

# 'Home never felt so close'

Joyful reactions on first day of Padma Bridge

WASIM BIN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Six minutes was all it took a BRTC bus to cross the 6.15km bridge over the Padma river yesterday. If the 3.15 kilometres of the approach viaducts of the newly inaugurated bridge is included, the river crossing that once was a source of suffering took just nine minutes and 45 seconds.

"Unbelievable, surreal," exclaimed Sattar Moral, a bus passenger who was apparently trying to process the smoothness of the journey.

Before the country's longest bridge opened for vehicular movement at 6:00am yesterday, the 50-year-old resident of Faridpur's Bhanga upazila had to wait for hours in queue to get on a ferry.

In cases of inclement weather or the outward rush of people from the capital around Eid time, his miseries would only compound, making the journey excruciating.

But yesterday, it was a brand new experience on a brand new bridge as he made it home in just two hours. "I can't express in words how I am feeling. Home never felt so close. It's just because of the Padma Bridge. What a beautiful bridge it is!" he said breathlessly.

The bridge's grand inauguration on Saturday and the

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Hundreds of motorcycles and several vehicles queuing up in Mawa, Munshiganj, to get on the Padma Bridge yesterday evening. Over 15,000 vehicles travelled across the bridge in only eight hours after it was opened to traffic at 6:00am yesterday. The authorities last night issued an order banning motorcycles on the bridge from today.

PHOTO: SAJJAD HOSSAIN

## PATURIA-DAULATDIA Almost deserted

SAJJAD HOSSAIN, Munshiganj

The number of vehicles at the Paturia-Daulatdia and Shimulia-Majhikandi ferry routes significantly dropped as the Padma Bridge opened to traffic yesterday.

Ferry operations remained shut on the Shimulia-Majhikandi route due to a shortage of vehicles, said officials of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

Two private vehicles arrived at Shimulia ferry terminal yesterday morning but the authorities asked them to leave as no other vehicle was there, said Ahmed Shamim Al Razi, chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation.

"We will start operating ferries if [enough] vehicles arrive at the terminal," he said.

The number of launch and speedboat passengers also dropped on the route, said Shahadat Hossain, assistant director of Shimulia River Port Naval Safety and Traffic Management of BIWTC.

Meanwhile, on the Paturia-Daulatdia route, the usual long tailbacks could not be seen yesterday, said officials.

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## Padma Bridge off limits to motorcycles

Large number of motorcycles overwhelm toll plaza; bike crash on bridge kills 2

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bridges Division last evening banned motorcycles on the Padma Bridge from 6:00am today as thousands of bikers queuing up to cross the bridge overwhelmed the toll plaza employees and two bikers died in a crash on the bridge.

The Press Information Department issued a circular in this regard hours after the long-cherished bridge was opened to traffic at 6:00am yesterday.

"We have made the decision for the safety of travellers and the bridge," Monjur Hossain, secretary of the Bridges Division, told The Daily Star last night.

Two men died after their motorcycle crashed on the

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## Floods displaced 5 lakh people in the northeast

Study finds

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Nearly five lakh people have faced temporary displacement during recent floods in Sylhet, Sunamganj, and seven other northeastern districts, said a report by a platform for government and non-government humanitarian agencies.

The devastating flash floods affected about 72 lakh people, damaged crops on over 83,000 hectares, and washed away 4,056 farm animals, said the Needs Assessment Working Group (NAWG).

The report titled, North Eastern Flash Flood, May-June 2022: Key Immediate Needs and Situation Analysis, said the internally displaced population were in need of immediate food, water and cash support.

Animal fodder and emergency

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

## FLOOD DAMAGES

# Farmers face hunger after loss of crops

ZYMA ISLAM and DWOHA CHOWDHURY

When the floods came this year, it was not just the rice in the paddy fields that were washed away, but also those stored at homesteads -- leaving many in a state of food insecurity.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, two crore tonnes of Boro rice were harvested from the fields -- an amount higher than last year -- despite the floods in April and May.

After injecting the rice into the market, farmers had stocked their homes for the season.

Their storages now lie empty.

In spite of having brought home 20 maunds of rice, Faruk Ahmed's family has

been living on dry biscuits while his stove lies cold.

Faruk is from Laki village, in Sylhet's Tawakkul union.

The village lies at the frontier of the wetlands bordering the impassive mountains of Meghalaya.

**In Sylhet district alone, 28,945 hectares of crops were damaged till June 26, according to the district administration.**

It receives the first faceful of the rainwater run-offs coming from the mountains.

Faruk's 20 maunds had survived the floods of May as they were brought home

safe before the floods hit.

This time, however, he could not help but silently watch his precious grains get swept away in the chest-deep waters

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## BUSINESS



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## Tarique, wife are fugitives

Declares HC, orders trial of graft case against them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Declaring BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman as "fugitives", the High Court yesterday rejected their writ petitions challenging the filing and initiation of a Tk 4.82 crore graft case.

The HC also withdrew the stay order on the case filed during the caretaker government in 2007 and directed the lower court concerned to complete the trial proceedings as early as possible.

The chief metropolitan magistrate of Dhaka has been asked to send the case record to the Senior Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court in Dhaka within 10 days of receiving

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



A woman cooks while sitting on a pile of bricks and sand in front of her inundated home in Monipur area of Bijoy Nagar, Brahmanbaria yesterday.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOY

## RIISING COVID CASES

### Health dept concerned

Says health minister; urges all to finish vaccine course

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Zahid Maleque said the health department is concerned over the rise of Covid-19 infections, as 1,680 new cases were recorded in 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday.

Two deaths were reported during the period.

Speaking at the cholera vaccine campaign yesterday at the icddr, he said Covid infection rate had decreased to below one percent with the death rate being nearly zero. However, the number of cases has been increasing and the positivity rate has recently crossed the 15 percent mark.

Yesterday, the positivity rate was 15.66 percent, from 15.07 percent from the day before.

With the new infections

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# Russian missiles shake Kyiv

Kindergarten, apartment block hit; Biden slams the attack as 'barbarism'

AGENCIES

Russian missiles hit an apartment block and kindergarten in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv yesterday, in strikes US President Joe Biden condemned as "barbarism" as world leaders gathered in Europe to discuss further sanctions against Moscow.

Up to four explosions shook central Kyiv in the early hours, in the first such attack on the city in weeks. Two more blasts were heard on the southern outskirts of the city later in the day.

"The Russians hit Kyiv again. Missiles damaged an apartment building and a kindergarten," said Andriy Yermak, head of the president's administration.

A Reuters photographer saw a large blast crater by a playground in a kindergarten that had smashed windows.

Ukraine's police chief, Ihor Klymenko, said on national television that five people had been wounded, and police later said one person was killed.

Russia has stepped up air strikes on Ukraine this weekend, which has also seen the fall of a strategic eastern city to pro-Russian forces.

"It's more of their barbarism," said Biden, referring to the missile strikes on Kyiv, as leaders from the Group of Seven

(G7) rich democracies gathered for a summit in Germany.

"Putin's been counting on it from the beginning, that somehow Nato and the G7 would splinter, but we haven't and it's not going to," Biden told German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

**"Putin's being counting on it from the beginning, that somehow Nato and the G7 would splinter, but we haven't and it's not going to."**

US President Joe Biden

Seeking to further tighten the screws on Russia, G7 countries announced an import ban on new gold from Russia.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said G7 countries should respond to the latest missile strikes by imposing further sanctions on Russia and providing more heavy weapons to Ukraine.

As Europe's biggest land conflict since World War Two entered its fifth month, the Western alliance supporting Kyiv was starting to show signs of strain as leaders fret about the growing economic cost.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the West needed to maintain a united front against Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"The price of backing down, the price of allowing Putin to succeed, to hack off huge parts of Ukraine, to continue with his programme of conquest, that price will be far, far higher," he told reporters.

Two Russian missiles also struck the central city of Cherkasy, which until now had been largely untouched by bombardment, according to regional authorities, who said one person had been killed and five others wounded.

Russia's TASS new agency quoted a pro-Russian separatist official saying its forces were advancing on Lysychansk, across the river from Severodonetsk, and had entered the city's industrial zone.

In the Ukrainian-held Donbas town of Pokrovsk, Elena, an elderly woman from Lysychansk in a wheelchair, was among dozens of evacuees who arrived by bus from frontline areas.

"Lysychansk, it was a horror, the last week. Yesterday we could not take it anymore," she said. "I already told my husband if I die, please bury me behind the house."



Paturia ferry terminal devoid of vehicles.

## Almost deserted

FROM PAGE 1

All the pontoons of Paturia ferry terminal were empty by 4:00pm. Only a few trucks were seen on the ferry, they added.

A total of 7,658 vehicles crossed the Padma using ferries on this route between 6:00am Saturday and 6:00am Sunday, said Shah Mohammad Khaled Newaz, deputy general manager of BIWTC's Aricha office.

Hasan Ali, of Rajbari, said he used to face long tailbacks on the Paturia-Daulatdia route, but he did not have to wait even for a minute for boarding a ferry yesterday.

Selim Khan, of Magura, said he used this route regularly and would do so in the future as it became easier due to less traffic.

[Our Manikganj correspondent contributed to this report.]

## Turkey arrests Greek on spying charges: police

AFP, Istanbul

Turkey arrested a Greek citizen yesterday on suspicion of espionage activities, a day after seizing him in an operation coordinated with its spy agency, local police said.

Mohamed Amar Ampara was caught in the southeastern city of Gaziantep near Turkey's border with Syria. "The agent, named M.A.A., was detained by the judicial authorities after he was discovered to have connections with the Greek National Intelligence Organisation ... compiled information about our country's border security and transferred it to Greek intelligence," the police department in Gaziantep said in a statement.

Turkish media reported at the weekend that Ampara operated disguised as a businessman during his trips to Turkey.

## 'Home never felt so close'

FROM PAGE 1

start of vehicular movement on it yesterday were historic moments in Bangladesh's road communication.

A flurry of vehicles started streaming in and out of Dhaka soon after it opened, resulting in long queues of buses, trucks, cars and motorcycles before the toll plazas at Mawa point and on the Dhaka-Mawa Expressway. However, the pressure of vehicles started to ease as the day progressed.

The Daily Star correspondents took a trip on a BRTC bus to see the changes that the Padma Bridge has started to make on the once-strenuous journey to the southwestern districts of the country.

Starting from Fulbaria Bus Terminal in the capital's Gulistan at 10:30am, the passengers faced the all too familiar congestion leading up to the expressway at the Suvadda canal in Keraniganj. As the bus hit the expressway around 11:10am, excitement gripped passengers.

"What a smooth road it is!" one of the passengers exclaimed as the bus was heading towards the dream bridge at speed.

The entire expressway up to the toll plaza at the Mawa end was decked with various flowering plants in the median strip. Many of the passengers were seen taking photos and videos as the bus moved along.

It took only around 30 minutes for the bus to reach the toll plaza. As soon as the bus driver started towards the bridge after paying the toll, which took less than a minute, there was a stirring among all passengers as they

made final preparations to experience their slice of history – the first crossing of the Padma Bridge.

Some burst into joy and others turned to the windows to catch a glimpse of the mighty structure. Most of the passengers started recording the journey, while some shared the experience with their relatives through video calls.

"I have been trying to reach you for quite some time. Look, here is the bridge and I am crossing it," an excited Safia Khatun told her daughter over the phone. Her husband, sitting beside her, piped up excitedly: "Look Ma, how beautiful the bridge is!"

Sixagenarian Mohammad Shafiq, a resident of Shariatpur, could not believe his eyes as the bus moved along the bridge.

"It was a dream that came true ... I finally crossed the bridge," he said.

"My home is close to Dhaka. It is barely 10 kilometres from the river. There were times when I had to spend seven to eight hours on the banks of the Padma before Eid. That is over now," he said.

The bridge wore a festive look as it had been overflowing with crowds of people, many of whom came to see the bridge.

Flouting government instructions, they were seen stopping motorbikes and cars to get a feel of the bridge, taking selfies and group photographs. Bikers were seen posing with their two-wheelers propped against Padma Bridge's railings.

The Cabinet Division issued a notification

yesterday, saying stopping vehicles, walking around on Padma Bridge, and taking pictures are completely prohibited and punishable offences.

Authorities of the Padma Bridge project asked the engineering support and safety team to beef up vigilance on the upper deck of the bridge and on both sides after incidents of damaging the bridge were reported.

The first eight hours on the opening day saw 15,200 vehicles crossing the bridge since it was opened to traffic at 6:00am. Around Tk 82.19 lakh toll was collected from vehicles till 2:00pm, an official of Bangladesh Bridge Authority told The Daily Star.

**RETURN TRIP** Soon, the bus reached Bhangha intersection, around 20km away from the Padma Bridge connecting road. Most of the passengers, including these correspondents, got down as the bus started for a return trip. BRTC expanded its services on 21 routes in southwestern region including Dhaka-Bhangha yesterday.

"I cannot believe I reached so fast," said Saiful, a passenger.

The bus driver, Jashim Uddin, was no less amazed. "There were times when we got stranded for the entire night at the ferry terminal. Now we will be able to make trips to and from Dhaka quickly. This will increase our income."

The correspondents got on another BRTC bus to return to Dhaka. Many of the passengers boarded the

bus to see the Padma Bridge. The bus began its journey at 2:18pm.

Around 2:45pm, the bus reached the toll plaza at the Zanjira end. A huge crowd was found near there. Many had come to see the bridge.

As the bus got on the bridge, the passengers could barely contain their excitement and, seeing the crowd of people already on the bridge, they requested the driver to stop for a moment.

The driver succumbed to the requests and stopped for a minute. All the passengers got down from the bus and started taking photos and videos of the bridge.

"I came near the bridge site yesterday [Saturday], but could not see it up so close. Today I have been able to touch the bridge finally. It's a dream come true for me," said one of the passengers.

The bus started rolling again and drove almost uninterrupted until it reached Babu Bazar bridge over the Buriganga river at 3:47pm. It took 40 minutes for the bus to reach Fullbaria from the north end of Babu Bazar bridge, a distance of little over two kilometres.

Now that the bridge has opened and transport from the southern parts are coming to Dhaka more smoothly and quickly, traffic congestion became a spot of bother.

"We reached Babu Bazar in an hour, but now we are stuck in a jam for more than half an hour. We need to fix this problem. Else, we won't get the full benefit of the Padma Bridge," said a passenger.

## PADMA BRIDGE

### Man detained for removing nuts, bolts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was detained for removing nuts and bolts from the railing of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge yesterday.

Criminal Investigation Department detained Bayezid Talha, of Patuakhali, from the capital's Shantinagar area, said CID's Special Superintendent Rezaul Masud.

The CID yesterday said it would disclose further details at a press conference today.

Earlier, a 34-second-long TikTok video went viral where Bayezid was seen standing on the bridge and removing nuts and bolts from its railing.

People thronged the bridge yesterday after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated it on Saturday.

### Cattle trader found dead in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaajpur

Police recovered the body of a cattle trader at a banana orchard in Faridpur's Sadar upazila yesterday.

Sharif Sheikh, 35, of the upazila's Rahimpur village, remained missing for a day before his body was found, said Golam Mostafa, chairman of Krisnanagar union parishad.

"He was carrying Tk 5 lakh when he went missing. He did not return home overnight. Later, locals found his body."

Sumon Ranganj Sarkar, additional superintendent of police (Sadar circle), said the body had sharp force injuries.

The body was sent to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Faridpur for autopsy.

### Three men get life term over rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaajpur

A Dinaajpur court yesterday sentenced three men to life imprisonment for raping a college girl 15 years ago.

The convicts are Asadul Islam, Ranju Mia, and Babu Mia, of Rangpur city.

Mostafa Kamal, judge of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal, delivered the verdict.

The court also fined each of the accused Tk 1 lakh.

On May 26, 2007, the men picked up the victim and raped her. She filed a case against the tree on the same day, according to the case statement.

### One dead, three wounded in Montreal stabbings

AFP, Montreal

One man was left dead and three people were sent to hospital early yesterday in Montreal after stabbings by a 26-year-old who suffered a breakdown, Canadian police said.

## Padma Bridge

FROM PAGE 1

bridge between the pillar no 26 and 27 around 8:00pm, said SM Mizanur Rahman, additional superintendent of police in Shariatpur, adding that the man riding the bike was filming with one hand.

Alamgir Hossain, 25, and Fazlu, 24, were pronounced dead after they were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 10:30pm, said Inspector Bachchu Mia, in-charge of hospital's police outpost.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Saturday inaugurated the bridge and the authorities opened it to traffic at 6:00am yesterday. Officials said many of the motorcyclists stopped in the middle of the bridge to take pictures, disrupting traffic flow.

Secretary Monjur said mobile courts would be conducted on the bridge from today and army personnel would be on vigil.

"The court will take punitive action if anyone stops a vehicle and gets down on the bridge, violating government directives. The court will

also seize such vehicles," the secretary said.

Meanwhile, the Padma Bridge project authorities asked the engineering support and safety team to beef up vigilance on the upper deck of the bridge and on both sides.

Project Director Shafiqul Islam yesterday told this newspaper that he sent a letter to the chief coordinator of the team in this regard.

Bangladesh Army is providing the engineering support and safety service for the project.

In his letter, Shafiqul said some individuals were stealing and damaging important equipment from the bridge deck, even as getting down from vehicles on the bridge was prohibited.

Some of them even damaged equipment at Mawa and Zanjira ends of the bridge, he wrote.

Earlier in the day, the Criminal Investigation Department arrested a young man seen removing nuts and bolts from the guard rails of Padma Bridge in a viral video.

### Macron tasks French PM with new talks to form 'government of action'

AFP, Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday "confirmed" his confidence in Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne in an interview with AFP, after the premier came under fire for a wooden performance in an election that saw her boss fail to retain an overall majority in parliament.

Macron said he had instructed Borne to conduct new consultations with parliamentary groups to form a "government of action" for early July.



Dhaka-Toronto
Biman flight
from Jul 27

RASHIDUL HASAN

The much-awaited Dhaka-Toronto flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines will begin from July 27 this year. Biman Managing Director and CEO, Dr Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal, yesterday told The Daily Star that subject to finalising ticket rates, travellers from any part of the world will be able to buy tickets on Biman's website since yesterday afternoon.

He said travel agents from any country, except Toronto, Canada, will also be able to book tickets from yesterday.

The Biman MD said after completing some necessary formalities, travel agents of Canada will also be able to sell and book tickets using Biman's website within five-six days.

After changing several dates, Biman finally set July 27 for starting the flight on Dhaka-Toronto route.

Kamal said the maiden Biman flight on Dhaka-Toronto route (BG 305) will take off from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on July 26 at 3:30pm (local time).

According to sources in Biman, after flying for around 8 hours and 30 minutes, the flight will land in Istanbul Airport for refueling.

After a one-hour stopover, the flight will depart from Istanbul and fly to Toronto in around 11 hours.

The return flight will leave Toronto for Dhaka on the same day in the afternoon. The direct flight will land in



A vendor hangs gamcha (a type of fabric typically used as a towel) of different eye-catching colour combinations on a wall for sale. After purchasing them in bulk from Narsingdi, each piece goes for Tk 80-200, depending on the size. This photo was taken yesterday from the capital's Shyamoli area.



Acquire scientific knowledge
PM tells youth

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged students to acquire scientific knowledge and take the country towards development and prosperity.

"We have to move forward, keeping pace with the ever-evolving technology and science," she told winners of the countrywide "Bangabandhu Innovative Talent Hunt 2022" competition, at an event held at International Mother Language Institute in Dhaka.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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TIPU MURDER

Key accused
Musa confesses

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Sumon Shikder alias Musa, a key accused, has confessed to a magistrate that he assigned Masum Mohammad Akash to kill Dhaka Awami League leader Jahidul Islam Tipu from Dubai.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Sheikh Sadi on Friday recorded his confessional statement after DB Inspector Mohammad Yasin Sikder quizzed him at his chamber regarding the case.

Musa was placed on a 13-day remand in three phases. After recording the statement, the magistrate ordered to send him to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

In his statement, Musa told the magistrate that he coordinated the killing and supplied the firearm to Akash, which was used to kill Tipu and college student Samia Afran Jamal Prity in Dhaka's Shahjahanpur on March 24, said court sources.

On June 9, Musa (43), was brought home from Oman by police. Oman police arrested Musa on May 12 on his way to Dubai.

An accused in 11 cases, including the ones for the murders and possession of illegal firearms, Musa fled to Dubai on March 12. He was a fugitive convict in one of those cases.

On April 4, Akash confessed to another magistrate that he was involved in murdering Tipu and Prity.

Shamim alias Molla Shamim, a fugitive accused, was also involved with the killing mission.

Earlier, another arrestee Nasiruddin Manik took names of Musa and several others in his confessional statement regarding the killings.

With Musa, detectives have so far arrested 16 people in this regard.

On March 24, Tipu (55), former general secretary of Motijheel AL, was returning home in his microbus from his restaurant in Motijheel AGB Colony area. The vehicle was at a traffic intersection in Shahjahanpur when the killers arrived at the scene on a motorcycle and opened fire.

College student Prity (22), who happened to be in a rickshaw next to the vehicle, also got shot.

Explore alternative power sources

Speakers urge govt at CPD dialogue

Table with 2 columns: CAUSES BEHIND HIGH COST and RECOMMENDATIONS. Causes include Capacity payment, Use of expensive fuel-based plants, Quick rental power plants, Poor efficiency, outdated plants. Recommendations include Developing primary, renewable energy sector, Reducing system loss, Exploring more gas fields, Importing oil by BPC.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Capacity charges for idle power plants, theft in the name of system loss, wastage and dependency on imported gas and fuel without exploring alternatives are the main causes behind high energy costs, said speakers at a dialogue yesterday.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised the event titled "Energy and Power Sector in the National Budget for FY2022-23" at a city hotel.

CPD urged the government to allocate more in the budget for the power transmission and distribution, rather than for its generation.

Though the country has achieved the milestone of 100 percent electrification, people are far from getting affordable and uninterrupted power. The government should focus on exploring alternatives due to the hike in prices of gas and fuel in the international market, said CPI.

CPD Research Director Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem, during his keynote presentation, said the capacity payment to private sector power plants, including rental and quick rentals, has gone up to Tk 26,505 crore in FY2022 from Tk 5,600 crore in FY2018.

"It would be Tk 31,600 crore in FY2023. This capacity payment obligation has forced the government to move for increasing power tariff," he said.

Moazzem mentioned that the country's surplus electricity - which was termed an overgeneration capacity - has increased to 10,764 MW in 2021-22 from 8,231 MW in 2020-21 with a jump to 42.12 percent from 37.37 percent.

The current total electricity generation is 25,556 MW and the highest generation was 14,782 MW on April 16 this year.

He also said the length of transmission lines has increased during FY2022 by 5.5 percent, while the distribution lines increased by only 2.5 percent, which are the major reasons behind poor load management.

On the other hand, per unit cost has been increasing over the years. It has increased by 11.8 percent, to Tk 6.61 per kilowatt-hour from Tk 5.91/kwh, in FY2022 from FY2017.

Rise of generation cost in IPP plants by 14.6 percent and by 11.1 percent in public plants resulted in a rise in average generation cost.

Capacity payment, use of expensive fuel-based plants, quick rental power plants, poor efficiency, and outdated plants are some of the reasons behind the high unit cost.

Buet professor and energy expert M Tamim said, "On one hand, we are buying 150-180 million cubic feet of gas per day from the high-priced international spot market. On the other hand, only in Titas - the largest gas distribution company - at least 150 million cubic feet are being stolen per day."

"Why are we not blocking the loopholes? In the gas sector, the system loss should not be allowed up to 0.25 percent for the leak. How could Titas allow a loss of up to 7-8 percent?" he asked.

Tamim said the country aggressively needs to pay attention to the development of the primary energy sector.

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CONSPIRACY CENTRING
PADMA BRIDGE
HC to hear rules
to find those
involved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The attorney general's office has taken an initiative for the High Court hearing on a five-year old suomoto (voluntary) rule over formation of an enquiry commission to identify the "culprits who made up false stories" about a corruption conspiracy involving the Padma Bridge project.

Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik yesterday prayed to the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Md Ejarul Haque Akondo for hearing and disposal of the rule.

Accepting the prayer, the bench yesterday asked its officials to include the rule in its today's hearing list.

On February 15, 2017, the HC issued the rule asking the government to explain in two weeks why it should not be directed to form an enquiry commission to identify the "culprits who made up false stories" about a corruption conspiracy regarding the Padma Bridge project and why it should not be ordered to bring those behind such stories to justice.

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32 hospitalised
with dengue

UNB, Dhaka

Thirty-two more dengue patients have been hospitalised in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Among the new cases, only two are from outside of Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new cases, the total number of dengue patients rose to 952.

Among the patients, 118 are still undergoing treatment at several hospitals.

On Tuesday, DGHS reported the first death of the season from the mosquito-borne viral disease.

Table with 2 columns: PRAYER TIMING JUNE 27 and prayer times for Azan, Jumaat, Fazr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib, Esha.

Financial institutions in looters' clutches

Firoz Rashid tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's financial institutions have gone under the control of looters, said Jatiya Party MP Kazi Firoz Rashid at Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

He slammed the government for failing to stop money laundering and looting from banks and other financial institutions.

"Uncontrolled looting is going on in financial institutions as if there is no one to watch. Bangladesh Bank and Banking Division of the Ministry of Finance are silent in this regard," the JP MP said while taking part in the discussion on the

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To get respite from heat, people cover their heads with shopping bags they brought with them to purchase daily essentials from an Open Market Sales (OMS) point and await their turn patiently. This photo was taken in front of Bangshal (Bangladesh Field) yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

The length of transmission lines has increased during FY2022 by 5.5 percent, while the distribution lines increased by only 2.5 percent, which are the major reasons behind poor load management.

Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem, CPD Research Director

Advertisement for a hospital offering various medical services including colonoscopy, rectoscopy, and cancer treatment. Includes contact information for Prof. Dr. AKM Faziul Haque.







Another step towards justice

Appeal filed on behalf of alleged rape victim who directly sought justice from HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An appeal has been filed with the High Court yesterday on behalf of the 15-year-old alleged rape victim from Nilphamari, who directly sought justice from the court while appearing before it, challenging a lower court verdict that acquitted the rape accused.

Bodrun Nahar, a panel lawyer of the Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee (SCLAC), submitted the appeal to the HC bench led by Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim, seeking cancellation of the trial court judgement and punishment for the accused Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) member. The HC bench will hold

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Wading through a flooded road, a family, along with their cattle, sets off on foot in search of a safe shelter, as they couldn't find any vehicle that could carry them. The overflowed Kushiara river has flooded Golapganj, Balaganj, Biswanath, and Dakhin Surma upazilas in Sylhet division, trapping many residents. This photo was taken from Daudpur union in Dakhin Surma yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

'Polls will be transparent'

Hopes Australian high commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Jeremy Bruer



yesterday said Australia hopes that Bangladesh's next general election will go well and be transparent.

Jeremy Bruer, while on a courtesy visit with Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal, also inquired about the last-minute "chaos" in announcing the unofficial results of Cumilla City Corporation on June 15.

"It was a very good and productive discussion," Bruer told reporters, coming out from the meeting, at the Nirbahchan Bhaban in Dhaka's Agargaon.

"We also discussed the caretaker provision that worked in Australia's electoral system," he added.

CEC Awal hoped that the next general election will be better in all aspects.

"He [Jeremy] hoped that our election will go well. He expressed his desire to observe the next general elections," said the CEC.

On June 8, US Ambassador in Dhaka Peter Haas -- after a meeting with the CEC -- said the US wants a general election in which the Bangladeshi people can

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BRRRI Dhan-81 fails to live up to expectations



ANWAR ALLI, Rajshahi

Production of BRRRI Dhan-81 witnessed a sharp decline in Rajshahi during this boro season for bad weather and calamities.

This breed was the most promising among the high-yielding paddy varieties of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI). Many farmers choose this breed due to its yield expectancy of eight tonnes of paddy, per hectare of land.

Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) recorded an average of 3.75 tonnes of the yield of BRRRI Dhan-81 in Rajshahi and Bogura this season, disappointing the farmers. Even last year's yield was 4.75 tonnes on average.

Dr Md Fazul Islam, regional chief scientist, said, the damage was marked on one-hectare experimental land in BRRI's regional centre in Rajshahi.

"It happened due to an unprecedented rise in the temperature, and rains," he told this correspondent.

During the paddy's sprouting stage, the temperature rose to 46 Degree Celsius in mid-April and that has never occurred in the last 10 years, he said.

"The paddy variety was only capable of sustaining temperature up to 35 Degree

Celsius," he said.

BRRRI Dhan-81 was introduced to farmers in 2017. It was termed one of the "premium quality" varieties, producing exportable rice.

Normally, its per hectare yield is 6 to 6.5 tonnes, but with proper care, a yield of eight tonnes is possible, BRRI and DAE sources said.

Abdus Salam, a farmer of Rajshahi's Uttar Chalkpara area, said he cultivated the paddy this year as he received a high yield last season.

"If I get 30 maunds of paddy in exchange for the same expenditures of BRRRI Dhan-28, why would I not cultivate this paddy?"

"But this year I was bamboozled at the results as I got around 14 maunds of yield in per-acre land only," he said. "This year the paddy didn't grow tall like last year. The grains were smaller too."

Almost 150 farmers of Chalkpara Beel have experienced a similar fate as Abdus Salam this year.

Robitul Islam of the same area said, "If there are 200 grains in a paddy sheaf, I found only 80 of those grains in good condition. The rest was damaged."

"I cultivated this variety for the first time this year. Now, I'm mad at myself for making

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Allow all agencies to send workers to Malaysia

JP lawmaker tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An opposition MP in parliament yesterday demanded a quick decision on sending workers to Malaysia and opening up opportunities for all recruiting agencies instead of a syndicate of few agencies.

Jatiya Party MP Rustum Ali Faraji made the demand while speaking on a point of order.

Drawing the attention of the expatriates' welfare minister, the JP MP said the minister had repeatedly visited Malaysia to send workers to Malaysia.

"Malaysia is ready for hiring workers from Bangladesh. But no decision is being taken because of the syndicate," he said.

Faraji observed that it will cost Tk 3 to 4 lakh instead of one and a half lakh if workers go through syndicate.

"You [minister] make the right decision without any excuse. You should allow all the recruiting agencies to take expatriate workers to Malaysia," he added.

On June 2, Malaysia agreed to hire 5 lakh Bangladeshi workers over the next five years through the syndicate system, with the first batch of documented workers from

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Shihab was strangled to death'

Says autopsy report; two teachers arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Shihab, a fifth-grader of Sristy School in Tangail, was strangled to death, said Civil Surgeon Dr Abul Fazal Mohammad Shahabuddin citing the autopsy report published yesterday.

A three-member medical team from Tangail General Hospital conducted the autopsy, said officials.

Meanwhile, police and Rab raided the private school at the town's Suparibagan around noon and detained two of its teachers for their alleged involvement in the killing.

The arrestees are Abu Bakkar and Nasir Uddin, said Nazmul Huda, principal of the school.

Mir Mosharaf Hossain, officer-in-charge of Tangail Sadar Police Station, said they were investigating the incident sincerely.

Shihab, a residential student of the private school, was found dead in its hostel on June 20. His body bore injury marks on different parts.

The school authorities informed the family that Shihab hung himself in a bathroom on the seventh floor of the dormitory.

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ACC to probe graft allegation against ex-mayor of Gazipur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ACC has decided to inquire into the corruption allegations against former Gazipur City Corporation mayor Zahangir Alam.

ACC Deputy Director Nargis Sultana and Assistant Director Ashikur Rahman will investigate the matter, confirmed ACC Secretary Mahub Hossain.

The ACC secretary said Zahangir allegedly misappropriated a huge amount of money from development projects. A week after the expulsion for life from Awami League for making derogatory comments on Bangabandhu, the LGD on November 25, 2021 suspended Zahangir from his mayor post over allegations of graft.

Man kills niece over property

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A woman was hacked to death allegedly by her uncle following a dispute over property in Mymensingh yesterday.

Police arrested Moydar Ali Sarker, said OC Shah Kamal Akanda of Kotwali Police Station. The victim is Hosna Ara (45) of Raghunathpur.

The OC said associates of Moydar Ali attacked Hosna Ara and her family members following a feud over property belonging to her father. Three people were injured in the attack, he added.

Boy found dead in jute field

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Police recovered the body of a boy from a jute field at Bara Hijli village under Baliakandi upazila in Rajbari yesterday.

The deceased is Badol Mollah (15), son of Humayan Mollah. He was a student of class eight at a local madrasa. Md Asadujaman, officer-in-charge of Baliakandi Police Station, said police recovered the body after locals found it in a jute field. The body was sent for autopsy.

Private ambulances a menace for MMCH

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Private ambulances parked beside the emergency entrance of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) has become a serious nuisance for the hospital's emergency ward patients and their attendants.

Attendants said not only private ambulances, CNG and battery-run auto-rickshaws remain parked at the emergency entrance gate to get passengers.

Besides, private ambulances parked on both sides of the hospital's main gate often occupy a good portion of the four-lane highway in Charpara area, causing gridlock during rush period.

Locals also alleged that this illegal parking has continued for years now, resulting in a long-term suffering for the city's commuters, patients, and their attendants. Even when the authorities take steps against illegal parking and brokers of different clinics on the hospital premises, the situation remains unchanged.

When this correspondent visited the hospital yesterday, it was seen that around 20 ambulances were parked beside the emergency entrance inside the hospital. Patients were having trouble getting in with ease.



"What's ridiculous is that there are stickers forbidding illegal parking on the premises but the place is packed with vehicles -- especially during busy hours," said Emran Ali, an attendant whose wife underwent a C-section operation.

The patients and their attendants have

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



For over a month now, the authorities have left a rod structure meant for the construction of a drain right in the middle of Sonadanga-Notun Rasta road. For this, school children from surrounding areas have to face much difficulty to get across. This photo was taken from Boyra area in Khulna recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Allow Alal to leave country for treatment

HC directs govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to allow BNP Joint Secretary General Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal to leave the country for treatment and to re-enter home without any hindrance and disturbance.

The court also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned of the home ministry and immigration to explain in four weeks why their action creating such a hindrance should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

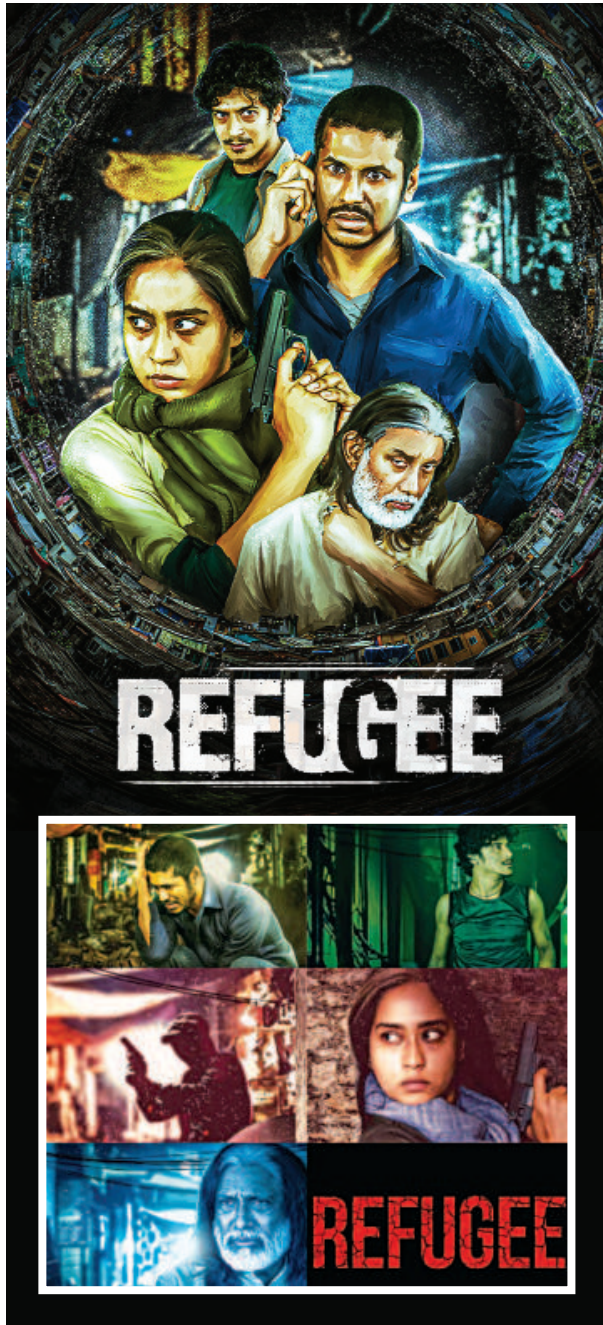
The HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice SM Maniruzzaman issued the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Alal challenging

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# Does 'Refugee' do justice to the portrayal of the Bihari community?

**The plight of a group of people who can neither integrate into mainstream Bangladeshi culture nor migrate back to Pakistan is a classic example of being caught between a rock and a hard place.**



AR NODI

The new Hoichoi crime-thriller web series "Refugee," starring Afzal Hossain, Zakia Bari Mamo, and Sohel Mondol, attempts to portray the unexplored lives of the Bihari community in Bangladesh, who have been living a life of neglect and abuse as "stranded Pakistanis," who allegedly opposed the 1971 Liberation War.

This series has become somewhat of a hot topic among audiences in recent times, for its plot that revolves around life in the Geneva Camp, a setting which is rarely seen in Bangladeshi media.

Directed by Imtiaz Hossain, the series is set in 2007, when Bangladesh was discussing whether or not to grant the member of the Bihari community citizenship – it delves into their restlessness at the time.

The plight of a group of people who can neither integrate into mainstream Bangladeshi culture nor migrate back to Pakistan is a classic example of being caught between a rock and a hard place.

The plot revolves around Iqbal (Sohel Mondol), a drug dealer at the Geneva Camp, whose circumstances force him to become an informant for police officer Maria (Zakia Bari Mamo).

While the series had the potential to be a thrilling experience for its viewers, it falls short due to its predictable plot and lack of genuine emotions.

The story progression is convoluted and slow-paced, with only six episodes in the first season. The script is riddled with poor dialogue and characters who are difficult to relate to, and as a result, it fails to leave an impression. Furthermore, the plot lacks the necessary depth, making it highly predictable. Finally, the representation of a refugee camp, which is comparatively new territory

for directors, is underwhelming and unsatisfying.

However, the series does have some good things going for it, namely the impressive colour-grading and cinematography and brilliant performances by a talented cast.

Cinematographer Tuhin Tanzimul and colourist Chinmoy Das use a dark green overtone to emphasize the Biharis' loyalty to Pakistanis, as well as the cramped and claustrophobic life in the refugee camps.

Actress Zakia Bari Mamo takes a risk by playing the character of an investigative police officer in this series, as she played a similar character in the critically acclaimed "Mohanagar". It is difficult to portray two similar characters in different ways, but she did it brilliantly.

Sohel Mondol has already received applause for his acting in "Taqdeer" and "Boli". To his credit, he made the character believable.

Afzal Hossain's portrayal of a terrorist, in my opinion, needed a little more backstory and buildup. He was on the screen for very little time compared to the other characters, but he still showed charisma during that time. But it feels like the director could not use Afzal Hossain in the proper way in this series.

Apart from this, Sharif Siraj caught the viewers' attention with his natural acting and fluent dialogue delivery, amidst a cast of high-profile actors.

The portrayal of sexual abuse of men in prison is what grabbed my attention the most in this series. In a subtle manner, the director depicts a man's helplessness, mental trauma, and distress with just two dialogues.

Despite its many flaws, "Refugee" is worth seeing once for its portrayal of some social issues that requires actual courage to execute.

## Disney apologises to Johnny Depp

Disney have sent an apology letter to Depp, offering a handsome amount to return as Jack Sparrow. According to reports, draft for a film about Jack Sparrow has been penned already, and the producers are hopeful that Johnny will forgive them for axing him from their projects.

## Nawshin and Hillol announce first child together



Renowned television artistes Nawshin Nahreen Mou and Adnan Faruque Hillol are expecting their first child together. The couple are residing at the USA for a long time. Pictures of celebrating their baby shower has been posted on the social media.

## Unprecedented response for country's premier OTT Awards

We are overwhelmed by the tremendous responses & submissions for the Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT and Digital Content Awards 2021. The awards are intended to recognize artists, content producers, and individuals who are making a positive impact on both the OTT & Digital Content industry, as well as the entertainment industry. Awards have been set up in 36 categories, and there have been approximately 1200 submissions overall. The categories under accordingly films/drama, TV series, and individual content, as well as the critics' choice section. After the nominations are thoroughly sorted by our esteemed jury panel, a date for the grand gala will be announced.



# NEWS

## Substance abuse in children

FROM PAGE 12  
"I take Dandy as it makes me sleep easier and it is cheap and available," a 12-year-old street child at the capital's Kawran Bazar told the correspondent.

Another reason for the increase in substance addiction is the use of children as drug mules, according to Mahmood.

More than 21 percent of the narcotics carriers are children, according to a recent DNC research.

"Smugglers use children to carry narcotics from one place to another to douse law enforcers' eyes. On the way, the children try them and become addicted," Mahmood said, while urging the DNC to increase monitoring.

Children also veer towards substance use due to the disintegration of their families, said Atanu Barua, project director of BARACA.

"We have found a number of children in dropping centres who came to Dhaka after getting angry at their family members and then get drawn to drugs through friends or out of curiosity," he added.

The DNC is now focusing

mainly on the treatment of the addicted children, said Md Masud Hossain, director of DNC.

"But we have a plan to take special initiatives to address the scenario," he told the correspondent.

**EIGHTY PERCENT OF ADDICTS ARE YOUTH**  
DNC yesterday observed the "International Day Against Drug Abuse, Illicit Trafficking" at the capital's Osmani Memorial Auditorium with the theme "addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crisis".

Statistics show about 7.5 to 8 million people in the country are addicted to drugs, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan while addressing the event as the chief guest.

But many say the figure is much higher.

"And the most alarming part is that 80 percent of them are youths."

Of the addicts, 57 percent are involved in sex crimes.

"We are not sparing anyone – we have to address this menace at any cost."

The law has been amended, as a result of which a large number of drug addicts are now

behind bars, Khan said. Last year, a total of 20,592 narcotics cases were filed against 21,992 people and they are drug dealers, smugglers or addicts.

And 60 percent of the inmates in the 68 jails around the country are drug dealers, smugglers or addicts.

"It's your responsibility to know what your son does, what your neighbours' sons do. If you don't carry out your responsibilities properly, our dreams will be shattered," Khan added.

Earlier, Khan said a law is being formulated to conduct dope tests before enrolling students at the universities to prevent drug abuse.

Medical tests will be done at the time of admission, during which dope tests will also be carried out, he said at a programme at the secretariat.

He, however, did not give a time frame for this.

At present, recruits at law enforcement agencies have to pass dope tests in line with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's zero-tolerance policy towards drugs.

## Tarique, wife are fugitives

FROM PAGE 2  
the order for holding its trial.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Md Ejarul Haque Akondo delivered the verdict after hearing arguments on whether Tarique and Zubaida, who have been living in London since 2008, are fugitives in the case.

The question was raised before the bench on June 5 when it was dealing with three separate writ petitions filed by the accused, challenging the filing and initiation of the case under the then Emergency Power Rules.

Details of the HC judgment could not be known as its full text has not been released yet.

Anti-Corruption lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that Tarique has been convicted in three cases and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in a money laundering case, 10 years' imprisonment in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case and to life imprisonment in the August 21 grenade attack case.

The HC declared him a fugitive as he did not surrender before any court in connection with the

cases, the lawyer said. Warrant of convictions against him is pending and therefore, he is a fugitive in the eye of law in the Tk 4.82 crore graft case, he said.

The ACC counsel said the HC declared Zubaida a fugitive in line with an observation from the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court that in a judgement on April 13 termed her a fugitive in the eye of law.

No lawyer can appear for Tarique and Zubaida during trial of the corruption case against them until they surrender before the lower court concerned, Khurshid Alam

claimed. Zakir Hossain, a lawyer for Tarique and Zubaida, said they would be able to understand after going through the full text of HC verdict whether lawyers can appear for his clients during the trial proceedings.

On September 26, 2007, the anti-graft body filed the case with Kafrul Police Station against Tarique, his wife Zubaida and her mother Iqbal Mand Banu for amassing assets worth Tk 4.82 crore through illegal means and concealing information in their wealth statements.

After separate writ

petitions were filed by the accused, the HC that year issued rules asking the state and the ACC to explain why the filing and initiation of the case under the then Emergency Power Rules should not be declared illegal. The court also stayed the trial proceedings of the case.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin and Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik represented the state, while lawyers AJ Mohammad Ali, Zainul Abedin, AM Mahub Uddin Khokon and Kayser Kamal argued for Tarique and his wife during hearing the petitions.

## Health dept concerned

FROM PAGE 2  
recorded after testing 10,728 samples yesterday, the total number of cases rose to 19,65,173

With two deaths, the death toll stood at 29,140,

yesterday and the death rate now stands at 1.48 percent.

Among the two deceased, one was male and the other female, both aged above 60.

At least 169 patients have

recovered from Covid-19 within this period. The total number of recoveries now stands at 19,06,688, with the recovery rate being 97.02 percent.

The minister said they

were taking measures to curb infections. With officials of the health ministry and the health directorate general testing positive for Covid recently, Maleque requested all to be

cautious. "We'll have to wear masks and maintain social distance," he said, urging everyone to complete their vaccine courses immediately.

## Soybean oil prices cut

FROM PAGE 12  
"Taking into account the overall situation, I think the prices of [Soybean] oil should have been cut by 15 percent [Tk 30] a litre in the domestic market."

Citing data from Reuters, Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission said the price of crude soybean oil fell 26 percent in Argentina in a month. It fell to \$1,464 a tonne on June 22 from \$1,970 a month ago. Palm oil price also fell by 27 percent to

\$1,230 from \$1,690.

Edible oil prices in Bangladesh depend on international price movements, as up to 90 percent of the annual demand of 20 lakh tonnes is met through imports.

According to retailers in Dhaka and Chattogram, one-litre bottle of soybean oil sold for Tk 196 yesterday and five-litre bottle for Tk 980-990, while loose soybean oil sold for Tk 175-180 a litre.

Shafiul Ather Taslim,

director of TK Group's finance and operations wing, said oil prices have been reduced keeping in mind the decline in its prices in the global market, flood situation and the Eid-ul-Azha.

"It appears from the declining trend in edible oil prices in the global market that the prices will decrease further in the coming days. But the products that we are selling in the market now were purchased at a higher price..." he added.

FROM PAGE 1  
invading his house. Along with those went his 40 ducks.

And just like that, a healthy homestead is now surviving on relief food.

At the first sight of sun last Saturday, farmers brought out their meager stocks of rice and put them out to dry on plastic sheets the road leading from Shalutikar Bazar to Tawakkul union.

Any patch of land that was not under water was covered by ankle-deep mud, forcing the farmers to crowd the tarmac with barely enough space for even a CNG to pass through.

But for every plastic sheet containing shining golden grains, there were 10 others containing damp, brown kernels that would

yield inedible rice.

At one spot, goats happily munched away at the damp grains without getting chased away as farmers let the animals eat what they can't.

At another, a pick-up truck mistakenly ran over the plastic sheet, and a thin man in worn-out clothes came charging with a stick, trying to protect his spoiled rice with a fierceness that can only be driven by hunger.

Asked how he would consume the damaged rice, he said he would try and salvage any good grains. In the last flash floods that hit the Sylhet division in the last week of April, 7,730 hectares of Boro were damaged in Sunamganj, Sylhet and Habiganj districts. Another flash flood hit

on May 11 and damaged around 2,534 hectares of Boro, 1,674 hectares of Aush, 1,500 hectares of vegetables and 75 hectares of peanuts.

The floods that began on June 15 is the third blow within two months.

In Sylhet district alone, 28,945 hectares of crops were damaged till June 26, according to the district administration.

The loss of the crops in three other districts is being assessed as the floodwaters had still not receded in the low-lying areas.

However, an estimate released on June 21 by the agriculture ministry said 56,000 hectares of Aush had been destroyed.

Musharraf Hussain Khan, additional director

of Sylhet Divisional Agriculture Office, said, "This flood is a major blow to the agriculture in Sylhet as around 50 percent of the Aush is damaged.

"Moreover, we are facing a huge crisis of dry land to prepare Aman seedbeds as the floodwaters were still not receding."

Sylhet division alone produces around 16 percent of the nation's Aush yield and eight percent of Boro.

Meanwhile in Sirajganj, Babul Kumar Sutrodhor, deputy director of the district's agriculture extension department, told The Daily Star that 12,599 hectares of crop fields were submerged in floods this year.

"We are calculating the crop loss and expecting to get a full report this

month." Md Nasir Bhuiya, a resident of Kawakhola in Sirajganj Sadar upazila, said he had cultivated 10 bighas of jute – all of which has gone under water.

"If the floods last a week longer, none of my crops will survive."

Meanwhile, the flood claimed two more lives in Sherpur and Habiganj districts in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the fatalities to 84, reported UNB.

Each of them died by drowning in floodwater, according to the Directorate General of Health Services. The total deaths were recorded from May 17 to June 26.

(Our Pabna correspondent contributed to the report.)



## INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME

## G7 aims to mobilise \$600b: Biden

AFP, Elmau Castle

US President Joe Biden yesterday announced a G7 project to rival China's formidable Belt and Road Initiative by raising some \$600 billion for global infrastructure programmes in poor countries.

"Together with G7 partners, we aim to mobilise \$600 billion by 2027 in global infrastructure investments," the White House said shortly ahead of a speech by Biden unveiling the proposal.

Unlike China's huge BRI initiative, the proposed G7 funding would come largely from private investors and is therefore not guaranteed.

The plan, which relaunches a first attempt unveiled during last year's G7, will target countries desperately needing everything from roads to harbours -- and until now often relying on the Chinese.

The gargantuan BRI project has successfully used Chinese infrastructure know-how to spread Beijing's economic and diplomatic tentacles into strategic points around world, leaving Western governments flat-footed.

Biden, whose presidency is centred on restoring US leadership after the isolationist policies under Donald Trump, says his version will not only catch up but provide a better alternative.

Unlike the Chinese version, reliant on state-controlled funds and companies, Biden said the US and other G7 governments will only provide limited amounts of money, while incentivising massive private sector investments.



Smoke rises after a missile strike, as Russia's attack on Ukraine continues, in Kyiv yesterday. One man was killed and five others, including a seven-year-old girl, were injured following the early morning strikes on a neighbourhood that includes a weapons factory, said city mayor Vitali Klitschko.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Monkeypox not yet a health emergency

REUTERS, London

Monkeypox is not yet a global health emergency, the World Health Organization (WHO) ruled on Saturday, although WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said he was deeply concerned about the outbreak.

"I am deeply concerned about the monkeypox outbreak, this is clearly an evolving health threat that my colleagues and I in the WHO Secretariat are following extremely closely," Tedros said.

WHO said in a separate statement that although there were some differing views within the committee, they ultimately agreed by consensus that at this stage the outbreak is not a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

## 21 teens die in S African tavern

AFP, East London

At least 21 teenagers, the youngest possibly just 13, died at the weekend after a night out at a township tavern in South Africa, in a tragedy whose cause remains unclear.

Many are thought to have been students celebrating the end of their high-school exams on Saturday night, provincial officials said.

There were no visible wounds on the bodies. Officials have ruled out a stampede as a possible cause and said autopsies would determine if the deaths could be linked to poisoning.

Crowds of people, including parents whose children were missing, gathered on Sunday outside the tavern where the tragedy happened in the city of East London, while mortuary vehicles collected the bodies, an AFP correspondent saw.

Senior government officials rushed to the southern city. They included national Police Minister Bheki Cele, who broke down in tears after emerging from a morgue where the bodies were being stored.

"It's a terrible scene," he told reporters. "They are pretty young. When you are told they are 13 years, 14 years and you go there and you see them. It breaks (you)." The provincial government of Eastern Cape said eight girls and 13 boys had died. Seventeen were found dead inside the tavern. The rest died in hospital.

Drinking is permitted for over-18s in township taverns, commonly known as shebeens, which are often situated cheek by jowl with family homes or, in some case, inside the homes themselves.

But safety regulations and drinking-age laws are not always enforced.

"We have a child that was there, who passed away on the scene," said the parents of a 17-year-old boy.

"This child, we were not thinking was going to die this way. This was a humble child, respectful," said grieving mother Ntombizonke Mgangala, standing next to her husband outside the morgue.

## Floods displaced 5 lakh people in the northeast

FROM PAGE 1

livelihood support is required for those who are not able to engage in income-generating activities, it added.

Safe drinking water, disinfection of water sources and emergency repair or replacement of latrines and tube-wells are needed to avoid an outbreak of water-borne diseases, it said.

Besides Sylhet and Sunamganj, the assessment report covered Habiganj, Moulvibazar, Brahmanbaria, Kishoreganj, Sherpur, Mymensingh and Netrakona districts.

On May 18, flash floods damaged mostly crops and food storages while on June 17 and the following days, floods washed away homes and cattle and the remaining food storages.

The recent floods caused by heavy rains in the northeastern region and upstream Indian states of Assam and Meghalaya inundated 72 percent area of Sylhet division, including 89 percent of Sunamganj.

Abdus Salam, a farmer in Dakkhin Bardal village of Tahirpur, Sunamganj, told this correspondent that his paddy fields, ready for harvesting, went under water in May while the latest flood damaged everything he had.

"It made me homeless and penniless. My house and cattle were washed away. I have never seen such a devastating flood in my life," the 65-year-old farmer said.

Abdul Manan, a 55-year-old of Laki village in Gowainghat, Sylhet, said, "I have lost everything in the

floods this year. I don't know how I will survive."

Kaiser Rejve, co-chair of NAWG, said the damage caused by the latest round of floods will be very high.

"What we are estimating now is a primary assessment. It will take a few more days to find out the exact extent of damage. There will be dire long-term consequences of the flood," Rejve observed.

As the water recedes, waterborne diseases are likely to break out, causing the people to suffer even more.

In many affected areas, a trail of devastation has been revealed after the waters receded, the report said.

NAWG in its previous report said that the flood in May impacted around 12 lakh people in the region and caused a loss of 78 percent of the food stock.

Contacted, Atiqul Huq, director general of the Department of Disaster Management, said the loss from this month's flood could be colossal.

"I cannot tell you exactly how devastating the impact of the latest flood will be on the livelihood because the water has not completely receded everywhere. We are collecting information and it will take some time," he said.

The DG said special attention is being given to the flood-affected areas, especially areas in Sylhet, Sunamganj and Netrakona.

"We will take short and long-term programmes after completing the assessment on all the 17 flood-affected districts," he added.

## Crisis-hit Sri Lanka hikes fuel prices

Seeks discounted oil from Russia; US delegation arrives for talks



AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka has raised its fuel prices, causing further pain for people as officials from the United States arrived for talks in an effort to support the island nation amid its worst economic crisis since its independence in 1948.

Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) said yesterday it had raised the price of diesel, used widely in public transport, by 15 percent to 460 rupees (\$1.27) a litre while upping petrol 22 percent to 550 rupees (\$1.52) a litre (about four litres to a gallon).

The country announced sending ministers to Russia and Qatar to try and secure cheap oil. Energy Minister Kanchana Wijesekera said two ministers will travel to Russia today to discuss getting more oil following last month's purchase of 90,000 tonnes of Siberian crude.

That shipment was arranged through Coral Energy, a Dubai-based intermediary, but politicians

have been urging the authorities to negotiate directly with President Vladimir Putin's government.

"Two ministers are going to Russia and I will go to Qatar tomorrow to see if we can arrange concessionary terms," Wijesekera told reporters in Colombo.

A delegation from the US Treasury and the State Department meanwhile arrived to "explore the most effective ways for the US to support Sri Lankans in need", the US embassy in Colombo said. "As Sri Lankans endure some of the greatest economic challenges in their history, our efforts to support economic growth and strengthen democratic institutions have never been more critical," US ambassador Julie Chung said in a statement.

The embassy said it had committed \$158.75 million in new financing in the past two weeks to help Sri Lankans. About 1.7 million residents need "life-saving assistance", according to the United Nations which issued a flash appeal last week.

## Deadly migrant rush 'attack' on territory: Spain

AFP, Madrid

The Spanish prime minister on Saturday described a deadly migrant rush on the enclave of Melilla from Morocco as an attack on Spain's "territorial integrity", as human rights activists demanded an investigation.

At least 23 African migrants died in the latest drama on the doors of the European Union, when around 2,000 mostly sub-Saharan African migrants approached the Moroccan border with the tiny territory at dawn on Friday.

More than 500 people managed to enter a border control area after cutting a fence with shears, Melilla authorities said in a statement.

Moroccan officials on Friday said 18 migrants had died during the rush or succumbed to their injuries, some of which came from falling from the top of the barrier.

On Saturday, they revised the toll upwards to 23 after five of those injured died. More than 20 migrants and two security force personnel remain in hospital Saturday in the cities of Nador and nearby Oujda, they said.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said the incident was a "violent and organised attack by mafias who traffic in human beings, against a Spanish territory".

But Morocco's AMDH human rights group said it was "a true catastrophe that shows the consequences of the latest Moroccan-Spanish entente", just weeks after the two sides resolved a year-long diplomatic rift.



## Prince Charles 'given €3m in cash in bags by Qatari politician'

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

The Prince of Wales accepted bags containing millions of euros in cash during meetings with a senior Qatari politician, according to a report.

Prince Charles was said to have been given a total of €3m (£2.6m) during meetings with Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber al-Thani, the former prime minister of Qatar.

The cash was handed to the heir to the British throne in a suitcase on one occasion, a holdall on another, as well as in Fortnum & Mason carrier bags, the up-market department store which holds a royal warrant to supply the prince's household with groceries.

The handovers are alleged to have occurred during meetings between the two men, it was claimed.

In a statement, a Clarence House spokesperson said the money given during the 2015 meeting was "passed immediately to one of the prince's charities who carried out the appropriate covenants and assured us that all the correct processes were followed".

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তারিখ: ০৪/০৪/২০২২ইং

অফিস আদেশ নং-৮৪/পি  
সরকারী কর্মচারী (শৃংখলা ও আপিল) বিধিমালা, ১৯৮৫, বর্তমানে ২০১৮ এর আওতায় জনাব দীপক রঞ্জন সাহা, ফরেস্ট রেঞ্জার (বরখাস্তকৃত), এর বিরুদ্ধে বুদ্ধকৃত বিভাগীয় মামলা নং-১২ অব ২০১৮ তারিখ ০৫/০৩/২০১৮ খ্রিঃ মূলে আনিত অসদাচারণ ও দুর্নীতির অভিযোগে একই বিধিমালায় ৭(৯) বিধি মোতাবেক ২য় দফা কারণ দর্শনোর নোটিশ:

যেহেতু আপনি জনাব দীপক রঞ্জন সাহা, ফরেস্ট রেঞ্জার (বরখাস্তকৃত), সামাজিক বন বিভাগ, ফরিদপুর এর আওতাধীন মাদারীপুর সামাজিক বনায়ন নার্সারী ও প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্রের ভারপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা (মূল দায়িত্ব) ও সহকারী বন সংরক্ষক (অঃদাঃ) নিয়োজিত থাকাকালে উক্ত বন বিভাগের অধিক্ষেত্রাধীন পদ্মা বহুমুখী সেতু প্রকল্পের সার্বিক নিরাপত্তা বিধানকল্পে ৯৯ কম্পোজিট বিঘ্নেত এর স্থায়ী সেনানিবাস স্থাপনের জন্য শরীয়তপুর জেলার জাজিরা উপজেলাধীন ১০১ নং নাওডোবা মৌজায় বিহারএস বিভিন্ন স্থিত্যান ও দাগে ৯৯.৪২ (নিরানব্বই দশমিক চার দুই) একর জমি এলএ ০৮/২০১৫-১৬ নং কেসে অধিগ্রহণ করা হয়। উক্ত অধিগ্রহণকৃত জমির উপর অবস্থিত গাছপালায় মূল্য নির্ধারণে অনিয়ম করায় অসদাচারণ ও দুর্নীতির অভিযোগে আপনার বিরুদ্ধে বিভাগীয় মামলা নং-১২ অব ২০১৮ তারিখ: ০৫/০৩/২০১৮ খ্রিঃ বুদ্ধ করতঃ আত্মরক্ষামূলক জবাব দাখিলের জন্য নির্দেশ প্রদান করা হয়। নির্ধারিত তারিখের মধ্যে আত্মরক্ষামূলক জবাব দাখিলে বার্থ হওয়ায় বিষয়টি তদন্তপূর্বক তদন্ত প্রতিবেদন দাখিল করার নিমিত্ত এ দপ্তরের অফিস আদেশ নং-৪৫৬/পি তারিখ: ১৫/১০/২০১৮ খ্রিঃ মূলে জনাব মোঃ হুমায়ুন কবির, উপ বন সংরক্ষককে তদন্তকারী কর্মকর্তা নিয়োগ করা হয়। তদন্তকারী কর্মকর্তা বিষয়টি তদন্ত করতঃ বিস্তারিত উল্লেখপূর্বক মতামতসহ তদন্তপ্রতিবেদন এ দপ্তরে দাখিল করেন। তদন্তে আপনি, জনাব দীপক রঞ্জন সাহা, ফরেস্ট রেঞ্জার(বরখাস্তকৃত) এর বিরুদ্ধে আনিত অসদাচারণের অভিযোগ প্রমানিত হয়েছে মর্মে তদন্তকারী কর্মকর্তা মতামত প্রদান করেন।

যেহেতু আপনি, জনাব দীপক রঞ্জন সাহা, ফরেস্ট রেঞ্জার (বরখাস্তকৃত) এর বিরুদ্ধে আনিত অসদাচারণ এর অভিযোগ তদন্তে প্রমাণিত ও প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়েছে, সেহেতু কেন আপনারকে নিম্নোক্ত গুরুত্ব প্রদান করা হবে না তার সন্তোষজনক ২য় দফা আত্মরক্ষামূলক জবাব এ প্রণ প্রাপ্তির ৭(সাত) কার্যদিবসের মধ্যে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে এ দপ্তরে দাখিল করার জন্য নির্দেশ প্রদান করা হলো। নির্ধারিত সময়ের মধ্যে ২য় দফা আত্মরক্ষামূলক জবাব দাখিলে বার্থ হলে আপনার বিরুদ্ধে বিধি মোতাবেক পরবর্তী পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করা হবে।

প্রস্তাবিত শাস্তি

১। জনাব দীপক রঞ্জন সাহা, ফরেস্ট রেঞ্জার (বরখাস্তকৃত) কে সরকারী কর্মচারী (শৃংখলা ও আপিল) বিধিমালা, ২০১৮ এর বিধি ৪(৩)(গ) মোতাবেক চাকুরী হতে অপসারণ করা।

স্বঃ-  
(মোঃ আমীর হোসাইন চৌধুরী)  
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তারিখ-১৭০২



The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

## Rising Covid cases should worry us

Authorities should respond properly to the emerging threat

WHILE the nation's attention was fixed elsewhere, the coronavirus numbers have been rising again, and fast, one should add. In the 24 hours till Sunday 8am, at least two people died from Covid-19, while 1,680 people tested positive. This, according to data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), marks the second consecutive day that the positivity rate crossed the 15 percent threshold – for the first time in over four months. On Saturday, at least three people died from Covid-19, while 1,280 people tested positive. A week-on-week analysis prompted a striking observation from the World Health Organization, which said that Bangladesh has the highest rate of infection in the world. In one week, the number of infected people in Bangladesh increased by 350 percent.

This pattern of increase – which, as an expert said, means we've entered the fourth wave of coronavirus – should concern us. The question is, why are Covid numbers rising when Bangladesh has vaccinated a large number of its citizens? Of the three who died by Saturday morning, two had received two shots of vaccine each, while the other had received a single dose, according to DGHS data. This is known as a case of "breakthrough infection", where a vaccinated person gets Covid-19. If this is a sign of things to come, Bangladesh, where a relatively small percentage of the population got the booster dose and where people are still generally lax in following health guidelines, has a lot to worry about.

Experts say that since the coronavirus is constantly mutating, no vaccine can guarantee a lifelong protection against it. Two Omicron subvariants, which are already causing havoc in a number of countries, are feared to be behind the recent rise of infections in Bangladesh. These new variants are highly infectious if not highly dangerous. But the effect of a vaccine, or the antibody produced from one's exposure to infections, gradually wears off after a certain period. This makes it extremely important that we follow health guidelines at all times even after vaccination, and that the majority of the population are given the booster dose (and more doses if the pandemic persists) as soon as possible.

Part of the problem in Bangladesh is people's indifference to testing. Earlier, when the pandemic was at its peak, there was some interest in voluntary testing but that, especially after being vaccinated, seems to have largely dissipated. This has to change. The authorities must launch a new drive to raise awareness of testing and other Covid precautions if we are to handle the new wave effectively. At the same time, the nationwide testing and vaccination programmes should be strengthened further. Following health guidelines, especially wearing masks in public and maintaining safe distance, should be made mandatory again.

## Save street children from drug abuse

Govt must rehabilitate them, ensure their rights

WE are alarmed by the findings of a recent study of the Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) that said that 56 percent of the street children in the country are addicted to different kinds of drugs, while 21 percent of them are being used as carriers of drugs. The reason for the situation has also been identified – easy availability of drugs – with 53 percent of the children surveyed saying they can buy drugs directly from the traffickers. The study also identified the districts where the number of vulnerable children is higher.

Although there are no reliable current figures, the number of street children in the country stood at 1.5 million in 2015, as per Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS). These children are deprived of their basic rights – right to food, clothing, home, education, and healthcare. Although there are some programmes taken up by government and non-government organisations to rehabilitate them and provide them with a better life experience, these efforts are nowhere near enough for the vast number of children requiring support.

Living as they do – on the streets, with no support and deprived of all their rights – these children often resort to drugs to feel good about themselves. According to the DNC study, 14 percent of street children said they have been taking drugs since they were 10 years old, which is horrifying. Experts say, young addicts often suffer from various mental health problems. The DNC study has also found that the children often lack the ability to control their emotions, with 64 percent of them identified as being unable to manage themselves. Taking advantage of their vulnerability, drug traffickers sell cheap drugs to them and also use them as carriers. This is a heinous crime. Law enforcement officials must conduct regular drives to catch such criminals who play with children's lives, and legal action needs to be taken to punish them.

Equally importantly, to rehabilitate this large number of street children who remain vulnerable to all kinds of abuse, not just of drugs, the government should create a thorough database with updated information and take measures to ensure their wellbeing. Their education should be its number one priority. The children also need proper counselling to bounce back in life. There are many private organisations in the country who have been working to ensure their rights. If the government and these organisations work collaboratively, the situation can definitely improve for our street children, and they can be saved from the scourge of drug abuse.

# Can a new law solve our educational problems?



Dr Manzoor Ahmed is professor emeritus at Brac University, chair of Bangladesh ECD Network (BEN), vice chair of the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), and member of the international advisory committee for the Yidan Education Prize Foundation.

MANZOOR AHMED

THE National Education Policy 2010 anticipated a comprehensive education law that would bring together existing laws and regulations under an umbrella to facilitate implementation of the policy. At least four different drafts of an education law have been prepared since 2011 but were withdrawn upon receiving negative feedback from the public and even the Cabinet of Ministers. The last one in December 2016 met strong disapproval from the Cabinet Division because it was seen to be giving legitimacy to coaching centres and private tutoring in the name of "shadow education" or educational activities in exchange for payment outside the classroom.

Commercial guidebooks and notebooks were another source of controversy. Schools and teachers required students to buy these, while the government provided free textbooks. A new draft, to be presented to the cabinet, restricts and penalises private coaching and guidebooks. What difference can this make? Are these indeed our major educational problems?

Media reports indicate that the new draft retains much of the 2016 text, except the new one putting stricter restrictions on private coaching and guidebooks. The 2016 draft in its preamble invoked Article 17 of the constitution that, as fundamental principles of the state, foresaw: a) Uniform, mass-oriented and universal education, free and compulsory as determined by law; b) Relating education to the needs of society, producing trained and motivated citizens to serve these needs; and c) Removing illiteracy using a timetable determined by law.

A contradiction in purpose and scope for the law arises from the gap between the broad vision of the constitution and the 2010 policy objective of consolidating existing laws and regulations within a legal framework. In other words, the draft law compiles some of the existing laws, regulations, rules, and orders and provides a legal cover for some practices. It does not anticipate change in respect to three key educational challenges: a) Establishing the right to education, b) Education governance reform in relation to decentralisation and accountability, and c) Education financing principles and criteria to ensure adequacy of resources for building equitable, inclusive, and quality education for all. The draft law thus bypasses the real challenges of the education system.

The draft law is also not a right-to-education law similar to those adopted in neighbouring countries such as India, Nepal, and Pakistan (through constitutional amendment followed by supportive legislation formulated in each country). An example is India's 86th constitutional amendment of 2002. Article 21-A was inserted in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to 14 years as a fundamental right. This was followed up by the Right to Education Act 2009 to implement the constitutional provision. Bangladesh's draft law mentions primary education (up to Class 8) as a child's right, but does not specify how it is to be ensured and what the various duty-bearers' obligations, particularly of the state, would be.

It can be argued that the draft law looks at the symptoms of the disease, rather than the roots of the problem. Poor teaching and learning in schools, and the character and content of too

many high-stakes public exams drive students and parents to coaching centres and guidebooks/notebooks. Low-paid and poorly qualified teachers are motivated to take on private students and rely on guidebooks. Will the ban on coaching centres and guidebooks, without addressing effectively the deeper causes of educational decline, solve the problems?

The legal provisions proposed regarding curriculum development, teacher preparation and examinations reflect the present arrangements and structures which may need to be changed. For example, educators have suggested that teachers' professional development follow a concurrent approach (combining a four-year college degree and teacher training, instead of the present sequential



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

There is also the practicality and workability of enforcing the proposed restrictions. Guidebooks will be banned but supplementary materials and digital learning content will be permitted with approval from NCTB. Coaching centres will be closed but centres for assisting those preparing for jobs or seeking admission to institutions and language and skills training will be allowed. Private tutoring by teachers of students from schools other than one's own will be permitted. Coaching organised by schools will also be allowed.

These are pragmatic compromises. But entrepreneurial minds are likely to find ways around the rules to carry on their business. The more complex and subject-to-discretion the rules are, the more likely are occurrences of corruption and nepotism.

In fact, guidebooks, notebooks, and coaching centres are common in more advanced education systems. They are considered helpful for learners and not harmful as in Bangladesh, because they are not substitutes for good teaching in school, and learning assessment does not reward memorisation.

A critical measure of the benefits of the Act would be to ask what value it adds and what can be or cannot be done without the Act.

A permanent education commission is foreseen, which is a civil society demand. Registration of all institutions is required, which will be seen as a positive by educators. Separate teacher recruitment bodies have been proposed. Production and distribution of textbooks will be handed to a separate authority, detaching it from curriculum and textbook development. Inflicting corporal and mental pain to children will be prohibited. These are positive and necessary steps.

There are areas which belong to the sphere of education planning and development rather than the law – especially curriculum development, professional development, performance standards for teachers and education workers, and assessment of student learning and examinations. These are subjects more appropriate for qualitative change and adaptation, which should not be locked down by legal provisions and fixed rules.

approach). There is no advantage in freezing the process with an education law when adjustment and adaptation are already necessary.

As noted above, the law is silent about establishing the right to education, decentralisation of the education system, and financing criteria for equitable and inclusive education.

The law foresees, expectedly, the formulation of rules and regulations in many areas to implement the provisions of the law. It provides for penalties in at least a dozen instances – prison sentences ranging from six months to five years and fines of Tk 50,000 to 10 lakh. Mobile courts and the penal code are to be employed to deter infringement of law. The penal code and courts can, of course, play their role when criminal offences are committed. It is, however, questionable to prescribe a wide range of specific penalties when establishing the breach of law is a matter of judicious assessment in an educational context.

Interestingly, in respect to tertiary and university education, the draft hardly mentions the University Grants Commission (UGC) and vests responsibilities to the "government," on personnel, financing, quality assurance, and even academic matters. Legal authority assigned to the "government" in the case of tertiary institutions can undermine academic autonomy and make the exercise of governmental authority subject to political influence.

A new law is not a panacea. We know too well that laws can serve their purpose only when the key problems are clearly identified, and there is a capacity and desire to enforce the laws. The positive elements of the new education law will help if they can be implemented, and backed-up by well-formulated rules and regulations. The absence of some critical elements in the law means that it avoids major education challenges. The aspects that are considered questionable make it a weak law and may defeat its purpose.

Having waited a long time, it would be worthwhile to make the new draft of the education law available to the public once more for feedback and to examine it critically in the context of Bangladesh's SDG4 agenda and its aspiration for a higher middle-income status.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send us your letters to [letters@thedailystar.net](mailto:letters@thedailystar.net)

### All arts should be included in the curriculum

Education is supposed to be the systematic doorway to achieving conscious growth as a human being. Of all the things our current educational system takes into account, the arts are always kept on the sidelines as an extracurricular activity.

The pressure of exams and getting good grades seldom leave time and energy for children to practice any art form. As most parents are more focused on the academic results of their children, they try to use any

extra time for academic subjects as well. This leaves us with a whole generation of children deprived of ever making an attempt to become experts in any form of art, other than the occasional mandatory painting classes at school.

Therefore, music, sculpting, dancing, drawing, and poetry should all be included into the curriculum for the well-rounded mental growth of our students.

Sudipto Dorshon, Gopalganj





ROE VS WADE

# The US' descent to the 'Dark Ages'



SHARBARI AHMED

Sharbari Ahmed is an author, a screenwriter, playwright, and an educator.

WHEN I was seven, I was visiting a much older sister in Boston, Massachusetts. I was given the run of her small, airy apartment, and in her bedroom, I found a book discreetly tucked away between other inconspicuous titles. It was a large white paperback with a glossy cover and the words "Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book By and For Women" in bright green over a black and white photo of women demonstrating in the street with the sign "Women Unite." Even though I was an incredibly precocious second grader, I had no idea what this book was about – the title gave me no clue because, at age seven, I was wholly comfortable in my skinny little brown body. And I didn't know that, as a female, it was already a battle zone, with various men – and ill-advised women – wanting to legislate control over it.

I naturally didn't understand everything in the landmark book, first published in 1970 two years before Roe vs Wade was passed. It was about women understanding and taking ownership over their bodies, sexualities, and spirits – though that is probably too simplistic a summary. One photo will be forever emblazoned on my psyche and that I would return to several times until I could not anymore. It was a grainy black and white crime scene photo of a young woman named Gerri Santoro, who had died in the process of getting an illegal abortion at the hands of her lover. Her husband was a violent, abusive man and Gerri found refuge in the arms of another. When she found out she was pregnant, she feared her husband would harm her and her daughters. She felt

she had no choice but to terminate the pregnancy. Gerri's naked body was photographed, with her collapsed torso over her kneeling legs, and blood-soaked sheets behind her. She died like that, bleeding out from the catheter that was used to attempt the abortion of her baby. Her lover panicked and left her lying



PHOTO: REUTERS

there. She was discovered the next day by a hotel maid. My seven-year-old brain froze on that image of this girl. I stared at it for several minutes, unable to look away. As I got older, I would always go back to the book to learn more. Eventually, I started skipping that image. It caused me inexplicable psychic pain. The raw vulnerability, the nudity, the collapsed torso, the aloneness, the blood seeping into the sheets and carpet underneath Gerri haunts me to this day.

**The moment Roe vs Wade was overturned, clinics in Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Ohio were immediately shut down.**

Gerri died in 1964, almost nine years before Roe vs Wade would be passed. The magazine Ms. would publish this photo with the headline "Never Again" underneath it, because that is what the women and male allies of the United States sincerely believed; that the days of back-alley abortions performed with wire hangers and catheters and

on social media, are aghast, enraged, devastated, and terrified because this is about so much more than one law. This means that any law that governs human self-determination is vulnerable. That gay marriage could be overturned, that naturalised citizens could be stripped of their citizenship and deported, that Muslims can be sent to internment camps. Nothing – except, it seems the rights of gun owners – is off limits. This is a precursor to the fall of the empire. I was not surprised. I am still processing. I will resist. However, at this moment, I am also grieving because this particular situation is deeply personal. For private reasons, I had to terminate a pregnancy, and I did so safely with care. Pro-lifers like to frame pro-choicers as morally bankrupt people who use abortion as a means of birth control. That we end lives with no afterthought. Nothing could be further from the truth. Not a month goes by that I don't think of that baby and what might have been. I would go on to raise a healthy son with my partner and I am deeply grateful that I was given a choice, even though it still hurts that I had to make it.

As I type this, the horror of this ruling is unfolding. The moment Roe vs Wade was overturned, clinics in Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Ohio – among others – were immediately shut down. Almost the moment the ruling was announced, appointments were cancelled, leaving scores of women without recourse – except now maybe the only choice Gerri Santoro felt she had. States are vowing to defy the ruling – while others are gleefully showing this nation back into the dark ages. The Attorney General of Texas, Ken Paxton, closed his office and is making this dark day an annual holiday while Beto O'Rourke urges Texans to fight it at the polls. In a country that has known a cataclysmic civil war that was in part also about freedom over one's body, we are once again at civil odds, and will continue to be, it seems, for at least my son's lifetime.

## Mental health: A mother's woes

MANSURA KABIR

Mansura Kabir is not the author's real name.

DARK circles, puffy eyes, and sleepless nights are riddled with anxiety – the mother thinks she cannot survive this episode, yet she lives to see another day. The mother of a child with mental health issues dies every day and somehow manages to find the strength to live every day – if not for her sake, for the sake of the child. Such mothers are made of steel nerves; they

shortcomings. She most probably will be blamed for everything bad and ugly in his life; she will hardly be spoken to; she, in fact, will be treated like a ghost and only summoned when housekeeping needs to be done. Yet, the mother knows that this is not his normal behaviour. She adjusts herself to his whims. Yes, of course, such misdemeanour takes its toll on the mother and she too needs to decompress and talk to counsellors. Caregiving for such children is not an easy matter; it takes a lot of courage to accept fate and

Persons with mental health issues can live perfectly normal lives with medicinal adjustments and therapy. True, there are often side effects, but one must try to seek help and not take matters into their own hands, because every case is different and every diagnosis and prognosis varies. But we should also address the misconception and stigma associated with mental illnesses through general education, through orientation of general doctors. For mental health

patients, family support is a key part of their support system. Mental health awareness does not only deal with the illness of the mind, but also acknowledges the process of taking care of it. "Life cannot be as bad as you think, you are almost there. Trust yourself, you can do this." This is always the prayer of a panic-stricken mother who silently sobs hoping that her son is safe and that the demons in his head are not torturing him to the edge again.



For the mother, the child's chemical imbalances, the dilemmas of whether he will find his footing through the dark tunnel, or whether he will be able to fight his demons, is an everyday worry. VISUAL: STAR

would go to incredible lengths to ensure their children are getting treatment, being socially accepted, and being able to live the life they deserve. Mental illness is such that the capacity of the affected person to analyse or justify social and emotional matters is not like that of others. For the mother, the child's chemical imbalances, the dilemmas of whether he will find his footing through the dark tunnel, or whether he will be able to fight his demons, is an everyday worry. What is a mother to do when her picture-perfect child stumbles at every course of his life? His demons are a reality for him that no one will ever be able to grasp. Why does he not feel right in his head, why does his heart skip a beat, why does he let go and fall every time he wants to leap? Somehow the mother has to live through all the dark chapters of his life and come out a winner. For we assume a mother can never fail, that she needs to stick to it till the end and help her child up on his legs again and again. There will be times when the child cannot see past the mother's

then act on it positively. There will be times when all his anger issues will be directed at her. The little misunderstandings of the past, that he holds dear, will build up and escalate every time there is a manic episode, and this is repeated in each phase. It is like living in a time warp – only the trajectory of the bout gets lengthier. It is another struggle altogether. The mother knows deep inside her that, like any other mother, she is loved if not cherished, she is sought out if not sought after. But the blame game becomes intense with time, the bullying gets tougher, the helplessness becomes heavier. Her self-confidence erodes and she finds herself inside a shell only to come out and hold the child's hand during his dark times. Society has a longstanding misinterpretation and superstition regarding mental health. Mental health is a real problem. It is not a figment of anyone's imagination. Doctors, counsellors, therapists, and medicines are there to help, and one must try to avail these interventions just like they seek assistance for physical ailments.

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**দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

শর্তসাপেক্ষে নিম্নবর্ণিত কাজের জন্য উন্মুক্ত দরদাতার নিকট থেকে পিল বোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

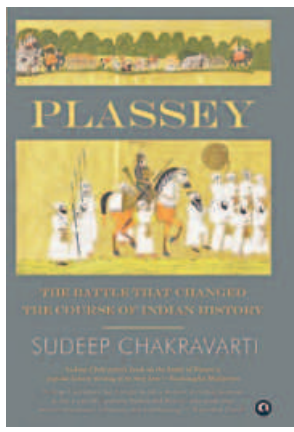
১।	মন্ত্রণালয়	সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়
২।	প্রতিষ্ঠান	বিআরটিসি সম্বন্ধিত কেন্দ্রীয় মেরামত কারখানা (আইসিডব্লিউএস), পাঞ্জীপুর
৩।	সংগ্রাহক সত্তা	ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার (ট্রেনিং), বিআরটিসি, আইসিডব্লিউএস, পাঞ্জীপুর
৪।	কাজের বিবরণী/ধরণ	বিআরটিসি'র অশোক মিল্যান্ড-ব্রিডল-জাটিকুলেটেড-এসি ও দাইনামি এন্সি, নাইনটু নন এন্সি, টাটা একতলা ননএসি, চায়না সিএনজি বাস এর যন্ত্রাংশ এবং লুরিকেন্টস সরবরাহের নিমিত্তে ১২ মাস বা এক বছরের জন্য দরপত্র আহ্বান।
৫।	দরপত্রের স্মারক নং	৩৫.০৪.০০০০.০৩৭.০১.০৩০.২২/২৮৫, তাং-২/০৬/২০২২ খ্রিঃ
৬।	দরপত্রের মেয়াদকাল	২১ (একুশ) দিন
৭।	নিয়োগ পদ্ধতি	একশাস বিশিষ্ট উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (ফ্রেমওয়ার্ক)
৮।	অর্থের উৎস	বিআরটিসি
৯।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের তারিখ	৩০/০৬/২০২২ খ্রিঃ
১০।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	২১/০৭/২০২২ খ্রিঃ
১১।	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৪/০৭/২০২২ খ্রিঃ, সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা
১২।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	২৪/০৭/২০২২ খ্রিঃ, সকাল ১১.০০ ঘটিকা
১৩।	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তি স্থান	বিআরটিসি, আইসিডব্লিউএস, হিলাব শাখা, পাঞ্জীপুর (এক্সি চলাকালীন সময়)
১৪।	দরপত্র খোলার দপ্তর	বিআরটিসি, আইসিডব্লিউএস, পাঞ্জীপুর। এ সময় দরদাতা বা তাদের প্রতিনিধি উপস্থিত থাকতে পারবেন।
১৫।	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	স্পেশ্যাল পার্টস/লুরিকেন্টস আমদানীকারক, সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান কিংবা প্রতিক্রিয় স্বাস্থ্য প্রতিষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে যুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ/লুরিকেন্টস বিক্রয়তাপন দরপত্রের অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন।
১৬।	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা মাত্র (অফেরৎযোগ্য)।
১৭।	জামানত (আনেষ্টম্যানি)	উক্ত মোট মূল্যের ৩% জিএম বিআরটিসি আইসিডব্লিউএস এর অনুকূলে যে কোন রাষ্ট্রায়ত্ত্ব/সিডিউল ব্যাংক হতে প্রদত্ত ডিডি/পে-অর্ডার এর মাধ্যমে দরপত্রের সাথে জমা করতে হবে।
১৮।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম ও পদবী	প্রকৌশলী ক্ষেত্রমা বেপম, ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার (ট্রেনিং), আইসিডব্লিউএস, জয়দেবপুর, পাঞ্জীপুর।
১৯।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগ ঠিকানা ও ফোন নম্বর	বিআরটিসি, আইসিডব্লিউএস, জয়দেবপুর, পাঞ্জীপুর, ফোন নম্বর-০২-২২৪৪২৩০৭১।
২০।	নির্দেশনা	অসম্পূর্ণ, ভুলভুল ও জামানত বিহীন (আনেষ্টম্যানি) দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
২১।	আলোচ্য দরপত্র পিপিআর-২০০৮ এর অন্তর্ভুক্ত গুণেন টেন্ডার পদ্ধতি অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে। বিআরটিসি'র কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র সম্পূর্ণ বা আংশিক গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।	

ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার (ট্রেনিং)  
বিআরটিসি, আইসিডব্লিউএস  
জয়দেবপুর, পাঞ্জীপুর।

GD-1300



# Plassey: Myths and reality



Cover of Sudeep Chakravarti's book 'Plassey'

**Plassey—Polashi—was never a binary conflict. Black and white. Sacrifice and betrayal. Horrid English and disadvantaged natives. The descriptions of a hapless Siraj, and a crafty Clive backed by a treacherous Mir Jafar are not absolute. This seminal event in Bengal and South Asian history is a Rashomon truth, as it were.**

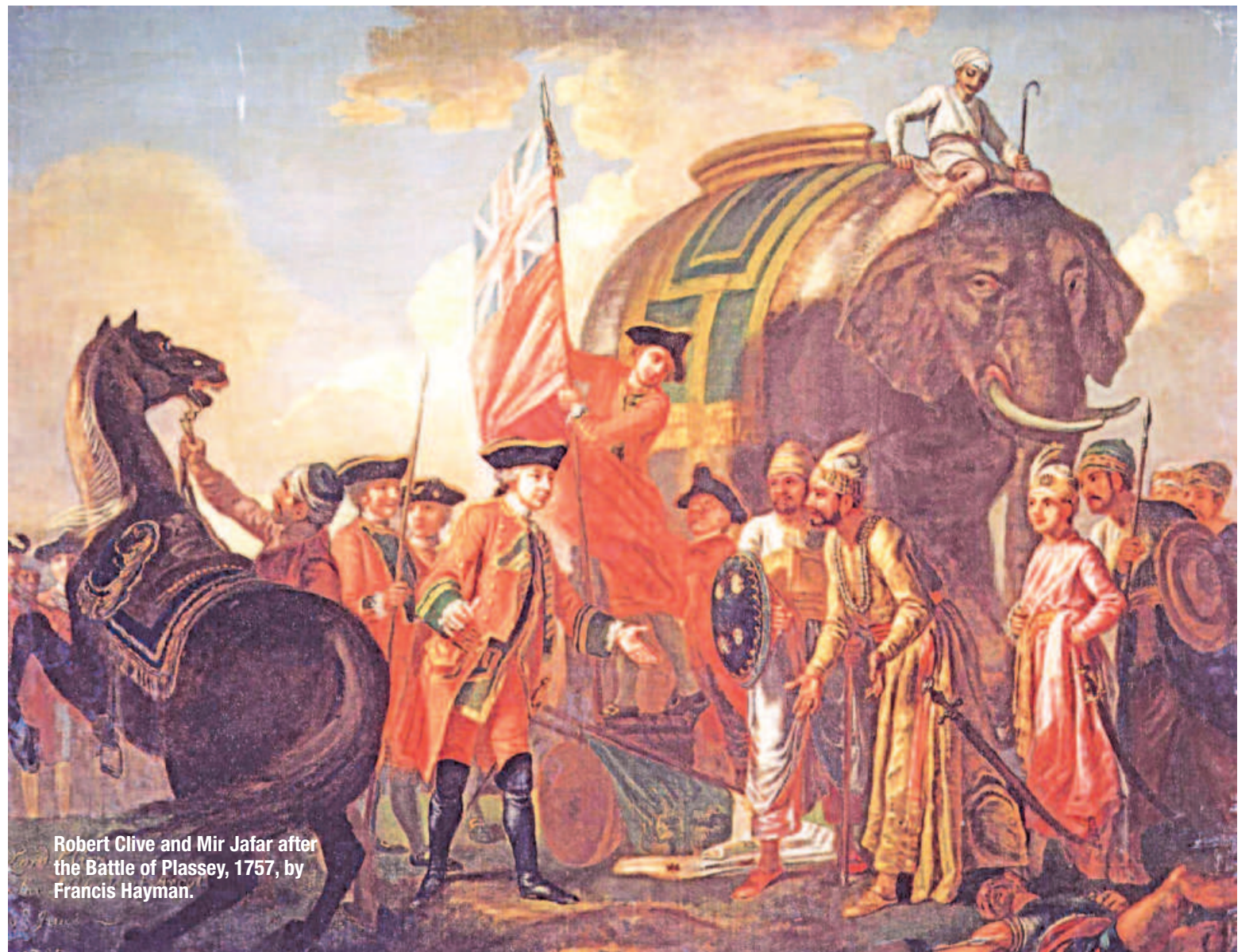
SUDEEP CHAKRAVARTI

Each year on 23 June arrives an occasion of template lament for Bengalis: the defeat of Siraj ud-daulah at Plassey at the hands of forces led by Robert Clive—and Bengal's subsequent quick subjugation by the East India Company. Indeed, the quick subjugation of the Indian Subcontinent by both Company and Crown in a blistering 190-year sprint from that Monsoon day in 1757 until a muggy August in 1947. The fact that this article is being written in English and not French, Marathi, the language of the *Borgi*, or—a long historical shot—Persian, is an indication of the dexterity with which 'John Company' and the British government navigated and dominated South Asia's shape-shifting dynamics.

This rubric included Britain's arch-enemy France (along with initially robust competition in Bengal from the Dutch). The back story of Plassey—the battle as well as the run-up to it—is a mix of aggressive mercantilism married to geopolitics, an often-diminished fact. Few works acknowledge just how much the French were a factor in the run-up to Plassey. Then there was the Maratha confederacy that ran riot from western India all the way to the opposite bank of the Bhagirathi in Murshidabad. And there was the crumbling pay-per-*farman* Mughal Empire.

Plassey—Polashi—was never a binary conflict. Black and white. Sacrifice and betrayal. Horrid English and disadvantaged natives. The descriptions of a hapless Siraj, and a crafty Clive backed by a treacherous Mir Jafar are not absolute. This seminal event in Bengal and South Asian history is a *Rashomon* truth, as it were. That it continues to be portrayed in binary terms even by some eminent historians and intellectuals, let alone by pamphleteers who live off emotional history for political gain, is outright misdirection—and Plassey's true lament. Let me illustrate this with just a few of numerous examples.

Take the myth that John Company were



Robert Clive and Mir Jafar after the Battle of Plassey, 1757, by Francis Hayman.

numerous run-ins with the Company over trade, duties, concessions, breach of protocol, overstepping command and control boundaries and, occasionally, military overreach. The British repeatedly attempted to paper these over with abject apologies and 'gifts'.

As late as 1749—seven years before Alivardi's death and Siraj's accession—Company records speak of attempts to mollify Alivardi with the gift of a "fine Arab horse" as the nawab had squeezed trade to and from Calcutta and Dhaka as one of the outcomes of a dispute the British had with local Armenian traders.

Alivardi wasn't mollified. He soon began to stop the boats of British merchants, and cut off the supply of provisions to the British factory in Dhaka. Alivardi's troops surrounded the factory at Qasimbajar, reminiscent of the time of the nawab Shaista, and not unlike what Siraj would do in a few short years. The Company capitulated by paying off Alivardi through the Jagat Seths, bankers who would shortly conspire against Siraj—but they had actually been conspiring against Siraj before he became nawab.

and his officers on their visit to Hugly entered 35 gold mohurs, = Rs. 677; ready money Rs. 5,500; wax candles Rs. 1,100; a clock Rs. 880; looking glasses 2 pairs Rs. 550; 2 marble slabs Rs. 220; pistols 1 pair Rs. 110; a diamond ring Rs. 1,436; to Allivardi's wife and women 26 gold mohurs, = Rs. 429; fukiers Rs. 184 ... the sum total in ready money amounted to Rs. 15,560. In return the president of the council in Calcutta received a robe of honour and an elephant."

This honour to his favourite grandson greatly pleased Alivardi. It pleased Siraj too. He would write to Roger Drake, Company chief in Calcutta, adding his pleasure to a pro-Company *parwana*: "...you are a great man, and that greatness becomes you, the head of all merchants, and the standard of merchants."

Siraj was then a friend as much as any nawab, established or on the make, could be a friend, strategically feted and suitably befriended. The teenage heir apparent hadn't yet been magically transformed into the demon the British—and their post-Plassey allies, who contributed to creating a history of victors—loved to hate, the

backroom help of the Jagat Seths, who read the political and economic tea leaves and threw their lot in with the British over the French and Siraj.

Moreover, the British were determined to rid the French from Bengal—the trading plum for both European companies and their countries—even before Clive arrived in Bengal. He arrived not to wrest Bengal from Siraj, but basically in the hope of negotiating with Siraj to win back the Company's possessions and concessions in Bengal the Company had lost in 1756 through the policy and military overreach of the Calcutta Council. Clive & Co. were focused on the French, their rivals in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia, as much as regaining trade in Bengal.

"I hope we shall be able to dispossess the French of Chandernagore..." Clive had written in a letter to the Company's Select Committee in Madras on 11 October 1756, five days before the Company & Crown fleet sailed from Madras to Calcutta. The imperative to win the French bastion in Bengal was underscored in a letter dated 13 November by the Select Committee in Madras to Admiral Charles Watson, a Royal Navy officer who commanded the naval arm of the expeditionary force; Clive commanded the infantry: "If you judge the taking of Chandernagore practicable without much loss it would certainly be a step of great utility to the Company's affairs and take off great measure the bad effects of the loss of Calcutta by putting the French in a position equally disadvantageous."

And what of the so-called Lion of Bengal, later celebrated as "Clive of Bengal," and gilded into British peerage as Baron Plassey? That pushy, often-brilliant, opinionated but nervous wreck of an opium addict who nearly drowned on his way to take up his position as a lowly Company Writer in Madras? That "heaven sent general" who, despite signing the Plassey conspiracy with Mir Jafar that guaranteed Clive & Co. great riches and that disgruntled noble the *masnad* of Bengal, was far from sure of victory even hours before the battle? The desperate man who was ready to make peace with Siraj as if nothing had passed between them?

A whiny, insecure, desperate Clive who had staked his career and the Company's fortunes on a thrown of campaign dice, wrote to Mir Jafar on 22 June, the day before the battle:

"I am determined to risk everything on your account, though you will not exert yourself... If you will join me at Plassey, I will march half way to meet you, then the whole Nabob's army will know I fight for you. Give me [leave] to call your mind how much your own glory and safety depends upon. Be assured if you do this you will be the Subah of these Provinces, but if you cannot do even this length to assist us I call upon God to witness the fault is not mine, and I must desire your consent for concluding a Peace with the Nabob, and what has passed between us will never be known..."

There was no guarantee even hours before the battle commenced at 8 a.m. on 23 June 1757. Indeed, I would maintain that it wasn't so much that Monsoon showers spoiled Siraj's party by wetting his army's gunpowder—in addition to most of his army standing idle in conspiracy to see which way the storm winds travelled—but Siraj's own insecurity in leadership.

There are numerous examples of non-binary truths about Plassey. But there's a stodginess about visiting the information-soaked-by-lanes of Plassey, those exciting neighbourhoods beyond the ghettos of template interpretations. Colonial pursuits and the other side of that coin, lamenting Siraj and Bengal's abject fate, have formed the bedrock of such historiography. Binary history is an expired commodity. Certainly Plassey deserves better.

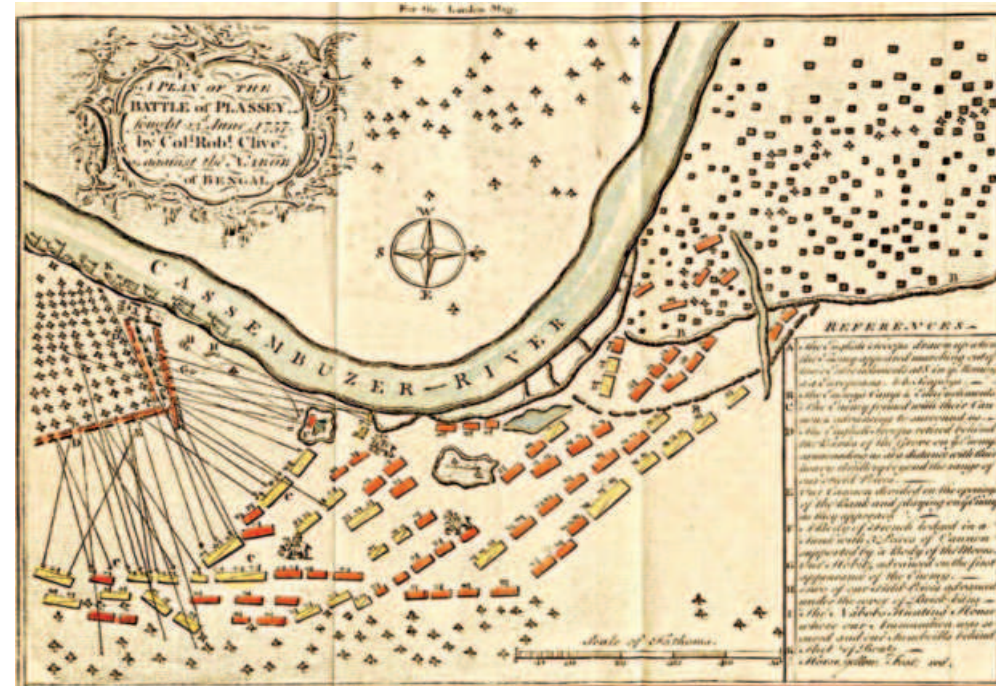
Sudeep Chakravarti is an historian, author, columnist, and visiting professor of South Asian Studies at ULAB, Dhaka. He has written several books including Plassey: The Battle that Changed the Course of Indian History (Aleph, 2020).



▲ The Nawab's artillery at Plassey, illustration from 'Hutchinson's Story of the British Nation' by Richard Caton II Woodville

content in Bengal until the arrival of Siraj to the *masnad* in April 1756, upon his grandfather Alivardi's death. This myth discredits the contentious relations the nawabs of Bengal had with the British East India Company in Bengal from the time of Shaista Khan's governorship in the late 17th century. Indeed, Job Charnock, who later helped establish the Company presidency in Calcutta 1690, was kicked out of the Company trading depot in Cossimbazar—Qasimbajar—alongside a near-total shutdown of trade, by Shaista, on account of aggressive manoeuvring. Charnock was merely following in the haloed military-mercantilism steps of Thomas Roe, who arrived as ambassador of the court of King James I to the court of Emperor Jahangir in the early 17th century. Roe and his colleagues diligently carried out the Company S.O.P.: Treat with the Mughals, threaten them, and blockade Mughal shipping in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal if need be. Play hardball.

The Company and Charnock returned to conduct business in Bengal only after Shaista was recalled by Emperor Aurangzeb. This happened nearly 70 years before Siraj became nawab. Subsequent governor-nawabs, including Murshid Quli Khan, and later, Alivardi, who defeated Sarfaraz Khan to rule Bengal, had



A Plan of the Battle of Plassey.

The Company's Consultations of 31 August 1749 note: "The English trade being stopped and the factory at Cossimbazar surrounded with troops by the Nawab owing to the dispute with the Armenians the English try through the Seats to propitiate him, but his two favorites demand a large sum of money Rs. 30,000 for themselves and 4 lakhs for the Nawab, at last after much negotiation the Armenians expressing themselves satisfied the Nawab becomes reconciled, but the English got off after paying to the Nawab through the Seats..."

Various disputes continued right until 1755, a year shy of Alivardi's death, a matter of routine give-and-take and written off by the Company as both an investment in goodwill and the cost of doing business.

The Company reached out to Siraj too—a gesture that was reciprocated. This happened in 1752, when Alivardi declared Siraj as his heir and successor. Siraj visited Hugly, the trading town north of Kolkata on the western bank of the eponymous river. Company representatives travelled upriver to meet the crown prince, and Company records note they were received by Siraj with "...the utmost politeness and distinction far superior than was paid the Dutch or French..."

They took gifts for Siraj. A chronicler, the Reverend James Long quoted Company ledgers to observe:

"In the accounts of presents to Suraja Doula

man whose forces would pressure Drake and most of his colleagues to abandon Calcutta less than four years later.

(Maybe Siraj-ud-daula was unpredictable, perhaps a mystery. Even when he became relatively better known to the Company, the political nuances and personalities of Bengal evidently remained as arcana to the board of directors in London. As the writer and historian Piers Brendon wryly observes, "...one Company director did ask if Sir Roger Dowler was really a baronet.")

Here are some other often-ignored aspects of Plassey. The conspiracy against Siraj in Murshidabad predated Plassey and Clive's arrival in Bengal over the winter of 1756-57. Mir Jafar, who was sacked by Siraj as paymaster general of the Bengal army had, with the help of Ghaseti Begum, Siraj's aunt, conspired to incite Shaukat Jang, the nawab of Purnea and Siraj's cousin, to march on Murshidabad. Shaukat Jung did, twice—once abortively and the second time fatally, for him. Ghaseti Begum had it in for Siraj even before Siraj was made heir apparent by her father. She wished for Siraj's younger brother Ikram-ud-daulah, whom she had adopted, to succeed Alivardi. Her hate for Siraj grew after Ikram died of illness and Siraj was elevated to heir. When the Plassey conspiracy was finally sealed as late as April-May 1757, just weeks before the battle, Clive essentially walked into a ready environment and leveraged it with the



Monument of Battle of Plassey, Nadia, West Bengal.

**The conspiracy against Siraj in Murshidabad predated Plassey and Clive's arrival in Bengal over the winter of 1756-57. Mir Jafar, who was sacked by Siraj as paymaster general of the Bengal army had, with the help of Ghaseti Begum, Siraj's aunt, conspired to incite Shaukat Jang, the nawab of Purnea and Siraj's cousin, to march on Murshidabad. Shaukat Jung did, twice—once abortively and the second time fatally, for him.**



# Star

DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 27, 2022, ASHAR 13, 1429 BS

# SPORT

## What to WATCH

### T SPORTS

BPL (Football)  
Mohammedan vs  
Sheikh Jamal  
Live from 04:00 pm  
West Indies vs  
Bangladesh

2nd Test, Day 4  
Live from 08:00 pm  
**TEN 2**  
England vs New  
Zealand  
3rd Test, Day 5  
Live from 04:00 pm

### STAR SPORTS HD

1 & 2  
Wimbledon  
First Round  
Live from 04:00 pm  
onwards

## England closing in on series sweep

AFP, Leeds

England were racing towards a clean sweep of New Zealand with victory in the third and final Test getting ever so closer at the end of the fourth day's play on Sunday.

The hosts, who are 2-0 up in the series, reached 183 for two at stumps, chasing a victory target of 296 after dismissing the Black Caps for 326 earlier in the day.

Ollie Pope was batting on 81 alongside Joe Root on 55 with Alex Lees (9) and Zak Crawley (25) back in the pavilion.

Earlier, Tom Blundell top-scored with 88 not out and Daryl Mitchell made 56 as the pair shared their fourth century partnership of a three-match series.

Mitchell and Blundell joined a select group of players when they posted their fourth century partnership of a Test series.

Only four other pairs have performed a similar feat, with Australia's David Boon and Mark Waugh sharing five hundred stands during the 1993 Ashes series in England.

New Zealand's sixth-wicket duo put on 113 on the fourth day of the third Test. That also shared a stand of 120 in the first innings of this match which followed their partnerships of 195 and 236 at Lord's and Trent Bridge respectively.

After Matthew Potts made the breakthrough to have Mitchell lbw on review for 56, the World Test champions collapsed on the fourth afternoon at Headingley.

Jack Leach polished off the tail on his way to figures of 5-66, which combined with his first-innings 5-100 gave the left-arm spinner overall figures of 10-166 -- the first time he had taken 10 wickets in a match during his 25-Test career.

Another success in Leeds would mean England had won all three of their Tests since the appointment of a new leadership duo in captain Ben Stokes and red-ball head coach Brendon McCullum, a former New Zealand skipper.



Bangladesh pacer Khaled Ahmed celebrates one of his five wickets on the third day of the second Test against the West Indies at the Darren Sammy Cricket Ground in Gros Islet, Saint Lucia yesterday. Khaled's first five-wicket haul in Test cricket helped Bangladesh restrict the hosts to 408 in their first innings, but the Tigers suffered an all-too-familiar collapse in their second innings. PHOTO: AFP

## Another day of 'big lessons for the boys'

SPORTS REPORTER

In his third year as Bangladesh head coach, Russell Domingo is still mentioning how tough Test cricket is and the South African is taking lessons from the opposition after the visitors were forced into the back foot by the second day's close of play in the second and series-deciding Test against the West Indies in Saint Lucia on Saturday.

Despite being under pressure on day two, the hosts recovered from losing four wickets in the first session and are eyeing to post a big lead to take full control of the Test match, courtesy of Kyle Mayers striking his second Test ton. Interestingly, both of his centuries had come against the same opponent.

"They chased down 400 against us in Chittagong. Kyle Mayers got 200. We're not getting those scores at the moment," Domingo expressed his frustration after the close of the second day's play.

"Big lessons for the boys. Test match cricket is hard and when you are not batting as well as you should, good teams will punish you and we're being punished now."

Interestingly, when Domingo was appointed as the Tigers' head coach in 2019, the situation was quite similar to where it stands after three years of his tenure. The learning curve for Bangladesh in the longest format seems never-ending



**"We are getting a lot of 30s and 40s and odd 50s but nobody is doing what Kyle Mayers is doing and getting a big hundred. That's the difference between 230 and getting 400."**

**RUSSELL DOMINGO**  
Bangladesh head coach

since they started playing Test cricket 22 years back.

The talks over sticking to the basics, applying pressure when required or maximising the opportunities when offered -- the mantra of playing better cricket is known by all but when it comes to implementation, there is a huge void in

that regard.

The reappointment of Shakib Al Hasan as the Test captain after Mominul Haque resigned from the post ahead of the West Indies series was expected to be a major step towards the reformation of the Tigers' approach in the longest format of the game.

However, it is also important to realise that someone like Shakib, despite being a champion cricketer and a great tactician of the game, cannot single-handedly bring the best out of the team in a collective manner.

Shakib, who himself is a thorough professional and expects others to be the same, may have already realised in his first assignment on his third stint as the Tigers Test captain that he needs to work more as a leader, both on and off the field.

It is still too early to comment on the fate of the Saint Lucia Test as the Tigers did manage to rise against the odds when their backs were against the wall in the past.

Although it seems to be a tough ask for the visitors, especially in the current context of the Test match, Bangladesh really have to come up with something special in the coming days. However, what Domingo and Shakib need is to find the right collective approach, which at present seems missing in all departments of the game.

## Brave Malaysia deny Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team won the FIFA International Women's Football Series 1-0 following a goalless draw against Malaysia in the second match at the Bishreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium on Sunday.

Visitors Malaysia, who are 85th in FIFA Ranking, put up a much-improved performance compared to the first match and frustrated the women in red and green following a 6-0 defeat in the first match.

Golam Rabbani Choton pinned his hopes on the same playing eleven but the girls found it hard against a revamped Malaysian team, who had good defending, zonal marking and chased the Bangladesh players well to deny the home side from building the game from the deep.

Forward Sirat Jahan Swapna played a good role in exposing the Malaysian backline several times in the first match but she later looked unimpressive before being replaced by Ritu Parna Chakma at the start of the second half while captain Sabina Khatun, winger Sanjida Akter and forward Krishna Rani Sarker also failed to find the target.

After being resisted by the visitors, Bangladesh tried from outside the box to break the deadlock but the drives from the forwards could hardly trouble Malaysian goalkeeper Nurul Azurin Binti Mazlan, who was more impressive than the first match.



## Kings extend lead

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Bashundhara Kings continued their winning run in the Bangladesh Premier League with a 3-2 win against Sheikh Russel KC at the Bashundhara Kings Arena yesterday.

With 14th win in 17 matches, Kings moved to 44 points, nine more than nearest rivals Abahani, who however played a match less. Sheikh Russel remained in seventh position with 18 points.

Kyrgyz defender Aizar Akmatov gave Sheikh Russel the lead in the 28th minute from the spot but Kings took 10 minutes to level the margin. Robson Robinho brilliantly entered the box from the left flank to square it to his unmarked compatriot Miguel Figueira, who drove to the top left-side of the net with a left-footed.

Iranian defender Khalid Shafiei made it 2-1 for Kings in the 65th minute following a rebound before Robinho widened the margin with a placing shot at the end of a forward-pass from compatriot Figueira. With clock ticking towards the end of six minutes of added time, Sheikh Russel pulled one back through substitute Mannaf Rabbi but could not avoid their fourth straight defeat against Kings in the professional league.

## Can Swiatek solve grass court puzzle?

AGENCIES

Poland's world number one Iga Swiatek is the red hot favourite to win the Wimbledon title but admits that grass court tennis is something she is still trying to figure out.

That admission will offer hope to her rivals but the bad news is the 21-year-old has done a pretty good job of figuring everything out so far in her stunning early career.

Swiatek makes no secret of her use of sports psychology and may need all her powers of positive thinking to plot her way to the Wimbledon title. She appears to be a huge favourite going into the tournament -- courtesy of a 35-match winning sequence that began in Qatar in February.

She was simply unstoppable on the Roland Garros clay, dropping one set as she claimed a second French Open title in three years, having free-wheeled her way to the 2020 title when she became the youngest French Open champion for 28 years.

But Wimbledon presents an entirely different challenge for a player whose nine career WTA titles have been won on clay and hard courts and who admits grass is tricky.

"Honestly I still feel like I need to figure out grass. Last year, for sure, it was that kind of tournament where I didn't know what to expect," Swiatek told reporters on Saturday.

The women's draw remains open with defending champion Ashleigh Barty having retired earlier this year.

Four-time major winner Naomi Osaka, rarely a serious threat on grass, has withdrawn with an Achilles injury.

Meanwhile, ranked a lowly 1,204 in the world and without a competitive singles match in 12 months, 40-year-old Serena Williams will sweep into Wimbledon targeting what would be her greatest triumph.

The seven-time champion at the All England Club will also be chasing down a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title.

The odds have rarely been so stacked against the great American who can become the first unseeded woman to win Wimbledon.



## Djokovic, Nadal lead title chase at all-change Wimbledon

AFP, LONDON

Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal headline the title chase at Wimbledon where eight-time champion Roger Federer, the world's top two players as well as valuable ranking points will all be missing.

Djokovic is bidding for a seventh title at the All England Club to move level with US great Pete Sampras.

Nadal, fresh from a 14th French Open victory and a record-extending 22nd major, is halfway to the first men's calendar Grand Slam in more than half a century.

The season's third Slam tournament has already made political waves even before the first ball is served on Monday.

The decision to ban Russian and Belarusian players in the aftermath of the invasion of Ukraine means there is no place

for world number one Daniil Medvedev or eighth-ranked Andrey Rublev.

Both the ATP and WTA, who control the men's and women's tours, retaliated by stripping ranking points from the tournament.

For the first time since his debut in 1999 -- notwithstanding the Covid-cancelled 2020 edition -- Federer will be a no-show as the 40-year-old recovers from knee surgery.

Also missing is Germany's world number two Alexander Zverev, who suffered serious ankle ligament damage in a horrific injury in his French Open semi-final against Nadal.

Djokovic and Nadal, ranked three and four, are therefore the top seeds meaning if they are to face each other for the 60th time, it can only be in the final.

Djokovic, the champion in 2011, 2014, 2015, 2018, 2019 and 2021, will be playing in

his final Slam of the year. His refusal to be vaccinated against Covid-19 will rule him out of the US Open later this year.

A bruising quarter-final loss to Nadal at the French Open which saw him deposed as champion in Paris will also provide extra motivation.

Nadal won the last of his two Wimbledon titles in 2010 having captured his first with an epic triumph over Federer two years earlier.


The 36-year-old Spaniard arrives at Wimbledon with the Australian and French Opens secured.

Nadal has endured a bittersweet relationship with Wimbledon.

Two titles have been accompanied by three lost finals as well as injury-enforced absences in 2004, 2009, 2016 and 2021.



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## Soybean oil prices cut by up to Tk 6 a litre

SUKANTA HALDER

Edible oil refiners have cut soybean oil prices up to Tk 6 a litre though the consumers rights organisation said the rates should have been reduced by at least Tk 30 amid falling prices of the item in the global market.

Yesterday, Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners and Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association reset the highest retail price of loose soybean oil at Tk 180 a litre, down from Tk 185.

It refixed the highest retail price of one-litre bottled soybean oil at Tk 199, down from Tk 205, and a five-litre bottle at Tk 980, down from Tk 997.

The new prices take effect today.

This is the first time in the last couple of months that edible oil refiners have reduced prices. Since February, edible oil prices rose up to Tk 55 a litre as refiners hiked prices in phases in line with spiralling prices in the international market.

Tapan Kanti Ghosh, senior secretary at the commerce ministry, said the cut in oil prices was in discussion over the last few days.

Earlier, Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission recommended cutting edible oil prices, which started declining in the global market late May, he said.

The price evaluation committee on basic commodities under the commerce ministry suggested reducing the prices in consultation with importers, refiners, wholesalers, added Tapan.

Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, said the prices have not been reduced in keeping with the rates at which prices have come down in the international market.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## Substance abuse in children spiralling

### CHILDREN TREATED AT GOVT REHABS

YEAR	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	TOTAL PATIENTS
2012	4	10,749
2013	0	8,108
2014	1	10,364
2015	8	9,504
2016	47	12,815
2017	74	14,688
2018	80	25,143
2019	109	27,983
2020	496	14,952
2021	608	19,208

- 20,592 narco cases were filed against 21,992 people in 2021
- Total number of drug addicts is eight million
- 60pc of the inmates are accused in narco cases
- Over 80pc drug addicts are aged between 21 and 25

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Children's substance abuse has increased exponentially in the ten years since 2012 -- an alarming development for the society.

In 2012, four children took treatment at the government rehabilitation centre, according to a statistic from the Department of Narcotic Control (DNC). In 2021, that number reached 608.

Another estimation shows an equally worrying trend.

Before the pandemic, 25-30 children would visit the "dropping centre" of the Bangladesh Rehabilitation and Assistance Centre for Addicts (BARACA) on an average each day.

That number almost doubled to 45-50 a day last year, according to BARACA officials.

The DNC should take initiatives immediately to check substance abuse among children, said AS Mahmood, director of Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum.

"Or else, the scenario would become dire." Easy availability of substances and a

lack of monitoring are the prime reasons behind the rise in addiction among children, according to Mahmood.

The majority of the addicts are glue-sniffing street children, said officials and doctors.

Popularly known as dandy, the adhesive glue, used by shoe repairers, contains toluene, a sweet-smelling and intoxicating hydrocarbon.

The solvent dissolves the membrane of brain cells and causes hallucinations as well as dampens hunger pangs.

"We rarely get children with addiction to Yaba or high priced drugs as they are not able to afford those," said Shoyebur Reza Chowdhury, chief consultant of Central Drug Addiction Treatment Centre.

A small tub of glue, which is available in all hardware and paint shops, cost only Tk 20 and a medium-sized one Tk 60.

Since Dandy is not expensive and legal, it has become a very convenient substance to abuse.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

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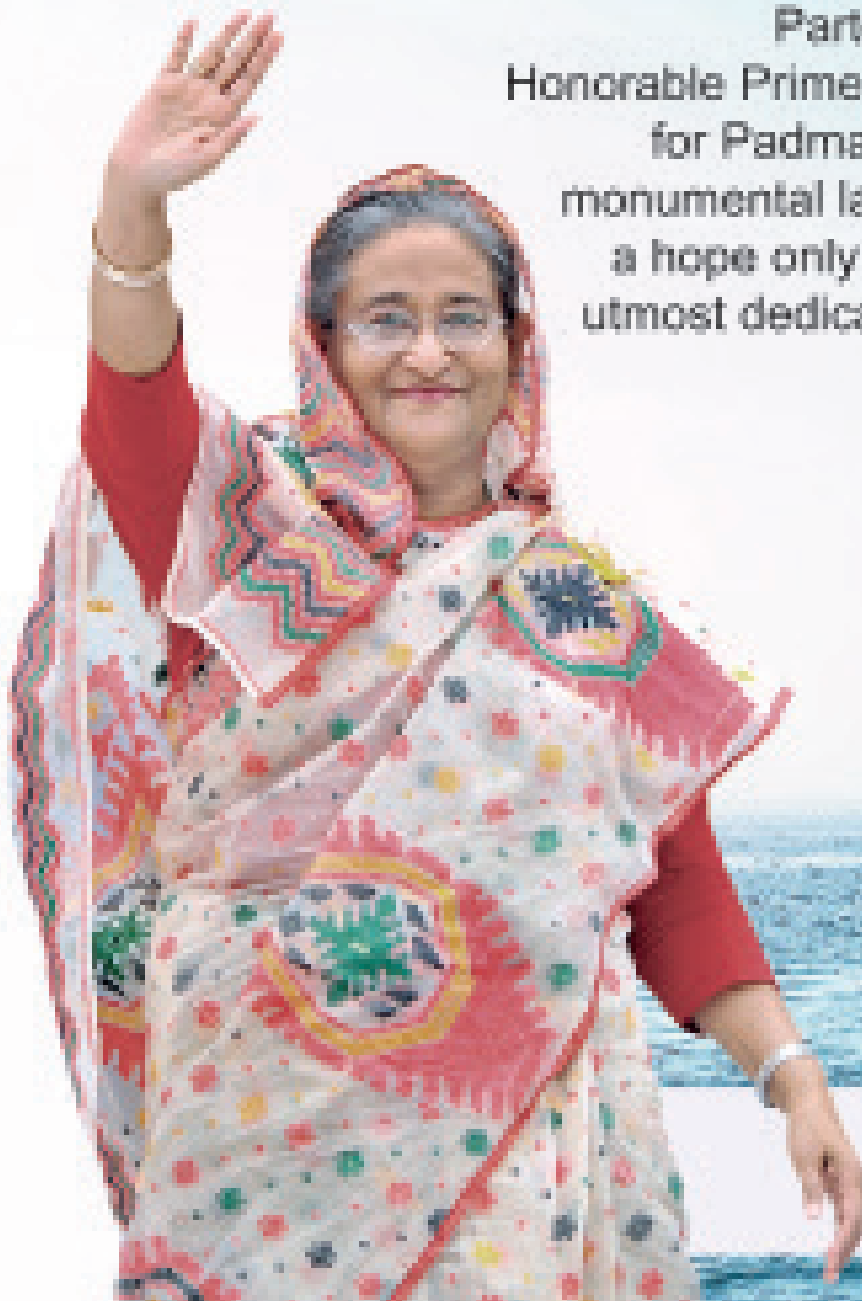

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