, the youngest of three siblings, had plunged in financial constraints since his father's death. He started providing tuition to pay for his studies and research.

Locals including school teacher Ashraf Hossain gathered to see the magical invention of Ahsan. They were seen interacting with the robot.

"We are happy and proud that our village boy has made such a robot," Ashraf said adding that they hope Ahsan will continue his research to create a more advanced robot.



Ahsan Habib of Sundrahabi village in Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila has invented a robot. Robot Chishti can reply to questions, shake hand and ambulate. PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Businesses get loan repayment relief

FROM PAGE 1

The borrowers must clear 60 percent of their unpaid loans in the July-September quarter and 80 percent in the fourth quarter of 2022 if they don't want to be classified as defaulters.

For cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs), borrowers must pay 25 percent of the payable loans in the April-June quarter, 30 percent in the second quarter and 40 percent in the last quarter of the year to avoid falling into the defaulter category.

Only the term loans, which carry a repayment period of more than a year, will qualify for the fresh relaxed classification

treatment, said the notice.

In the flood-hit areas identified by the disaster management and relief ministry, borrower-farmers will not be declared as defaulters even if they fail to pay any instalment between April and December.

CMSME borrowers in the affected areas will have to clear 25 percent of the unpaid loans for the nine-month period.

The working capital loans due as of April 1 this year can be repaid by December. Such loans are taken to finance a company's day-to-day operations.

The unpaid portion of the loans, payable in the nine-month period, will

be added to the next year's loans and the instalment sizes would be adjusted accordingly, the BB said.

Banks can't impose any penal interest or fee on the beneficiaries for the April-December period.

The loans that were unclassified as of April 1 this year will only be eligible for the new relaxed repayment facility.

The borrowers who enjoyed the BB's relaxed facility in 2019 could also get the deferral support.

The BB, however, didn't say whether banks would be allowed to show their unrealised interests against the loans enjoying the deferral support as income and how much funds

lenders must keep aside in the form of provision to cover loan losses.

Instructions to this effect will be given later, said the notice.

Borrowers in Bangladesh enjoyed a full year payment holiday throughout 2020 because of the pandemic and could avoid slipping into the defaulter category by paying 15 percent of the instalments payable for 2021.

The central bank discontinued the support from the beginning of this year as virus infections fell, paving the way for the economy to rebound strongly, before coming under pressure after the Russian-Ukraine war.

1,135 new Covid cases recorded

FROM PAGE 2

The overall positivity rate stood at 13.75 percent, and the death rate was 1.49 percent.

The country's total caseload was 1,959,209 and the fatalities were 29,134.

Some 8,536 samples were tested across the country during the 24-hour period.

At least 122 Covid patients recovered during the time, bringing the total number of recoveries to

19,06,105. The recovery rate was 97.29 percent, said the DGHS in a release.

The deceased, Shamsur Rahman, was the associate professor and head of the paediatric surgery department at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital. He died from Covid on Monday.

It was confirmed on Tuesday that the physician, who was hospitalised with Covid symptoms, died from coronavirus after testing

samples collected from his body.

Meanwhile, a team of researchers of Jashore University of Science and Technology on Tuesday detected a sub-variant named BA.4/5 through a partial (spike protein) genome sequence of samples collected from two infected people in Jashore, said a university press release.

According to the release, the two male patients are

aged 44 and 79. One of them received Covid booster shot, while another was vaccinated with two doses.

One of them is undergoing treatment at a hospital and the other at home. They are showing some mild symptoms, including fever, sore throat and cough.

The research team added that this new sub-variant has a mutation similar to Omicron in the spike protein.

Govt won't implement phase-2

FROM PAGE 14

Press, a Japanese news agency.

Japan International Cooperation Agency was supposed to finance phase 2. It was ready to fund it even after its commitment at the G7 summit, saying it's an "ongoing" project. But 120 organisations from 25 countries and green campaigners working against fossil fuel urged all

stakeholders to stop the expansion of Matarbari project.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, said they have already made a plan to build an LNG-based power plant instead of the coal-based one.

"We have already scrapped Matarbari

phase-2 project. We plan to build an LNG-based power plant there. It will be linked with an LNG [Liquefied Natural Gas] terminal."

Replying to a query, he said, "We will start it [LNG-based plant] after completion of Matarbari phase-1."

Work of the 1,200MW Matarbari Ultra Super Critical Coal Fired Power Project began in fiscal

2013-14. The cost was initially estimated at Tk 35,984 crore for phase-1.

Last November, the cost was raised by 44.1 percent to Tk 51,854.9 crore. Of the amount, JICA is providing Tk 43,921 crore.

Sources in Power Division said more than 70 percent work of phase-1 has been completed. It is expected to go into operation in January 2024.

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

Dispatches of independence

The book also stands as a testimony to the struggles of a journalist on the field. Ghosh faced immense challenges, threats, and attacks while reporting this war for years.

NAMRATA

The Bangladesh Liberation War fought in 1971 created history in many ways. In addition to the formation of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, it was also what changed the ties between India and Pakistan, forever.

Author Manash Ghosh was one of the few Indian journalists who covered the entire event from the very beginning till the historical surrender of Pakistan on December 17, 1971.

for eight years to Bangladesh for his anti-government writings, and despite being blacklisted by the then PM of Bangladesh, Begum Zia, he went on to become the country's 'Manashda'.

The shades of grey on the muted cover of *Bangladesh War: Report from Ground Zero* (Niyogi Books, 2021) sets the tone of the book perfectly. It presents a black and white picture of shoes and helmets of army officials lined up before a wall with only doors and windows visible, depicting the missing men who have either been killed in the war or have been

Bangladesh War resembles a journalist's diary. Ghosh's tone is neither that of a critic nor a judge. He is neutral throughout the book, like a keen observer who just narrates what he has seen.

"What the Jews were to Hitler, the Hindus were to Nazi", Ghosh writes. He narrates the series of incidents with its ugliness and nakedness intact. While the atrocities and the loss of lives are traumatic to read and relive, it is heartwarming to read about the love and support extended to Ghosh. As it is in any war, women and children continue to be the number one casualty, closely followed by the poor. It is devastating to recall the horrors of the war and witness the brutalities at close quarters in these pages.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's planning and preparation, which eventually led to the birth of Bangladesh, are inspiring to read about. He worked on it painstakingly for three decades, liaising with three successive Indian prime ministers, his goal clear, which helped him in gaining a mass following.

The book also stands as a testimony to the struggles of a journalist on the field. Ghosh faced immense challenges, threats, and attacks while reporting this war for years. Yet, he overcame it all to become the much-loved 'Manashda' for everyone, from the common man to the powerful political leaders of the country, owing to his passion for this cause and the desire to report nothing but the truth.

This book is a recollection of tumultuous events at a visceral level. Ghosh has captured memories, mistakes, and mind games brilliantly in his narration. The series of incidents both before and after the war are extremely important in the geopolitical history of the subcontinent. Though it was a war for freedom, it impacted South Asia in countless ways.

Namrata is a writer, a digital marketing professional, and an editor at *Kitaab* literary magazine.

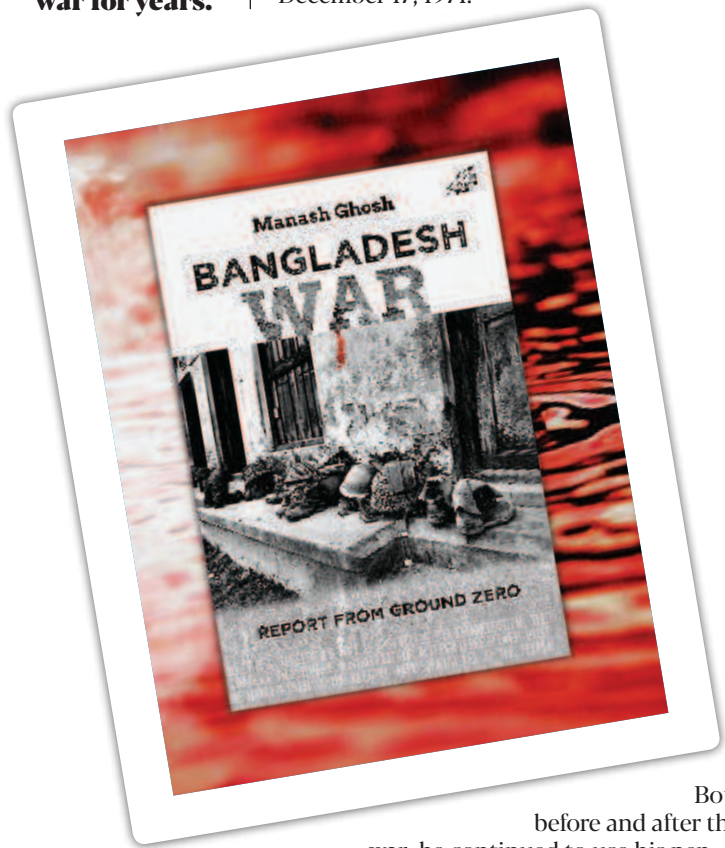
With a detailed sequence of events, accompanied by pictures, dates, and names, Bangladesh War resembles a journalist's diary. Ghosh's tone is neither that of a critic nor a judge. He is neutral throughout the book, like a keen observer who just narrates what he has seen.

taken as prisoners. Only a splatter of blood represents the aftermath of a war.

In his book, Ghosh gives us an insider view of how the muktijuddho was planned meticulously for years before being executed, starting with a detailed background of how it all began, to taking the reader deep inside East Pakistan.

Ghosh was on great terms with senior Awami League leaders at the time and commanders of the Mukti Bahini. This has ensured that many hitherto unknown facts have been revealed in the book, making it a gripping read. One of the many things that the writer brings to the reader's attention is that the upheaval behind the war had been triggered by a natural disaster.

With a detailed sequence of events, accompanied by pictures, dates, and names,



Both before and after the war, he continued to use his pen and fight for the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh. Ghosh was denied a visa

BOOK REVIEW: POETRY

From Feni to New Zealand: Trinkets of a life lived

NAZIFA RAIDAH

The thing about the tales of 'modern' women is that they are largely put into boxes. They are often riddled with individual plights, struggles and of course, the final thundering redemption song. Although there is truth sewn even within those stories, it is one that is predictable to the reader. This is where Mastura Tasnim's *Silent Rebellion* (Chaitonno, 2020) offers a fresh set of eyes.

This collection of 30 poems was born within the stirring times of the pandemic—taking even the author by surprise. The birth was unintentional on the author's part, as it was her brother who had neatly grafted all the poems, turning it into a fine piece of reading, eventually presenting it to her as a gift. And for that effort, readers can rejoice since this honest, funny and raw piece of work has surfaced on the face of the earth.

Reading this book gave me an essence of looking through a bioscope, where the author, through each piece of poetry, gives the reader a sense of all the places she has hopped to—starting from the backwater towns of Feni and

Jessore and then on a trip overseas in Singapore, and in New Zealand where she pursued her higher education in public policy. There's a push and pull within all of those journeys. One can sense the author's struggle—of being everywhere and nowhere all at once, in all the places and faces that felt

The birth was unintentional on the author's part, as it was her brother who had neatly grafted all the poems, turning it into a fine piece of reading, eventually presenting it to her as a gift.

like home, and all the goodbyes that were said. The book stitches a subtle yet raw imagery of the stubbornly quintessential 20s when life changes rapidly.

However, even with this rushed mindset, Mastura's penning is sincere. She crafts the details like

a watchsmith, a representation of which could be found in the very first piece of the book, named "Feni". The author paints the town with a great deal of empathy and introspection. I was filled with intrigue as she coloured the most mundane aspects of Feni with great beauty, be it with her observations of Raipur Girls' College or the streetlights keeping away the dark. It also places the reader into the shoes of people living on the outskirts, where there's a lot of quiet but very loud dreams.

In "Rush", the reader gets a glimpse of the writer's playful world-building, where she stretches out the boundaries of imagination. "There was once a dear old man/ With ninja chops that hurt a thief/ He pulled a onesie over his eyes/ And beat him till he couldn't bleed", she writes. Her word play rings of nostalgia; it felt like I was looking at things like I did when I was once a child.

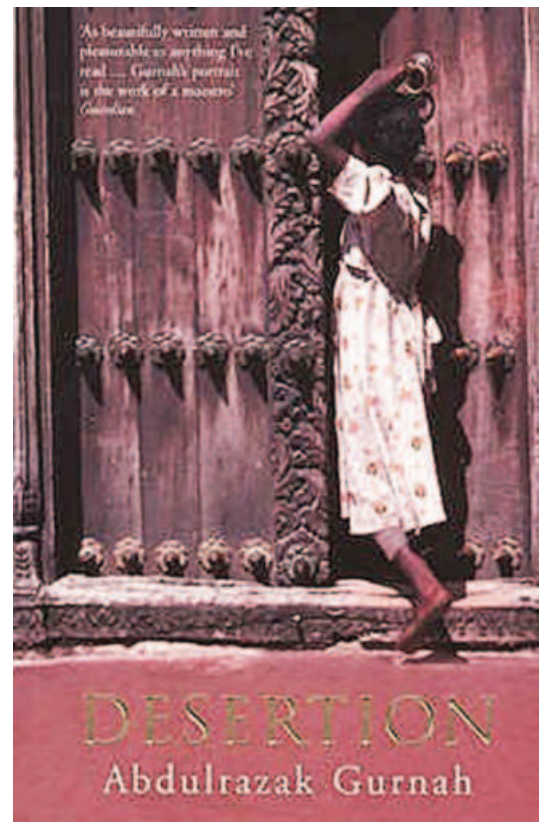
Yet most of her pieces also feel like they were conversations she was having with herself—reflections, advice and the constant checking back with reality that kept the writer grounded in every new city that

welcomed her. This is reflected in her piece titled "Home", in which she confronts her own isolation in freedom. She walks the reader through the prophecy of her own life and the constant strife of meeting expectations, all the while fearing that none of it may come true.

Flipping through the pages of *Silent Rebellion*, one may find themselves resonating with many of the pieces, as they are written from a place that is all too familiar to us all—the struggle of fitting in, being of worth and meeting our own expectations. Mastura lets us know that we're not alone in our struggle, and thus comforts us with her words.

When asked about the motivation behind her writing, she says, "Transitioning into adulthood, with a full time job, and then transitioning into monk-hood with the scholarship, life went by. Although it felt like cheating writing in free-verse, I thought there was no other way to paint it, especially since the only person who I could speak to was myself."

Nazifa Raidah is a sub editor at The Daily Star.



BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

Abdulrazak Gurnah's 'Desertion': The politics of leaving

NUSRAT HUQ

Zanzibar born (now Tanzania) writer Abdulrazak Gurnah was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2021. One of his 10 published novels, *Desertion* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2005) is about—like many of his other works—colonialism, racism, cultural and religious biases, migration, and of course, desertion.

The story spans from 1899 in Mombasa to the 1950s in Zanzibar. In part one of three we are introduced to Hassanali, a shopkeeper, his wife Malika, and his sister Rehana. The first page describes Hassanali walking towards the mosque at dawn to recite the azaan, his heart filled with piety. Just then, he comes across a half-dead European slumped in a heap in front of the mosque, and Hassanali's sense of Muslim charity and brotherhood drives him to take the European to his home nearby, where his wife and sister help to revive him. Next, the inevitable happens: Rehana and Martin Pearce fall in love. She is from a conservative Muslim household and he, a modern European, a member of the ruling class. Their forbidden love becomes a part of the appeal of the story.

The narrow, dilapidated alleyways and the mosque depicted in the book indicate that they live in the less-favoured Muslim neighbourhood in Zanzibar. The rows of houses spell squalor and poverty, a replication of, say, the mudir dokan in Bangladesh. Near it was the neighbourhood tea stall which was, in a way, the pulse of the neighbourhood.

In a secondary plot line, the three representatives of the British Empire converse, over pegs of whiskey, about how justified they are to rule over 'savages' who do not know any better. Martin Pearce joins the District Officer Frederick Turner and the Estate manager Burton in these conversations. They would never socialise with the Bohra Gujratis, Arabs, or the rest who they termed as "mongrel natives."

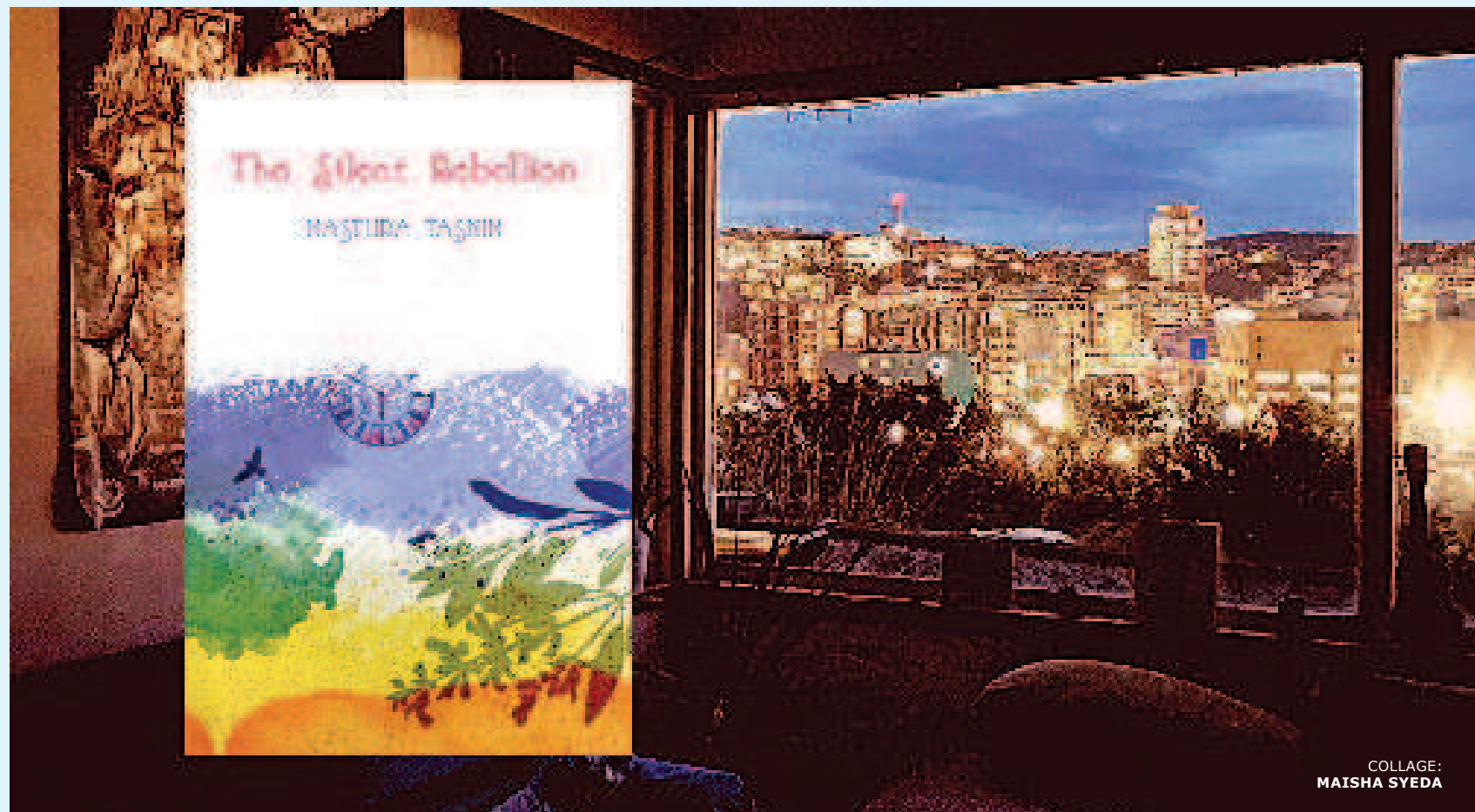
In these conversations, Gurnah makes a significant reference to Shelley's poem "Ozymandias", the oriental despot. The mighty and powerful can one day turn to dust and ruin. Frederick reflects, though, that the British Empire had many more years of greatness ahead of them before such ruin ever befell them. Making an interesting comparison between colonising Africa and colonising India, he says, "Indian ways are antiquated, whereas in Africa there is nothing but beasts and savagery."

The second part of the book, set in 1950s Zanzibar, is about the brothers Amin and Rashid, their sister Farida, and their parents. Amin trains to be a school teacher while Rashid aspires to study in Cambridge or Oxford, hoping to improve his situation. The education system is further commented on when we are told that Rehana is not competent enough to get admission into the subsidised state school and a private school was not affordable for her, so she turns to dress-making.

Gurnah's motivation to name the book *Desertion* is made evident with young men like Rashid who desert their native countries for the comforts of the developed countries they migrate to. White men like Pearce desert their lovers. Jamila is abandoned not just by Amin, but by two other husbands before him. One point of view that is debatable is that the British "deserted" their colonies like the islands of Zanzibar before the time was right. I wonder if there is any right time to decolonise. Should the British have left India later than 1947 and would that have reduced the number of deaths of Hindus and Muslims?

The book's language is remarkable and the characters well-drawn. Gurnah, admirably, does not glorify Martin Pearce or Amin as heroes. Like most people in the 1950s and the decades before that, these characters give in to societal pressures and opinions. Even today, you may find yourself under similar pressures. The story appears disjointed at first, but in the end the loose ends are tied up, albeit with some haste. The richness and relevance of the text make it a very worthy and enjoyable read.

Nusrat Huq is a teacher at Sunbeams and a member of The Reading Circle (TRC).



COLLAGE: MAISHA SYEDA

What lies in Mustafizur's Test future?

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh drafted Shoriful Islam into the squad for the second Test against West Indies, with the pace bowler joining up with the team in St. Lucia on Tuesday. Despite bowling being one of the positive aspects of the Tigers' performances in the first Test in Antigua, the decision to call on Shoriful leaves Mustafizur Rahman's participation in the second Test in question.

24-year-old Shoriful's Test career is just four games old, but the left-armner has already garnered praise for his efforts with the ball, especially in the Test series against New Zealand this year. On the other hand, Mustafizur's availability was murky ahead of the series after a few exchanges of words in the media between the board and the player while Fizz was playing in the IPL.

The pacer had cited workload management as reason he wanted to stay away from Test cricket and focus solely on white-ball cricket. For a long time, Fizz was overlooked in the longer format. Russell Domingo cited that the bowler had to learn to bring the ball back into right-handed batters in order to find his way back into the Test line-up.

Between 2019 and 2021, Fizz played just one Test. He returned to the side more than a year later for the first Test against West Indies in Antigua, having last appeared against West Indies at home in February 2021.

For a long time, however, Fizz had been allowed to pick and choose formats. But the BCB's decision to dictate who will opt out of which series saw them send a letter asking him to clear his stance on Test cricket.

With Taskin Ahmed and Shoriful Islam both having been initially ruled out of the Tests, the BCB had little room to manoeuvre in terms of replacements and Fizz was drafted back in despite not being handed a Test contract for 2022.

Fizz's reluctance was perhaps evident before and skipper Shakib Al Hasan opined that no one could be inspired out of the blue to appear in Tests.

"I don't think anyone can be inspired out of nowhere," Shakib had said ahead of the series. "As he [Mustafizur] is in the series, I'm sure he is motivated to play these two matches. That is important for us. As captain, I'm focused on these two matches and he looked very motivated to play," he added.

Fizz bowled 18 overs in the first innings in Antigua, giving away just 30 runs while bagging the very first wicket at an economy of 1.66 on his return. He was hard to get away and, in the first day's play, his 12 overs saw just 10 runs conceded.

His rhythm had been great in the beginning and he was right in the zone, getting the ball to shape back into the right-handed Kraigg Brathwaite on quite a few occasions. However, his average pace would drop between the first session and third and, despite a good line-and-length, he did not threaten as greatly as the effects of not playing in the format for a long time perhaps showed.

While Ebadot Hossain had bowled 28 overs in that first innings, Fizz could be used for just 18. However, it was the absence of wickets with the new ball, together with Fizz's workload management, which may very well see the pacer rested for the second Test in St. Lucia.

However, as pace bowling coach Alan Donald previously said about Fizz, the decision about whether he wants to keep playing Tests in the future remains a personal issue because of the impact it could have on his performances in the white-ball formats.



An injury forced Taskin Ahmed out of Bangladesh's ongoing Test series against the West Indies, which the Tigers now trail 1-0 after a seven-wicket defeat in the first of the two-match series in Antigua. However, the pacer is raring to go with the rest of the Tigers' white-ball contingent for their upcoming T20I and ODI series against the Windies.

PHOTO: BCB

Yasir Ali coming back

SPORTS REPORTER

After missing out on the two-match Test series due to a back injury, middle-order batter Yasir Ali Chowdhury has now been ruled out of the ODI and T20I series against West Indies, BCB confirmed on Wednesday.

Yasir sustained the injury during the three-day practice game ahead of the first Test and following the MRI scan, a Discogenic Back Pain was found on the lumbar spine.

"Yasir has not been recovering as anticipated and could not start rehab. As he is still restricted in his physical work, we can conclude that his injury time will be extended. He will be missing the remaining matches of the West Indies series," Bangladesh team's physio Bayjedul Islam said.

Yasir will return to Bangladesh and will continue his recovery under the supervision of the BCB medical team.

Yet another challenge for an aspirant Taskin

SPORTS REPORTER

Fitness has always been an issue for Bangladesh pacer Taskin Ahmed. The 27-year-old's susceptibility to injuries has often seen him start the process of getting back to the rhythm from the ground up ahead of series and tours.

Taskin suffered a shoulder injury during Bangladesh's tour of South Africa in March-April this year which eventually forced him out of the following Test series at home against Sri Lanka in May.

After recovering from the shoulder injury, the 27-year-old hurt his back during a gym session and was a doubt for the upcoming ODI series in the West Indies.

After recovering from the shoulder injury, the 27-year-old hurt his back during a gym session and was a doubt for the upcoming ODI series in the West Indies. However, having recovered from the back injury, the right-arm pacer is now all set to travel to the Caribbean tomorrow with the Tigers' white-ball contingent.

Taskin, who has turned himself into one of the main cogs in the Tigers' pace-bowling unit, once again faces the challenge of finding his feet after a layoff.

"I hurt my back a few days ago while in a gym

session. I bowled in the nets the past two days. I tried to give my 100 per cent on both days. The physio, and selectors were there as well. They were satisfied and so was I," Taskin said after training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The pacer bowled around seven overs and also underwent a fitness test yesterday.

After the end of the ongoing Test series, Bangladesh will play three T20Is and three ODIs in the Caribbean. And Taskin mentioned that he is up to taking the challenge of getting back into the rhythm with the Windies ODIs.

"Actually, all the series are tough irrespective of my injury concerns. This is also a challenge and I need to take it. So I will proceed in that way. I will give my everything. And even if I get injured after that, I can console myself saying that I had given my all," the pacer said.

Taskin, who has been only included in Bangladesh's ODI squad for the Windies series due to his injury concerns, also stated his willingness to keep playing all three formats of the game.

"I want to play all the formats. If at any point [of my career] I see that I am not being able to, I will let everyone know. But I don't think now is the time [to exclude myself from any particular format]. Now it is actually the right time to be fit and play [all formats] as well as I can.

"My dream is to be a world class bowler. I don't think it is the time that I would need rest. If at any time I feel that I am not able to manage the workload, I will say it. But I don't feel that way yet," Taskin added.

Abahani thump Mohammedan

SPORTS REPORTER

Brazilian forward Dorielton Gomes celebrated his return to Bangladesh Premier League with a brace, powering Abahani to an emphatic 4-2 win over archrivals Mohammedan in an action-packed encounter at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla yesterday.

The triumph means the Sky Blues stretched their unbeaten run against the Black and Whites to six league matches and also saw them reach 35 points from 16 matches, shrinking the gap with leaders Bashundhara Kings to six points. Meanwhile, sixth-placed Mohammedan remained glued to 22 points.

Having missed the last six matches, including the AFC Cup encounter against Mohun Bagan, fit-again Dorielton returned to the starting eleven for the Sky Blues and immediately demonstrated his prowess again, as he did by scoring in his last league outing against Bashundhara Kings in a 2-2 draw in April.

The



32-year-old picked up where he left off, slotting home a brace after Costa Rican forward Daniel Colindres opened the scoring in the eighth minute to set the tone for the high-voltage match, which saw all six goals scored in the first half and also saw Abahani go down to 10 men for the last 10 minutes.

Colindres provided a seventh-minute lead by scoring directly from a corner kick before Dorielton latched onto a pass into the box and fired in at the near post to double the lead.

Despite those setbacks in the first 10 minutes, Mohammedan appeared determined to fight and pulled one goal back in the 18th minute. After exchanging over 20 passes, a cross from Alamgir Molla found Malian striker Souleymane Diabate at the far post, who cushioned the ball into the far post with an outstretched leg.

Abahani regained their two-goal cushion 25 minutes later, when substitute Emon Babu drove home from the six-yard box after the goalkeeper parried an effort from Colindres straight to him.

But Mohammedan again sparked excitement by scoring two minutes into stoppage time as Shahriar Emon perfectly met a sweeping cross-field ball from Anik Hossain inside the box. Emon went past the first defender with his first touch before bamboozling two more and firing powerfully into the net.

However, their joy was short-lived as Abahani struck their fourth in the last minute of stoppage time, with Dorielton rising high at the near post and heading home a Colindres corner.

Abahani played the last 10 minutes with 10 players after defender Rezaul Islam picked up his second yellow card but Mohammedan could not hit back, eventually succumbing to their 13th defeat in 28 league matches against Abahani.

In the day's other match, Bangladesh Police defeated Uttar Baridhara 3-2 to join Mohammedan on 22 points. Baridhara are tenth with 12 points from 16 matches.

England eye same aggression

REUTERS, Leeds

England Test captain Ben Stokes has challenged his team to play without fear and put on a show against New Zealand at Headingley despite taking an unassailable 2-0 lead into the final match of the three-match series.

"We've obviously won the series but there are World Test Championship points to play for. We want to carry on with the way we've played," Stokes told reporters on the eve of the third test.

"I was pretty simple and clear in the dressing room. Let's try and think like we're in the entertainment business rather than the sporting business... there's a reason why 20,000 people came out to watch us at Trent Bridge last week.

"So I set a challenge to the team to be even more fearless, positive and aggressive than last week."



Bangladesh women's football team players train at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur ahead of today's FIFA friendly match against Malaysia. The match kicks off at 6:00pm. The 146th-ranked side will host Malaysia, ranked 85th in the world, in two friendly matches, the second of which takes place on June 26.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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PADMA BRIDGE It will boost Indo-Bangla connectivity Says Indian envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Vikram Kumar Doraiswami, Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh, said the Padma Bridge will contribute to greater connectivity between Bangladesh and India and in the sub-region supporting the BBIN initiative.

"From that perspective, as a country that has long valued the opportunity to increase connectivity across the sub-region, we in India will be delighted," he told journalists at the high commission on Tuesday.

He attributed the achievement to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's "continuous and consistently courageous decision".

The high commissioner said Hasina was proven correct in her decision to go ahead with this

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Buildings remain half destroyed after City Corporation authorities carried out eviction drives against illegal establishments -- including residential buildings, shops and factories -- at the Kathalbagan Box culvert road a month and half ago. People have begun living in the partly-demolished structures, which might result in tragic accidents. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BNP leader bombed, hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Benapole

A ward-level BNP leader was attacked with explosives and then hacked to death by miscreants in Jashore's Benapole on Tuesday night.

The deceased, Ashanuzzaman Bablu, president of Mohisakura Ward-7 BNP unit, was also a union parishad member of Baganchara in Sharsa upazila.

Police and witnesses said Bablu was at a tea stall with acquaintances near his house in Balunda Bazar. Around 11:30pm, three people appeared on motorcycles and threw explosives targeting him.

While people fled the area, they hacked Bablu to confirm his death.

Kamal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Benapole Port Police, said they still do not know who the killers were.

"The matter is being investigated. The body was sent to the Jashore General Hospital for autopsy yesterday.

DRAFT EDUCATION ACT

Blitz against notebooks, private tuition

Draft to be sent to cabinet next week

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Bangladesh's first education act, which will be sent to the cabinet division next week for approval, orders a ban on printing, publishing and marketing notebooks and guidebooks -- a menace to the country's education system.

While students are given free textbooks by the government, they need to spend a sizeable amount to purchase a set of notebooks.

If found printing, publishing and marketing notebooks and guidebooks, the penalty is three years' imprisonment or a fine of Tk 5 lakh or both, as per the latest iteration of the draft, which was locked by the education ministry yesterday.

The draft, which is in line with the Education Policy of 2010, allows the publishing of supplementary books and education aid books but only after approval from the authorities concerned.

However, if a teacher is found pushing the supplementary books and education aid books on the students, it will be considered misconduct and disciplinary actions will be taken.

The draft forbids teachers from giving private

tuition to students of their institution.

Another salient feature of the draft act, which has been in the works since 2011, is its ban on corporal punishment for schoolchildren and mental torture by teachers.

The draft will be sent to the cabinet division next week, said Abu Bakr Siddique, secretary of the secondary and higher education division, after the meeting yesterday where it was finalised.

This would be the fourth time that the ministry is forwarding the draft law to the cabinet division.

It was last sent in October last year and the cabinet division sent it back with observations and instructions for revisions, as in 2016 and 2017.

The back-and-forth is taking place over the provisions concerning guidebooks, notebooks and coaching centres, according to education ministry officials informed on the matter.

For instance, the version forwarded in December 2016 was met with a chorus of disapproval at the cabinet division as the ministry gave legitimacy to coaching and private tuition in the name of "shadow education".

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

MATARBARI PLANT Govt won't implement phase-2

Japan cancels
funding

ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government has decided not to implement the second phase of the Matarbari coal-fired power plant, a cabinet member confirmed yesterday hours after Japan announced the cancellation of funding for the project.

At a press conference in Japan, Hikariko Ono, foreign press secretary of Japan, said support for coal-fired power projects by Official Development Assistance (ODA) for Bangladesh and Indonesia will be suspended.

The announcement came following Japan's commitment at the G7 summit in June last year. It agreed to end new support for coal-fired power generation facilities that did not take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the end of 2021, according to Jiji

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Polls will be fair, I hope all parties join

Hasina tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday told parliament that she hoped the next national election would be held in a free and fair manner with spontaneous participation of all political parties.

She added that her government has taken 11 "significant" measures to make the polls more acceptable and inclusive.

The measures include ensuring environment to carry out party activities smoothly and for participation of all political parties in the election.

The PM was replying to a query from Syed Abu Hossain, opposition Jatiya Party lawmaker from Dhaka-4 (Demra Shyampur).

In her written answer, Hasina, also leader of the House, said as per article 118 (4) of the constitution, the Election Commission is an independent and constitutional body.

"The chief election commissioner and other commissioners carry out their respective work independently in line with the constitution and the law. The government assists the Election Commission as per its requirement."

The EC will remain independent in carrying out its activities and it will remain only under the jurisdiction of the constitution and the law. It is the duty of the government and the executive

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Thanks, but no thanks

BNP turns down invite to
Padma Bridge inauguration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP will not join the inauguration of the Padma Bridge.

Party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir said this in response to a query during a press conference yesterday afternoon.

He said the BNP leaders and activists will not go to any event organised by those who killed people and want to kill eminent persons by pushing them into the river.

Earlier in the day, the government invited a group of senior party leaders to join the opening ceremony of the Padma Bridge on June 25.

Dulal Chandra Sutradhar, a deputy secretary of the Bridges Division, went to the BNP's Nayapaltan central office around 11:00am and handed over the invitation cards to the party's senior joint secretary general, Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

Apart from Mirza Fakhru, BNP standing committee members Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Mirza Abbas, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Abdul Moin Khan, Nazrul Islam Khan and Vice-Chairman Hafiz Uddin Ahmed were invited to the programme.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 18, during a speech marking her homecoming from exile, said Khaleeda Zia should be pushed into the river from the Padma Bridge, a comment the BNP termed tantamount to death threat.

Fakhru claimed the prime minister lied today (yesterday) when she said the BNP-Jamaat

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Govt extends shopping hours ahead of Eid

Malls, stores to stay open till 10pm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shopping malls and shops across the country can stay open till 10:00pm from July 1 to 10 ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, the government decided yesterday.

Shop owners will have to pay their staff allowance for the two extra hours, said a Ministry of Labour and Employment gazette notification issued yesterday.

In a meeting on Sunday, business leaders requested the government to allow them to keep shops open till 10:00pm on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

The Eid is likely to fall on July 9.

The government had earlier ordered shops to close by 8:00pm. From June 20, shops and malls across the country had been following the directive.

The PMO in a letter on June 17 announced the order on PM Sheikh Hasina's instructions, stating that the Bangladesh Labour Act already stipulates the closure of shops at 8:00pm.

The Prime Minister gave the directives to save power and energy amid rising energy prices worldwide following the Russia-Ukraine war.



Vehicles dumped near the Shahbagh Police Control room after police confiscated them at different times. Most of the time, they cannot complete the lengthy legal process and the vehicles are left unattended until they are completely damaged. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Archaeologists discover ancient Roman temple



REUTERS, Amsterdam

Archaeologists have discovered an ancient Roman sanctuary with a relatively intact Roman temple in the Dutch central-east Gelderland province, the country's cultural heritage agency said, describing the find as "exceptional".

Volunteers made the first discovery in 2021 in a city near Unesco World Heritage Roman Limes - which represents the border line of the Roman empire at its greatest extent in the 2nd century AD - and alerted the agency.

"There used to be several temples here. We have found

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