



# The Daily Star

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

"He's (UK PM Boris Johnson) a proven liar who's engulfed in sleaze and we can't have another couple of months of this."

UK Labour's deputy leader Angela Rayner



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## Homegoers get stuck in tailbacks

Sufferings unbound on highways to northern districts; trip to South relatively smoother

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

People going to their hometowns from Dhaka to spend Eid suffered immensely due to shortage of buses, long tailbacks on the highways and delayed trains. Tailbacks reached about 25km on Dhaka-Mymensingh and Dhaka-Tangail highways at times yesterday. Hundreds of people heading to the southern districts travelled on the flatbed of trucks and pickups paying exorbitant sums as there were not enough buses to carry them.

As the train schedules fell apart, some going to the north-western districts had to wait at Kamalapur Railway Station for seven hours.

In Elenga area on Dhaka-Tangail highway, SK Enamul Haq said, "My wife, son and I left Shyamoli [in the capital] in my car around 6:00am for my village home and I am still here on the road after more than 14 hours."

He added that the entire journey would have taken about two and a half hours if the traffic was normal.

Like him, thousands of people, including women, children and the elderly spent hours on the road in scorching heat.

Sadi Rosni Suchana, a TV presenter, told The Daily Star that her sister left for their home in Naogaon from Chattogram around noon on Thursday. "After 31 long hours on the road, the bus was only able to cross the Bangabandhu Bridge on the Jamuna."

She added that the bus had air conditioning, but it stopped working on the way.

Quader Mia, a trader from Karwan Bazar, was going to Gaibandha from Dhaka with his wife and three children. His bus left Gabtoli terminal around 11:00pm on Thursday and only reached the eastern side of Bangabandhu Bridge at 8:00am yesterday.

"The whole road is jammed. My children became sick being in the bus the whole night in this hot and humid weather. We do not have food, water, and there is no toilet," Quader told The Daily Star.

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The Daily Star wishes its valued readers, patrons, advertisers and well-wishers a very happy Eid

### HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star offices will remain closed for 3 days from today on account of Eid-ul-Azha. There will be no issue of the newspaper from July 10-12. However, our digital version will serve the readers 24/7 during the holiday.

## ALAM KHAN (1944-2022)

### Adieu, music maestro

AAQIB HASIB

"Hayre Manush, Rongin Fanush, Dom Furalei Thush".

These unforgettable lines, etched in Bangladeshi musical history, reminds us just how fragile our existence really is.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



## Hope against hope

Govt's plan to reduce power outage by Sept may hit snag, experts suggest renegotiating capacity charges

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and ASIFUR RAHMAN

The government has assured people suffering from severe power cuts that the situation will improve after September when three new coal-based power plants start operation, but experts expressed doubts about it.

The new power plants are the Rampal power plant, the second unit of Payra power plant and Adani Godda power plant in India.

These power plants are to run on imported coal at a time when the forex reserves of the country are strained.

After a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office on Thursday, Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, energy adviser to the PM, made the assurance that there would be some relief from load-shedding from September.

He argued that three new coal-based power plants will come into operation by that time.

But the reality is, while the country's two running coal-fired power plants have the capacity to plug shortfalls in power generation, those are also suffering from a shortage of coal and lack of transmission lines.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Japan ex-PM Abe assassinated

Suspect held; world leaders condemn killing

AGENCIES

Former prime minister Shinzo Abe, the longest-serving leader of modern Japan, was gunned down yesterday while campaigning for a parliamentary election, shocking a country where political violence is rare.

Abe was pronounced dead around five and a half hours after the shooter opened fire on him from behind as he spoke to members of the public from a traffic island in the western city of Nara.

The murder of the 67-year-old stunned the nation and prompted an international outpouring of grief and condemnation.



It was all the more shocking given Japan's strict gun laws and low rates of violent crime, with Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, describing the killing as a "barbaric act" that was "absolutely unforgivable".

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed her deep shock and sorrow over the killing.

A suspect was arrested at the scene. Senior police officers later named the suspect as unemployed 41-year-old Tetsuya Yamagami, who said he had used a handmade gun.

PHOTO ON PAGE 12  
BANGLADESH OBSERVES STATE MOURNING TODAY - SEE PAGE 2

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## Politician who tried to reinvigorate Japan's glory

AGENCIES

Japan's longest-serving prime minister Shinzo Abe, who was assassinated yesterday, dedicated his life to reviving Japan's economy with his bold "Abenomics" policies, revising the post-WWII pacifist constitution, and restoring traditional values.

Abe, who left office in 2020, was shot and killed during an election campaign speech.

During a visit to the United States in February 2013, shortly after becoming Japan's PM for the second time, Abe declared, "Japan is back".



Holidaymakers on the packed Jamalpur Commuter head home to celebrate Eid. The other train, Dhaka-bound Bhawal Express, was almost empty at Gazipur's Sreepur Railway Station. There was intense rush of homebound passengers throughout yesterday. PHOTO: ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE

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## TANGAIL'S MADHUPUR Foresters, Garo people at odds over land

MIRZA SHAKIL

Tensions have been brewing between members of the Garo community and foresters over pieces of land in the Amtali forest of Tangail's Madhupur upazila.

While Garos have been cultivating crops on the land for generations, the forest department has recently adopted a plan to dig an artificial lake there for tourists.

A few days ago, the authorities put up a sign forbidding people from entering the land, saying it was "reserved forestland".

Locals have been opposing the lake from the very beginning, fearing endangerment of their livelihood and culture.

Witnesses said some foresters, led by Dokhala Range Officer Ismail Hossain, went to the area on Wednesday after learning that Garos, including Kaushala Nokrek, a well-known farmer in the area, were ploughing the land with some other workers.

The rangers retreated following an altercation between the two sides. They, however, took policemen to the spot later to stop the farmers.

Garo farmers alleged that the rangers threatened to shoot them.

Contacted, Kaushala said they have been cultivating the land for generations. The foresters, on Wednesday, went there and threatened to shoot.

"I asked them if the weapons were provided to them by the government to shoot us," she told The Daily Star.

Her question was met with a threat.

She asked this correspondent, "What will we eat if we can't cultivate?"

Range Officer Ismail said they went to the spot to forbid the Garos from ploughing land with tractors.

"But they continued their work."

He denied the allegation of threatening to open fire. "We didn't say we would shoot them. When we asked them to stop ploughing, they chanted 'shoot us'. We then left the area."

Local Garo leader Eugene Nokrek, also the president of Joyenshahi Adivasi Unnayan Parishad, told The Daily Star that several indigenous families had been cultivating crops for a long time on the lands where the forest department plans to dig the lake.

The department is constructing a new rest house close to the area.

Local lawmakers, following the agriculture ministry's directives, have spoken to locals in this regard. The locals, however, did not agree to the lake or the rest house.

Eugene further said, "We think it is important to resolve the issue quickly through discussions."

Sajjadur Rahman, divisional forest officer in Tangail, said though the locals

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



The journey of joy has turned into pain for holidaymakers, who are heading for their home districts to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha. This picture taken around 11:30am yesterday shows passengers bound for northern districts are stuck in a long tailback on Dhaka-Tangail highway near Tangail town. The snarl-up of vehicles stretched about 25 kilometres at the east end of Bangabandhu Bridge.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

## G20 SUMMIT IN BALI

# West seeks to unblock Ukraine's grain ports

### Russian FM walks out of the talks amid criticism; artillery barrages pepper Donbas

AGENCIES

Western officials yesterday tried to coax Russia into allowing Ukraine to ship its grain out to the world as the four-month-old war threatened to bring hunger to countries far away from the battlefields.

Moscow, however, accused the West of waging economic warfare on Russia by attempting to isolate it with sanctions imposed over the February 24 invasion.

On the frontlines in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region, officials reported continued Russian shelling of towns and villages ahead of an anticipated new push to grasp more territory.

At a meeting of G20 foreign ministers in Bali, Indonesia, some of the staunchest critics of the Russian invasion confronted the Kremlin's top diplomat Sergei Lavrov.

High on their concerns was getting grain shipments from Ukraine out of blockaded Black Sea ports.

At a plenary session, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged Moscow to let Ukrainian grain out to the world, a Western official said.

"He addressed Russia directly, saying: 'To our Russian colleagues: Ukraine is not your country. Its grain is not your grain. Why are you blocking the ports? You should let the grain out,'" the official said.

Earlier, Lavrov had berated the West, saying that instead of focusing on how to tackle global economic problems at the meeting, ministers had embarked on "frenzied criticism" of Russia over the Ukraine conflict, reports Reuters.

He walked out of a morning session as German counterpart Annalena Baerbock criticised Moscow over its

invasion, diplomats said.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi called on the G20 to "find a way forward" to address global challenges and said the repercussions of the war, including rising energy and food prices, would hit poor countries the hardest.

The biggest conflict in Europe since World War Two has killed thousands, displaced millions and flattened Ukrainian cities.

On Sunday, Moscow declared it had "liberated" Luhansk and now plans to capture parts of neighbouring Donetsk it does not control.

Luhansk governor Serhiy Gaidai said yesterday Russian forces were indiscriminately shelling villages, towns and cities.

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## Bangladesh observes state mourning today

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh is observing a one-day state mourning today for former Japanese prime minister and the country's true friend Shinzo Abe.

The Cabinet Division issued a notification in this regard yesterday evening.

As a mark of Bangladesh's deepest respect for Abe, the national flag will fly half-mast on all government, semi-government and autonomous institutions' offices, and missions abroad.

Special prayers will be offered today for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

Abe, 67, died yesterday after being shot while delivering a campaign speech in southern Japan.

## Policeman, 3 others held with yaba

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of Rab-7 arrested four men, including a police constable, with 5,280 pieces of yaba pills in Chattogram.

Upal Chakma, 45, a constable of CMP City Special Branch, Nantu Das, 42, Kamrul Islam, 30, and Ghiyasuddin, 42, were arrested near Chattogram Medical College Hospital around 11:15pm on Thursday.

A case has been filed against them under the Narcotics Control Act with Panchlaish Police Station, said Sadequr Rahman, inspector (investigation) of the police station.

## Seven die from Covid

STAR REPORT

Seven people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, read a press release of the Directorate General of Health Services.

With this, the death toll in the country now stands at 29,195 and the death rate at 1.47 percent.

At least 1,611 fresh cases were recorded during this period.

The current positivity rate stands at 16.82 percent and the total positivity rate at 13.77 percent.

A total of 9,580 samples were tested across the country during this period.

Meanwhile, at least 890 patients have recovered from Covid-19 within this time.

## SUNNY MURDER

### Rab arrests three more

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rab arrested three more persons for their alleged involvement in Rajshahi's Sunny murder.

Mohammad Moyeen, the prime accused in the case, his mother Bithi, and Habibi Kumkum Saba were arrested from Kurigram, said Rab.

The trio was trying to flee the country, claimed Lt Col Riaz Shahrar, commanding officer of Rab-5, at a press briefing in Rajshahi Rab office yesterday.

Meanwhile, two teams of Rab-5 arrested two other accused -- Raheem, 20, and Shahi, 21 -- from Dhaka and Narayanganj on Thursday.

On July 3, a group of miscreants abducted Sunny, son of Rafiqul Islam Pakhi, vice-president of the motor workers' union, from Rajshahi Medical College Hospital premises.

Later, he was stabbed to death in Hetemkhan Sahajipara area of Rajshahi city.

## Homegoers get stuck in tailbacks

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, cattle traders have been in fear of losing money as trucks going to Dhaka from the northern districts remained stuck in traffic.

In Tangail, Traffic Inspector Delwar Hossain said the tailbacks happened as the number of vehicles multiplied for the holidays. Some trucks going out of order in the middle of the road also created bottlenecks.

Construction work

on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway has occupied two lanes of the road at multiple places between Tongi Bridge and Chandana intersection, creating bottlenecks that resulted in a 26km tailback.

Motorists said it took them over two hours to travel just about two kilometres. Congestion was most severe in Konabari and Safipur Palli Bidyut areas, they added.

Those going to the southern towns spent

much less time on the roads despite the tailbacks near the Padma Bridge toll plazas. But finding a vehicle was a major challenge for them.

Pick-up and truck drivers took Tk 500 from each individual they carried from the capital's Jatrabari to Bhanga in Faridpur. Some trucks carried people with cattle.

"My mother and I had to board a pick-up ... She fell sick on the way as the vehicle got stuck at a toll

plaza on the expressway for 15 minutes," said Mahmud Hossain, who is a student.

In Gabtoli terminal in the capital yesterday evening, several thousand people were seen waiting for their buses that could not enter Dhaka because of congestion on the highways. Around 5:30pm, Parveen Begum, who was with her elderly mother and three children, said she had been waiting since 1:00pm.

"My mother and children

have lost all energy. The transport company employees say they do not know when the bus will reach Dhaka," Parveen said.

Those travelling shorter distances paid the drivers of trucks and three-wheelers to carry them for a lot more than the usual fare. People were seen travelling on the roofs of buses.

However, river traffic was smooth yesterday: 14 launches left for Barishal with a good number of passengers. The

anticipation that there would be a scarcity of launch passengers because of the Padma Bridge was proven wrong.

At Kamalapur Railway Station, as trains arrived behind schedule, hundreds of people struggled to get on board through the doors and windows. Many were seen happy to be able to climb to the rooftop.

[Our correspondents in Tangail, Gazipur, Munshiganj and Manikganj contributed to this report.]

## Hope against hope

FROM PAGE 1

The first unit of the 1,320-megawatt Payra plant and the 525MW Barapukuria plant are now generating 763MW -- less than half their combined capacity.

Of a total of 152 power plants across the country, only 59 were operational on Thursday, according to the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB).

The rest were out of operation either because of the fuel crisis or due to maintenance issues.

On Thursday, 28 power plants were out of operation due to fuel shortage, and that number was 19 on June 30, when the government started power rationing, showed the PGCB data.

The government is trying to cut dependency on imported fuel and gas-based power plants and rely more on domestic gas production, coal-fired power plants and imported electricity.

To save electricity,

the government has already instructed restrictions on lighting in social programmes, shopping malls, shops and households and it is contemplating shortening office hours, introducing "home office" for its officials and rescheduling school timing.

An official of PGCB told The Daily Star that the government only said "September" hoping that the winter will reduce demand for electricity, and that the timeline is not based on any study.

Prominent energy expert M Tamim said the difference of peak-hour demand in winter and summer is more than 4,000MW.

"Currently, our national AC [air conditioner] consumption load is more than 2,500MW at peak hours. The government recommends setting the thermostats at 25 degrees Celsius. Even if everybody adjusts their thermostats to 24 degrees, it would save 700-800MW more in

total," he said.

He also said that as per his knowledge, no new coal-based power plant will be in operation by September.

"The second unit of Payra is ready but not operating due to lack of a transmission line, which is likely to be ready in December. We are paying Tk 103 crore every month in capacity payment for this power plant running at half-capacity [the first unit is running at 660MW]. And through the same transmission line, Rampal will also supply electricity. Adani will also come next year."

The Daily Star reported earlier that the transmission line to import electricity from India's Adani power plant will not be ready by this year.

M Tamim, however, welcomed the power-saving recommendations made by the government, saying it was the only solution to reduce the electricity demand.

Only one out of three units of the Barapukuria coal power plant are operating, using coal produced in Barapukuria. These units cannot go into full production because the coal mine is not producing enough coal.

Asked about Barapukuria power plant, Tamim said, "Since we are not able to operate the Barapukuria plant because of a lack of coal, firing up three new coal-based power plants would not solve the crisis unless coal supply is ensured."

Replying to a question, Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury said during Thursday's briefing that the full capacity of the Barapukuria power plant cannot be utilised as coal production at the nearby coal mine has remained suspended for development of the next phase of the mine.

"The next phase will be ready for production after a month," he said.

"The Payra power plant's capacity also has

remained underutilised as a substation required for power evacuation is being repaired for back-feeding electricity to the Rampal power plant."

Even if the government adopts austerity measures and keeps fuel-based power plants out of operation, the capacity charges to be paid to the power plants will continue to be a huge burden.

Experts suggested renegotiating contracts with power plant owners and suspending capacity charges for the time being.

According to data of Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), the government has paid a total of Tk 33,970 crore in "capacity payments" to the independent power producers, rental and quick rental power plants between 2017-18 and 2020-21.

In 2017-18, it was Tk 5,600 crore, in 2018-19 it was Tk 6,241 crore, in 2019-20 Tk 8,292 crore and in 2020-21 Tk 13,200 crore.

## Flood death toll now 113

Says the DGHS

UNB, Dhaka

Although flood situation continues to improve in most places, another death was reported in Habiganj in 24 hours till yesterday morning, taking the total flood-related fatalities to 113.

The latest victim drowned in floodwater, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The total deaths were recorded between May 17 and July 8, it said.

Among the total deceased, 85 people died by drowning in floodwater, 15 from lightning strikes, two from snake bites, one from diarrhoea, and nine due to other reasons.

Of the deceased, 60 people died in Sylhet, 40 in Mymensingh, 12 in Rangpur and one in Dhaka division, it said.

## Pilgrims pack Mt Arafat

FROM PAGE 12

before performing the symbolic "stoning of the devil" ceremony today.

"I am so happy to be here... This is the biggest hajj in the coronavirus era, but it isn't big enough yet," Egyptian pilgrim Saad Farhat Khalil, 49, told AFP.

"There are one million here today, but if the Saudis allowed more, 10 million would have come," he added.

Entry roads were packed with worshippers as helicopters buzzed overhead and volunteers handed out bottles of water and collected rubbish in green plastic bags.

The hajj, usually one of the world's largest annual religious gatherings, is among the five pillars of Islam and must be undertaken by all Muslims with the means at least once in their lives.

In 2019, as in previous years, some 2.5 million Muslims from around the world took part, a figure that dropped to a few

thousand in 2020 and 60,000 in 2021.

A number of world leaders have participated this year, including Mauritania's president and Indonesia's vice president. State media yesterday reported that Chechen strongman Ramzan Kadyrov had arrived in the kingdom to perform the hajj.

At noon, thousands of pilgrims prayed in Namirah mosque, where the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) gave sermons.

The hajj is taking place against the backdrop of a resurgence in the region, with some Gulf countries tightening restrictions to keep Covid outbreaks in check.

All participants were required to submit proof of vaccination and negative PCR tests. On reaching their white tent encampment at Mina on Thursday, they were handed bags containing masks and sanitiser.

## Biometric attendance at apex court from August 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court is going to introduce biometric attendance of its Appellate Division officials and staffers on August 1.

The officials and employees of the apex court will have to attend and sign off offices through electronic system from that day.

This is being done to ensure timely office attendance of officials and staffers.

The information technology section of the Appellate Division will record fingerprints of the officials and workers of the division from July 18 to July 21 to execute biometric attendance, mentioned a notification issued by Appellate Division Registrar Mohammad Saifur Rahman on July 6.

After its introduction in the apex court, the biometric system will be launched in the High Court as well, Saifur said.

## 29 dengue patients hospitalised in 24hrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 29 dengue patients have been admitted to different hospitals across the country in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

All the new cases were from Dhaka, and the total number of cases rose to 1,376, said Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the patients, 121, eight of whom are from outside Dhaka, are still undergoing treatment.

A total of 1,254 patients recovered, while one patient has died so far.

Earlier, experts warned the city corporations of a major dengue outbreak this year, after the scenario came to light in a DGHS-conducted pre-monsoon survey.

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

Experts have asked the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to address the matter.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
JULY 9

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT 4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Despite the construction of Padma Bridge, many were seen to still travel on launches to reach their home before Eid. The large vessels were filled with passengers, making multiple trips throughout the day. This photo was taken from Postogola bridge yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Dhaka cattle markets finally booming



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

After seeing a scarcity of customers, Dhaka's cattle markets have started gaining momentum after Juma prayers yesterday, as a huge number of buyers rushed to the markets.

Though the demand for small bulls, priced at Tk 50,000 to Tk 1 lakh, was high, demand of medium- and large-sized bulls, especially those that are being sold for Tk 2 lakh, was low.

Traders have started selling bulls at reduced prices from Thursday night, fearing losses.

"I brought 23 bulls priced between Tk 1.50 lakh and 7 lakh, but could only sell seven of them," said Ahmed Hossain, manager of Hossain Agro, who was frustrated since he had to let them go, incurring around Tk 8,000 loss for each bull on average.

Ahmed said he sold them for a loss due to lack of customers at Dholaikhal cattle market. It'll be impossible to sell them before Eid, and there is little demand for big bulls on the last day. Last year, he had to take back all his 31 big

bulls as those remained unsold.

"I had to sell those at Tk 30,000 loss for each bull to meat traders. If we had sold them to customers at cattle markets, we would've faced a loss of over Tk 1 lakh for each bull," he said.

Mohammad Sentu, a trader of Jhenidah, said he sold all his three bulls by Friday morning, facing a Tk 30,000 loss, fearing further loss due to low number of customers.

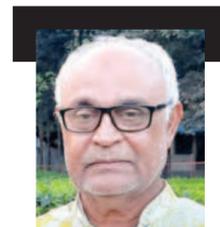
Cattle feed price has doubled in the last nine months, which is the main cause behind the high cattle price, he said.

Shariful Islam, a trader of Karimganj of Kishoreganj, said he sold a bull for Tk 1.18 lakh yesterday at Gabtoli cattle market, out of his five bulls, for Tk 9,000 loss.

"I've started to sell my bulls even at a bit of a loss, as I'm still confused about the market trend," said Shariful.

Mohammad Dalu Mia -- a cattle trader of Gabtoli, who brought two bulls, said, "Although

**Though the demand for small bulls, priced at Tk 50,000 to Tk 1 lakh, was high, demand of medium- and large-sized bulls, especially those that are being sold for Tk 2 lakh, was low.**



## Abu Musa Chowdhury passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Freedom fighter Abu Musa Chowdhury passed away at his village home in Haidchakia village of Chattogram's Fatikchhari upazila around 2:30am yesterday.

He was 67. He is survived by his wife, two children and a host of well-wishers.

On October 2, 1971, Musa, who was just a teenager back then, destroyed a foreign ship by carrying out "Operation Avloz" in Karnaphuli river. He also took part in "Operation Jackpot" and five other valiant naval operations during the Liberation War.

Musa's nephew Mohsin Kazi, also joint secretary general of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), told this correspondent that he was laid to rest at the family graveyard yesterday after Asr prayers.

Earlier, his namaz-e-janaza was held with state honour.

His first operation was Operation Jackpot in

## Online cattle sales on decline

Many opt for old ways of buying sacrificial animals, as Covid situation better than last year's

DIPAN NANDY

As the fear Covid-19 is not as much when compared to the situation last year, online sales of sacrificial animals this Eid has declined. People have been showing more interest in on-the-spot purchases so far this year.

Besides, the experience of buying animals online has not been smooth for everyone, which has contributed to the decline as well.

According to the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, about 90,93,242 animals were sacrificed across the country last year, of which, 3,87,579 were bought online.

According to Department of Livestock Services, 1.21 crore animals have been prepared for sacrifice this year.

However, the digital "haat" is still being operated by Dhaka North City Corporation, e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh (e-CAB) and Bangladesh Dairy Farm Association (BDF), with technical support from a2i's online platform Ekshop.

Dr Dewan Muhammad Humayun Kabir, a2i project director, told this correspondent, "The fear of Covid-19 is no longer the same as before. Due to the lower number of infections this year, people are less keen to purchase sacrificial

**For the last eight years, Bikroy has been bringing sacrificial animals for Eid-ul-Azha. In today's busy life, digital purchases have become a necessity. Our site has so far posted over 10,000 sacrificial animal advertisements, and around 2,000 have been sold.**

ISHITA SHARMIN, CEO of Bikroy.com

animals online and more interested in on-the-spot purchases. The response has been low so far, when compared to the last two years."

According to e-CAB, 3,87,000 cows, goats and other animals were sold online last year, with a market value of Tk 2,500 crore.

Around 11,13, 809 visitors have visited "Digital Haat" this year as of yesterday, while 38,641 animals have been sold on the online platform and "Ancholik haat" under the platform. The total sales have amounted to Tk 355 crore.

Around 10,590 animals have been sold by merchants, with sales amounting to Tk 87 crore. There have been 422 crore transactions online this year so far.

Although sales are low, the platform is working for better connectivity across the market. Customers can get more aware about their purchases, while new farmers are entering the platform as well.

Ishita Sharmin, CEO of Bikroy.com, said, "For the last eight years, Bikroy has been bringing sacrificial animals for Eid-ul-Azha. In today's busy life, digital purchases have become a necessity. Our site has so far posted over 10,000 sacrificial animal advertisements, and around 2,000 have been sold."

"Considering the overall Covid situation, this year, we have tried to bring a greater number of sacrificial animals for customers. However, we also recommend purchasing with caution. We encourage vendors to use pictures taken from different angles while putting up advertisements," she added.

Chief Marketing Officer of Daraz Tajdin Hassan said their platform has sold 250 animals this year, while it sold 350 last year.

"Daraz provided free home deliveries and other offers for purchase of sacrificial animals," he added.

Some individual online-sellers, however, have seen better sales compared to last year.

Sanjeeda Akhter, founder of Sanju-Shafiq Agro, told this correspondent that 13 bulls from

## A battle to reach home

Dhaka residents struggling amid dearth of public transport, high fares

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Due to a lack of public transport, Md Asif had to change vehicles several times to reach Gulistan from Mirpur. He had to take a rickshaw ride, get off and then on a Laguna, and finally just walk to his destination.

He said he could not use auto-rickshaws due to their high fares.

Not only Asif, thousands of people are going through a similar situation. Those who want to leave Dhaka to celebrate Eid with their loved ones are especially suffering.

On the occasion of Eid, public transport vehicles that usually run inside Dhaka are now going to nearby districts. As a result, they are not interested in carrying passengers travelling within Dhaka.

Buses running in Gabtoli, Sayedabad and Gulistan areas are not taking

short-distance passengers. They are also collecting extra fares for going to terminal areas.

Anisur Rahman, who wanted to go to Gabtoli from Motijheel, said, "I'll go to Rajbari for Eid. So, I want to go to Gabtoli by bus. But the conductor wants Tk 80, when the regular fare is Tk 30."

**Buses running in Gabtoli, Sayedabad and Gulistan areas are not taking short-distance passengers. They are also collecting extra fares for going to terminal areas.**

Talking to several others, it was learnt that Tk 30 fares are now Tk 70 to 80, and passengers are still having trouble finding transport. Auto-rickshaws and rickshaws are being hired much more.

Rashedul Amin, who came to Sayedabad by auto-rickshaw from Rampura, said, "I was forced to come here paying three times the regular fare. Capitalising on this crisis is inhumane. This happens every Eid, but no one does anything to stop it."

Passenger Welfare Association, in a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Chatai, a mat made of bamboo slates, is an essential item for Eid-ul-Azha, especially for the time of sacrifice. Bundles of chatai, therefore, were being carried by these van riders on Manik Mia avenue, possibly to be sold in a cattle market. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Univ teacher arrested over harassment of student

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested a teacher at Shanto Mariam University of Creative Technology on charges of molesting a student.

The arrestee is Kumar Animesh Bhattacharjee (42), a lecturer at Department of Fashion Design and Technology, said police.

Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Uttara West Police Station, said they arrested Animesh on Thursday night, after the student filed a case against two, including classmate Nahidul Haque (25).

Quoting the case statement, police said Nahidul invited the student to a party at Animesh's apartment

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

# Jamuna devours 1,000 homes in Tangail

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

With erosion by the river Jamuna taking a serious turn, over 1,000 dwellings and vast tracks of croplands have been devoured in Tangail.

Numerous houses and other structures – including educational institutions – have also remained under erosion threat.

The homeless people are living under the open sky or have taken shelter in safer places, including their relatives' homes, said locals.

Although the local administrations provided financial support to some of the victims, they demanded the construction of an embankment for a permanent solution.

The worst affected areas are Dopteur, Solimabad and Bharra in Nagarpur upazila, Beltia and Alipur in Kalihati upazila, Govindasi, Arjuna and Nikrail in Bhanpur upazila and Kakua and Hugra in Sadar upazila.

Mohammad Danej Sheikh, a farmer from Khash Tebaria village in Nagarpur, had relocated his home from the riverside six times in the last few years. But he could not save the house this year.

"Now I have nowhere to go with my wife and children," Danej said.

Like him, numerous riverbank people in three unions under the upazila faced a similar fate.

Altab Hossain from Solimabad said he already lost his dwelling house to river erosion.

"We have to get our children admitted to another school due to erosion, hampering their education," he added.

"The Water Development Board

recently told us that a project was already approved regarding the construction of an embankment," said Shahidul Islam Apu, chairman of Solimabad Union Parishad.

Affected by the flood and erosion, Jorina Begum (35) from Konabari in Bhanpur along with family and valuables has taken shelter in the flood control embankment in Govindasi. "We do not know where we will go now. No one comes to us with any assistance so far."

On the other hand, a portion of the newly constructed embankment near Bangabandhu Bridge in Beltia, Kalihati collapsed due to erosion, creating a possibility for the nearby localities of being washed away.

Mohammad Jinnah, chairman of Kakua Union Parishad under Sadar upazila, said the dumping of geo bags cannot stop erosion in the area.

Md Sirajul Islam, executive engineer of WDB in Tangail, said they were dumping such bags on an emergency basis.

Asked about the damage caused by the erosion, Tangail District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer Dilip Kumar Saha told The Daily Star, "The number of damaged houses must be at least 1,000."

He added that the district administration has already allocated a total of Tk 7.5 lakh in the three upazilas – Nagarpur, Kalihati and Bhanpur.

When contacted, Tangail Deputy Commissioner Dr Ataul Gani said assisting the affected families is continuing. However, this assistance is not enough for them, he added.

"We have already sent a proposal to the government through the Water Development Board to take measures to prevent river erosion permanently."



# Building wall at old

FROM PAGE 5  
The prison authority earlier claimed that the pole was being installed inside the area where a new wall of the jail is planned to be constructed.

The minister said, "He [DIG Prisons], not sure whether he admits it or not, did a wrong thing by removing the pole. He should have informed the authorities concerned about this disagreement, as both are government offices."

"He [DIG of Prisons] may have shown security reasons while approving the project of Tk 70 lakh, but this is useless and the approving authority must have overlooked it," he said.

Momen said, "I will inform the home minister in this regard, and I believe he will cancel the project."

On Tuesday, SCC Mayor Ariful Haque Chowdhury said the pole was installed as part of the project

"Dhopadighi Area for Better Environment and Beautification", funded by the Indian government, which was inaugurated on June 11. The mayor then informed the matter to the foreign minister and higher authorities of the local government.

Contacted on Tuesday, Muhammad Manjur Hossain, senior jail super of Sylhet Central Jail, said, "For security reasons, the wall needs to be constructed, and the pole was erected at the location. We will settle this matter soon by discussing with the corporation."

DIG Prisons Md Kamal Hossain could not be contacted after repeated phone calls.

Notably, the old jail near Dhopadighi remains as a backup jail, since a new jail at Badaghat in Sylhet Sadar upazila is being used as the main jail since January 2019.



An "ator (perfume)" seller hands out a sample to a customer to have a smell in Barishal's Chawkbazar area. Traditionally during the time of Eid, these sellers are seen in front of different mosques, selling 30 to 60 ml bottles at a price ranging from Tk 120 to 600. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

# A battle to reach

FROM PAGE 3  
statement, made similar claims yesterday. It said since Thursday evening, fares of city buses have been increased by five to six times in some cases.

Tk 300 bus fare was being taken to go from Uttara to Sayedabad, when the regular fare is Tk 50. Passengers had to pay Tk 200 instead of Tk 30 for

Shyamoli to Gulistan. Fare of Tk 25 for Dhanmondi to Sadarghat rose to Tk 200, it mentioned.

However, Khandaker Enayetullah, general secretary of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, said the allegations of overcharging are not true. Some isolated cases may have occurred, which is another matter.

# In a dire state for 50 years

FROM PAGE 5  
hospital, while the number was 5,331 in 2019. This year 2,100 patients have been admitted to the hospital till June.

On-duty medical officer Shaila Nahid said even the slightest shower during monsoon causes rainwater to leak through the ceiling, causing suffering to patients. It is especially difficult for female patients due to the lack of privacy and relaxed security.

"Dampness has caused the plaster to peel off large parts of the ceiling and walls. The hospital premises have turned into a good breeding ground for mosquitoes due to excessive bushes and lack of cleaning," she added.

Mahamuda Nipa, who was attending to

her adolescent daughter suffering from diarrhoea, said it is uncomfortable to stay in the same ward with male patients.

"The authority should put some boundaries at least," she said.

Md Rashel Ahmed got admitted with food poisoning in the first week of May, along with his four colleagues.

"I couldn't bear the odour that was all around the hospital, coming from the abandoned spaces. The wash rooms were a nightmare too," he said.

"When we asked them to clean the wash room, the hospital authority said there was no cleaner."

Medical Officer Md Habibur Rahman said there are only two medical officers, whereas at least

five are required to run the hospital properly.

"There are three vacant posts for cleaning staff. There are no night guards or office assistants. The pharmacist himself performs all these duties. Sometimes, doctors need to be on duty for 24 hours," he said.

"We have sent a letter to higher authorities seeking support to construct a new building and transform it into a 50-bed hospital. But we are yet to receive any response from them," said Suzat Ahmed, Khulna civil surgeon.

About lack of doctors, he said no doctor wants to stay in the hospital due to its poor condition. The situation will improve once the new building is constructed, he added.

# Univ teacher arrested

FROM PAGE 3  
in Uttara on Wednesday night. Even after declining multiple times, she was urged by Nahidul to go, as other classmates will also

be there. There the two accused molested her, the statement read. The OC said they are currently looking for Nahidul.

# Dhaka cattle

FROM PAGE 3  
I've spent around Tk 10 lakh in the last six months to raise these two, I'm getting very low offers."

He's demanding Tk 12 lakh for his Australian Bull and Tk 8 lakh for his Shahi goats," he said.

Although the number of customers and sacrificial animals were low in Gabtoli cattle market till Thursday, a huge number of cattle carrying trucks were seen in the afternoon yesterday, which made cattle traders more worried about getting good prices.

and he will go to the market after evening today.

"Last year, prices were lower on the last day, so we'll wait till then. If we don't get any bulls in our price range, we'll buy goats," he said.

Although the number of customers and sacrificial animals were low in Gabtoli cattle market till Thursday, a huge number of cattle carrying trucks were seen in the afternoon yesterday, which made cattle traders more worried about getting good prices.

**World Health Organization**  
Bangladesh

## VACANCY NOTICE

**World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following position under following contractual modality:**

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For further details on submission of applications including detailed post description please visit our websites:

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গাজীপুর মেট্রোপলিটন পুলিশ, গাজীপুর।

## “পুলিশ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি”

তারিখ: ০৭/০৭/২০২২ খ্রি।

স্মারক নং-গাজীপুর মেট্রোপলিটন পুলিশ/২০২২/১৭৫৯/ই

"The Public Procurement Act-2006 & The Public Procurement Regulation-2008/2010" (সংশোধনী-২০১৬) অনুযায়ী ২০২২-২০২৩ অর্থ বছরে গাজীপুর মেট্রোপলিটন পুলিশের জন্য যানবাহনের ক্রয়াদান ও যুক্ত মন্ত্রাংশ ক্রয় (টায়ার, টিউব ও ব্যাটারীসহ), যানবাহন মেইনটেন (ডেন্টিং-পেইন্টিংসহ) কাজ বাস্তবায়নের নিমিত্তে বাংলাদেশের সড়ক যানবাহন/টিকাদার/সরকারিকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিচের হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে প্রতিবেদনিত মূল্য উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাবে।

ক্র. নং	স্মারক নং	কাজের বিবরণ	সিটিভেনের মূল্য (অফারযোগ্য)	দরপত্র আহ্বানের পরিমাণ (সেফরযোগ্য)	কাজ সমাপ্তির সময়
১.	০১	গাজীপুর মেট্রোপলিটন পুলিশের যানবাহনের ক্রয়াদান ও যুক্ত মন্ত্রাংশ ক্রয় (টায়ার, টিউব ও ব্যাটারীসহ)	১,০০০/-	১,০০,০০০/-	২০২২-২০২৩ অর্থ বছর।
২.	০২	গাজীপুর মেট্রোপলিটন পুলিশের যানবাহন মেইনটেন (ডেন্টিং-পেইন্টিংসহ)	৫০০/-	৫০,০০০/-	

**বিশেষ জ্ঞাপনাঃ**

- টিকাদার ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্বত্বিকারীর স্বাক্ষরিত প্যাকেট আবেদন পূর্বক বর্ণিত স্থান হতে পত্রিকার বিজ্ঞাপন প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে ২৪/০৭/২০২২ খ্রি তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত দরপত্র সিটিভেন ক্রয়/সেফর করা যাবে।
- সর্বশেষে প্রাপ্তিকৃত সি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট অফিস-২০০৬ ও সি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট রেগুলেশন-২০০৮/২০১০ (সংশোধনী-২০১৬) বিধিমালা অনুসরণ করা হবে।
- দরপত্র সিটিভেনে আনানো শর্তাবলী বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বর্ণনা করা হবে।
- দরপত্রাদাতা কর্তৃক সিটিভেনে বর্ণিত সকল শর্তাবলী অবশ্যই পালন করতে হবে।
- নির্ধারিত তারিখ ও সময়ের পর সিটিভেন বিজ্ঞপ্তি ও দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
- কোন কারণে দরপত্র পেশার দিন অফিস বন্ধ থাকলে পরবর্তী দিনে এসে একই সময়ে এবং নিম্নের দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও যোগ্য হবে।
- কোন কারণে দরপত্র পেশার দিন অফিস বন্ধ থাকলে পরবর্তী দিনে এসে একই সময়ে এবং নিম্নের দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও যোগ্য হবে।
- দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্তৃক কোন কারণে দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা গ্রহণের ক্ষমতা সার্বক্ষণিক কমে।

(স্বাক্ষর) ইলিয়াস  
সিপি-২৪০৬১১৪২২৪  
উপ-পুলিশ কমিশনার (সিটিভেনের এক ট্রান্সপোর্ট)  
পুলিশ কমিশনার  
গাজীপুর মেট্রোপলিটন পুলিশ, গাজীপুর।

ফোন-১৩৬৭

# Abu Musa

FROM PAGE 3  
August, 1971. Avloz was his third operation. The heroism of the freedom fighters spread all over the world after the destruction of the Greek oil-laden ship MT Avloz at Chattogram port on October 2, 1971 under his leadership.

After the accomplishment of Operation Avloz, he took part in operations to destroy MV Turag in Buriganga-Dhaleshwari estuary, to destroy the UN supply ship Mini Lady and Mini Lion in front of the World Godown in Narayanganj and to blow up Kanchpur ferry and pontoon. These naval operations have been marked as milestones in the history of the Liberation War.

The head injuries he sustained during Operation Avloz turned into a serious illness two decades after the war, and he bore the brunt of the battle till his last breath, said Mohsin.

# Online cattle

FROM PAGE 3  
her farm were sold online last year. "This year, we put 12 bulls for sale from our farm. All of them have been sold. We provide home delivery, which has made our sales faster," she explained.

Many have also opted for online purchases due to their convenience. Robin Raihan, a resident of Uttara, said, "I buy sacrificial animals from an online shop because it is hassle-free."

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সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা  
টেলিফোন নং-০২-৪৪১১০৮৬৮  
মোবাইল নং-০১৭৩০-৭৮২৭৫৬  
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তারিখ: ০৭/০৭/২০২২ খ্রি।

## সেতুর ইজারা কোটেশন আহ্বান বিজ্ঞপ্তি (৫ম আহ্বান)

সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের তালিকাভুক্ত টিকাদার/টিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান এবং ইজারাদার/ইজারাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিচের হতে স্ব সাইনসেল এর ক্ষমতা/অভিজ্ঞতা অনুযায়ী সীলমোহরকৃত খামে বাংলাদেশ ফরম নং-২৯১১-তে কোটেশন আহ্বান করা যাবে।

০১।	ইজারা কোটেশন নং	০৭/ইজারা/কেআরডি/২০২২-২০২২ (৫ম আহ্বান)
০২।	ইজারার বিবরণ	২০২২-২০২৩, ২০২৩-২০২৪ ও ২০২৪-২০২৫ আর্থিক বছর এর জন্য সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা-এর অধীন বেঙ্গলোম-ডালা-পাইকপাড়া-কসরা সড়কের ৩৩তম কিলোমিটারে অবস্থিত শিবসা সেতু হতে পারাপারকারী যানবাহনের টোল আদায়ের নিমিত্তে ইজারাদার নিয়োগ।
০৩।	ইজারা চুক্তির মেয়াদ	০৩ (তিন) বছর।
০৪।	ইজারা কোটেশনের সিটিভিল মূল্য	টায় ৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার টাকা) মাত্র।
০৫।	জামানতের টাকার পরিমাণ	ভ্যাট ও আইটিসিএ মোট উক্ত দরের ১০% টাকা মাত্র (বাংকে ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার/মিনি রিসিট আকারে)।
০৬।	ইজারা কোটেশন বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৭/০৭/২০২২ খ্রি তারিখ- বিকাল ৫:০০ পর্যন্ত।
০৭।	মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় ইজারা কোটেশন গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৮/০৭/২০২২ খ্রি তারিখ- দুপুর ১২:৩০ পর্যন্ত।
০৮।	ইজারা ভাঙে অংশগ্রহণের যোগ্যতা	ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভ্যাট ও আয়কর সনদধারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/নাগরিক, সরকারি/বেসরকারি/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানের টিকাদার।
০৯।	যে সকল কর্তৃক ইজারা কোটেশন জন্মের অন্য পাণ্ডা যাবে	জেলা প্রশাসক, খুলনা/পুলিশ সুপার, খুলনা/নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, বাগেরহাট/সাতক্ষীরা/খুলনা, উপ-বিজ্ঞানী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ-১/২/১ম সারি কারাবানা উপ-বিভাগ, খুলনা।
১০।	যে সকল কর্তৃক ইজারা কোটেশন মুখবন্ধ অবস্থায় গ্রহণ করা হবে	(ক) তত্ত্বাবধায়ক প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক সার্কেল, খুলনা। (খ) জেলা প্রশাসক, খুলনা। (গ) পুলিশ সুপার, খুলনা। (ঘ) নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা।
১১।	ইজারা কোটেশন খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	স্থান: নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা। তারিখ: ২৮/০৭/২০২২ খ্রি। সময়: ৩:০০ ঘটিকা।
১২।	ইজারা কোটেশন আহ্বানকারী যে কোন সময় কোন কারণে দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন কোটেশন/সকল কোটেশন ব্যতীলের ক্ষমতা সার্বক্ষণিক কমে।	

মাধুরী সুলতানা  
পরিচিতি নং-৭০০৪২২  
উপ-সহকারী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ  
সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা

মোঃ আনিসুল্লাহ মান্নান  
পরিচিতি নং-৬০১৯৫২  
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ  
সড়ক বিভাগ, খুলনা

ফোন-১৩৬৬

## Chui jhal, must-have for a southerner's Eid

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY, *Bagerhat*

It's a long held heritage of the southerners to use "chui jhal" (piper chaba) along with other spices to cook meat. This spice is extremely popular in the region throughout the year. However, the demand multiplies before Eid-ul-Azha.

In Bagerhat, seasonal traders have set up mobile shops selling the item in different places. Crowds at these shops are a common scene. At regular times, it is sold at Tk 600 to 1,000 per kilo. But at present, it's being sold at Tk 800 to 2,000 depending on the size.

According to Bagerhat Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), the spice is cultivated in the south-western districts of Bagerhat, Khulna, Narail, Jashore and Satkhira.

At present, its popularity as a spice is also increasing in other districts. Chui is a creeper plant; its stems are grey, and the leaves are like betel leaves. The roots and stems of chui jhal are all medicinal.

The spice goes wonderfully with duck, beef and goat. Gauranga Das, a vendor in Bagerhat's Kachua upazila, said the item sells well all year round. However, during Eid-ul-Azha, sales shoot up. As a result, wholesalers raise prices, and retailers also have to sell at higher prices.

Depending on the size of the stem, it's sold at Tk 800 to 2,000 per kilo, he added.

Saddam Sheikh, who came to buy the spice, said, "Even if the price goes up a little, chui jhal is a must have for our household to cook meat."

Ilias Kabir, a buyer, said, "The chui jhal price may go up further before Eid. So I've come to buy it in advance to avoid crowds."

Azizur Rahman, Bagerhat deputy director of DAE, said about 30 tonnes of the spice is produced by cultivating on 15 hectares of land in the district. Its market value is more than Tk 1.5 crores.



For southerners, Eid-ul-Azha is almost unimaginable without chui jhal -- a type of plant stem that's used as a spice, especially for cooking meat. Due to increased demand in Khulna, spice traders have set up mobile shops like these, where each kilo is being sold for Tk 300 to 1,800. This photo was taken from Khulna city's Boro Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Building wall at old Sylhet jail will waste money

Says foreign minister after argument between SCC, jail authorities

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The plan to construct a new wall at old Sylhet Central Jail-2 is useless and an attempt to waste public money by looting, says Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen.

The minister, also a lawmaker from Sylhet-1, made this remark while visiting Dhopadighi area yesterday, where a disagreement between Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) and the jail authority took place on Tuesday.

On that day, the jail police with an order from the DIG of prisons in Sylhet allegedly knocked down an electric pole installed under the beautification project of the city corporation.

## MINIMISING WATERLOGGING

### CDA-CCC joint probe body submits report with recommendations

ARUN BIKASH DEY, *Ctg*

A joint probe committee of Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) and Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) has submitted a report to the mayor with six short- and 11 long-term recommendations to resolve the city's waterlogging problem.

The committee was formed following a meeting of CDA and CCC on June 22, chaired by Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, after most of the port city's low-lying areas recently remained underwater for several days.

CDA Chief Engineer Hasab Bin Shams was made its convener, and CCC Chief Engineer Rafiqul Islam member secretary.

The short-term recommendations include refraining from throwing waste into canals and drains, legal actions against grabbers, cleaning water bodies regularly, and removal of pipelines set up by different organisations that obstruct water flow.

The long-term suggestions include land acquisition for the project of digging new canal from Bahaddarhat Baroipara to Karnaphuli River, taking steps so that household and kitchen-market waste cannot be thrown into canals and drains, ensuring silt trap and trash trap, formation of drainage and waste management cycle, building new water reservoirs, entrusting the charge for the management of 40 tidal regulators to a specific organisation, and removal of earth from the box culvert on Sheikh Mujib Road.

Both the sources at CDA and CCC confirmed that the recommendation report was submitted on Thursday.

To know about the next course of action following the submission, this correspondent phoned the mayor, but he did not respond to the calls. The CDA chief engineer did the same.

The committee convener Rafiqul Islam declined to give further details.

Similar refusal came from Mobarak Ali, a member of the committee and a ward councillor of Chattogram City Corporation.

He said the mayor himself will talk about it to journalists if necessary.

## In a dire state for 50 years

Khulna's lone infectious disease hospital grappled with poor infrastructure, lack of manpower



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

Khulna Infectious Disease Hospital has been facing multiple problems for over the last fifty years. This, in turn, has made it almost impossible to offer quality treatment to patients.

The 20-bed hospital, established near Khulna-Jashore highway at Mirerdanga area in 1968, provides treatment to those infected with tetanus, diphtheria, chickenpox, rabies, mums, diarrhoea, pneumatic tetanus, varicella, measles and hydrophobia.

This is the only infectious-disease hospital in the south-western region, where patients have been coming from 21 districts for treating such diseases for over 50 years.

In the six-ward hospital, there are no separate

wards for male and female patients. Although almost half the patients are children, no paediatrician has been appointed in a long time.

During a recent visit to the hospital at Phulbari gate, this correspondent found the hospital building in a dilapidated and risky state, due to lack of renovation. Three buildings for staffers have already been abandoned, with the northern side entirely unprotected.

According to the civil surgeon office, the hospital, built on four acres of land, started its journey with 20 beds. Although 54 years have passed, the number of beds has not increased, neither has the number of staff. However, the number of patients is increasing day by day.

In 2018, 5,498 patients were admitted to the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## 5 killed in road crashes across country

STAR REPORT

Five people were killed in separate road crashes across the country in the last two days.

In Joypurhat Sadar upazila, a man was killed and another was injured in an accident yesterday. The deceased is Dowlat Ali (58) of the upazila, and the injured is Razu Mia.

Quoting witnesses, police said Razu Mia was heading to Naogaon's Damoirhat upazila on his motorcycle.

As he reached Jitarpur, he hit Dowlat while crossing the road. He died on the spot.

Locals rescued Razu and rushed him to Joypurhat Modern Hospital.

In Thakurgaon Sadar, two people were killed and four injured in a head-on collision between a truck and three-wheeler on Thakurgaon-Panchagarh highway at Bhulli village on Thursday.

The deceased are Khalilur Rahman (60), driver of the three-wheeler, and Parvez (35) of Kumarpur village.

Md Keramat Ali, OC of Moidandighi Highway Police Station, said the accident occurred around 11:30pm.

Injured Akhter Hossain (35), Supiar Rahman (40), Azijul Islam (45) and his wife Hasina Begum (40) from Panchagarh's Boda upazila took treatment at Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.

A case was filed with Thakurgaon Police Station in this regard, the OC said.

In Faridpur, two people were killed when an auto rickshaw overturned and caught fire after being hit by a speeding truck on Dhaka-Khulna highway on Thursday night, said police.

The accident occurred around 9:30pm in Arkandi area in Madhukhali upazila, said Kankan Biswash, officer-in-charge of Kanaipur Highway Police Station.

One passenger died on the spot and another was declared dead by doctors at the upazila health complex, he said.

The identities of the deceased could not be known, reports UNB.

"The truck has been seized and legal action will be taken in this regard," said the OC.

## Japan ex-PM Abe assassinated

FROM PAGE 1

The suspected killer admitted targeting the politician and said he held a grudge against an organisation he believed Abe was connected to, police said.

Police declined to give details of the "particular organisation" mentioned by the suspect, saying investigations were ongoing, but several Japanese media outlets described it as a religious group.

"I am stunned, outraged, and deeply saddened by the news that my friend Abe Shinzo, former Prime Minister of Japan, was shot and killed while campaigning," US President Joe Biden said in a statement.

"This is a tragedy for Japan and for all who knew him... He was a champion of the alliance between our nations and the friendship between our people."

Similar messages of

sympathy and shock poured in from around the world following news of Abe's death.

Russian President Vladimir Putin called the death an "irreplaceable loss". British Prime Minister Boris Johnson hailed the leadership role taken by the former premier, saying the UK stands with Japan "at this dark and sad time".

India announced one day of state mourning, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailing Abe as a global statesman.

Abe had been making a campaign speech outside a train station when two shots rang out.

Security officials were then seen tackling a man in a grey T-shirt and beige trousers.

Kyodo news service published a photograph of Abe lying face-up on the street by a guardrail, blood on his white shirt. People were crowded around him, one administering heart

massage.

Abe was showing no vital signs when he was taken to a hospital. He was declared dead at 5:03 pm (0803 GMT), having bled to death from deep wounds to the heart and the right side of his neck.

He had received more than 100 units of blood in transfusions over four hours, Hidetada Fukushima, the professor in charge of emergency medicine at Nara Medical University Hospital, told a televised news conference.

Members of the public laid flowers near the spot where Abe fell. TV Asahi reported that Abe's body would be transferred to his Tokyo home today.

It was the first killing of a sitting or former Japanese leader since a 1936 coup attempt, when several figures including two ex-premiers were assassinated.

Post-war Japan prides itself on its orderly and open democracy. Senior

Japanese politicians are accompanied by armed security agents but often get close to the public, especially during political campaigns when they make roadside speeches and shake hands with passers-by.

The killing might change the practices, analysts said. Abe served two terms as prime minister, stepping down in 2020 citing ill health.

The hawkish conservative had pushed for the revision of Japan's pacifist constitution to recognise the country's military, and stayed a prominent political figure even after his resignation.

Kishida, who won the premiership with Abe's backing, said the LDP would continue election campaigning today to demonstrate its resolve to "never give in to violence", and to defend a "free and fair election at all cost".

## West seeks to unblock

FROM PAGE 2

The situation was similar in settlements in Donetsk. Vadym Lyakh, the mayor of Sloviansk in Donetsk, said a woman was killed overnight when Russian shelling hit a residential building.

Britain's defence ministry said Russian forces were likely to be pausing to replenish before undertaking new offensive operations in Donetsk. The ministry said Russia's immediate tactical objective might be Siversk, a small industrial city in the north of Donetsk.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, in his video message, said the raising of the Ukrainian flag on Snake Island in the Black Sea on Thursday was a sign his country would not be broken.

"Let every Russian captain, aboard a ship or a plane, see the Ukrainian flag on Snake Island and let him know that our country will not be broken," Zelensky said.

## Television's beloved 'Maa'

FROM PAGE 12

cancer, barely took any break from the craft she loved so much - acting. Her love for acting began at the age of four, in her first play on stage. Born as Majeda Mollick in May 1947, she started her career in radio in 1962, in film in 1964 and in television in 1968. She went on to make history as a part of "Dompoti", the first drama serial of Bangladeshi Television.

Throughout her illustrious career, Sharmili went on to star in about 400 films and 150 tele-fictions - with the latter parts portraying the role of a mother on screen. And what a mother she was - her warmth, grace and simplicity won over the hearts of everyone who is least aware of films and television programmes in the country.

Among hundreds of her meticulous TV and film roles, she played notable ones in "Malancha", "Agun", "Abirvaab",

"Poush Phaguner Pala", "Meherjaan", "Abar Hava Bodol", "Brishtir Pore", "Amader Ananda Bari", "Anchol (2006)", "Aguntuk", "Poshak", "Chheleti", "Uposhonger", "Chena Manusher Panchalee", and "Dhupchhaya".

Unfortunately, the veteran actress never won a National Film Award for her efforts. "It does not bother me at all," she had told The Daily Star. "The affection and respect that people show me, wherever I go, are my awards."

Many noted actors wrote on social media to pay tributes to the great actress. "The entire acting fraternity lost its Amma," wrote eminent actress Suborna Mustafa on Facebook. "Her earnest smile and grace were motherly - Sharmili Aunty was truly the 'mother' of the screens," wrote Dhallywood 'king' Shakib Khan. Sharmili's namaz-

e-janaza was held after Juma prayers yesterday at the Uttara Sector-II mosque. Later, she was laid to eternal rest at Banani Graveyard.

## Nasa

FROM PAGE 12

engineering test photo on Wednesday - the result of 72 exposures over 32 hours that shows a set of distant stars and galaxies.

The image has some "rough-around-the-edges" qualities, Nasa said in a statement, but is still "among the deepest images of the universe ever taken" and offers a "tantalizing glimpse" at what will be revealed in the coming weeks, months, and years.

"When this image was taken, I was thrilled to clearly see all the detailed structure in these faint galaxies," said Neil Rowlands, program scientist for Webb's Fine Guidance Sensor at Honeywell Aerospace.

## 'Gun-free' Japan stunned by Abe killing

REUTERS, Tokyo

Japan struggled with shock and sadness yesterday, trying to come to terms with the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in a nation where firearms are strictly regulated and political violence extremely rare.

From politicians to ordinary people, there was an outpouring of grief.

Japan's gun-ownership restrictions do not allow private citizens to have handguns, and licensed hunters may own only rifles. Gun owners must attend classes, pass a written test and undergo a mental health evaluation and a background check.

Shootings, when they occur, typically involve "yakuza" gangsters using illegal weapons.

Japan has had mass killings, but they usually have not involved guns.

Attacks on politicians, though, are unusual. There have been only a handful in the last half century, most notably in 2007 when the mayor of Nagasaki was shot and killed by a gangster - an incident that resulted in still further tightening of gun regulations.

"I can't stop shaking. This is the end of peaceful Japan," wrote Twitter user Nonochi.

"There's plenty of politicians I'd like to see disappear, but assassination is inconceivable. It's the beginning of the end of democracy."



This image received from the Asahi Shimbun newspaper shows a man (centre R) suspected of shooting former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe being tackled to the ground by police at Yamato Saidaiji Station in the city of Nara, Japan, yesterday. Inset, A woman reacts in front of a makeshift memorial at the scene where Abe was shot.



PHOTO: AFP



## Leave means leave

UK PM Boris Johnson faces calls to go now

AFP, London

Britain's main opposition Labour party yesterday threatened to call a no-confidence vote in Prime Minister Boris Johnson to get him to quit immediately, after he was forced to resign by a cabinet revolt.

Johnson quit as leader of the ruling Conservative party on Thursday, after a frenzy of nearly 60 resignations in less than 48 hours in opposition to his scandal-hit leadership.

But the 58-year-old premier, whose three-year premiership has been defined by Britain's departure from the European Union and Covid, said he would stay on until his successor is found.

As candidates readied for a battle to replace Johnson, he faced calls to leave straight away and for an acting leader to be appointed to head the world's fifth-

largest economy in the interim.

Labour's deputy leader Angela Rayner yesterday said they aimed to trigger a vote of no-confidence in parliament if the Tories do not get rid of him immediately.

"He's a proven liar who's engulfed in sleaze and we can't have another couple of months of this," she told BBC radio. "If they don't, we will call a no-confidence vote because it's pretty clear he hasn't got the confidence of the House (of Commons) or the British public."

To do so, they would need the support of dozens of Conservative MPs. But the strategy is fraught as it could trigger a general election, which could see Tories lose their seats if Johnson is defeated.

James Cleverly, newly installed as education minister, insisted that Johnson would stay in charge for the next few months.

"It's right that he has stood down and

it's right that he has put a team in place to continue governing whilst the selection procedure flows for his successor," he told Sky News. "And we should do that I think pretty quickly."

A timetable for the Tory leadership contest is expected to be announced on Monday, with the winner installed in time for the party's annual conference in early October. Defence minister Ben Wallace and Rishi Sunak - whose resignation as finance minister on Tuesday set off the chain of exits - were among the early frontrunners to take over, a YouGov survey of Tory members suggested.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, another potential contender, cut short a trip to Indonesia for a G20 meeting to fly back.

So far, Conservative MP Tom Tugendhat and Attorney General Suella Braverman have both officially announced their candidatures.

## GEORGE FLOYD MURDER Ex-cop sentenced to over 20 years

AFP, Saint Paul

Derek Chauvin, the former Minneapolis police officer convicted of the murder of George Floyd, was sentenced to more than 20 years in prison on Thursday on federal charges. Chauvin, who is white, pleaded guilty in December 2021 to violating the civil rights of Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, during his May 2020 arrest for allegedly using a counterfeit \$20 bill to buy a pack of cigarettes. Chauvin is already serving a 22 and a half-year sentence after being convicted of state murder charges for Floyd's death, which sparked protests against racial injustice and police brutality across the United States. The state and federal sentences are to run concurrently. Chauvin, a 19-year veteran of the Minneapolis police force, was captured in a video that went viral kneeling on Floyd's neck for nearly 10 minutes, until he passed out and died. Chauvin and three other police officers who were on the scene during Floyd's fatal arrest - Tou Thao, Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane - were charged with violating his constitutional rights and failing to respond to his medical needs.

## CYBER LIBEL CONVICTION Ressa loses appeal

AFP, Manila

Philippine Nobel Peace Prize winner Maria Ressa lost her appeal against a conviction for cyber libel, her news website Rappler said yesterday, in the latest blow for the veteran journalist. Ressa, 58, and her former colleague Rey Santos

Jr face lengthy jail sentences, but the company said they will "avail of all legal remedies available to them", including taking the case to the Supreme Court. The ruling comes less than two weeks after Philippine authorities ordered Rappler to shut down ahead of former president Rodrigo Duterte's last day in office. Rappler yesterday described the decision to uphold the

2020 conviction as "unfortunate", saying it "weakens the ability of journalists to hold power to account". "What is ultimately at stake is our democracy whose strength rests on a media that is not threatened by the state nor intimidated by forces out to silence critical voices," Rappler said. Ressa, who is also a US citizen, is fighting at least seven court cases.



## Adieu, music maestro

FROM PAGE 1

The unparalleled talent behind the song, eminent composer and music director Alam Khan, passed away yesterday at 11:32am at a hospital in the capital.

His son, Arman Khan, confirmed the news to The Daily Star. The artist's namaz-e-janaza took place at the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) after Asr prayers.

Khan was a titan in Bangladesh's music industry. His body of work solidifies his legacy, but it is also the person behind the music that we remember.

Khan, who went on to

win seven national film awards as music director, started his musical career at a very early age. At only the age of 10, the maestro had made the music and provided vocals for the song "Niribili Sondhaye Dekha Hole Dujonaye", which was written by his friend Maksudur Rahman. While the song was never released, it marked the entry of the artistes into the world of music.

Fans and music lovers will remember him as the mind behind "Orey Neel Doriya", "Hayre Manush Rongin Fanush", "Ami Rojogondha Phuler Moto Gondho", "Daak Diyachhen

Doyal Amare", "Ki Jaadu Korila Piriti Shikhaila", "Tumi Jekhane Ami Shekhane" and "Shobai to Bhalobasha Chay". The first two songs in particular were the ones that pushed him to superstardom.

"Orey Neel Doriya" from the 1978 movie "Sareng Bou" was composed and produced by Alam Khan, with Mukul Chowdhury penning the lyrics and Abdul Jabbar providing his voice. The song was a pop-culture phenomenon then and continues to be so.

Even today, the song is remade and covered due to its popularity. A survey by RTV on the song

recognised it as one of the best songs of the golden age of Bangladeshi music.

What solidifies Khan's legacy in the Bangladeshi music industry, is his role in pushing artistes such as Ferdous Wahid, Andrew Kishore and Sheikh Ishtiaq as playback singers - with all three making their playback debuts under him.

Even though Khan will no longer be with us, the legacy he leaves behind has ensured that we will never forget him. His music will forever be tied to the culture of our country, the history of our film music, and in our hearts and minds.

## Sri Lanka on alert ahead of anti-govt rally

AFP, Colombo

Thousands of heavily armed troops were deployed in Sri Lanka's capital yesterday ahead of a planned rally demanding the ouster of embattled President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

The island nation is suffering through an unprecedented financial crisis, and its 22 million people have endured runaway inflation, prolonged blackouts, and shortages of fuel and other essential goods since the start of the year.

## Foresters

FROM PAGE 2

cultivate crops on the land, it is the government-gazetted reserved forest land which has been earmarked for the lake.

"On humanitarian grounds, the Tangail deputy commissioner has already pledged to give Tk 5 lakh to the locals who cultivate there. The upazila administration has promised to provide another Tk 5 lakh."

He said the locals were even assured of earnings from renting out boats on the lake, but they still did not agree. "What can we do? As government employees, we have to carry out our duties as per directives."

## Politician who tried

FROM PAGE 1

Those three words would come to define Abe's unique and unparalleled legacy on Japan's politics, both at home and abroad, where he did more than any other Japanese leader to raise Japan's standing on the world's stage.

The lawmaker first became Japan's youngest premier since World War Two in 2006, lasting just a year before returning for a rare second stint in 2012. Abe became Japan's longest-serving premier in November 2019, but by summer 2020, support had been eroded by his handling of the Covid-19 outbreak as well as a series of scandals including the arrest of his former justice minister.

He resigned in September of that year citing ill health without achieving his long-held goal of revising the US-drafted constitution.

But he remained a dominant presence over the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), controlling one of its major factions.

Abe hailed from a wealthy political family that included a foreign minister father and a great-uncle who served as premier. But when it came to policies, his grandfather,

the late prime minister Nobusuke Kishi, seems to have mattered most.

Kishi was a wartime cabinet minister imprisoned but never tried as a war criminal after World War Two. He served as prime minister from 1957 to 1960, resigning due to public furore over a renegotiated US-Japan security pact.

Five years old at the time, Abe famously heard the sound of clashes between police and leftist crowds protesting the pact outside parliament as he played on his grandfather's lap.

Kishi tried unsuccessfully to revise Japan's US-drafted 1947 constitution to become an equal security partner with the United States and adopt a more assertive diplomacy - issues central to Abe's own agenda.

Abe boosted defence spending and reached out to other Asian nations to counter an increasingly assertive China. He pushed through laws to let Japan exercise the right of "collective self-defence", or militarily aiding an ally under attack.

Revising the pacifist constitution remained a top priority for Abe, a contentious goal since many Japanese see the

charter as responsible for the country's post-war record of peace.

Abe's underlying agenda was to escape what he called the post-war regime, a legacy of US occupation that conservatives argue deprived Japan of national pride. Reforming the education system to restore traditional mores was another of his goals.

He also adopted a less apologetic stance towards Japan's World War Two actions, saying future generations should not have to keep apologising for past mistakes.

First elected to parliament in 1993 after his father's death, Abe rose to national fame by adopting a tough stance toward unpredictable neighbour North Korea in a feud over Japanese citizens kidnapped by Pyongyang decades ago.

Though Abe also sought to improve ties with China and South Korea, where bitter wartime memories run deep, he riled both neighbours in 2013 by visiting Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, seen by Beijing and Seoul as a symbol of Japan's past militarism.

In later years, he refrained from visiting in person and instead sent ritual offerings.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Project Director  
Establishment of Sheikh Rasel Textile Engineering College, Sylhet.  
Department of Textiles, BTMC Bhabon (11<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
7-9, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.

**Invitation for Tender (Goods)**

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Textiles & Jute			
2	Agency	Department of Textiles			
3	Procuring Entity Name	Project Director			
4	Invitation for	Supply of Books & Journals for College.			
5	Invitation Ref No	7-2/ Books & Journals/ 2022-23			
Key Information					
6	Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (National)			
Funding Information					
7	Budget and Source of Funds	2022-23 and GOB			
8	Development Partners (if applicable)	N/A			
Particular Information					
9	Project / Programme Code (if applicable)	224115608			
10	Project / Programme Name (if applicable)	Establishment of Sheikh Rasel Textile Engineering College, Sylhet.			
11	Tender Package No.	GD-13			
12	Tender Package Name	Supply of Books & Journals for institute.			
Tender Publication Date					
13	Date	08-07-2022			
14	Time	On or before			
Tender Last Selling Date					
15	Date	28-07-2022			
Tender Closing Date and Time					
16	Date and Time	31-07-2022 12.00 Noon			
Tender Opening Date and Time					
17	Date and Time	31-07-2022 2.00 PM			
Name & Address of the office(s)					
Address					
Selling Tender Document					
1) Office of the Director General, Department of Textiles, BTMC Bhabon (9 <sup>th</sup> floor), 7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.					
2) Office of the Project Director, Establishment of Sheikh Rasel Textile Engineering College, Sylhet, BTMC Bhabon (11 <sup>th</sup> floor), 7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215					
Receiving Tender Document					
1) Office of the Director General, Department of Textiles, BTMC Bhabon (9 <sup>th</sup> floor), 7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215, Telephone No: 02-55011972. e-mail: srtec2021@gmail.com					
2) Office of the Project Director, Establishment of Sheikh Rasel Textile Engineering College, Sylhet, BTMC Bhabon (11 <sup>th</sup> floor), 7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215					
Opening Tender Document					
1) Office of the Project Director, Establishment of Sheikh Rasel Textile Engineering College, Sylhet, BTMC Bhabon (11 <sup>th</sup> floor), 7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215					
Information for Tenderer					
18	Eligibility of Tenderer	i) Having up-to-date Trade License ii) Having Valid e-Tin/TIN and VAT Registration Certificate. iii) Having Income Tax Clearance Certificate (Tax Year 2020-21) iv) Having minimum period of general experience of 5 (five) years in supplying books & Journals. v) Having experience of successful completion of Books & Journals supply work in a single agreement within 5 years amounting not less than Tk.40 Lac vi) Having minimum Liquid Asset Tk.40 Lac vii) Meeting all other terms and conditions as specified in Tender Data Sheet(TDS)			
19	Brief Description of Goods	Supply of Books & Journals for institute.			
20	Price of Tender Document (Tk.): 1000.00 (One Thousand) only				
21	Package No.	Identification of Package(s)	Location	Tender Security Amount	Completion Time in Months
	GD-13	Supply of Books & Journals for College.	Sheikh Rasel Textile Engineering College, Sylhet project area	1,20,000.00 (One lac twenty thousand)	04 (Four) Months
Procuring Entity Details					
22	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Niranjana Kumar Debnath			
23	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director			
24	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Establishment of Sheikh Rasel Textile Engineering College, Sylhet, BTMC Bhabon (11 <sup>th</sup> floor), 7-9, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215.			
25	Contract details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel: 02-55011972 - srtec2021@gmail.com			
26	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason there of.				

GD-1368

(Niranjana Kumar Debnath)  
Project Director  
Telephone No. 02-55011972  
E-mail: niranjankumerdot@gmail.com

# Afran Nisho's TIME IS NOW

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

After landing only two tele-productions last Eid ul-Fitr, Afran Nisho is back in full swing this season with rom-coms, thrillers and mysteries.

Alongside his much-awaited web projects "Kaiser" and "Syndicate", the actor will also appear in the Vicky Zahed directorial tele-fiction "Bachibar Holo Tar Shaadh", among many other single episodes, including "Chakri Noy Chakor" and "Hot Temper".

We caught up with Nisho to know more about this experience, with "Kaiser" and "Syndicate" and his other Eid special releases

## How did you become 'Kaiser'?

Being an 80's kid, I have a knack for detective stories, and I always wanted to play a role like Kaiser on screen. Kaiser does not fit into the usual mould that we expect in a detective. He is a very ordinary person, who has his own personal struggles to deal with. He is short-tempered and has trust issues. He also is a video-game addict. However, he is witty and is very good at his job.

## Is it a full-on detective story like Byomkesh, Sherlock Holmes or Feluda?

"Kaiser" won't come just as a detective story to the audience. There is more to the central titular character other than just solving a murder case. Holding on to Kaiser's internal conflicts while keeping up with the pace of his intelligence is the beauty of this role and was the most challenging part for me as an actor.

This production also gave me the opportunity to work with a team that I had not worked before with. This is also the first time I collaborated with Hoichoi and overall experience was quite intriguing!

## Your production "Syndicate" also has elements of suspense, thrill, and mystery. How was your experience with it?

My character, Adnan, suffers from Asperger's Syndrome, a form of autism which makes it difficult for him to be romantically involved with anyone. He often finds himself deeply invested in a single thought and his world revolves around that thought, ignorant of the externalities that might end up crossing his path.

However, the trailer of this production has given way to a lot of queries among the audience.

Is it a love story, a bank theft or a simple mystery—these questions will only be answered when they watch "Syndicate" on Chorki this Eid.

## What other projects are you looking forward to this Eid?

Alongside my web productions, I will also appear in a handful of single-episode tele-fictions this Eid.

I will be seen as a gangster in Vicky Zahed's "Bachibar Holo Tar Shaadh" who gives rise to incidents in his



PHOTO: ALIF

own way to reach to fulfil his desires. I will also be seen in Shihab Shaheen's "Chakri Noy Chakor", which deals with office politics and workers' rights.

"Ami Single" directed by Jakaria Showkhin, Mohidul Mohin's "Ekti Harano Shongbad", and "Paying Ghost" and "Onakangkhito Biye", both directed by Noyem Imtiaz Neeamul, will also air this Eid.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF HOICHOI



## RUMOUR MILL

# Rahul-Priyanka getting back together after divorce?

Tollywood couple Rahul Banerjee and Priyanka Sarkar recently shared a family pic of the couple along with their baby boy Shohoj on Instagram. The picture captioned "New Beginning" stirred excitement among fans and they began speculating that the estranged couple might be getting back together for good. However, some have also speculated that this might just be a promotion for Shohoj's upcoming movie "Kolkata 96".



## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I am mentally married to Ranbir Kapoor" - Dighi on her one-sided love for Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor.



PRARTHONA FARDIN DIGHI

## EID TV WATCH

### BACHELOR QURBANI (BANGLA VISION)

Directed by Kajal Arefin Ome  
Starring: Ziaul Haque Polash, Marzuk Russell, Chashi Alam  
Date: July 10 at 11:35 pm

### CORRUPTION (ATN BANGLA)

Directed by Mustafa Kamal Raz  
Starring: Tariq Anam Khan, Tasnia Farin and Shazu Khadem  
Date: July 10 at 5:50 pm

### VOICE CLIP

Directed by Shihab Shaheen  
Starring: Mehazabien Chowdhury and Imtiaz Barshon  
Date: July 10 at 11:05 pm

### PAYING GHOST (CHANNEL I)

Directed by Noyeem Imtiaz Neeamul  
Starring: Afran Nisho and Sabila Nur  
Date: July 11 at 2: 30 pm

### BACHIBAR HOLO TAR SHAADH (RTV)

Directed by Vicky Zahed  
Starring: Afran Nisho and Tanjim Saiyara Totini.  
Date: July 11  
Time: 7 pm

### ICON MAN (DDEPTO TV)

Directed by Sanjoy Somadder.  
Starring: Ziaul Faruq Apurba and Nusraat Faria  
Date: July 12 at 4 pm

## STYLE statement

Jaya Ahsan is bringing the heat with her recent look, where she is wearing a white halter-neck crop-top and denim ripped jeans. The actress is oozing hotness with her neat Kohl lined eyes and nude lips. If anything, Jaya Ahsan is giving us style goals for this summer.



## TV TALKIES

# Jujutsu Kaisen Animation redefined

Jujutsu Kaisen, usually called JJK, is an anime based on the manga of the same name. In the world of JJK, monsters and demons are made from the negative feelings of people, usually referred to as 'Cursed Energy'. Jujutsu Sorcerers are

people who can control this 'Cursed Energy', which allows them to protect regular people from these monsters and demons. Even if you're not on board by hearing the premise of the show, what makes JJK truly an amazing watch is its animation. Done by MAPPA, the same studio that did the last season of Attack on Titan, JJK is truly a visual spectacle that you need to check out.

## WHAT'S PLAYING?

# Eighteen: Owned

Bangladeshi grunge band Owned surprised everyone when they released "Eighteen", a banger of an EP last year. Among the three excellent tracks, "Shomorpon" was the most well-received, getting fanfare from all over the countries. "Abahon" and "Bishorjon" also brought a different flavour to the usual sound that Owned is associated with.



## 476 women raped in the last six months

### What has the state done to prevent violence against women and girls?

WORDS are not enough to express how appalled we are by the increasing incidents of violence against women and girls across Bangladesh.

According to a new report by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), at least 476 women have been raped in the country in the first six months of 2022. Among them, 24 were killed after rape, and six died by suicide.

Our women and girls have suffered many other forms of violence as well during this period of time. Reportedly, a total of 228 women were victims of domestic violence between January and June this year. Of them, 140 were killed and 42 died by suicide. ASK found that dowry was one of the major reasons behind domestic violence, and the number of dowry-related deaths and suicides are extremely concerning. These numbers are truly horrifying, but we shudder to think what the real picture could be as these numbers were collected from newspaper reports only.

These revelations point to the fact that all the efforts made by human rights groups, legal aid organisations, and the media to combat violence against women and children in Bangladesh have hardly yielded any results. And how will they, if the state is not willing to take responsibility to ensure the safety of half of its population?

In the cases of rape, it is still the survivors who have to suffer from social stigma, while the perpetrators often roam around freely, further intimidating the victims and their families. When it comes to the legal side of it, there are a number of loopholes that discourage survivors from filing rape cases and pursuing justice. The archaic definition of rape in our law is one of the biggest examples of this. Although the controversial "two-finger test" was finally prohibited by the High Court in 2018, a more extensive reform is still needed so that the law can do justice to rape survivors.

Therefore, if we can't change our mindset towards the victims of such a heinous crime, bring the necessary reforms to our existing laws, sensitise the law enforcement officials and the society at large about the issue, and break the existing culture of impunity that the rapists enjoy, things will not change for our women and girls, and we might continue to witness such high number of rape cases in the coming years.

## Eid Mubarak to you and yours

### May the essence of sacrifice, both spiritually and materially, embrace us all

THIS year, we celebrate Eid-ul-Azha amid a number of crises. Thousands of people in Sunamganj, Sylhet, and other parts of Bangladesh have only recently lost all their belongings to one of the most devastating floods seen in a hundred years. The world is experiencing one of the scariest inflationary trends in recent times, which has also spilled over to our country. People all across Bangladesh are struggling to afford even the most basic necessities, while it seems that another wave of the Covid pandemic has begun to rear its head. It is in times like this that the deeper message of Eid-ul-Azha becomes even more important.

Let us all remember that this Eid is really about sacrificing in the divine way. And what can be more divine than to use some of our material wealth to help out our fellow man and woman? There is no shortage of people around us right now who need help. It is our religious and moral obligation to extend a helping hand to them, and to ensure that they too can have somewhat of a joyous Eid.

If sacrifice is what this festival is all about, then the people in distress should be the prime beneficiaries of what we do on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. This Eid, let us resolve to break away from the temptation to show off our worldly riches, and focus on sharing some of our blessings with the less fortunate. In keeping with the true spirit of Eid, we hope that government and non-government organisations will also come forward with various initiatives that can alleviate some of the sufferings of the people who have been hit badly by the floods and ongoing inflation.

We would also like to remind everyone how important it is to maintain proper hygiene during Eid-related ceremonies and distributions. The government must ensure that the city corporations and other local administrations diligently carry out their duties, so that garbage and other waste material don't pile up on our roads and other public places. Finally, we hope that Eid travellers have a safe journey home and back, properly following all the health guidelines to prevent another sizeable outbreak of Covid post-Eid.

We wish our readers and patrons a happy and safe Eid. Eid Mubarak!

# A sobering call for austerity



**BLOWIN' IN THE WIND**

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

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

IN a rare public call, our prime minister has asked us all to maintain austerity to cope with the economic fallout caused by the Russia-Ukraine war. As a statesperson, she reminded us of the consequences of the war that we are facing in the developing world. The sanctions on Russia, following its invasion of Ukraine, have disrupted our energy supply chain, crippling our electricity production, forcing us to return to the nightmare of load shedding that was a recurrent feature 20 years ago. The domino effects of the economic sanctions on Russia are causing a humanitarian crisis throughout the world via inflation and a spike in food prices.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made an additional call to utilise every plot of available land to grow food, so that we can be self-reliant for food. The idea is simple: We need to reduce food imports to save foreign currency. She also, probably for the first time, admitted that "the burden" of 1.1 million Rohingya refugees is a bit too much at a time when we are all suffering, and the world should do something for their repatriation. The message is clear: We cannot afford to be generous when the world is not ready to reciprocate. The government knows that, now that the Western world is focused on the influx of "blue-eyed," "light-skinned" refugees from Ukraine, little attention will be paid to the forgotten people forcibly displaced from Rakhine. The mineral-rich, strategically located Myanmar's weapon-savvy junta can flout democracy and persecute its own people to make refugees out of them, and still remain a darling of the West. Such is realpolitik.

This makes me think of an African proverb: "When the elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers." The prime minister's words are sobering. Already, there have been office orders to reduce electricity production to save fuel for power generation. Rationing of electricity has been planned, and special decorative lights for social events at community centres, shops, offices, and houses have been banned to save electricity. Load-shedding is back with a vengeance. Earlier, we heard of a curb on unnecessary foreign travel by government officials and postponement of some less important development projects. The drive included the devaluation of our local currency. Now, there are indications that all types of subsidies,

such as for fuel, water and electricity, will be slashed – a signature World Bank/IMF prescription.

So, what went wrong? Our economy was going strong even during the pandemic. We had some extravagant events even when the world was reeling from the ills of the coronavirus. Our hard-working remittance earners continued to send money to aid their

Europe does in an afternoon."

Unfortunately, we don't have the strength to voice our needs. While we critiqued the sanction, we couldn't say that we would buy the cheapest raw material for our energy production. Instead, we are ruminating paying USD 41 per unit of LNG, which was USD 4 prior to Covid. The bulk of our energy production has relied on imported LNG, which has



▲ VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

relatives at home. Our industrious workers defied the threats of the pandemic to meet export deadlines to keep the economy alive. And we demonstrated extreme resilience to adapt to a digital reality over the last two years.

Then came the Russian invasion of Ukraine; nobody expected it to last this long. Everyone started to feel the pinch. Most of the countries were upfront in their responses. Some increased their military budget, some compromised their climate action plans to ensure the immediate supply of fossil fuel, some took economic measures to protect their vulnerable groups, and some pursued austerity.

The double standard of the West became apparent as European countries continued to import Russian gas notwithstanding the sanctions. Political analysts feel that these countries undermined the effectiveness of sanctions by refilling Russia's depleted foreign currency reserves. When, at a US-India ministry-level meeting, the Indian foreign minister was asked to stop importing Russian oil, he categorically said, "If you're looking at energy purchases from Russia, I'd suggest your attention be focused on Europe. We do buy some energy, which is necessary for our energy security. But I suspect, looking at figures, our total purchases for the month would be less than what

suddenly intensified the crisis. What happened to our gas, coal, hydro, and solar projects? Did we focus too much on a quick fix while ignoring a wide range of energy production sources? Is there any follow-up on the benefits of the solar panels that we are all obligated to install?

How effective will our solution of local austerity be if we don't address the issue from a global perspective? The World Bank predicts long-term damage to global growth due to this ongoing crisis. It calculates global growth to slump from 5.7 percent in 2021 to 2.9 percent in 2022. "As a result of the damage from the pandemic and the war, the level of per capita income in developing economies this year will be nearly five percent below its pre-pandemic trend," it says.

Our prime minister's message is a wake-up call to the forthcoming recession. While austerity is one tool of arresting the economic downslide, we also need programmes for robust fiscal activism. Given the devaluation of currency, there is no political or public mood for savings. It will be difficult to inculcate a desire for austerity. The challenge, then, is to dare to think big, act big: Earn the confidence of the big economic blocs, encourage trade and investment. Give social security to the vulnerable groups. It's time to have a new dream, fulfil it, and return to the world stage.

**Did we focus too much on a quick fix while ignoring a wide range of energy production sources? How effective will our solution of local austerity be if we don't address the issue from a global perspective?**

### PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

## Are the BRICS breaking up?



Shashi Tharoor, a former UN under-secretary-general, is an MP for Indian National Congress

SHASHI THAROOR

THE recent virtual BRICS summit, which brought together the heads of state and government of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, was interesting as much for what did not happen as for what did. The two-day gathering was marked by some constructive discussions, but also platitudes and pablum, and concluded with a grandly titled but thoroughly anodyne "Beijing Declaration."

Few doubt the huge potential of the BRICS, which comprises the world's two most populous countries (China and India), a former superpower (Russia), and two of the biggest economies in Latin America and Africa. But the grouping's record since the first annual BRIC meeting in 2009 (South Africa joined the bloc the following year) has mostly been a story of lofty rhetoric and chronic underachievement.

The Beijing Declaration states that the BRICS High-Level Dialogue is an opportunity to deepen cooperation in the fight against Covid-19, digital transformation, supply chain resilience and stability, and low carbon development. All these goals are being pursued in a variety of multilateral forums.

More hypocritically, the declaration condemned terrorism and called for the finalisation and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism within the United Nations framework. This rang rather hollow, since the summit took place just days after China blocked a joint proposal by India and the US to designate the

Pakistan-based terrorist Abdul Rehman Makki as an international terrorist under the provisions of the UN Sanctions Committee.

This was not the first time that China stymied proposals for the Sanctions Committee to list known Pakistan-based terrorists. It has repeatedly blocked efforts to designate as international terrorists Masood Azhar, chief of the UN-proscribed terrorist entity Jaish-e-Mohammed, and others associated with the equally murderous Lashkar-e-Taiba. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi pointedly stated at the BRICS summit that the group's members should understand each other's security concerns and provide mutual support in the designation of terrorists, adding that this sensitive issue should not be "politicised."

It was against this background that China, the summit chair, floated a proposal to enlarge the group by accepting new members, and subsequent reports claimed that Argentina and Iran had applied to join. But the matter was not officially discussed at the meeting and featured only tentatively in the closing declaration.

Underlying the enlargement issue are two questions that go to the heart of the BRICS grouping. First, is it a largely economic organisation or a geopolitical one? Second, if the BRICS is primarily a geopolitical bloc, will it become the principal vehicle for the emergence of a global axis led by China and Russia – a goal that China appears to support and that the proposed enlargement, and the putative candidates, seem intended to serve? In that case, what is India doing in it?

As to the first question, the BRIC acronym was initially impelled by a vision of economic cooperation. The four (later five) emerging markets' shared and compatible perspectives on issues of global governance reform certainly provided a *raison d'être*.

But their common concerns about the direction of global development and

the power of the Western-dominated Bretton Woods institutions meant that the group's agenda was political as well. BRICS seemed to be emerging as the premier platform of the Global South, articulating developing countries' dissent from the so-called Washington Consensus – a tendency underscored by the addition of South Africa, the only African economy in the G20.

In recent years, however, the global environment has changed dramatically. A backlash against globalisation and a US-China trade war, as well as heightened suspicions among US policymakers of China's geopolitical intentions, have been compounded by military hostilities between China and India.

As a result, BRICS appears to be undergoing an identity crisis. Indian foreign policy mandarins initially saw the group as a useful platform to increase India's international influence, in keeping with its traditional role as a leader of the developing world. But India is plainly uneasy about efforts to turn the bloc into a geopolitical forum supporting Chinese and Russian interests – and to enlarge it to include other "like-minded" states such as Iran. (Brazil has also maintained a studied silence on Argentina's reported membership application.)

It appears that China has not taken India fully into its confidence regarding BRICS expansion plans and the pending applications. India can scarcely be expected to welcome an enlargement of BRICS that is intended to make the bloc more China-centric. There are also the inevitable concerns about whether, given China's patronage, Pakistan would be next in line to join.

India has always been the indispensable swing vowel in the BRICS acronym. If the bloc's current strategic direction and possible enlargement pushing the country toward the exit, the grouping will become not just unpronounceable, but also unviable.

Read the full article on our website.

**The common concerns of the four (later five) emerging markets about the direction of global development and the power of the Western-dominated Bretton Woods institutions meant that the group's agenda was political as well.**

# What makes us the seventh saddest nation?



KAMAL AHMED

Kamal Ahmed is an independent journalist who writes from London. His Twitter handle is @ahmedkal

THE lead headline in this newspaper on July 4 reminded us of the arrival of an austere time, but another story inside was even more depressing, telling us that, according to the Global Emotions Report 2022, Bangladesh is the seventh saddest nation in the world. And we became miserable well before the onset of high inflation and cost of living crisis. How was it possible? Haven't we got dozens of occasions round the year to celebrate – some religious, some cultural, and many more political? Or are we about to hear that some quarters opposed to the government and its world-class development have been conspiring against us? The Global Emotions Report, however, is not produced by any of the opposition parties, including the BNP, or any human rights groups. It is a report by the global polling giant Gallup, constructed as part of its annual survey on people's emotional well-being.

In its quest for assessing the emotional state of people and what contributes to their happiness or unhappiness, Gallup asks hundreds of thousands of people in 122 countries questions about both positive and negative emotions. Think about how you felt yesterday. Did you smile or laugh a lot? Did you learn or do something interesting? Were you angry? Sad? It also asks whether someone was treated with respect, felt well-rested, or suffered from stress. Gallup asks people to imagine a ladder, with the lowest rung representing the worst possible life and the highest rung representing the best possible life. People rate where they stand today and where they expect to stand in three years. Based on how they respond, Gallup classifies them as thriving, struggling, or suffering.

According to this index, we are not thriving, not even struggling, but are

suffering. Every resident of Dhaka knows well how much stress one has to cope with just to survive every day. They don't need the Economist Intelligence Unit to tell them that their capital is the seventh least liveable city in the world. Its pollution level, air quality, noise, availability of clean water, traffic jams – all rank among the worst. Unless someone is a superhuman having supreme patience, it is quite natural that people would forget to smile, and become angry and sad all the time.

Though the world is suffering from war, inflation, and a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, Jon Clifton, the global managing partner of Gallup, said the global rise of unhappiness started long before any of those issues made headlines. In fact, unhappiness has been rising for a decade, he said in the report. And the report identifies five significant contributors to the rise of global unhappiness: Poverty, bad communities, hunger, loneliness, and the scarcity of good work. Economists have long been saying that inequalities are rising alarmingly because of our growth strategy, which has not created as many quality jobs as it should have. And the Covid pandemic has worsened it further, increasing poverty and hunger. And now, rising inflation and a prolonged war would certainly be bringing in further distress and despair.

Another part of the study has produced the World Happiness Report for the United Nations focusing on different variables, such as income, health, and social support. Could that have a different result that can cheer us up? The World Happiness Report, which has used statistical analysis to determine the world's happiest countries, concluded that Finland retained its standing as the happiest country in the world for the fifth consecutive year. To determine the world's happiest country, researchers analysed comprehensive Gallup polling data from 149 countries for the past three years, specifically monitoring performance in six particular categories: Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make your own life choices, generosity of the general population, and perceptions of

internal and external corruption levels.

Unfortunately, these results won't cheer you up either as Bangladesh ranked 94th on the list. We know that our government attaches the highest importance to making our country a high-growth economy, raising per capita GDP, and graduating to a developing country. So, where do we stand after

in conflicts. One critical element of the study shows that Bangladesh has done equally badly in both the Positive Experience Index and the Negative Experience Index. In the Positive Experience Index, the 10 lowest-scoring countries include our neighbours Nepal and India, along with Egypt, Tunisia, Ukraine, and Georgia. But their scores in



Every resident of Dhaka knows well how much stress one has to cope with just to survive every day. They don't need the EIU to tell them that their capital is the seventh least liveable city in the world.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

a decade-long pursuit for economic prosperity and well-being of the people? Besides GDP and life expectancy, among other things, Gallup questions included, "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your freedom to choose what you do with your life?" and "Is corruption widespread throughout the government/businesses in this country or not?" Would one be mistaken in drawing the conclusion that lack of freedom and widespread corruption, both in public and private sectors, are the reasons that keep us stuck in the lower rankings of global indices?

Other nations faring as badly as ours in the ranking of sadness or unhappiness are mostly known to be entangled

the Negative Experience Index are not so poor.

The authors of the report claim that higher scores in the Positive Experience Index indicate that positive emotions are more pervasive in a country. These scores strongly relate to people's perceptions of their living standards, personal freedoms and the presence of social networks. On the contrary, in the Negative Experience Index, the higher the score, the more pervasive negative emotions are in a country. People's experiences with health problems and their ability to afford food are predictive of higher negative scores. Reading such analyses would surely make one even sadder.

## Salma Khan: A mind without fear and a head held high



MILIA ALI

Milia Ali is a Rabindra Sangeet exponent and a former employee of the World Bank.

TODAY I have set out to write one of my most difficult columns. Difficult, because I am writing about a person who is so intimately entwined in my existence that it will be hard to separate myself from her larger-than-life persona. This is a humble tribute to my late aunt, Salma Khan (lovingly known to the family as Situ), who passed away last week.

Before I recount my aunt's multiple contributions and achievements, it may be appropriate to touch upon her challenging childhood.

Situ was merely a toddler when her father prematurely passed away. Her world suddenly shifted from security to uncertainty, the future turning into a question mark. But her mother – my grandmother – took up the difficult task of raising and educating her seven children with great fortitude. Situ grew up under the aegis of a matriarch who never cowed under pressure and did not differentiate between her four sons and three daughters. The unconstrained and liberal environment at home proved ideal for a talented woman like Salma to navigate the rapids of life with utter confidence, ability, and a belief in herself.

Salma Khan's many accomplishments cannot be encapsulated in a single column, but let me highlight the important ones. Although she herself was comfortably placed in the social structure, Salma was a feminist. She invariably stepped out of her comfort zone and walked the extra mile with the less fortunate. Whether it was fighting for equal rights of female workers or rallying against the domestic violence that women are subjected to – she left her footprint by challenging the many injustices and inequities. In the process, she raised public awareness and helped reshape our social and political consciousness, especially towards women.

As a member of the Planning Commission, she was instrumental in mainstreaming gender issues in the macro framework of the country's Five-Year Plans. She was always unafraid to act; I closely observed her in meetings where



Salma Khan (1942-2022)

PHOTO: COLLECTED

she took on a horde of men resisting her ideas. Apart from exceptional courage, her greatest quality was that she did her homework and articulated her viewpoints forcefully and persuasively.

Her attributes were recognised at international forums. She became the founder chairperson of NGO Coalition on Beijing Process (NCBP), a network of 624 NGOs working towards the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. She distinguished herself as the first Asian chairperson of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Having worked in the CEDAW Committee for over 12 years, she left her mark in the UN human rights system. As the ambassador to Indonesia, Salma Khan demonstrated to the international community that women in Bangladesh could rise to the highest levels, not only in politics, but also in the government sector.

In her book *The Fifty Percent: Women in Development and Policy in Bangladesh*, Salma Khan gave visibility to the invisible by exposing the exclusion of women from development activities. Her research revealed that, despite being in a disadvantaged socioeconomic situation, and contrary to patriarchal beliefs, women contribute substantially to the economy. She thus inspired women to "act" for their rights, rather than be passive dissenters.

My narrative about Situ would remain incomplete if I did not write about the woman she was. Recently, while a few

of us were in the middle of a discussion on how to be a "real woman," a female friend commented, "I am so confused trying to decide whether to be a Betty Crocker and bake cakes or a Virginia Woolf and work toward women's emancipation." Although the remark was made flippantly, I immediately thought of my aunt Salma, for she was the first woman who taught me that there was no need to make these choices. Real emancipation of a woman lies in forging her own path professionally, socially, and in her personal life. Salma Khan was a good wife (to her extremely supportive husband, Habibullah Khan), a loving mother, a dutiful daughter, a loyal friend, a doting grandmother, and also an excellent professional. Her household chemistry was so well-balanced that her mother and mother-in-law lived with her, under the same roof, in perfect harmony. She believed in strong family ties and made special efforts to lend support to her near and dear ones whenever they needed her. I will never forget that when I was going through a difficult transition in my life, she arrived at my doorstep in remote Yerevan in Armenia to give me moral strength. There are countless

ways she helped her relatives, friends, and domestic help – most of which will perhaps remain unknown.

My aunt was the first to tell me about Prof Yunus' work in Grameen Bank and how the programme's income-generating activities empowered women. She made me aware about Brac schools and their impact on girls' education long before I joined the World Bank as an education specialist. This knowledge inspired me to approach development work with passion, not just as a profession. And every time I feel the urge to protest against some inequity or injustice, I remember how Situ implanted a seed that helped me understand how important it is to enable the voices of the disempowered to be heard.

Salma Khan sparked a dynamic change with long-lasting implications in many lives. For my cousins and I, she was an aunt, a second mother, and a friend. But above all, she was the wind beneath our wings – as I hope she will be for many young women of the new generation.

Wherever you are Situ, you will always make the champak trees bloom. Rest in peace under their fragrant canopy.

### CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

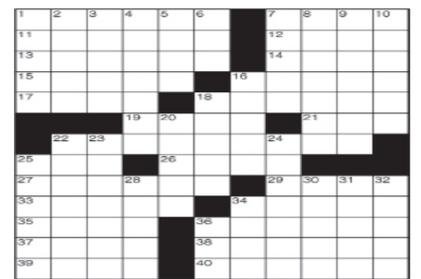
#### ACROSS

- 1 Music award
- 7 Rough shacks
- 11 Save
- 12 Hand or foot
- 13 Certify
- 14 Layered mineral
- 15 Subatomic particles
- 16 Overly confident
- 17 Frau's spouse
- 18 King of music
- 19 Galley needs
- 21 Roulette bet
- 22 "Blinding Lights" singer
- 25 Dove call
- 26 Forest plant
- 27 Alters, as a skirt
- 29 They may

#### DOWN

- 1 Plot out
- 2 Fix a loose lace
- 3 Silents star
- Mary
- 4 1984 Wimbledon winner
- 5 Disarrange
- 6 So far
- 7 Comic's forte

- 8 Tapestry subject
- 9 Amused
- 10 Didn't budge
- 16 Bank robber's advance man
- 18 Move furtively
- 20 Terrible
- 22 Pedicure target
- 23 Hockey team's advantage
- 24 Patella
- 25 Writer
- Deepak
- 28 Store events
- 30 Drain cover
- 31 Lubricated
- 32 Some coasters
- 34 Game with mallets
- 36 Writer
- Stanislaw



### YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

S	A	W	E	D	V	I	R	U	S
P	L	A	T	E	R	U	P	T	
L	A	L	A	W	R	A	N	D	Y
A	S	K	F	I	G	N	I	L	
S	K	I	A	C	E	I	K	E	
H	A	N	D	L	E	O	N	E	S
G	O	L	D	B	U	G			
L	A	S	T	T	R	I	B	E	S
A	C	T	L	E	I	O	N	A	
M	A	I	A	N	A	T	T		
A	C	R	A	G	A	R	R	Y	
R	I	K	E	R	U	D	D	E	R
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# SPORTS



**“Girls have role models today. When I teach them freestyle, I ask: Who would you like to be as a footballer? They used to say Ronaldo and Messi. Now they tell me: We want to be like Alexia [Putellas]”**

Female professional freestyler  
PALOMA



## In sync despite being 5 thousand miles apart

**One can easily imagine a Classico where the likes of Karim Benzema, Vinicius Jr. and Luka Modric were lining up against Pedri, Sergio Busquets, and Gerard Pique, but none of those megastars were on the pitch that night.**

ASHFAQ UL MUSHFIQ

The beautiful game has been the most popular sport on the planet for over a century, but although the field has been dominated by men for most of its history, times have begun to change in the last few decades.

Women's football can trace its history back to the 1890s, when there were a number of women's clubs in England and one in north London was reported to have attracted 10,000 to a game at Crouch End.

Preston was the stronghold of women's football in those days after the famous Dick Kerr's Ladies were formed in 1894. Their match with St Helen's Ladies on Boxing Day 1920 featured the largest crowd for a women's game as 53,000 packed into Goodison Park and thousands remained locked outside.

However, following this success, the Football Association initiated a ban in 1921 in England that disallowed women's football games from taking place on the grounds used by its member clubs. That ban

remained in effect until July 1971.

While there were independent bodies that organised Women's World Cups, FIFA only held the inaugural FIFA Women's World Cup in China in 1991, which accelerated the women's game's popularity on a global scale. Since then, the sport has gained in popularity, with over 1.12 billion people worldwide tuning in to watch the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup in France.

Nations like Germany, USA and Japan have dominated the international stage, but FC Barcelona Femeni have emerged as the crown jewel of club football in Europe and pulled off miracles.

On March 30 this year, Barcelona faced off against Real Madrid in front of a capacity Camp Nou. A record crowd of 91,553 turned up for that Champions League semifinal clash, which saw Real Madrid thrashed 5-2 at Camp Nou.

One can easily imagine a Classico where the likes of Karim Benzema, Vinicius Jr. and Luka Modric were lining up against Pedri, Sergio Busquets, and Gerard Pique, but none of those megastars were on the pitch that night. Instead, it was the Barcelona Femeni taking on their counterparts.

Only matches at the unofficial 1971 Women's World Cup have ever attracted attendances for a women's sporting event in excess of that, with 110,000 people turning up for the final between Mexico and Denmark at the Azteca Stadium.

It was little over a decade ago that Barcelona Femeni were training on whatever pitch was available at ridiculous hours of the day. They have only been a professional side since 2015, but they now dominate Spain and have won the Women's Champions League in 2021 while breaking a 22-year record for attendance at a women's game.

How this team has become such a powerhouse in such a short amount of time?

The main factor was the injection of Barcelona's DNA, shaped by iconic figures like Johan Cruyff and Pep Guardiola and the philosophy of the three P's: possession,

pressure and positioning. Even while their men's team has failed to entice spectators to the stadium on a regular basis, the Femeni team are beloved not only in Catalonia, but all over Spain.

A similar scenario has unfolded 5068 miles away in Bangladesh over the last few years, albeit on a smaller scale.

Packed stadiums during domestic football matches have not been witnessed in generations, but female footballers have started to get appreciable success after groundbreaking success in SAFF competitions, starting when the Under-15 side recorded huge wins such as the 6-0 hammering of Nepal and 3-0 triumphs over Bhutan and India in 2017.

The following year, a 14-0 victory over Pakistan in the SAFF U-15 Women's Championship and 10-0, 8-0 and 7-0 victories against Bahrain, Lebanon and UAE respectively in the AFC Under-16 Championship qualifiers inspired the entire nation.

Ever since, the number of spectators for the women's game has increased drastically. The most recent example would be the final of the 2021 SAFF U-19 Women's Championship, when Bangladesh beat India 1-0 in front of a capacity Bir Sherestha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

At the same venue this year, the Bangladesh senior women's team defeated Malaysia -- a team ranked 60 places higher than them -- by a massive 6-0 margin in front of yet another bustling crowd.

Despite the difference in level and quality, the growth of Barcelona Femeni and the Bangladesh women's football team have followed roughly the same timeline.

The only question that remains is what the future holds for these young footballers of Bangladesh. Will there be a sustainable approach that can form a solid foundation? And can the Bangladesh Football Federation implement a structure that ensures a long-lasting impact defined by the current run of success?



### ‘Spectators boost our confidence level from 100 to 120 per cent’

**Twenty-eight-year-old Sabina Khatun is the captain and top-scorer of the Bangladesh women's national football team. The veteran striker shared the experience of the change of perspective and scenario of Bangladesh's football fans towards women's football throughout her career and made comparisons on their journey of success with the story of FC Barcelona Femeni while talking to The Daily Star's Ashfaq Ul Mushfiq. The excerpts are below:**

**The Daily Star (DS):** 6-0 in the first match against Malaysia and then a goalless draw in the next one despite dominating them. What was the realisation after the last match?

**Sabina Khatun (SK):** When you play consecutive matches against the same side in the space of a few days, the opponents will understand your plans better. Even though they are well ahead of us in the FIFA rankings, I think they couldn't read us well in the first match. However, they came back well in the next match and gave us a good fight.

**DS:** Women's football in the country has been witnessing a greater amount of spectators on a regular basis compared to men's football. Since you're a veteran of the game, how much difference do you see today from the time you started playing?

**SK:** I think spectators generally come to watch women's football matches. But to me, what changed noticeably is people's perception. And this is noticeable on social media as well. Whenever we play good football, fans appreciate us and feel hopeful that these girls can actually give something to the country's football and take it a long way. In Bangladesh, there are some people who don't like girls playing football and wearing shorts. But I think success speaks for itself and what we have achieved in the last 5-7 years has changed people's perception and the pattern of saying things about women's football.

**DS:** Do you find similarities in the growth of Bangladesh women's football with FC Barcelona Femeni?

**SK:** Actually the scenario of women's football now is very different from the time when we started. At first, people thought that the girls were barely able to play. But times have changed since the success of age-level teams, especially from the U-15 level. People now automatically arrive in stadiums during the girls' games hoping to see a good display of football. And in terms of Barcelona's tiki-taka style of play, there was a time when the women's team only played defensive football and concede as less goals as possible. But now times have changed and girls can now play dominating football. We can now dominate in the opposition half more than ever. These girls have stayed together in the camp for a long time, we have great chemistry and we understand each other's roles very well. If you follow our games, you will see that our players don't stick to the



same position the entire game; we rotate around the pitch and change our roles. That's something quite similar to Barcelona's possession game. But in the end, when it comes to fans, their presence in the gallery boosts our confidence level from 100 to 120 per cent.

**DS:** You once said that girls are now keener to take football as a profession. But is there any guarantee of longevity in terms social and cultural obstacles in Bangladesh?

**SK:** Well, there was a time many girls, including myself, struggled a lot financially while playing professional football. But now so many girls are not only earning well but also are the breadwinners of their families. So today families don't force the girls to quit football and get married like they once used to.

**DS:** In the world of football dominated by male role models, did you come across girls saying, “We want to be like Sabina Khatun”?

**SK:** Yes, I hear that a lot, and it's a different kind of feeling when someone says she looks up to me as a role model. Even after the 1 scored against Malaysia, the junior girls told me that the goal really inspired them.

## ‘Aim to give girls a beautiful life’

**Golam Rabbani Choton has been the head coach of Bangladesh women's football team, both at senior and age-level, and has delivered nine trophies at different international age-group tournaments while also guiding his side to the runners-up position four times, including once in the SAFF Women's Championship. The 52-year-old spoke to The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman about the different aspects of women's football in Bangladesh. The excerpts are below:**

**The Daily Star:** How would you describe the journey of the current batch of girls?

**Golam Rabbani Choton (GRC):** This journey started in late 2013 under the U-13 football tournament programme initiated by the BFF women's wing and financed by Plan Bangladesh. Changes started at that time because we before formed the women's squad with the girls from different disciplines like handball, kabaddi, volleyball and judo but they returned to their respective disciplines after participating in football matches or tournaments. We lacked specialised football players, who would be playing only football and then we found that group of girls from the U-13 tournament.

Then the BFF groomed them through long-term training of 210 footballers. The number was trimmed to 46 ahead of the AFC U-14 Championship Qualification in 2014.

Since then, the girls have been kept in a group and trained round the year. Their development gathered steam when those girls became group champions and moved into the AFC U-16 Women's Championship in Thailand. The journey is still going on.

**DS:** What was the main challenge in grooming these girls as a team?

**GRC:** Compared to countries like India, Nepal and Bhutan, a footballer is trained through academies before coming into the national teams. But in Bangladesh, girls come into the national teams directly from villages without proper knowledge or techniques. Fresh footballers also lack nutrition. These have actually been our main challenges. The girls in the BFF training camp also have to face challenges every day because they must show improvement daily, otherwise they have to quit. With 68 girls from different groups in the training camp at present, some 50 to 60 girls had to leave the camp due to non-improvement. Newer, talented players replaced them.

**DS:** The women's football team hardly drew spectators before but that has changed and spectators now

come to the stadium in numbers. Why do you think that is?

**GRC:** We used to defend and try to resisting the opponent in our own half. But now our coaching philosophy is to play entertaining football. Irrespective of results, the girls can now build-up the play and play pressing football, which spectators love to watch. International success is another reason. Although these girls are gradually improving, I think they have to improve in every area.

**DS:** There are concerns that the girls, who are growing older, might leave football due to family pressure. What initiatives has the BFF taken to keep them in football?

**GRC:** The federation has kept them in training round the year. They are still under 20 and the BFF provides a salary. They also earn from the women's league and get bonuses



### Blatter, Platini cleared of fraud

REUTERS, BELLINZONA

Former FIFA President Sepp Blatter and France footballing legend Michel Platini were both cleared of corruption charges by a Swiss court on Friday after a seven-year investigation during which they were booted out of the sport.

A judge said the pair's account of a 'gentlemen's agreement' for FIFA to pay Platini 2 million Swiss francs (\$2.05 million) for consulting work was credible, and serious doubts existed about the prosecution's allegation it was a fraudulent payment.

As a result Blatter, who led FIFA for 17 years, was cleared of fraud by the Federal Criminal Court in the southern city of Bellinzona.

Platini, a former France national team captain and manager, was also acquitted of fraud.



Australia's T20 cricket captain Aaron Finch (3rd L) holds the trophy with former international players Shane Watson (L), Waqar Younis (2nd R), Morne Morkel (R) and Australian women's players Georgia Wareham (2nd L) and Tayla Vlaeminck (3rd R) as 100-day-countdown ceremony for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 was held in Melbourne on Friday. PHOTO: AFP

### Jamal, Saif share the spoils of an entertaining draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Saif Sporting Club and Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club shared the spoils of an entertaining 2-2 draw in their Bangladesh Premier League fixture at the Bishreshtha Flight Lt Motiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj yesterday.

The two sides have been in a dogfight for a top-three finish and the result left neither team in a better position.

Midfielder Shonanur Rahman gave the home side, Sheikh Jamal, the lead in the 37th minute with a header on a corner from Shakil Ahmed.

The hosts held on to the lead for 40 minutes before Emery Bayisenge equalised for Saif in the 76th minute, scoring from the spot after Jamal Bhuyan's corner kick hit Sheikh Jamal midfielder Mazharul Islam on the hand inside the box.

Saif thought they had nicked all three points when Asror Gafurov scored one minute into stoppage time with a fine solo effort. But another penalty – this time Sohan's shot hitting Saif defender Abid Ahmed on the hand inside the box – came to Sheikh Jamal's rescue as Vali Jonov Otak made no mistake from 12 yards out.

The draw saw Saif move to 34 points from 19 matches in third position while Sheikh Jamal were just behind them, level on points but having an inferior goal difference. Both teams are 14 points behind league leaders Bashundhara Kings.

With this fixture, the top-tier professional league of the country went into a five-day break for the Eid-ul-Azha.

### Kyrgios' secret to success

REUTERS

Nick Kyrgios's mum believes the Australian's success in reaching his first Grand Slam final at Wimbledon is down to leaving his video games behind in his hotel room and getting out to see the world.

Nil Kyrgios told Australia's Nine Media that she had seen a big change in her son's outlook on life since the Australian Open at the start of the year.

"It was so hard for us to get him to do anything," she said. "He was happy to sit in his room and play video games all the time. His shoulder would hurt him from how much he would play."

"In Beijing, we wanted him to walk the Great Wall of China with us. Who wouldn't, right? But Nick wouldn't go. He was happy to sit in his room and order in, that's what worried me."

"I remember in Canada we said, 'Let's go to Niagara Falls'. He wouldn't even go there. I actually went on my own on the tour bus. Nick wouldn't want to do those things."



## T20I humbling offers scope for introspection

SPORTS REPORTER

Yet another disappointing performance from Bangladesh on Thursday saw the visitors lose the three-match T20I series against the West Indies 2-0 after a five-wicket defeat in the third and final T20I in Guyana.

Bangladesh's inability to adapt to the shortest format of the game has seen questions raised about a lack of power-hitting, which is proving the biggest concern ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup, scheduled for later this year in Australia.

The three-match T20I series in West Indies was expected to be the start of the build-up to the mega-event for Bangladesh, with the team management expressing hopes of forming a balanced squad.

After a disastrous T20 World Cup campaign last year, there was plenty of talk about reforming the Tigers' T20 approach. But things do not look to be in good shape overall. A failure to have an impact in the Powerplay overs is another major concern, as is the team's search for a stable opening duo.

While Tamim Iqbal's future in the



format is still in limbo, the Bangladesh Cricket Board, selectors, T20I skipper Mahmudullah and head coach Russell Domingo need to come up with a solution in order to improve the Tigers' fortunes, especially at the top.

There are questions over the lack of power-hitting towards the latter stages of innings as well, which keeps Bangladesh from getting quick runs and crucial momentum. There are also questions regarding Mahmudullah's capabilities as a batter and also as captain.

The experienced cricketer has been

unable to lead the side from the front since the last World Cup and, with Bangladesh scheduled to play at least 12 games before the T20 World Cup this year, it will be important to settle those questions.

It has been a difficult Caribbean sojourn for the visitors so far. Bangladesh lost the two-match Test series comprehensively prior to the T20I series defeat. However, the visitors can take some positives heading into their favoured 50-over format, with the first of three ODIs scheduled for July 10 in Providence.

Bangladesh won the first ODI in the same venue during their last tour in 2018 and went on to win the series 2-1. Bangladesh's performance in the ODI format under Tamim this year has been remarkable. They won a historic ODI series in South Africa in March this year after winning a series against Afghanistan at home to begin the year.

However, it will be important for Bangladesh to gain confidence, which at the moment seems very low. In the absence of veterans like Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim, the ODI series is expected to pose a tough challenge for the visitors.

### Labuschagne, Smith tons drive Aus

AFP, Galle

Marnus Labuschagne and Steve Smith both hit centuries to give Australia opening day honours against a Covid-hit Sri Lanka in the second Test on Friday.

The tourists reached 298 for five at stumps after electing to bat first in their bid to clinch the two-match series in Galle. Smith, on 109, and wicketkeeper-batsman Alex Carey, on 16, were batting at close of play after debutant left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya took three wickets.

Smith smashed fast bowler Kasun Rajitha for a cracking cover drive to

bringing up his 28th Test hundred as he raised his bat to an applauding dressing room.

It was the former captain's first hundred since January last year during the third Test against India in Sydney.

Labuschagne, who made 104, and Smith put on 134 runs for the third wicket to take the attack to the opposition bowlers after Australia lost their openers in the first session.

Labuschagne recorded his seventh Test century and his first away from home in an attacking knock before Jayasuriya got him stumped at the stroke of tea.



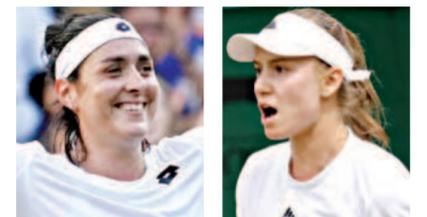
## Wimbledon braces for a new queen

AFP, London

Ons Jabeur said that the seeds of her history-making charge to the Wimbledon final were sown 12 months ago when she told her coaching team: "I'm coming back for the title."

Jabeur became the first African woman to reach a Grand Slam final in the modern era when she beat close friend Tatjana Maria, 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 in the semi-finals.

She will face Russian-born Elena Rybakina, now representing Kazakhstan, for the title on Saturday. Twelve months ago, Jabeur, 27, made



the quarter-finals for the first time, losing to Aryna Sabalenka.

But on the way she knocked out five-time champion Venus Williams, 2017 winner Garbine Muguruza, as well as current number one Iga Swiatek. Having never previously got past the second round at the All England Club, that run gave her the taste for more.

Russian and Belarusian players are banned from this year's tournament following the invasion of Ukraine.

But there will be a Russian presence in the final after Rybakina, playing in her first Slam final, switched allegiance to Kazakhstan in 2018.

"I'm really happy representing Kazakhstan. They believed in me. There is no more question about how I feel," said the 23-year-old.

"It's already a long time my journey as a Kazakh player. I played Olympics, Fed Cup."

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# Tk 1,238cr lost to flood in Sylhet

Says govt report



MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Flash floods in Sylhet last month caused a financial loss of about Tk 1,238 crore, claimed six lives and displaced around 3.68 lakh people.

About 2,718sq km area of 92 unions and wards of the district's 13 upazilas was seriously affected by the deluge, according to the assessment report prepared by the District Relief and Rehabilitation Centre.

Heavy rains in the country's north-eastern region and onrush of water from upstream Indian states of Assam and Meghalaya caused the flooding, which badly damaged roads, dams, crops and houses.

In a bid to take up short and long-term programmes to address the loss, the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) has taken an initiative to prepare damage assessment reports on 17 flood-affected districts.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the assessment report on Sylhet district. The deputy commissioner of Sylhet has approved the report and sent it to the DDM, said sources.

Floods completely damaged 2,072 thatched houses in the district's six upazilas and partially damaged another 34,175. About Tk 122.80 crore is needed to rebuild and repair those, reads the report.

Another Tk 90.81 crore is required for repair of 9,019 semi-pucca houses damaged partially, it adds.

Floodwaters swept away 886 cattle worth about Tk 77.3 lakh and about 48,000 poultry worth Tk 1.45 crore.

The devastating flood has also damaged cropland and seedbeds.

Data shows the damage to 18,940 hectares of cropland in Sylhet caused an estimated financial loss of Tk 115.44 crore. The deluge also inundated seedbeds, causing financial damages of Tk 22.98 crore.

Many power stations were submerged in the flooding, causing disruptions in electricity supplies to many parts of Sylhet.

The report shows the deluge affected 253km power lines in nine upazilas.

Floods destroyed about 3,388km road worth around Tk 357.24 crore and damaged 442 bridges and culverts.

About 188.66km of embankments were also damaged in the river and haor areas of Sylhet.

**Heavy rains in the country's north-eastern region and onrush of water from upstream Indian states of Assam and Meghalaya caused the flooding.**



Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe lies on the ground after he was shot during an election campaign in Nara, western Japan yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



## Television's beloved 'Maa' no more

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

"All these years, the love that I have received from fans and fellow artistes is unparalleled. I feel proud and emotional when my co-actors call me Maa," Sharmili Ahmed had said in her last interview with The Daily Star in May.

The entire entertainment industry was in mourning when the news broke of Sharmili's death at her Uttara home.

The 75-year-old artiste, who was suffering from

SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

# 12 crore people can't afford healthy diet

Says UN report about Bangladesh

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Do you know how much a person living in Bangladesh needs to pay every day to maintain a healthy diet?

It is roughly Tk 286 (\$3.064) in Bangladesh whereas the global average is about Tk 331 (\$3.54), according to the UN's flagship report styled "The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2022: Repurposing Food and Agricultural Policies to Make Healthy Diets More Affordable."

The daily cost of maintaining a healthy diet for a person in Bangladesh was \$2.882 in 2017, \$2.971 in 2018, \$3.024 in 2019 and it reached to \$3.064 in 2020, said the report.

"In 2020, the sharp increase in global food prices in the second half of the year translated directly into an increased average cost of a healthy diet at the global level, and for all regions and almost all subregions in the world," the report said published yesterday.

According to the WHO, healthy diets include less than 30 percent of total energy intake from fats, less than 10 percent of total energy intake from free sugars, consumption of at least 400 grams of fruits and vegetables per day; and not more than 5 grams per day of salt (to be iodized).

"Between 2019 and 2020, Asia witnessed the highest surge in the cost of a healthy diet (4.0 percent)," said the report, adding that almost 3.1 billion people could not afford a healthy diet in 2020 – an increase of 112 million more people than in 2019.

When it comes to affordability of a healthy diet in Bangladesh, over 12 crore people could not afford healthy diet in 2020 and the number of such population was two crores more than the previous year. But the number was 12.3 crore in 2017.

The report said although there were hopes that the world would emerge from the pandemic in 2021 and food security would

begin to improve but world hunger rose further in 2021.

"The increase in global hunger in 2021 reflects exacerbated inequalities across and within countries due to an unequal pattern of economic recovery among countries and unrecovered income losses among those most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic."

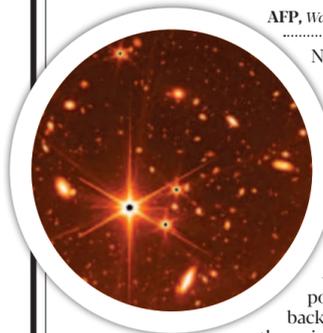
Although the prevalence of undernourishment rose to 9.8 percent in 2021 from 9.3 percent in 2020, the rate in Bangladesh was 11.4 percent in 2021, the report said.

It said around 2.3 billion people in the world were moderately or severely food insecure in 2021, and 11.7 percent of the global population faced food insecurity at severe levels.

When it comes to Bangladesh, a total of 10.7 percent people of the total population faced severe food insecurity while 31.7 percent people faced moderate or severe food insecurity.

# Nasa releases James Webb telescope 'teaser' picture

AFP, Washington



Nasa has provided a tantalizing teaser photo ahead of the highly-anticipated release next week of the first deep-space images from the James Webb Telescope – an instrument so powerful it can peer back into the origins of the universe.

The \$10 billion observatory – launched in December last year and now orbiting the Sun a million miles (1.5 million kilometers) away from Earth – can look where no telescope has looked before thanks to its enormous primary mirror and instruments that focus on infrared, allowing it to peer through dust and gas.

The first fully formed pictures are set for release on July 12, but Nasa provided an

SEE PAGE 5 COL 8



## Pilgrims pack Mt Arafat for climax of hajj

AFP, Mount Arafat

Huge crowds of robed Muslim pilgrims prayed on Saudi Arabia's Mount Arafat yesterday, the climax of the biggest hajj pilgrimage since the pandemic forced drastic cuts in numbers two years in a row.

Groups of worshippers, many holding umbrellas against the fierce sun, recited verses from the Holy Quran on the rocky rise, where the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is believed to have given his final sermon.

Prayers on Mount Arafat are the highlight of the pilgrimage, capped this year at one million people including 850,000 from abroad.

Pilgrims, many in white robes, chanted "Oh Allah, here I am" as they reached Mount Arafat on foot or in buses from their nearby tents.

After sunset, they will travel the short distance to Muzdalifah, where they will sleep under the stars

Muslim pilgrims gather to pray atop Mount Arafat, southeast of the Saudi holy city of Makkah, during the climax of the Hajj pilgrimage yesterday. Inset, Pilgrims touch the pillar atop Mount Arafat, also known as Jabal al-Rahma (Mount of Mercy). The crowds, capped at one million including 850,000 from abroad chosen by lottery, are the biggest since 2019 after two Covid-hit years when only tens of thousands were allowed.

PHOTO: AFP

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7



১৯৭৮ সাল থেকে



জামাদের সকল গ্রাহক, অরবরাহকারী, ব্যবসায়ীক, ব্যাংক, বীমা, পুস্তিগোষ্ঠী এবং শুভানুষ্ঠায়ীগণ সহ সবাইকে জানাই পবিত্র ইদ-উল-জাযহা-এর

**শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন**

মোঃ মজিবুর রহমান  
 চেয়ারম্যান






# No clear remedy for a pervasive ill

SHAHEEN MOLLAH, ZYMA ISLAM AND MUNTAKIM SAAD

The Cabinet Committee on Law and Order at the home ministry recently suggested that the legal age determining who is a “child” be lowered.

Chief of the committee, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque, said the age should be 14 years and below instead of the current 18 years.

This will allow law enforcers to send children to jail and not let them get away with committing “heinous crimes”, he said.

The issue of what age defines a child or minor has come to the fore ever since 10th-grader Ashraf Islam Jitu beat his teacher to death with a cricket stump in Ashulia on June 25, supposedly, to impress a girl.

As public outrage poured over the death of Utpal Kumar Sarkar, the teacher and a Hindu, certain questions were not asked: How does a teenager like Jitu become “Jitu Dada”, who thought nothing of beating his teacher to death with a cricket stump in front of the whole school? Jitu’s teachers have given extensive interviews about his errant ways, his

juniors had refused to comply. Instead, one of the juniors brought out the big guns – a “senior” cousin and his “older” friends.

“On that day I was called by a junior who said, a senior bhai is here to solve this issue. They told me that they have agreed to give me ‘respect,’” said the boy. And so, off Farhan went, lured by the prospect of being granted the much-coveted “respect”.

As they beat him up in the Eid-gah field, the whole episode was recorded and edited with slow-motion special effects. The video was then laid over with a trippy “drift” tune and someone rapping lyrics roughly translated as “Beat him up, don’t mess with Mirpur boys, we will make you wear a sari from Benarasi palli.” The level of creative effort cannot be denied.

Farhan’s sister called 999 and the boys were hauled off by the Pallabi police and slapped with attempt-to-murder charges – after all, putting aside the notion that this was turf war fought in the teenage spirit, Farhan could truly have been killed.

Pallabi Police Officer in Charge (OC) Parvez Islam called it a “gang” and said “7 members of the gang including its team leader were arrested in a raid”. The inspector (investigation)

keeps an English vocabulary notebook and shares a bed with his grandmother. All his social media activity, his forays into PubG was done using his mother’s phone.

Rakin lives in a two-bedroom apartment, that his father and older brother can barely afford with their jobs as a personal driver and waiter. The apartment is airy and the building has a caretaker and a lift – Rakin is clearly loved and cared for.

This beloved teenager however is growing up in a neighbourhood where the only after-school activity involves going to coaching centres for lessons and hanging out in street corners and making TikTok videos.

There is usually only one cultural event a year, held in a nearby field. Even though the neighbourhood is not affluent, gaudy sports bikes are plenty and there is an inverse relationship between the engine capacity of the motorbike, and the willingness to wear a helmet. As our female correspondent walked into an alley, an older woman verbally harassed her for “wearing her scarf wrong”.

In this neighbourhood, teenagers like Rakin, Farhan and the others are left to entertain themselves using smartphones. They find their own idols. On TikTok, homemade videos like the one Rakin and his friends were making while beating up Farhan, are plenty – most, in all probability, being staged.

Teenagers like them, act out exactly how and when to slap or beat up their girlfriends and promote toxic masculine behaviour. Since this is user-generated content, there is no oversight on what values are being represented, and since this is a new technology, the parents have no idea.

Mohammadpur Police Station OC Abul Kalam Azad said the situation is similar in his area. “Children of low-income families are getting involved in such teen gangs. In many cases, they do not even know what the punishment will be if they commit a crime. No one in society makes them aware. They commit various crimes due to lack of awareness.”

He said many are school dropouts with parents working long hours. “These parents don’t know how their children are passing their time,” he said. Soon they gain the patronage of local criminals and move to bigger crimes.

Farhan was asked why everyone wanted “respect” so badly – he had no answer. The response perhaps is that no teenager wants to be left out. Zahin (not his real name), a teenager from a slum of Bhashantek, explains the pangs of being ostracised by his friends after he had to drop out after fifth grade to help his father sell fish.

“I like going to the gaming arcade but they do drugs there.”

“I do not have a smartphone so I am good at my friends’ TikTok videos, but I am good at shooting videos so they at least let me shoot.”

“I cannot go to school, and they sometimes bunk school and hang out, so I cannot go with them.”

“Outside of work, I just hang out with my friends. I miss English and Religion classes.”

Grownups would be quick to judge the teenager and dismiss these as juvenile problems – but to Zahin, these are big. He manifested his pain through self-harm – he has two rows of over a dozen blade-cut scars on his forearm. The cuts are neat, deliberately done and only a month old.

“I cut myself in front of my friends. They thought I was crazy. I let them think that.”

Juvenile “delinquents” – the law enforcers criminalise them; society calls them products of failed parenting and the media call them gang members. But there is hardly anyone helping them grow in a healthy way.

## ‘Time to look at what we’re doing for our children’

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Kamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury is a professor of the department of clinical psychology of Dhaka University and programme director of Nasirullah Psychotherapy Unit – an outpatient mental health unit managed by DU’s department of clinical psychology. He has been researching adolescent mental health and juvenile delinquency for decades. Recently he talked to The Daily Star about the sudden rise of criminal behaviour among youths and adolescents.

**Q: Adolescents are forming street gangs and often commit organised crimes. Multiple instances of faceoffs between rival gangs have been reported. What is influencing them?**

A: Adolescents love to spend time with their peers. They want to learn from them and they want their recognition. They love group activities. When such groups commit an offence, we call them gangs, adding a negative connotation to their activities. But groups of youth have also done great work such as road safety movements. When these youths are not motivated to do positive activities, when they are not appreciated for their good qualities, and when they are treated as “the other” in society, they may form such groups.

However, social media and popular media are also some of the biggest contributing factors. Through social media, which they have used excessively during the pandemic, they learn to interact with people who are just like them.

They join social media groups where they find many youths who act and think like them. Many of these youngsters have millions of followers without making any real contribution to society.

In this manner, these youths confine themselves to a very narrow sense of identity and culture, which they reproduce by forming groups in their real lives. They take inspiration by observing other such groups on social media and popular media, such as drama serials and cinema.

**Q: What is your comment on the mental health condition of Bangladesh’s adolescents?**

A: According to a 2019 study conducted by National Institute of Mental Health, 14 percent of the below-18 population have been suffering from conduct disorder, which means these children persistently show anti-social behaviour.

Among them, 1.7 percent are involved in criminal activities. If you consider Bangladesh’s population, the number is huge. Again, this study was conducted before the pandemic. I believe that the mental health condition of our youth has deteriorated drastically during the pandemic.

More than 90 percent of these adolescents do not get any medical attention due to lack of awareness in the family and also due to scarcity of mental health services in our country.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused the situation to further deteriorate as children have become severely deprived of healthy recreation, and are overly engaged in social media. Many adolescents find their families suddenly in impoverished condition due to income losses induced by the pandemic.

Many adolescents and youth have been suffering from depression due to such factors and getting addicted to narcotics. Suicide rate among them has also increased alarmingly.

**Q: What effective measures can be taken to keep children away from such destructive activities?**

A: The time has come to think about what services we are providing our adolescents and youth instead of focusing on what they are doing. If we can think in this way, we shall see that we have deprived them of healthy recreation, and co-curricular activities in schools, we have deprived them of a safe childhood within their own community.

We must ensure healthy recreation, outdoor physical sports and outdoor co-curricular activities for adolescents. We need to build organisations such as clubs, volunteerism-based youth organisations so that youth are engaged in creative activities and community services.

Teachers’ training and parenting training is also essential. Including everything in the textbook and syllabus will not help at all unless teachers are trained to deliver quality and impactful teaching.

Some parents impose excessive, unnecessary restrictions on their children. They often physically punish their children and use abusive words against them. When these children find their back against the wall, they start to commit offences to break free from those restrictions. Ultimately, they want to break social norms and create their own rules.

On the other hand, overly permissive and protective parenting can also encourage them to commit crimes as they think they will get away with their misdeeds with the help of their parents. Again, overlooking offences of one’s own children and maintaining silence is also an instance of such parenting that encourages children to commit further offences.

Also, if children see their parents involved in criminal activities, they are very likely to get involved in criminal activities as they see their parents as their role models.

Recently we have conducted a study on parents of children having conduct disorder. We developed a module on positive parenting and after training the parents for one month, we conducted an assessment.

Our assessment proved that the training parents reduced the frequency of anti-social behaviour among children significantly. Another follow-up study after one month showed similar results. We should organise training on positive parenting all over the country as soon as possible.



**They came to our house and took Rakin away, without telling us where they are going. He was kept in the lockup inside the police station. This arrest will define his life even if he does get out on bail.**

RAKIN’S MOTHER



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

**When asked why he had been beaten up like that, Farhan launched into a convoluted, lengthy tale about a tussle over “respect”.**

bad manners and propensity towards drugs and gang culture – but could say little about what he likes, what his struggles were, who his idols were.

Last Tuesday, high-school student Farhan\* (not his real name) lay on his bed in his Pallabi home, his leg bandaged and resting on a pillow.

The leg had been hacked last Saturday when some neighbourhood boys calling themselves “DTCB Street” beat him up in the schoolyard.

“They had rods and one boy had a large cleaver. He swung at me and I moved so the blow landed on my leg,” said Farhan.

“DTCB Street” is a gang of Mirpur-12, where the letters stand for “D, Ta, C Block”.

This is an area where flats cost between Tk 9,000-12,000 per month, and most have gated security, but no lifts. The streets are clearly laid out, and kindergartens and snack stalls dot every corner, making it an ideal neighbourhood for low to middle-income families to live and raise children in.

When asked why he had been beaten up like that, Farhan launched into a convoluted, lengthy tale about a tussle over “respect”.

In a nutshell, he had demanded “respect” from his juniors on account of his age, and the

cast them off as “hopeless cases” saying that “no amount of arrests will fix this problem until the parents learn how to control them”.

The “gang’s” active presence on social media, shows that the arrested team leader is an adult named Md Habibur Rahman, but the rest of his followers seem to be teenagers and younger children. Some of the teenagers hold official roles like “Shooter of HD” presumably for producing TikTok-style videos.

Most of the videos involve the group walking down the street in large numbers or posing with bikes, flashing victory signs. The nod to hip-hop culture is overt in the videos.

Fifteen-year-old Rakin\* (not his real name) who was taking part in the assault, and was arrested by the Pallabi police, features in several of those videos.

“They came to our house and took Rakin away, without telling us where they are going. He was kept in the lockup inside the police station. This arrest will define his life even if he does get out on bail,” said Rakin’s mother.

On social media, he portrays himself as a tough teenager, sporting side-fades and rectangle sunglasses, adding strobe effects and high bass to his videos.

At home, he is a kid who is stellar in math,

# Chandrabati Kotha

## A Tale of the First Feminist Poet of the Sub-continent

ABDULLAH AL MAMUN

**Previously apprenticed under and trained by her own father in the composition of lyrics, this first Bengali feminist poet is seen in the movie questioning the presentation of Sita in the epic- Sita forced to prove her chastity through walking on fire- that is why her version of Ramayana becomes a story of Sita instead of Ram metaphorically representing years of subjugation of women. Director of this movie N. Rashed Chowdhury in one of his writings about this movie says, "According to some experts, Chandrabati's version of Ramayan is actually Sita-yan! It hardly talks of Ram; rather becomes an elegy of Sita."**

In a time when Bangladeshi film industry is grievously experiencing the dearth of powerful narrative and proper storytelling; be it commercial or historical or any other genre, *Chandrabati Kotha* (The Tales of Chandrabati) directed by N. Rashed Chowdhury shows some light for the industry. His courageous attempt to portray the life of the first feminist poet of Indian sub-continent, Chandrabati, took more than five years of pre-production works including research work, collecting ballads from a particular region of Bangladesh, Kishoregonj, etc. makes the film worthy of grabbing people's attention particularly for academics and for those who are lovers of historical genre. Finally, it was released in October, 2021.

Set in the 16th century, this period drama explores not only the elegiac life of Chandrabati but also tries to capture the contemporary social and political life where several plots go hand in hand. The story begins with ballads of a contemporary famous bayati (an age-old Bengali village minstrel storytellers) Nayanchand Ghosh found in *Mymensingh Geetika* (Ballads of Mymensingh) performing his lyrics based on Chandrabati's love-life. However, her love-life ends in tragedy with the betrayal of her childhood lover Jayanand who is also a poet. He leaves her on the eve of marriage for another woman. From thins point onward, her life takes turn to another direction, a life of seclusion that probably paves the way to think deeply about life and connect herself with the sufferings of Sita in the *Ramayana*. Heavy-hearted Chandrabati, the daughter of veteran poet Dwij Bangshi Das who is the composer of *Manasa Mangal*, decides to spend the rest of her life in the devotion of God Shiva and write her own version of *Ramayana*.

Previously apprenticed under and trained by her own father in the composition of lyrics, this first Bengali feminist poet is seen in the movie questioning the presentation of Sita in the epic- Sita forced to prove her chastity through walking on fire- that is why her version of *Ramayana* becomes a story of Sita instead of Ram metaphorically representing years of subjugation of women. Director of this movie N. Rashed Chowdhury in one of his writings about this movie says, "According to some experts, Chandrabati's version of *Ramayana* is actually Sita-yan! It hardly talks of Ram; rather becomes an elegy of Sita." Apart from weaving the journey of Chandrabati, other plots including portrayal of the Devans of that time and the life of the followers of Vaishnavites are also found narrated in the performance of the bayatis that makes its audience a part of the journey and takes them back to a 400 years old Bengali riverine village. However, the story of Dewans seems to be loosely connected with the eponymous character of the movie.

Produced by government and Bengal Creations this 105-minute long biography stars Dilruba Hossain Doyel as Chandrabati, Imtiaz Barshan as Jayananda, Jayanta Chattopadhyay as Dwij Bangshi Das, Gazi



Rakayet as Dewan, Arman Parvez Murad as Qazi among others. Brilliant performance both from the veteran actors and the junior rising stars adds another dimension. Particularly, Doyel's role as Chandrabati is more of acting and giving expressions with few dialogues provides a realistic depiction of the central character.

Excellent music composition by Satyakee Banerjee, a folksong artist from Kolkata, creates an ambience more connected to the soil, giving the spectators an opportunity to have an authentic taste of the medieval rural Bengali music.

Upon watching this movie, one realizes that the illustration of the story against the backdrop of sixteenth century and presentation of characters with local

language in their tongues was the most challenging task for the director. But the movie maker triumphs over this difficult test and shows his craft with stupendous cinematography, costume design, and exclusively the delivery of dialogue in dialects. In short, it can be said that this biographic drama added a new dimension to the history of Bangladeshi movie for it will invoke creative people to dig deep the riches hidden under the soil. Therefore, watching this cinema is simultaneously experiencing a significant time and feeling the root.

Abdullah Al Mamun is a lecturer in the department of English at University of Skill Enrichment and Technology (USET).

Remembering Dr. Halima Khatun on her 4th death anniversary on July 3

## MOON DREAM

HALIMA KHATUN

I could make a kite  
From the petals of my heart  
To be flown by my son  
As a magic carpet,  
Instead of an elegy  
Lamenting my death.  
Though the moon cannot die  
Let it be my epitaph  
On the petals of the sky  
Written with the stars.  
Or the gospel of Buddha  
That I might leave with him  
And be an eremite,  
Then he could touch  
The mystery of my hair  
And make it a switch  
Turned into a wish,  
To stop the thunder of guns,  
That annoys meditation,  
Killing Bidyapati and the moon.

I could not reach the moon  
Because it was under my pillow  
Or behind his brow covered with thought.  
I dived into the bay  
To gather lost moments,  
Distilled with the honey  
Oozed from mermaid dreams.  
The moon became the pearl,  
And clouds petalled oysters,  
To be merged with the wings  
Of the peacock night.  
He could not drink the coffee  
Because it was my blood  
Served in the skull of Bidyapati.  
Sad moments turned to shadow  
Devouring the mermaid,  
Like Hemingway  
To be shot by his own gun.  
He went down the stairs  
Caged in my ribs,  
And wanted to dance  
Accompanied by the  
Drumbeats of my heart.  
Frozen into a dream of deathless life  
My heart missed a bulb  
Which could withstand love,  
And shot into a red dahlia.

(Oct. 1981)

Halima Khatun was a Bangladeshi activist, writer and academic. She took part in Bengali Language Movement in 1952 along with other activists including Rawshan Ara Bachchu. She was the recipient of Bangla Academy Literary Award in 1981 and Ekushey Padak posthumously in 2019.



# WHAT HE DID

HASAN MARUF

He joined the army at eighteen; a soldier through and through. He was tall, sturdy, ruddy-faced, and almost always urbane. Mahmud was my neighbour for nearly five years. He had moved from barely inhabited hilly terrain of Khagrachhari to the city of a heightened breeding place, old Dhaka. His decision to leave the vacuous and soulless life of the barrack could be being closer to his own children- all of them were assumed to be in their primes.

"I have six," he once told me. "Seven," he corrected himself a second later. Two from each of his three ex-wives and one boy whom he had picked up during an eviction mission in Bangladesh Myanmar border when his platoon was making their way through the fur-flung jungle of Ukhyia when there was a state of emergency in Rakhine state in a series of besmirching battles between Rohingya and Myanmar Army. The village had been raided just a few days before they got there. "There were severed and burnt bodies strewn everywhere," he proclaimed. Some people were still trying to salvage whatever they could. He drifted onto a discarded flotsam when a little girl crawled up, speaking inaudible Arakanese and crying, asking him to take the sickly nine-month-old baby she held in her arms.

He took the baby; fed him some dry food, and a few days later he handed the child over to the mobile Red Cross team. He also registered the baby as his own giving the baby a Bangladeshi moniker "Babu Miah."

He was a career soldier; he had been in



the UN mission to Africa, Middle-eastern Asia, and other missions. But he couldn't reminisce about those memories in a buoyant mood. He had seen the good, the bad, and the ugly side of humanity for the umpteenth times.

Every morning, I would hear him working at his backyard as the music played from his tape recorder, always local folksong. I would usually see him working on household chores, his old tape recorder; tinkling with things, taking them apart, and putting them back together. One evening, he played something from Lalon's mystic melody. A galaxy of memories fizzed through the beam of his conscience and it took him into a state of surreal stupor. The music seemed to pour salt into his unvoiced wounds as he crooned, — "O the woe-fraught bird in the cage... How do you fly repressing all your rage?"

More often than not, he and I would bask in propitious camaraderie on the

weekends talking through an opening in the wall that had separated our properties. Once in a while, his old comrades would traipse all the way to Tathari Bazar to come and visit him. But as far as I remember in those five years he had been my neighbour, his kids never came to visit him.

Mahmud would sometimes tell his kaleidoscopic range of stories, often recalling his childhood and his teens. How he signed up to be in the army the day after he passed matriculation simply because he didn't want to go to school anymore.

**I thought of inviting old Mahmud to come and join for an adda fuelling feast. My kids always enjoyed chatting to him; he was sardonically funny yet quite affable with them. However, he was nowhere to be seen.**

One sluggish Friday noon, as my family and I came back from Jumma prayer, I had prepared to marinate the beef to cook in the backyard. I thought of inviting old Mahmud to come and join for an adda fuelling feast. My kids always enjoyed chatting to him; he was sardonically funny yet quite affable with them. However, he was nowhere to be seen.

His old bicycle was parked in the front doorway; the bicycle he'd been working on was in the backyard along with the little tape recorder. I could hear music

streaming out from the garage. I called out to him but I didn't hear a response.

Knocking on his front door, and upon getting no reply, I surveyed around to the wooden door on the side of his house but it was locked. Tidying up the backyard, and cleaning the temporarily built fireplace, I went back to my house and set about my business.

My wife was inside the house taking a nap and my kids were in the living room playing and watching Friday matinee show on television. As I started to dredge up the makeshift hearth, expecting him to bob up with one of his friends, suddenly I heard a groan. At that moment, I decided to peep through the door hole.

There he was on the floor. He had fallen from a chair under his workbench. I called out his name, but he didn't respond. I tried to pry the door open. Then, I shattered the window in, removing the craggy board and unhooking it from the inside, I rushed to his side.

On his workbench was a gun, a bottle of aspirin, and a bunch of old pictures. He had slit his wrists with his old switchblade. Blood was diffused everywhere, his pajamas were draped in it. As I bent down, my white sandal suddenly became soaked in the crimson liquid. I panicked for a second and that's when he turned his head slightly and hissed, "I'm sorry."

"I got to call for help." I could feel myself faltering like a flickering flame of a white-hot candle.

"No" he spluttered; his breath came in ragged, shallow gasps, memories of the past swarmed all over him as the music of Lalan Shai's "Somoy Gele Sadhon Hobe

Na" was rending asunder from the old radio that hung on the other side of the wall.

"It's too late" Mahmud murmured. "I'm alone; my family's far away..." he added. "All my dostos (buddies) are gone; I saw them die before me. The things we did—the things I did—are heartless, deleterious, and unforgivable."

"Don't say that" I retorted as I held his hand. His hands were inert, rough, cold, and wan now.

"The things I did," he repeated. "I'm sorry for the things I did," apologizing to me as if I had been a haunted victim of his tortuous past.

My cell phone was in my pocket as I was still in delirious doldrums. I could feel my voice breaking, my eyes welling up. He sparked into one last smile, through the thick mustache, and muttered "I'm sorry" one last time. I stood up, transfixed; my legs were shaking and I saw the gun wasn't loaded. But he had taken gluts of aspirins as if he could not withstand the choice of having an easeful end.

Photographs of him and his old buddies from his military days lay cluttered on the floor. In one of these pictures, I could unerringly recognize a much younger Mahmud. Next to the photographs was a pile of letters in envelopes with different names. It seemed he wanted to go slowly, unnoted, and unsaid; luxuriating in his last moment with Lalon Shai.

Hasan Maruf teaches English at DPS STS School, Dhaka. His interest lies in diverse genres of literature.

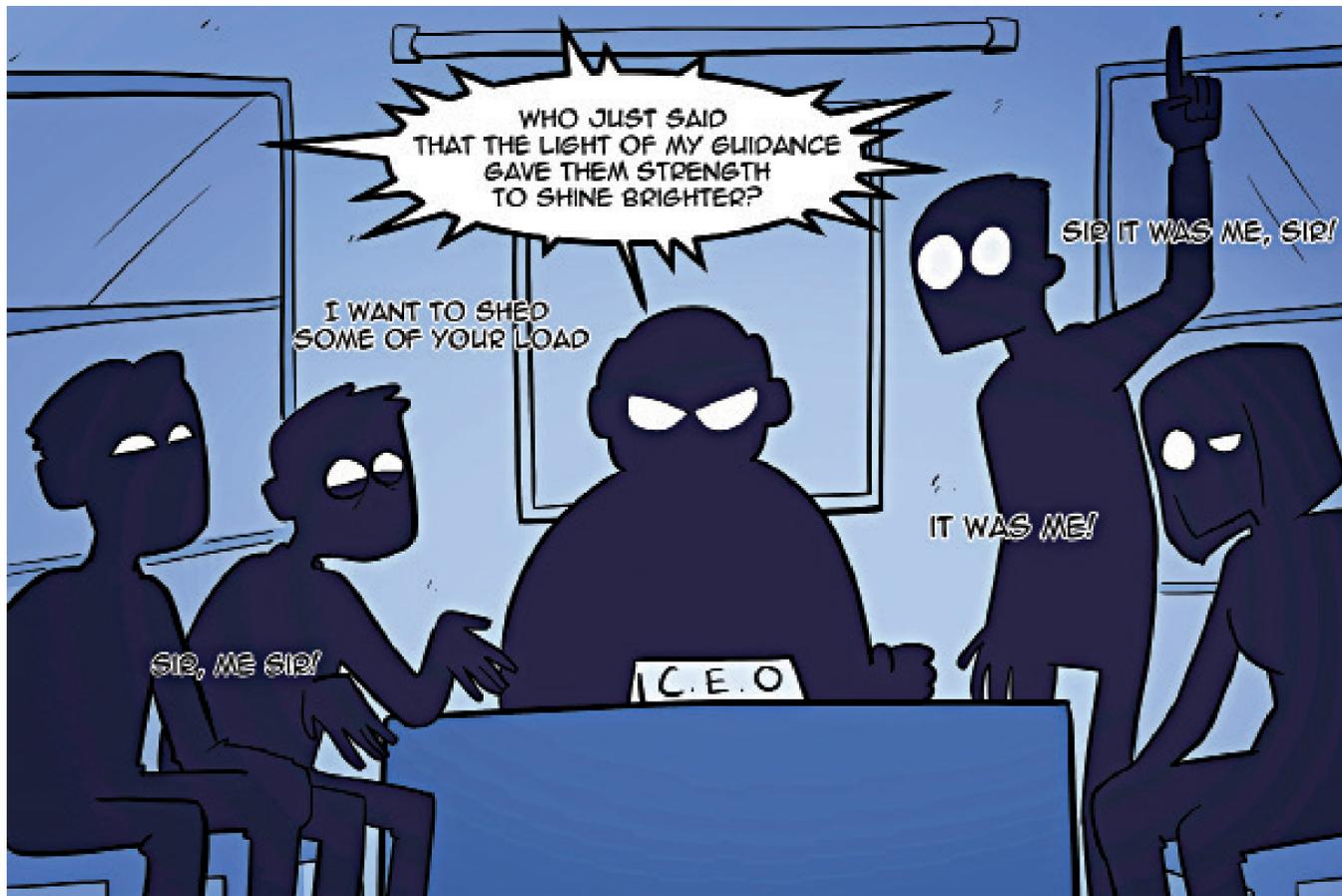


## AT MERCY OF NATURE

**D**EVASTATING floods turned highways into rivers and displaced hundreds of thousands of people in Sylhet region in recent weeks. Many poor people who only owned one or two farm animals had to see them get washed away by the sudden rush of water. As communications got disrupted, reaching food and drinking water to the people became a challenge.

PHOTO: STAR





## All oil used for flattery, none left for energy production

**“Where are those people who were oiling their bosses for promotion, political leaders for posts, teachers for good grades and voters for votes? We desperately need them now to supply their natural oil to those power stations that produce energy.”**

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

Due to the national habit of applying generous levels of oil to slide one’s way to the top – or most often, barely middle, levels – of organisations, Chapasthan has been facing an oil crisis for the past few days.

As a result, the country has failed to produce necessary electricity to enlighten its people, which even 75 percent literacy rate has not been able to do. The massive hue and cry have become a regular activity the people of Chapasthan have been doing despite having an obvious reluctance of doing so.

“Had I not oiled my boss frequently, I wouldn’t have to face this recent power blackout,” Telbaba, a jobholder, repented.

“We had plenty of oil to produce electricity, but instead of using that in power stations, we used those on people, who only recycled the oil and flattered their bosses,” he said, displaying his newfound honesty in a place of his mind that was previously occupied by blubber.

It has always been a famous



Representational image of oil being wasted.

PHOTO: AFP

unsolved mystery of the world that, despite having been blessed with the most sycophants per capita, a rare (but very common in Chapsathan) type of human who can produce oil naturally, Chapasthan – a country that looks like the Eiffel Tower from the sky – isn’t a member of OPEC.

Scientists, both social and antisocial types, worked on the problem for years but only

recently did they realise that all the oil people produce here is spent on their superiors for personal benefits instead of exporting to foreign countries, or to inject into the power grid.

“Where are those people who were oiling their bosses for promotion, political leaders for posts, teachers for good grades and voters for votes? We desperately need them now to supply their natural oil to those

power stations that produce energy,” Jaya Ahsan, failing to study for her upcoming HSC exams due to frequent load-shedding, asked.

Other career oilers felt cheated. “I read years ago that for there to be electricity, we have to inject oil into the power grid. That is when I saw my boss wearing chequered clothes, and I thought that was the power grid ... Now people are telling me that there is a national grid,” a man from Chapasthan’s port city said.

Meanwhile, those superiors, who have been oiled for years, are suffering from severe insecurity. As the news went viral that the country is running out of oil, their daily lives were disrupted. Unknown sources said they have faced a nearly 70 percent fall in flattery in just a week and the rate is booming every day. “I am a leader and no one oils me now like before. If things go like this, I will leave this country soon and settle in an oil-rich country,” Pathok Bhattacharya, a student leader expressed his feelings in despair.

## The shoe garland maker’s manual

CHAP AL MALA

With the climate as it is nowadays, means of meting out justice is few and far between.

We have all lost faith in law enforcement nowadays, because now they take people into custody and “interrogate” them. What does that even mean?

Anyway, like always, it is up to us, the people, to mete out justice and swiftly. None of this namby pamby stuff about due process or torture in custody, away from the eyes of the world.

That is why we, at Rokto Gorom Jubok, have put together a simple, easy-to-follow guide on making the traditional garland of shoes.

### FIRST, ITS BENEFITS

Derived from the garland brides and grooms put around each others’ necks to mark their holy union, the garland of shoes is, in many ways, a mark of respect. The person who has to wear it will be married to humiliation and vow never again to do whatever he or she did to warrant the garland.

It is non-violent. At least the act of putting it on is not a violent one. If the recipient resists, then one can use some forms of creative coercion, but that is neither encouraged nor discouraged.

Lastly, it is a community and communal activity. Anyone can join in. That creates fellow feeling among perpetr... ahem... participants.

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### NOW, THE HOW

Everyone must wear shoes. On this matter there can be no debate. We further recommend that sandals are best suited for the job as it is easier to thread a connecting wire/cloth/lace through to make a magnificent footwear necklace.

Most people are encouraged to carry smartphones in order to be able to monitor Facebook statuses, comments and likes. Smartphones are also helpful in gathering a crowd to do the deed, because none of us are carrying multiple shoes. Which leads us to...

A shoe garland party must be of at least four people, otherwise the garland doesn’t look pretty as the footwear is not spaced out sufficiently.

If one of the party is wearing a belt, that is perfect, because the neyar that holds up one of the others’ panjabis will come in handy when tying the shoes together. But we also need the neyar volunteer to be able to hold his panjabi up, and that’s where the belt comes in. Pro tip: think ahead.

Once the attac ... ahem ... ceremony is complete, the participants will suddenly find themselves without shoes. That is when the value of planning ahead is illustrated. Always conduct the ceremony near a mosque during prayer times.

One final pro tip. To save time and effort, drag around the newly garlanded with you while you are checking FB for more statuses. If you find a new targe... ahem... recipient, just take the garland off the old and put it around the neck of the new. If you need new thread, check to see if the old recipient, who is by now wholly compliant, is wearing a panjabi. If so, you are in luck.



PHOTO: STS



## THUG LIFE 6-WHEEL EDITION

After rickshaws were banned on Pachmoshjid Road, rickshaw-pullers have come up with an interesting way to bypass the law. They are now transporting their vehicles on vans. But law enforcers are quick to take action as well and are fining these poor rickshaw-pullers, proving that late-stage capitalism is out to kill us.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS