



**P3** Dhaka Gate set to regain its past glory



**P5** Karnaphuli Tunnel: still a lot to do



**P6** Pori is always my first priority



**P7** Bolton admits he 'helped plan coups'

# Sri Lankan president flees abroad

Lands in Maldives; he may fly to S'pore or UAE; protesters storm PM's office defying emergency

AGENCIES

Protesters in Sri Lanka defied tear gas, water cannon and a state of emergency to storm the prime minister's office yesterday after the president fled overseas.

Reports said Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled to the Maldives after an economic collapse unleashed a popular uprising that appeared to end his family's near two decade dominance of the country.

His decision to leave his ally Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe in charge as acting president triggered more demonstrations, with protesters storming the premier's office demanding that he go too.

Rajapaksa, his wife and two bodyguards left the main international airport near Colombo aboard an air force plane early yesterday, the air force said in a statement.

Maldives' local media suggested that Rajapaksa was staying at an exclusive resort and would leave for either the United Arab Emirates or Singapore later yesterday.

"He is going into exile in either of the two locations," a Sri Lankan security source in Colombo told AFP. "Ensuring security would be a challenge because there are Sri Lankan communities in both."

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Protesters wave Sri Lankan flags after storming the office of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe in Colombo yesterday. Barely hours after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country, thousands of people yesterday clashed with security forces, demanding the resignation of the prime minister, who was appointed as the interim president.

PHOTO: AFP

## 'MP assaults principal of a college'

Rajshahi lawmaker refutes allegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi MP has allegedly assaulted a college principal at his office last week.

Lawmaker Omar Faruk Chowdhury from Rajshahi-1 constituency, however, refutes the allegation.

Talking to this correspondent, he claimed some college principals, who met him at his chamber on July 7, got locked into a brawl, and it was he who stopped them.

However, Asaduzzaman Asad, former general secretary of Rajshahi District Awami League, said he visited the injured principal of Rajbari Degree College, Salim Reza, at his home on Monday and saw bruises on different parts of his body. He added that the lawmaker was giving the ruling party a bad name.

Meanwhile, the National

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## Taka again loses value against dollar

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

The taka depreciated once again against the US dollar in the inter-bank platform yesterday.

The exchange rate stood at Tk 93.95 per dollar. It was Tk 93.45 on Tuesday.

On July 13 last year, the exchange rate was Tk 84.80, which means the taka lost 10.79 percent value in a year.

The country's foreign exchange market is facing a shortage of US dollars due

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

## Many digital services exist in name only

Finds a govt study

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MAHMUDUL HASAN

People are not getting the maximum benefit from the 761 services the government have digitalised for slow servers and poor internet speed, according to a government evaluation.

A number of those services can no longer be requested online, according to the evaluation of the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) on 67 select digital services of 26 ministries and divisions.

The information was collected through direct interviews with 55 service providers at the administrative level and 340 service recipients and beneficiaries at the marginal level.

About 91 percent of the service recipients said the services still exist and the rest said it is no longer running. About 90 percent of the users are positive about digital services.

Although most of the surveyed people expressed their satisfaction with the services, they are facing different types of problems while requesting e-dockets, land mutation, e-passport, machine-readable passport, loan service, e-trade licence and health service on call, among others.

The websites through which the services can be requested are not updated regularly.

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## Spinners lead Tigers to series victory



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh continued their dominance over the West Indies in ODIs as the Tamim Iqbal-led side registered a comprehensive nine-wicket victory to clinch the three-match series 2-0 with a game in hand at the Providence Stadium in Guyana yesterday.

After bundling out the hosts for a meagre 108 in just 35 overs -- the Tigers' best bowling performance against a Test-playing side away from home -- Tamim smashed an unbeaten fifty while Liton Das was 32 not out to see the Tigers home in just 20.4 overs.

Tamim finished the chase in style, going down the ground and smashing spinner Gudakesh Motie for a boundary to bring up his 53rd ODI fifty.

The win was Bangladesh's 10th in a row over West Indies in ODIs, which also ensured the Tigers' fourth successive bilateral series triumph against them.

Bangladesh got off to a solid start as openers Tamim and Najmul Hossain Shanto combined for a 48-run stand.

Shanto departed when he miscued a Motie delivery and was caught in the cow corner in the 13th over.

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## Govt takes austerity to field level

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and JAMIL MAHMUD

In face of growing pressure on the country's economy, the government issued strict directives to field-level administration to practise austerity while spending from the budget allocation.

"The allocated money must be spent maintaining austerity subject to compliance with the government's financial and administrative rules," reads a public administration ministry directive issued to all upazila and district administrations last week.

The directive was published on the ministry's website yesterday.

The public administration ministry has also directed that field-level administration will in no way be allowed to spend additional money surpassing the amount allocated for them in the national budget for 2022-23.

The directive came days after similar instructions were issued by the finance ministry.

On the first working day of this fiscal year on July 3, the finance ministry in three notices rolled out a "cocktail of austerity measures" for all ministries and divisions, saying following those directives can save about Tk 60,000 crore.

The instructions came after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 29 urged everyone to practise austerity.

The public administration ministry in its directive

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### BUSINESS NOTICE

The business pages are not being published today as regular business activities are yet to resume after Eid-ul-Azha holidays. The business pages will be out as usual from Friday.

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## SPECIAL CHILDREN Ensure proper educational environment for them: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for ensuring integrated environment of education to help nurture merit and flourish creativity of children with autism and neuro-developmental disorders (NDD).

"Environment of integrated education is very much important ...," she said.

The premier said this while witnessing the architectural design of the "National Academy for Autism and Neuro-Development Disabilities (NAAND) Complex" at the Gono Bhaban.

The complex of international standards is being constructed to ensure fair and equal education for children with autism and NDD.

Hasina said that open and natural environment play an important role in physical and psychological development of those children.

She put emphasis on creating new trainers and teachers apart from upgrading training for current teachers for children with autism and NDD.

## Bangladesh picks new envoys to US, India

DIPLMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to appoint Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Muhammad Imran as the country's next envoy to the US, said a foreign ministry statement yesterday.

It has also decided to appoint Md Mustafizur Rahman, permanent representative of Bangladesh to the UN in Geneva and also the ambassador to Switzerland, as the high commissioner to India.

Imran will replace M Shahidul Islam, who was made Bangladesh ambassador to the US in September 2020. This means that Shahidul is being replaced more than a year before completion of his three-year tenure.

The changes in important diplomatic positions come months

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



VACATION ENDS... Passengers walking towards the exit on a platform of the Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital around noon yesterday. They were returning from Jamalpur after spending the Eid holidays there.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

### IMPASSE OVER GRAIN EXPORTS

## Russia, Ukraine hold talks to ease food crisis

Kyiv rules out ceding territory to Moscow to secure peace

REUTERS, Istanbul

Russian, Ukrainian and Turkish military delegations met with UN officials in Istanbul yesterday for talks on resuming exports of Ukrainian grain from the major Black Sea port of Odesa as a global food crisis worsens.

Turkey has been working with the United Nations to broker a deal after Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine sent prices soaring for grains, cooking oils, fuel and fertilizer. Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar announced the latest talks on Tuesday.

The Interfax news agency quoted the spokesperson for Russia's defence ministry as saying that Moscow had presented a package of proposals for a "speedy practical resolution of this issue" during yesterday's meeting.

It was not immediately clear whether any progress had been made during the talks.

"We are working hard indeed but there is still a way to go," UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters on Tuesday. "Many people are talking about it. We prefer to try and do it."

Ukraine and Russia are major global wheat suppliers, and Russia is also a large fertilizer exporter, while Ukraine is a significant producer of corn and sunflower oil.

Diplomats say details of the plan under discussion include Ukrainian vessels guiding grain ships in and out through mined port waters; Russia agreeing to a truce while shipments move; and Turkey - supported by the United Nations - inspecting ships to allay Russian fears of weapons smuggling.

The Interfax news agency quoted Pyotr Ilyichev, head of the international organisations department at the Russian foreign ministry, as saying Russia is ready to facilitate the navigation of foreign commercial vessels to export Ukrainian grain.

He added that Russia wants to control and inspect vessels to rule out "arms smuggling".

News agency RIA quoted another diplomatic source as saying that Russia's demands include the removal of "obstacles to the exports" created by Western

sanctions.

"There are obstacles for the Russian side in the areas of ship insurance, logistics, transportation services and banking operations due to the sanctions imposed," RIA's source said.

Russia has continued to export grain since the war started but there is a lack of large vessels as many owners are afraid to send them to the region. Cost of freight and insurance have also risen sharply.

Ukraine sparked hopes on Tuesday for an increase in grain exports despite Russia's blockade of Black Sea ports, noting that ships had started to pass through an important mouth of the Danube river.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba was quoted by Spanish newspaper El Pais as saying that Kyiv was "two steps away" from hammering out a deal with Moscow.

"The security concerns, linked to Russia's position, need to be addressed. We are in the final phase and now everything depends on Russia," he said, adding that Moscow could still drag out the talks.

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## Rain likely at different places today

UNB, Dhaka

The Met office predicts rain at different places in the country.

"Light to moderate rain or thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at a few places over Barishal, Chattogram, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places in Dhaka, Rangpur, Rajshahi and Khulna divisions with moderately heavy falls at isolated places over the country," the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) said yesterday.

A mild heat wave is sweeping over Sylhet division and the districts of Rajshahi, Panchagarh and Nilphamari and it may continue, it said.

### MUNIA MURDER CASE

## Police fail to submit probe report for the 15th time

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked the investigator to submit by August 1 the probe report in a case filed against Bashundhara Group MD Sayem Sobhan Anvir after the officer failed to submit the report for the 15th time.

Anvir and seven others were accused in a case filed on September 6, 2021, of rape and murder of a college student in the capital.

Inspector Alauddin of Police Bureau of Investigation is investigating the case.

The body of 21-year-old Mosarat Jahan Munia was found at a Gulshan flat on April 26 last year.

Her elder sister filed a case with the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-8 of Dhaka.

The other accused include Ahmed Akbar Sobhan, better known as Shah Alam, chairman of Bashundhara Group.

## Man dies as AL factions clash

A CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

A 55-year-old man was killed and at least 30 others were injured in a clash between the supporters of two local leaders of the Awami League.

Police sent the body of Mofizur Rahman, 55, who was a supporter of former UP member Shah Alam, to a morgue for autopsy.

Six of the injured were referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as their condition was critical, said Medical Officer Lipi Akter of Narsingdi Sadar Hospital.

Locals said the clash happened between the supporters of Abdul Khalek, vice-president of Shrinagar Union AL, and Shah Alam, executive member of Raipura Upazila Jubo League.

None of them could be reached for comments.

Ataur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Raipura Police Station, said additional police forces were deployed in the area to avert further violence.

## Govt takes austerity

FROM PAGE 1

said expenditures cannot go unabated and field-level administrations cannot go on spending sprees at the end of the fiscal year.

If there is confusion regarding budget allocation, the field-level administrations have to consult with the public administration ministry before they spend from the budget.

In the directive, the public administration ministry also said field-level administrations need to pay electricity bills timely.

In case of outstanding electricity bills, they have to explain the reasons to the ministry.

The government stance comes in the face of strained foreign currency reserves, rising global and domestic inflation and continued jitters surrounding the Russia-Ukraine war.

According to the finance ministry directive, no vehicles, aircraft, helicopters, ships, boats or barges can be purchased by the government, semi-government, autonomous and statutory bodies as well as state-owned enterprises and financial institutions or under any development projects until further notice.

In the budget for fiscal 2022-23, Tk 8,080 crore has been allocated for this overhead, down 1.6 percent from the

just-concluded fiscal year.

Institutions can spend their allocations only for emergency and essential needs.

Even then, they can spend at most 50 percent of the amount allotted.

About Tk 17,000 crore can be saved as a result, according to the budget document.

No honorarium can be given for attending meetings of project implementation committee, project steering committee, departmental project evaluation committee and departmental special project evaluation committee.

In the budget for this fiscal year, Tk 619 crore has been allocated for honorarium and special expenses, down 27.3 percent from fiscal 2021-22.

Besides, the government also suspended implementation of low-priority projects for the time being.

In the 2022-2023 fiscal year's budget, Tk 82,745 crore has been earmarked for subsidy which is nearly double the original allocation of the last fiscal year.

Finance ministry officials said due to global price hike of different commodities including fuel, fertilisers and LNG, the government's subsidy in the current fiscal could be even higher.

As a result, the government has to take an all-out austerity measure, they said.

## Sri Lankan president flees abroad

FROM PAGE 1

Even in the Maldives, Gotabaya yesterday faced protests with dozens of people urging Male not to provide him a safe haven.

"Dear Maldivian friends, please urge your government not to safeguard criminals," said a black and white banner held by Sri Lankans working in the islands' tiny capital.

Local media carried unverified videos of residents shouting insults at Rajapaksa as he walked out of the Velana International airport following his arrival on a military aircraft.

Authorities declined to reveal the whereabouts of Wickremesinghe, who declared a nationwide curfew until today morning in a bid to prevent further unrest after protesters invaded his office.

Police stationed outside had fired several rounds of tear gas, but the protesters were not deterred and surged into the compound.

"It feels pretty marvellous, people were trying to take this place for about three hours," said college student Sanchuka Kavinda, 25, standing next to a mangled, open gate of the prime minister's office. "No matter what, everyone in this crowd will be here until Ranil also steps down."

Local media said a 26-year-old protester who was hospitalised after being tear-gassed died of breathing

difficulties.

In a statement, Wickremesinghe said the protesters had no reason to storm his office.

"They want to stop the parliamentary process. But we must respect the Constitution," he said.

On the lower floor of the whitewashed colonial-era building, dozens of protesters sang Sinhala pop songs. A large group of security personnel armed with assault rifles sat in a room.

Protest organisers and security personnel manned a central wooden staircase at the heart of the building, guiding sightseers to and from the upper floor where the prime minister's room is located.

Parliament is expected to name a new full-time president next week, and a top ruling party source told Reuters Wickremesinghe was the party's first choice, although no decision had been taken.

An attempt by Wickremesinghe to cling on would infuriate the protesters who say he is a close ally of the Rajapaksa family, which has dominated the country since Rajapaksa's older brother Mahinda became president in 2005.

"An MP with one seat is appointed as PM. Now the same person is appointed as acting President," the opposition presidential nominee,

bare hands and then with a stick.

The others present in the room later took Salim outside.

The sources said witnesses to the incident, including the victim himself, would keep mum fearing reprisals from the MP's men.

Orthopaedic specialist Sayed Ahmed, who has a chamber in Lakkhipur area of Rajshahi city, treated Salim later that day. He told The Daily Star that the injuries were serious. He added that he knew Salim as they are from the same village.

However, as a report over the alleged torture was published by a national newspaper yesterday, Salim wrote on Facebook that the MP had not assaulted

him and what really happened was that the teachers meeting the MP engaged in an argument among themselves.

MP Omar's actions and comments made headlines multiple times before.

After the national election in 2018, his men took position at the two entry points of a village and barred all types of vehicular movement through the village because many of the locals did not vote for him.

The same year, it was reported in the media that ruling party activists assaulted a college principal in front of the MP on August 19.

Principal Salim Reza yesterday did not respond to this correspondent's request for a comment.

a new president is elected on July 20 as scheduled.

Amid the economic and political chaos, Sri Lanka's sovereign bond prices hit record lows yesterday.

The US Embassy in Colombo said it was cancelling consular services for the afternoon and for Thursday as a precautionary measure.

The island nation's tourism-dependent economy was hammered first by the Covid-19 pandemic and then a fall in remittances from overseas Sri Lankans. A ban on chemical fertilisers hit output although the ban was later reversed. Read full story

The Rajapaksas implemented populist tax cuts in 2019 that hurt government finances, while shrinking foreign reserves curtailed imports of fuel, food and medicines.

Petrol has been severely rationed and long lines have formed in front of shops selling cooking gas. Headline inflation hit 54.6 percent last month and the central bank has warned that it could rise to 70 percent in coming months.

Mahinda Rajapaksa, president from 2005-2015 and later prime minister under his brother, resigned in May after protests against the family turned violent. He remained in hiding at a military base in the east of the country for some days before returning to Colombo.

A reporter who had met him earlier said the principal had a black eye and injury marks on his right hand, stomach and back.

Imrul Haq, vice-principal of Godagari Degree College, who was present at the MP's chamber that day, said the lawmaker became angry at the principal over an issue. "But nothing as bad as an assault happened."

Omar yesterday said some individuals were out to put the blame on him because of an "internal political rivalry".

The MP late last night said he will hold a press conference about the matter today. Principal Salim is likely to be present at the event.



## Garbage truck claims yet another life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was killed after a garbage truck hit his motorcycle in Dhaka's Kafrul area yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Sabbir Ahmed Rokey, aged around 25, police said.

A garbage truck of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) hit the motorcycle around 4:45pm in Mirpur-14 area, leaving him critically injured, said Hafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Kafrul Police Station.

He was rushed to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, where the on-duty doctor declared him dead, he said.

Police seized the truck and detained its driver, Abdus Salam (50), following the incident, the OC added.

In November last year, two people -- a Notre Dame College student and a pillion rider -- were killed

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## Following in his brother's footsteps

Abrar Fahad's younger brother to enrol at Buet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abrar Faiyaj, the younger brother of Buet student Abrar Fahad, who was murdered by Chhatra League members in 2019, has decided to enrol at the same university.

"I took the decision after discussing with my family," Faiyaj told this correspondent.

Asked whether he would stay in the university dormitory, Faiyaj said there are some formalities regarding that.

"My classes will start after four to five months; besides it is uncertain whether I will get a seat in the hall this year. But I will move to the dorm once my seat is confirmed," he added.

Faiyaj also said earlier, he got admitted to Islamic University of Technology (IUT) and is going to cancel the admission.

Faiyaj secured 450th position in the Buet entrance exam. He has been selected for the Department of Mechanical Engineering.

In the early hours of October 7 of 2019, Abrar Fahad, a sophomore student of Buet's EEE, died after he was brutally beaten by some BCL activists at Sher-e-Bangla Hall of the university.

The Buet authorities on October 11 that year banned

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## 51 more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 51 dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals across the country in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

With the 51 new cases, the total number of dengue patients rose to 1,528, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the patients, 169 are still undergoing treatment.

A total of 1,358 patients have been released from hospitals and one patient has died so far.

PRAYER TIMING		JULY 14	
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-10	12-45	5-00	6-55 8-17
JAMAAAT 4-45	1-15	5-15	7-00 8-45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION			



Due to indiscriminate dumping of construction materials on the road, this entire area in front of Shahbagh's Aziz Super Market was covered with dust yesterday. Contributing to the ever-existing air pollution in the capital, the dust created serious inconvenience for pedestrians and patients commuting to adjacent hospitals.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

# Living with struggles and uncertainty

Survival gets hard for Bangladeshi migrants in Lebanon with ongoing economic crisis

JAMIL MAHMUD

Bangladeshi migrant workers continued to face financial hardship in Lebanon, while many found it difficult to remit money home after making ends meet, due to a prolonged economic crisis there.

Because of the Lebanese pound's depreciation against US dollar, many Bangladeshi migrant workers saw their purchasing capacity drop drastically as prices of food and fuel soared.

In August last year, Al Jazeera published an analysis on Lebanon's price hike situation. It showed that in July 2019, one kilo each of rice, chicken, milk (one litre), cucumber, tomato, orange, and apple would cost 10,250 Lebanese pounds (LBP).

Spending the same amount in July 2020, a consumer would get only one kilo each of milk, tomato, and orange. In July 2021, to get one kilo of each of the seven basic items, a consumer was required to spend 90,230 LBP.

According to the Al Jazeera report, the price of one-kilo rice in Lebanon increased to 21,000 LBP in July 2021 compared to 1,100 LBP in July 2019.

Zakir Hossain (39), a Bangladeshi migrant worker in Beirut, said he recently bought a 20-kilo sack of rice at 37,500 LBP per kg.

Pointing to Lebanon's recent

parliamentary elections, Zakir said many Lebanese and foreign workers like him were expecting an economic change with the formulation of a new government.

"But there is little hope as of now," he said, adding that he and his wife were barely surviving with their dual income.

Although many companies were supposed to pay foreign workers in

LEBANON'S ECONOMIC CRISIS
Price of one-kilo rice increased to 21,000 LBP in July 2021 compared to 1,100 LBP in July 2019
Defaulted on debt worth \$90 billion, GDP's 170pc in March, 2020
Black market traders selling USD for approx 27,850 LBP
LBP lost nearly 90pc value in June 2021

US dollars, only a handful of them now pays workers a portion of their wage in US currency and the rest in local currency. The majority of companies pay full wages in local currency, he added.

Lebanon's crisis began in late 2019 after the government announced newly proposed tax schemes, according to an AP report, recently published by

Lebanese online media outlet Naharnet.

In March 2020, Lebanon defaulted on paying back its massive debt, worth at the time about \$90 billion or 170 percent of GDP -- one of the highest in the world.

In June 2021, with the currency having lost nearly 90 percent of its value, the World Bank said the crisis ranked as one of the worst the world has seen in more than 150 years, reports AP.

Before the crisis unfolded, the Lebanese Pound was exchanged at 1,500 to the US dollar.

On June 29, black market traders in Lebanon were selling the US dollar for 27,850 Lebanese pounds, says a report by Lebanese online news outlet the961.com.

The dollar's current official rate still stands at 1,500 Lebanese pounds, while the bank rate is 8,000 Lebanese pounds.

Towards the end of last year, Lebanon was hosting nearly 1.20 lakh Bangladeshis. Around 20,000 of them were estimated to be undocumented.

Amid the economic crisis, at least 14,000 undocumented migrant workers returned home from Lebanon till 2021 under different voluntary repatriation programmes by the Bangladesh mission.

Mashiur Titu (40), a service technician at a packaging

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## France keen on bolstering economic, social ties

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Based on the strong foundation of bilateral ties, France wants to consolidate its economic and social relations with Bangladesh to face the numerous challenges to come.

"Let me assure you that the French embassy will continue to play an active role to further strengthen the friendly relations between our two countries," said France Embassy Charge d'Affaires Guillaume Audren de Kerdel yesterday, in a message marking French National Day, to be observed today.

France and Bangladesh share many views, in particular the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, respectful of international law. The two countries again reaffirmed their determination to strengthen partnerships in the field of blue economy, defence and science in particular, said Kerdel in a statement.

French Development Agency (AFD), which opened its Dhaka office in 2012, has become a key player in development cooperation in Bangladesh, with involvement in projects in different areas such as energy, water,

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## Ignoring directives, DNCC councillor goes on foreign trip

MAHIBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The government's request to save money during the economic crisis seems to have fallen on deaf ears, as a city councillor has flown to Thailand for tourism purposes, even though Local Government Division (LGD) had questioned the trip's motive.

On July 7, in three separate letters, LGD asked whether the trips of three councillors to Thailand and Singapore for tourism purposes are important and necessary.

However, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) ward councillor Jahidul Islam Mollah, one of the three councillors, did not wait for LGD's consent. He flew to Thailand yesterday, a staffer of his office confirmed to The Daily Star.

The two others are Dhaka South City Corporation ward councillors Akash Kumar Bhowmik and Mahmudul Hasan.

Signed by LGD Deputy Secretary Shamsul Islam, the letters mentioned that Finance Division in a circular on May 12 gave directives to keep all foreign trips for officials suspended until further notice, due to the global economic crisis and post-Covid recovery.

Against this backdrop, LGD inquired about the councillors' trips.

Contacted, Mahmudul declined to comment on the matter. "I'm busy right now," he said before cutting the call. Both Bhowmik and Jahidul could not be reached for comment.

While taking part in the general discussion on the proposed national budget in parliament on June 29,

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## Journo found dead at home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a journalist from her residence in Dhaka's Hazaribagh area yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Shohana Parvin Tuli (38), a member of Dhaka Union of Journalists and Dhaka Sub-editors Council.

On information, police recovered the body, hanging from a ceiling fan with a scarf, around 3:30pm and sent it to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Muktaruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Hazaribagh Police Station. The OC said police are investigating the incident.

A former student of mass communication and journalism department at Dhaka University, Shohana worked for different national dailies and online news portals before starting an online shop recently. Police said one of her friends first came to the house after failing to communicate with her over the phone. The friend then informed police.

## 'Demolish all illegal structures' Taposh directs officials to free Buriganga channel from encroachment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday directed officials concerned of the DSCC to demolish all illegal structures from Adi Buriganga channel and its adjoining canal.

Taposh directed this during a surprise visit to the Kalunagar area.

During the visit, the mayor found walls of buildings on the land of Kalunagar canal. He directed the officials concerned to take action immediately. Earlier, Taposh said they will recover the Adi Buriganga channel based on a CS map.

## Flood death toll stands at 118

UNB, Dhaka

The death toll from the devastating floods in Netrokona and Habiganj districts rose to 118 yesterday morning, with the recovery of two more bodies in the past 24 hours.

These two victims had drowned in floodwaters, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of the total deceased, 91 people drowned in floodwaters, 15 were struck by lightning, two died from snake bites, one from diarrhoea, and nine due to other reasons.

Of the deceased, 64 people died in Sylhet, 41 in Mymensingh, 12 in Rangpur and one in Dhaka division, the DGHS said.

Of a total of 70 flood-hit upazilas, 33 are in Sylhet division, 16 in Rangpur division, 20 in Mymensingh division and one in Chattogram division, according to the DGHS.

## Dhaka Gate to return to its past glory

HELEMUL ALAM

Once upon a time, it used to mark the terminus of the largest city of undivided Bengal; currently it lies uncared for, surrounded by bushes, covered by posters, in a shadowy corner of Dhaka University campus.

It is the Dhaka gate, popularly known as the gate of Mir Jumla, the Mughal governor of Bengal, renowned for securing Dhaka and its inhabitants from the raids of pirates. From 17th to the beginning of the 19th century, this gate was the main entrance to Dhaka city which, at that time, flourished on the banks of the Buriganga.

Currently, its side walls are covered with moss and algae. The central pillar is being used as a panel for sticking posters and advertisements.

Dhaka Gate is enlisted as one of the oldest Mughal architectures in Dhaka.

After the re-establishment of Dhaka as the capital of Bengal in 1660, the city expanded rapidly -- stretching up to Jafarabad in the west, Postogola in the east, and Tongi Bridge in the north. Mir Jumla II was appointed as the subahdar of Bengal by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb at the time, and it was he who constructed the gate.



This is the current state of Dhaka Gate, uncared for and surrounded by weeds. If all goes according to plan, however, the structure will take on a new look, as seen in the proposed design.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



## Nyma Nargis passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

N y m a N a r g i s, executive director of Institute of Communications Studies, died of brain stroke on Tuesday at LabAid Hospital. She was 44.

Nyma completed her graduation and post-graduation from Mass Communication and Journalism department of Dhaka University.

She left behind her only son.

Her family will take decision regarding her burial and namaz-e-janaza after one of her sisters returns home from abroad.

## Air quality in traffic free Dhaka 'good'

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka's air quality was "good" yesterday morning.

With an air quality index (AQI) score of 37 at 9:04am today, the capital city of Bangladesh ranked 39th in the list of world cities with the worst air quality.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered "good" while between 50 and 100 is "moderate". An AQI between 101 and 200 is considered "unhealthy".

# Tale from a hundred years ago

155-year-old stone inscription found in Natore



ANWAR ALI

An ancient stone with inscription on it has been found at Natore's Madhnagar village recently, bearing the history of a 155-year-old "Rath Jatra" festival.

The inscription -- Sanskrit written in Bangla alphabets -- was done with lead on a piece of white stone.

The family of Pintu Adhikari, a Hindu priest, has been preserving the stone at

their residence. Department of Archaeology officials have declared it a "valuable piece of artifact".

Nahid Sultana, deputy director of Rajshahi divisional archaeology department, said they would visit Madhnagar soon. "Such a stone cannot stay at a private house. It is a documentation of ancient history."

This correspondent saw the stone during a recent visit to Madhnagar. Pintu Adhikari,

who is also the president of the Bishnu temple committee, said the stone was on the temple's front wall. "The temple was destroyed in the 70s. Our family has been preserving the stone since then," said Pintu.

Rajshahi University's former Sanskrit professor Manjula Chowdhury translated the inscription for this correspondent.

According to Chowdhury, the stone says Jamini Sundori Bashak, the zamindar of Pabna's

Dilalpur, patronised for a Rath made up of bronze at Madhnagar in 1867. He also raised a Bishnu temple at the site.

Till the partition in 1947, the Rath Jatra festival was organised every monsoon. The month-long festival would draw devotees from across the then Indian subcontinent, locals said.

The bronze Rath, which used to be in front of the temple, is still there. Most of its grandeur, however, has been robbed, as it has been neglected for years.

## Ignoring directives

FROM PAGE 3

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina advised people to take austerity measures in the wake of global inflation.

"Everyone has to increase their own savings; we all have to be economical. Everyone has to protect themselves by saving something, by practising austerity," she said.

Noting that the government is discouraging import of luxury goods,

Hasina urged all not to import nonessential goods.

Yesterday, talking to The Daily Star, DNCC Chief Executive Officer Selim Reza said he would look into whether the councillor applied to travel for tourism purposes. "I'm yet to look into what instruction the LGD has given."

"We'll seek an explanation from the councillor and write back to LGD," he said.

## Dhaka Gate to return

FROM PAGE 3

A residential area was established around the gate at that time. It was known as Shujatpur and Chistia. During those days, Dhaka was frequently attacked from the north by Magh and Portuguese pirates. It is generally believed that the gate was apparently a border of Dhaka and was built to counter the pirates.

It was later rebuilt by Charles Daves in 1825.

Currently, it resides in the DU area near Curzon Hall and Shishu Academy. The DSCC has recently taken up a project to restore the gate.

Heritage specialist Prof. Abu Sayeed, who is heading the project, said, "We'll give it a look that will make visitors actually understand that there was a gate of great significance here a long time ago."

"There were three pillars each on two sides of the

gate, of which, one was broken. We will restore those," he added.

Pinnacles on the pillar's top will be added and lights will be set up, Sayeed said. "A panel board will be set up at the gate, where Dhaka Gate's history will be written."

DSCC chief town planner Md Sirajul Islam said a gate of such historic importance cannot be ignored.

He said DSCC appointed Prof Sayeed as a consultant due to his experience in renovating heritage sites.

"Around Tk 74 lakh will be required for the renovation. So far, the initial design's drawing has been submitted," he said.

It will take around two months to complete the tender procedure, after which they will start construction work, which would take six months to be completed, he said.

## Still a lot to do

FROM PAGE 5

(one at Anwara and another at Patenga) will see heavy traffic flow after opening, as vehicles going to-and-fro the airport, Chattogram Port, CPEZ, KEPZ, under-construction bay terminal, Mirsarai Economic Zone, CUFL, KAFCO, China EPZ, Cox's Bazar coal power plant and other establishments will use the tunnel and its approach roads.

Considering all aspects, the approach roads should be constructed with proper designs.

In November 2015, Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnee) approved the much-hyped, multi-lane road tunnel project, with a budget of Tk 8,446.64 crore. The cost later rose to Tk 10,374.42 crore.

The Exim Bank of China

is giving Tk 5,913.19 crore at an interest rate of 2 percent, while Bangladesh government is providing the rest.

The main tunnel is 3.32 kilometres long and has two tubes, each 2.45 km long. Each tube will have two lanes.

In the recommendation, the committee said for uninterrupted vehicular movement of Dhaka-bound vehicles, a flyover can be constructed at the extended portion of the elevated expressway and connected to the "G-1" road.

For free movement of vehicles going through Tunnel Approach Road, a U-loop can be constructed above CDA's Outer Ring Road to solve all problems related to turning right to go to Lalkhan Bazar and airport.

A flyover needs to be

constructed over China Harbour Road and Tunnel Approach Road intersection.

A fire-service station needs to be built at the tunnel area. To avoid gridlocks during toll collection, an electronic toll collection system can be installed.

Deputy Commissioner (DC, Estate and Development) SM Mostain Hossain of CMP told The Daily Star that several structures -- including bypass, overpass, flyover, and U-loops in several points -- should be constructed, so that the huge amount of traffic can pass by, without interrupting tunnel-bound traffic.

CDA Chief Engineer Kazi Hasan Bin Shams said, "The committee has identified several good issues regarding tunnel traffic management, and we have already completed the intersection design based on the recommendation, dividing construction work into several phases."

Tunnel Project Director Habibur Rahman said, "Eighty-five percent of work has been completed. The committee placed its recommendation to the ministry; I don't know the details."

## Living with

FROM PAGE 3

company in Beirut, said he will wait until December this year before considering whether he should return to Bangladesh.

Titu said he told his employer about his financial hardship. In response, he was promised to be paid an additional \$100, which came as a relief.

Babu Saha, a Bangladeshi journalist in Beirut, said Bangladeshi migrant workers were having income-generating opportunities but due to the economic crisis, life has become harder for most of them.

In 2019-2020, Lebanon generated \$86.99 million in remittance, which dropped to \$66.79 million in the following fiscal, according to Bangladesh Bank's data.

In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, inward remittance from Lebanon was \$49.74 million, the central bank data says.

## Following in

FROM PAGE 3

all political activities on the campus.

On November 13 that year, the Detective Branch of police submitted the charge sheet of the case to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka against 25 accused.

On December 8, 2021, 20 people were sentenced to death and five others to life term imprisonment in the murder case.

## Garbage truck

FROM PAGE 3

in separate accidents after two garbage trucks of both the city corporations hit them in the capital's Gulistan and Panthapath areas.

The death of the student sparked protest among fellow students, forcing the city corporations to take several steps to prevent such accidents involving their garbage trucks.

## France keen

FROM PAGE 3

transportation, health and finance.

On May 12 this year, France and Bangladesh signed an agreement establishing AFD as a development partner of Bangladesh. Thus, AFD renewed its commitment in supporting green and inclusive growth in Bangladesh.

**DEATH ANNIVERSARY**

Today is the fifth Death Anniversary of Mrs. Pratima Das Gupta of Baridhara Diplomatic Zone, Dhaka a prominent social worker and philanthropist. All relatives, friends and well wishers are cordially requested to keep her in their prayer.

**Dilip Das Gupta-Husband**  
**Sangita & Suparna-Daughters**

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**

কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, খুলনা

**khulnavat@q@gmail.com**

Fax: ০৪১-৭৬০৭৫৮

**নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির আপডেট**

কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, খুলনার ওয় ও ৪র্থ শ্রেণির কর্মচারী নিয়োগ পরীক্ষা সম্পন্ন করার লক্ষ্যে সিপিএ পদে আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীগণের শারীরিক (Physical) পরীক্ষা আগামী ২৭/০৭/২০২২খ্রিঃ তারিখ এবং গাজীচালক পদে আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীগণের প্রায়োগিক (Practical) পরীক্ষা আগামী ২৮/০৭/২০২২খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ০৯.০০ ঘটিকা হতে অত্র কমিশনারেটের টেনিস মাঠ/বেলার মাঠে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। উভয় পদের যোগ্য আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীগণের নিজ নিজ স্থায়ী ঠিকানার ইভেমেথো তাকযোগে প্রবেশপত্র পাঠানো হয়েছে। কোন যোগ্য আবেদনকারী প্রার্থী ২৪/০৭/২০২২খ্রিঃ তারিখের মধ্যে প্রবেশপত্র না পেয়ে থাকলে কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, খুলনার অফিসে যোগাযোগ করে আনুষ্ঠানিক দলিলাদি দাখিল সাপেক্ষে তার অনুকূলে প্রবেশপত্র সংগ্রহ করতে পারবে। উল্লেখ্য, উভয় পদে আবেদনকারী যোগ্য প্রার্থীদের তালিকা অত্র কমিশনারেটের নিজস্ব ওয়েবসাইট [www.khulnavat.gov.bd](http://www.khulnavat.gov.bd) এ visit করে স্ব স্ব নামের তালিকা দেখে নিতে পারবেন এবং অনলাইনে (০১/০৬/২২ হতে ২১/০৬/২২) যারা আবেদন করেছেন তাদের মধ্য হতে সিপিএ ও গাজীচালক পদে আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীগণ <http://khulnavat.teletalk.com.bd> এ visit করে প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোড করে উপস্থিতিসময় ও তারিখে পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করবেন।

**মোঃ মিলন শেখ**  
যুগ্ম কমিশনার  
ও  
সদস্য সচিব, বিভাগীয় নির্বাচন কমিটি  
কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, খুলনা

১৪২৯-১০৭৪

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

Prime Minister's Office  
Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority  
BEPZA Complex, House: 19/D, Road: 6, Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1205  
([www.bepza.gov.bd](http://www.bepza.gov.bd))

Date: 07.07.2022

**Ref No. 03.06.2616.311.05.076.18-821**

**Invitation for Tender No. 01/2022-2023**

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the eligible suppliers for the following goods and service as per terms & conditions stated below.

1	Ministry/Division	Prime Minister's Office
2	Agency	Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA)
3	Procuring entity name	Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA)
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka
5	Invitation for	Open Tender
6	Invitation Ref. No. and date	Ref No. 03.06.2616.311.05.076.18-821 Date: 07/07/2022
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>		
7	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) (Framework Contract)
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>		
8	Budget and source of funds	Self Finance of BEPZA
9	Development partners (if applicable)	N/A
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>		
10	Project/program code (if applicable)	N/A
11	Project/program name	
12	Tender Package No.	BEPZA Med-1
13	Tender package name	Supply and delivery of Medical Drugs, Surgical instrument and other related items for BEPZA Complex (Annually)
14	Tender publication date	On or before 17 July 2022
15	Tender last selling date	31 July 2022 during office hour
16	Tender last submission date and time	1 August 2022 at 12.00pm
17	Tender opening date and time	1 August 2022 at 12.30pm
18	Name & address of the office(s)	
	Selling of tender document (principal)	Accounts Section, BEPZA Complex, House 19/D, Road 6, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205.
	Receiving of tender document	Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA), BEPZA Complex, 3rd Floor, House 19/D, Road No. 6, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205
	Opening of tender document	Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA), BEPZA Complex, 3rd Floor, House 19/D, Road No. 6, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205.
19	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting	N/A
<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</b>		
20	Eligibility of tenderer	The invitation for tender is open to all eligible tenderer's who satisfy the following: a) The minimum years of general experience of the tenderer in the supply of medicine and related services as supplier (No pharmaceuticals Company) shall be 03 year. b) The minimum specific experience in supply of similar medicine and related service in a single contract completed successfully within the last 05 years with a value of at least Tk 15 lakh. c) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the tenderer shall be Tk 24 lakh. d) Debarred bidders from any govt/semi-govt./autonomous organization will be treated as ineligible to participate in the tender. e) All medicine and medical instrument are to be from reputed pharmaceutical organization. f) To attach: Tender purchasing money receipt (original), up-to-date trade license, income tax clearance certificate, VAT registration certificate, drug license etc. g. All prices are not more than published MRP (Maximum Retail Price) of manufacturers. Price/Change of any product is subject to accepted if proper document is submitted.
21	Brief description of related services	Supply and delivery of Medical Drugs, Instrument, Dressing, Laboratory, Nursing and other related items for BEPZA Complex (Annually)
22	Tender document price	Tk. 1000.00 (One thousand Taka only)
23	SN	Types of goods & service
	(i)	Medicine and instrument (as stated in the tender documents: Section 6)
		Location
		Dhaka, Bangladesh
		Tender security amount (BDT)
		Tk. 73,000.00
		Completion time
		01 year from the day of contract signing
<b>PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS</b>		
24	Name of official inviting tender	Dr. K. M. Majedul Islam
25	Designation of official inviting tender	Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA)
26	Address of official inviting tender	BEPZA Complex, 3rd Floor, House: 19/D, Road: 6, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh
27	Contract details of official inviting tender	Phone: +88029613882 Fax: +8802 9673020 E-mail: majislam2015@yahoo.com
28	Special instruction:	
	(a)	Eligible tenderer/manufacturer/suppliers/firms/authorized representative may purchase tender documents from the offices mentioned in SN-18 on submitting written request in their letterhead pad.
	(b)	Any false, forged and misleading documents furnished by tenderer shall result in rejection of the tender.
29	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any or reject all the tenders or, annul the tender proceedings.	
<b>Kalam Md. Abul Bashir</b> Additional Executive Director (CS) Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) Phone: +8802223363121		
GD-1373		



# 10 lives lost on roads

## STAR REPORT

At least ten people were killed and over a dozen injured in road accidents in five districts between Tuesday night and yesterday morning.

Of the deceased, three were from Dinajpur, two each from Chattogram, Madaripur and Manikganj and one from Laxmipur.

In Dinajpur, five friends went to Doshmile area of Kaharol upazila on Tuesday night on a private car. On the way to Dinajpur town, the driver lost his control over the steering and hit a roadside wall in Satmail area on Dinajpur-Rangpur highway around 11:00pm.

The deceased are Borna Basak (23), NR Emon Islam (23), and Shahriar Sawan (23). They were residents of the district town.

Borna died on spot. Locals took the others to a hospital. Emon and Sawan succumbed to their injuries there, said Md Asaduzzaman, inspector (investigation) of Dinajpur Sadar Police Station.

In Chattogram, two women were killed in a motorbike accident on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Sitakunda upazila yesterday morning.

One of the deceased was Anika (28), a pillion rider. Her husband was riding the bike.

Another deceased was a pedestrian. Her identity could not be known immediately.

Police said a group of around 15 motorbike riders was heading towards Cox's Bazar from Dhaka. The couple was one of the team members.

When the motorcade reached the Jalil gate area of Sitakunda around 6:30am, a pedestrian suddenly appeared in front of the bikes on the highway, said police.

The couple's motorbike hit the woman and then overturned. The accident left the woman dead on the spot.

The injured couple was taken to a hospital where Anika succumbed to her injuries, said Kazi Nazmul Haque, OC of Bara Awlia Highway Police Station.

In Madaripur, two people died when a passenger bus and a mango-laden pickup van collided in Rajoir upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased are Md Saddam (22), driver of the van, and Khairul Islam, a mango trader, who was on the same vehicle.

In Laxmipur, a man was killed and seven were injured as a speeding bus hit a parked truck yesterday morning in Char Chamita area of Sadar upazila.

The deceased is Md Momin (32), helper of the truck. Other seven passengers of the bus were also injured in the accident, said police.

In Manikganj, a passenger bus ran over a motorcycle leaving its rider and pillion dead on the spot on Tuesday night.

The deceased are Jewel Mia and Md Ashiqur Rahman of Manikganj's Ghior upazila.

Another person was injured in the accident, which took place around 10:30pm in Tora area of Ghior upazila, said OC Riazuddin Ahmed Biplob of Ghior Police Station. After the accident, agitating locals stopped the bus and set it on fire.



Eid is over but the festive mood persists for a few more days. Residents of the capital were seen having a good time with their close ones right after the Eid holidays at Dhanmondi Lake yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Complete Bangabandhu tunnel project soon: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

R o a d Transport a n d Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader



yesterday instructed the authorities concerned to complete the works of the ongoing Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel, which is being constructed beneath the Karnaphuli River in Chattogram, as soon as possible.

He gave the instruction at a views-exchange meeting with officials of the Bridge Division and Bangladesh Bridge Authority at Setu Bhaban in the capital.

The minister also asked the Bridge Division authorities to complete its other ongoing projects without any delay.

Quader, also the Awami League general secretary, informed that about 87 percent work of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel has already been completed.

Chaired by Bridge Division Secretary Md Monjur Hossain, the meeting was attended by senior officials of the Bridge Division and Bangladesh Bridge Authority.

# Still a lot to do

Key infrastructures around Karnaphuli tunnel yet to be completed even though deadline approaches; 28-point recommendation placed to avoid traffic congestion

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel under the Karnaphuli river is scheduled to officially open to traffic by the end of this year.

The authorities, however, are yet to construct key infrastructures -- including approach roads, U-loop, overpass and bypass -- raising big concerns over traffic management.

As the deadline for inauguration is approaching, a traffic route construction committee gave Bangladesh Bridge Authority a 28 point recommendation on how to manage traffic on March 3. The committee requested to implement the suggestions without delay.

There is fear of a traffic-management catastrophe if the recommendation cannot be implemented timely, said officials of departments concerned.

Although more than 85 percent of the tunnel's construction work has been completed, whether the recommendation will be implemented in time is still uncertain.

Apart from that, construction work of two police stations and a fire-service station are yet to start, raising concerns over security.

The dream project is expected to significantly reduce traffic congestion on both sides of the river, including the northern and southern parts of Chattogram,



RECOMMENDATIONS	TUNNEL AT A GLANCE
Build flyover at extended portion of elevated expressway	Ecne approved project in November 2015
Construct U-loop above CDA's Outer Ring Road	Original cost Tk 8,446.64cr; later rose to Tk 10,374.42cr
Build flyover over China Harbour Road, Tunnel Approach Road intersection	Exim Bank of China giving Tk 5,913.19cr, govt providing rest
Establish fire-service station at tunnel area	Main tunnel 3.32km long, has two tubes
Install electronic toll collection system	Each tube 2.45km long with two lanes

and shorten travel time, boosting the region's economy.

Bridges Division Secretary Abu Bakar Siddique, during a visit to the tunnel area in Patenga on September 7 last year, formed the traffic committee, headed by Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) commissioner and comprising officials of the tunnel authority, Road Transport and

Highways Division, Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) and other departments.

After formation, two meetings were held.

From the meetings, two technical sub-committees -- one for Patenga and another for Anwara point -- were formed to figure out an effective traffic management system.

After analysing traffic routes and system, field visits and internal discussions, the committee sent its recommendation to 14 government offices, which are directly involved in managing the tunnel.

Officials involved with the project, however, said all the suggestions will not be implemented within a short time.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the three-page recommendation letter.

Talking to The Daily Star, CMP Commissioner Saleh Mohammad Tanvir said, "We placed the recommendation based on future traffic flow, as the tunnel will bring a huge change in this region. As far as I know, several of the suggestions have already been passed, and some are now under consideration."

In the preface of the letter, the committee chief said after the project is completed, all vehicles using the tunnel will pass through the existing, designated "Gol Chattar (intersection)". Local, Patenga-bound traffic will also use the intersection.

Vehicles moving from the city's outer-ring road, under-construction elevated expressway (Lalkhanbazar to Patenga), Beach Road (towards Kathgar), Airport Road and Patenga Sea Beach Road, and pedestrians will pass through the intersection at the same time, which will create a chaotic situation.

The tunnel's two points

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## Two bodies recovered in Barguna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Six hours after they went missing, the bodies of two people were recovered from a Barguna estuary.

The deceased are NSI officer Mostafa Quader (54) and his niece Nur Akter Jui (17). They went missing from Shubha Sandhya point in Barguna's Taltoli upazila on Wednesday afternoon, said Kazi Sakhawat Hossain, OC of Taltoli Police Station.

The OC said the NSI officer came to the beach with five members of his family. They went deep into the water when a strong current hit. Three of them came ashore but Mostafa and Jui went missing.

Firefighters, local fishers and coast guards ran an almost six-hour-long rescue operation and recovered their bodies.

Sources said the process of handing over the bodies to the family is currently underway.

## Speed up trial proceedings

### Says law minister

BSS, Dhaka

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the speed of work throughout the world has multiplied in this digital age and the judges in the country too have to take this into consideration and speed up their trial proceedings.

"Times have changed. You are now the judges of digital age. Justice seekers in this age will not accept delay in trial. They want speedy justice. There is an old saying, justice delayed is justice denied and justice hurried is justice buried. You have to keep a balance between these two," he said.

The law minister said these while addressing inaugural function of 46th and 47th foundation training courses for assistant judges and equivalent officials at Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) in the capital.

## EU envoy meets Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

European Union Ambassador to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley met BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

The one-and-a-half-hour meeting was held at BNP chairperson's Gulshan office in Dhaka.

BNP standing committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and organising secretary Shama Obyed were also present at the meeting.

After the closed-door meeting, Khasru said they discussed in detail all the relevant issues involving bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the EU. He, however, declined to elaborate when asked about the relevant issues.

## Bangladesh will never be like Sri Lanka

### Says Hanif

BSS, KUSHIA

Awami League joint general secretary Mahbul Alam Hanif yesterday said the situation of Bangladesh will never be like that of Sri Lanka.

"Those who do not like the development of the country and express jealousy by observing the development spree of the country, are spreading falsehood that Bangladesh will face the situation like Sri Lanka," he said.

He further said BNP's dream in this regard will fade away soon as the infrastructure and economy of the country are not same like Sri Lanka.

BNP leaders also saw such dreams over past events in Egypt, he added.



This spot near Postogola Bridge is not supposed to be used as a bus stop. However, this rule is not followed by most buses travelling on the route. Passengers are often seen waiting here, while they make use of the almost-collapsing signboard, which directs buses not to stop there, as a shade. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN





# I was in ‘Poran’ promotions, but Pori was always first priority

SHARIFUL RAZZ

SHARMIN JOYA

Sariful Islam Razz earned a place for himself as one of the rising stars of the silver screen, ever since his debut in “Ice-Cream”. Raihan Rafi directorial “Poran”, featuring Razz, Bidya Sinha Mim, and Yash Rohan hit theatres this Eid and has already achieved ‘houseful’ status across many cinema halls.

The actor’s next film, “Hawa”, is set for release later this month.

Razz posted several pictures and videos from Star Cineplex and Purobi cinema hall. Excited fans were taking selfies with the “Poran” team. Razz could not stop smiling as fans raved about his villainous performance in the movie.

On speaking with The Daily Star, the actor became nostalgic when remembering how Covid halted the release of their film.

“We worked on ‘Poran’ before the pandemic had hit, and in these three years, we were somehow connected with the team, working on the post-productions and other activities regarding the project,” says the actor.

The “Networker Baire” actor loves spending time with his wife, renowned actress Pori Moni. The couple are expecting their first child to arrive very soon.

“I am trying to give my entire attention to Pori and our unborn child, we are excited for the arrival of our baby,” says Razz. The couple also appeared in a fun segment on “Eid Ananda Mela” which aired on BTV.

“Since childhood, we would look forward to BTV Eid programmes,

so it was a great honour to be a part of the show,” says Razz. “We enjoyed shooting for the programme, and Afran Nisho was a fantastic host.”

Razz also shared that he is elated with back-to-back release of his projects in recent years. “Pori is my lucky charm, so is our child,” says an emotional Razz.

“For ‘Hawa’, we stayed in Saint Martin’s for 2 months, and every day at 3 in the morning, we would start getting ready for the shoot. We would shoot for the entire day until evening, in the middle of the sea,” asserts the actor, who



“I promised I’ll take you to see Poran, I can’t even get tickets to my own film because it’s houseful,” wrote Razz in a fun post on Facebook.

plays the role of an engine operator in the film. “During that time, we got stuck in the severe cyclone storm Bulbul, hence there was a scarcity of food and supplies on the island.”

He adds that they had to borrow food from the locals. “It was a unique experience working with Mejbaur Rahman Sumon, along with sharing the screen with an actor like Chanchal Chowdhury. I am emotionally connected with the entire team of this project.”

Razz celebrated Eid with his family, but had his hands full with promoting “Poran” in Dhaka and Mymensingh.

“Pori is my first priority, I tried to be in all the promotions within my limitations.”

The actor is a part of a few other upcoming projects, which are in the works. He is waiting for the release of “Damal” and “Rokto Joba”, while the shootings for “Kajol Rekha” and “Dewaler Desh” are yet to be completed.

# Number of movie halls showing ‘Poran’ increased due to demand

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Raihan Rafi directorial “Poran”, which is based on true events, was released during Eid-ul-Azha. Both the production team and the actors were very active in terms of promoting the movie before its release.

Even after the release of “Poran”, the team behind the film have remained as active as ever. The team has been visiting cinema halls in various locations to gauge audience reactions. While “Poran” was initially released in 11 halls on Sunday, July 10, the movie will be made available in even more cinema halls starting July 15. This information was provided by the film’s distributors.



# Barsha responds to criticism about ‘Din: The Day’

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Ananta Jalil and Barsha’s “Din: The Day” was released in 107 cinema halls across the country on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. The movie has received criticism regarding its BDT 100 crore budget. However, Barsha feels that hate mongers are trying to ruin their success by personally attacking them on social media.

Visiting Madhumita Hall on Tuesday, Barsha told reporters, “I am shocked that some people are deliberately attacking us and spreading negativity. They are trying to bring up our personal lives. We tried making a good movie for the Bangladeshi audience, yet some people seem hell bent on spreading fake news.”



# COUNTRYWIDE

## Sudden Jamuna erosion makes many homeless



**Sudden erosion by the Jamuna river has washed away many homesteads at Mazzan village in Sirajganj’s Shahzadpur upazila a few days back.**

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Sudden erosion by the Jamuna river has devoured several homesteads and vast farmlands within a few hours at Mazzan village in Sirajganj’s Shahzadpur upazila last week, creating panic among the villagers.

“As I came to know that sudden erosion by the Jamuna started eroding a portion the riverbank in our village, I rushed to my house, but unfortunately couldn’t save anything,” Rafikul Islam of Mazzan village said.

“When I reached home, I saw it was already on the verge of being eroded, but I didn’t dare to go inside,” Rafikul said, adding that I lost my homestead, cultivable land and a happy family within few minutes last Friday.

“Two of my four children were playing at the courtyard when my house was devouring. I somehow managed to save my kids, nothing else as the entire house washed away into the river in front of my eyes,” another erosion-hit victim Rozina Khatun said.

“Now me and my four children are living in a roadside makeshift shanty, but I have nothing to feed my family as all our food grains, stocked at the house, also went into the river last week,” Rozina further said.

Affected villagers said due to the sudden erosion at least 13 houses went into river while another 20 to 25 shifted to other places in last one week.

Sirajganj Water Development Board (WDB) Executive Engineer Shafikul Islam said due to geographical state of the Jamuna erosion is a common catastrophe in Sirajganj during flood.

WDB has already took up a mega project of Tk 600 crore to protect 6.5 kilometre portion of the flood protection embankment in a bid to save Enayetpur, Shahzadpur and Belkuchi upazilas from further erosion, the WDB engineer said.

According to Sirajganj district administration so far around 974 homesteads, at different villages in five upazilas of the district, devoured in the Jamuna during the ongoing flood and the affected villagers need urgent rehabilitation.

## Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 12

During Shazmila’s treatment, Kolkata Police had facilitated a “green corridor” (traffic-free streets) for quick supply of 11 units of blood from a blood bank.

Doctors said she died due to excessive internal bleeding following the accident on Sunday. Shirin is currently under treatment at the same hospital.

Two of Shazmila’s brothers – one is an officer in the Bangladesh army, the other an IT professional – have been in Kolkata since the accident.

## Webb Telescope

FROM PAGE 12

James Webb Space Telescope marks “the dawn of a new era in astronomy”, Nasa said.

“The first images from the world’s largest and most powerful space telescope will demonstrate Webb at its full power, ready to begin its mission to unfold the infrared universe,” the space agency added.

## Rishi Sunak tops

FROM PAGE 12

candidate with the fewest votes each time, to whittle the field down to a final two by July 21. The new leader will then be chosen from those two by the 200,000 Conservative party members in the country at large, and be announced on Sept. 5.

While Sunak might be the most popular contender with his colleagues, a YouGov poll of nearly 900 party members found Mordaunt was the favourite, beating any of the others in a run-off. She had a huge lead over Sunak, who fared badly against almost all his rivals, and is now the bookmakers’ favourite.

Whoever wins will face a daunting in-tray while having to rebuild public trust bruised by a series of scandals involving Johnson, from the breaking of Covid-19 lockdown rules to appointing a lawmaker to government despite having been told of allegations of sexual misconduct.

Britain’s economy is facing rocketing inflation, high debt, and low growth, leaving people grappling with the tightest squeeze on their finances in decades. All this is set against the backdrop of an energy crunch exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, which has sent fuel prices soaring.

## Many digital services

FROM PAGE 1

For example, on June 7, the surveyors could not get access to SID Meeting Manager, a meeting notification web application of the Statistics and Informatics Division launched in 2018.

The review of data showed many services are no longer operational because skilled manpower was not developed through training before the completion of the projects.

One such project is the e-Government Project developed by the ICT division and planning division for the digitalisation of the government office activities to ensure accountability and transparency.

The report found the project, whose implementation period was from 2016 to 2021, is not sustainable. The project is yet to be fully completed and there is a dearth of skilled manpower in running the online platform.

But the National e-Government Procurement (e-GP) portal owned and operated by the CPTU to facilitate procurement activities by the public agencies is turning out to be beneficial for its targeted users.

The portal, which has seen more than 25.6 lakh visitors so far, seemed complicated at first but now feels intuitive, according to the service recipients.

However, in the case of tender submission in the service, the system becomes slow. Moreover, the design of the service needs to be further improved; the user interface needs to be simplified and there is a need for adequate bandwidth.

Though e-passport has brought convenience to many, some are struggling to request one due to servers often being down and slow progress in the process.

Despite digitalisation, the users said they still suffer from corruption and irregularities in the passport offices.

They are also not happy with the online MRP service of the Department of Immigration & Passports due to slower delivery and ineptness of staff in providing digital services, the report said.

The users said the server of e-dockets and land mutation website is very slow and, on many occasions, their tax filing shows unpaid even after the balance is transferred.

Besides, middlemen in the land offices discourage people from taking services online and disseminating fake information, the report said.

The portal to request for no-objection certificate for multi-story buildings needs upgrading and correction as people are not getting the service despite filling in the information properly.

Those hoping to avail the e-trade licence, a digital service of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), are often met with demands for bribes from the employees of the city corporation office, the report said. Otherwise, they make excuses to not provide the service requested online.

Besides, there is a problem with the server and the application form arrives 2-3 days after application. The service recipients said the quality of service needs to be improved and that there should be monitoring.

Since 2013, the government has given scholarships and grants to 1,089 individuals or organisations in the ICT sector for innovative/research activities. But there are no mobile numbers or emails of the grant recipients, the report said.

It is necessary to verify whether all the innovative projects for which the grants were given have actually been completed and whether their objectives have been achieved.

If the projects’ objectives are not met, a huge amount of money would have been wasted, the report said.

It takes a while for Hajj pilgrims to get a no-objection letter and confirmation SMS after filling in details on the website. Many get it at the eleventh hour, according to the study.

With the view to monitoring the prices of essentials, the DSCC has introduced a digital price chart at the entrance of all kitchen markets, which all sellers must stick to.

But, according to sellers, no such board can be found. Instead, they write down the prices manually as they wish, the report found.

## Russia, Ukraine

FROM PAGE 2

Russia’s invasion and sea blockade of Ukraine has stalled exports, leaving dozens of ships stranded and more than 20 million tonnes of grain stuck in silos at Odesa.

## Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 2

after the US imposed sanctions against Rapid Action Battalion and seven of its current and former officials. This has strained, to some extent, the US-Bangladesh bilateral relations.

Imran is a career foreign service officer from the 1986 batch of the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Foreign Affairs cadre. He has served extensively in various capacities both at the foreign ministry and Bangladesh missions abroad such as Jeddah, Bonn, Berlin and Ottawa.

Mustafizur is a career foreign service officer from the 11th batch of BCS Foreign Affairs cadre. He has served in Bangladesh missions in Paris, New York, Geneva, Kolkata, and Singapore.

## Twitter sues Elon

FROM PAGE 12

After weeks of threats, Musk last week pulled the plug on the deal, accusing Twitter of “misleading” statements about the number of fake accounts, according to a letter from his lawyers included in a US securities filing.

## Taka again loses

FROM PAGE 1

to rising import payments and declining remittance.

Import payments have gone up since the end of last year because of the rising prices of commodities in the global market.

Between July and May of the last fiscal, imports went up by 39 percent year-on-year to \$75.40 billion, while exports grew 33 percent to \$44.58 billion.

This resulted in a record trade deficit – the gap between exports and imports – of \$30.81 billion, up 48.8 percent year-on-year.

Remittance, the cheapest source of foreign currencies for Bangladesh, fell 15 percent year-on-year to \$21.03 billion in 2021-22.

The country’s foreign exchange reserves dropped below \$40 billion on Tuesday after the Bangladesh Bank cleared the import payments to the Asian Clearing Union (ACU).

The country settled import payments worth \$1.99 billion with the ACU last week, which dropped the reserves to \$39.80 billion for the first time in nearly two years.

The reserve was \$46.15 billion in December last year.

The central bank injected \$97 million into the market yesterday to keep the market stable, Md Serajul Islam, spokesperson for the Bangladesh Bank, told The Daily Star.



# Bolton admits planning coups d’etat abroad

Ex-US NSA says Capitol riot wasn’t a coup; committee says Trump’s January 6 rally tweet was a ‘call to arms’

AFP, Washington

Former US national security advisor John Bolton admitted on television Tuesday that he has helped plan coups in other countries, while arguing that the January 6, 2021 riot in Washington fell short of such efforts.

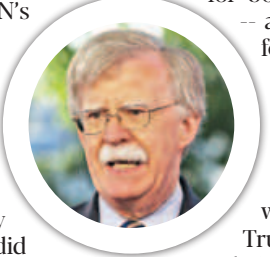
The attack on the US Capitol was the result of then president Donald Trump “just stumbling around from one idea to another,” Bolton told CNN’s Jake Tapper.

“As somebody who has helped plan coups d’etat, not here, but, you know, other places, it takes a lot of work,” he said.

Bolton -- who served as Trump’s national security advisor from 2018 to 2019 -- did not specify which governments he had helped to overthrow, but while in his post, he advocated for US military intervention in Venezuela.

January 6 was “not an attack on our democracy. It’s Donald Trump looking out for Donald Trump. It’s a once in a lifetime occurrence,” said Bolton.

“Ultimately, he did unleash the rioters at



the Capitol. As to that, there’s no doubt. But not to overthrow the Constitution, to buy more time, to throw the matter back to the states, to try and redo the issue,” he added.

An unabashed hawk, Bolton served in the US Departments of Justice and State during three Republican administrations, starting with Ronald Reagan’s in the 1980s.

Bolton unrepentantly pushed for the US invasion of Iraq and has voiced support for bombing Iran and North Korea -- an interventionist approach to foreign policy that put him at odds with Trump, who fired him in 2019.

Bolton’s comments on the January 6 riots came as a congressional committee works to determine whether Trump or his associates had a role in planning or encouraging the violent insurrection that left at least five people dead and 140 police officers injured.

On Tuesday, lawmakers said a tweet by then-president Trump promising a “wild” January 6 rally was seen as a “call to arms” by members of right-wing militia groups and other supporters of the president who went on to assault the US Capitol.



Demonstrators take part in an anti-government protest outside the office of Sri Lanka’s prime minister in Colombo, yesterday. Thousands of anti-government protesters stormed into Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe’s office yesterday, hours after he was named as acting president, witnesses said.

PHOTO: AFP

# From demigods to traitors

The rise and fall of Rajapaksa clan in Sri Lanka

AGENCIES

They were once seen as heroes of the nation, the almost mythical warrior-king leaders who defeated the separatists in a bloody civil war.

Yet the final days of Sri Lanka’s Rajapaksa dynasty tell a very different tale.

In the early hours yesterday, embattled president Gotabaya Rajapaksa made a hurried exit from the South Asian nation, days after thousands of angry protesters broke into his official residence, swam in his pool, and demanded he finally go.

He had been expected to resign later that day, but Gotabaya Rajapaksa didn’t wait around to make it official. Instead, before dawn, he boarded a military plane leaving Colombo and fled to the Maldives.

His departure is a historic moment for the island nation of 22 million, which the Rajapaksas had ruled with an iron fist for much of the past two decades before losing the faith of their once adoring citizens.

“The sight of Gotabaya Rajapaksa fleeing Sri Lanka on an air force plane represents (the downfall) of this family,” said Ganeshan Wignaraja, senior research associate at the British think tank, ODI Global.

“Their legacy I don’t think is a positive one. But one hopes that Sri Lanka will move on in a new direction.”

Gotabaya Rajapaksa is not the first member of the family to have been president. His brother Mahinda Rajapaksa, who like Gotabaya was widely considered a “war hero” among the majority population, was elected President in 2005 and achieved near legendary status in 2009 when

he declared victory in the 26-year civil war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebels.

That victory gave Mahinda Rajapaksa an almost inexhaustible well of political capital to draw on and he would go on to enjoy a 10-year grip on power during which he was venerated by Sri Lanka’s Sinhalese Buddhist majority. He was popularly referred to as “appachchi” -- the father of the nation -- and people would often bow when he walked past and fear for him when he was unwell.



For much of his term, Mahinda Rajapaksa ran Sri Lanka like a family business, appointing his brothers to key positions; Gotabaya as Defense Secretary, Basil as Minister of Economic Development, and Chamal as the Speaker of Parliament.

And while the good times were rolling, despite gripes about nepotism, the brothers remained popular. The country saw years of growth, fueled by the government’s vast borrowing from overseas to fund public services.

But the good times weren’t to last.

After the end of 30-year-long Tamil Eelam war, the majority Sinhalese Buddhist people

comprising 70 percent of the total population threw their might behind the Rajapaksa clan almost elevating it to the status of demigods.

The Rajapaksa clan thrived on Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism. The emboldened majority started asserting itself dictating the terms to minority Tamils and Muslims. It suited the politics of Rajapaksa and they also encouraged it. Between 2010 and 2015, they amassed enormous wealth and power.

to permanently end the rule of the Rajapaksa clan.

Mahinda declared that he would come back to rule again. The new national government faltered from Day 1, and in 2019, Rajapaksas were back in power. Actually, they were much stronger and many thought they would be in power for a long time. The Easter Bombings of 2019 also played a major role in their big win.

Rajapaksa came to power on a manifesto promising “Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour”, but according to the UN the country now desperately needs humanitarian aid.

The coronavirus pandemic hammered tourism and overseas remittances -- both mainstays of the economy -- leaving it facing a foreign exchange crisis.

Lengthy power cuts are in place as the country does not have dollars to import oil for generators, the nation’s 22 million people have been enduring acute shortages of food, fuel and medicines since late last year, and poverty is spreading.

President Gotabaya, full of hubris and no real experience in handling a sensitive matter like economy, did not listen to saner voices both within and outside. Just to stay in power at any cost, the Rajapaksas dismissed all charges against them as bogus that finally forced the people to protest against them.

The same people who were once cheering the Rajapaksa clan as the saviours of Sri Lanka have turned against them calling them “traitors”. Now the whole clan is hiding from the wrath of people.

The carefully built invincible image of Rajapaksa now lays in tatters. Their ignominious exit from power has destroyed all the myths built around the family.

CLIMATE CRISIS  
Pacific nations eye to move int’l court

AFP, Suva

Climate-threatened Pacific islands are pushing for the International Court of Justice to throw its weight behind efforts to arrest climate change, with the initiative gaining support at a key regional summit in Fiji yesterday.

The Pacific nation of Vanuatu is spearheading a campaign to ask the Hague-based tribunal “to protect the rights of present and future generations against the effects of climate change”.

Vanuatu’s Foreign Minister Marc Ati yesterday told AFP that he was confident leaders from neighbouring islands, including Australia and New Zealand, would endorse the push at this week’s Pacific Islands Forum in the Fijian capital Suva.

The plan will need the backing of a majority of countries at the United Nations General Assembly in September to be put to the world’s highest court.

Support from the countries meeting at this week’s Fiji summit could be crucial to get the UN vote across the line.

Ati said he had “met with all my counterparts, they confirmed their support”.

The initiative began in a classroom at the University of the South Pacific in 2019. Some 27 law students wrote to Pacific leaders asking them to take up the campaign -- and Vanuatu answered the call.

# Yangon blast kills 2

AFP, Yangon

A bomb blast near a shopping mall in Myanmar’s commercial hub Yangon has killed two people and wounded eleven, rescue workers and local media said yesterday. No group has so far claimed responsibility for the explosion, which took place on Tuesday afternoon, as the country marked a public holiday for a Buddhist festival. The Southeast Asian country has been in turmoil since a coup last year, with self-declared “People’s Defence Forces” (PDF) targeting the military and officials or organisations perceived to be working with the junta.

# Biden starts ME tour in Israel

REUTERS, Tel Aviv

US President Joe Biden yesterday arrived in Israel, which embraced him as an old friend on the first leg of a high-stakes trip dominated by efforts to bring it closer to Saudi Arabia and to persuade Washington’s Gulf allies to pump more oil. Landing at Ben Gurion Airport, whose tarmac he first trod in 1973 as a senator, Biden bumped fists with Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid and President Isaac Herzog and, in a speech, described the connection between the two nations as “bone deep”. “You do not need to be a Jew to be a Zionist,” Biden added, voicing support for the ideology behind Israel’s foundation on lands with ancient Jewish roots, and which is deeply resented by many Palestinians. Biden also reiterated US desire for negotiations, stalled since 2014, to create a Palestinian state on Israeli-occupied territory, calling this two state solution “the best hope” for both peoples. Biden will spend two days in Jerusalem before meeting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Friday in the occupied West Bank. He will then fly directly from Israel to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia for talks with Saudi officials and to attend a summit of Gulf allies.



An Air Tractor AT-802F “Fire Boss” airplane takes part in firefighting operations at Espite in Ourem, Portugal, yesterday. France and Britain suffered soaring temperatures, edging closer to the blistering heat already engulfing Spain and Portugal as wildfires destroyed vast stretches of Western European forestland.

PHOTO: AFP

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Upazila Engineer

Sylhet Sadar, Sylhet

www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মুদ্রাঙ্কিত

বঙ্গ শব্দের উদ্ভৃতি

Memo No. 46.02.9162.000.07.007.2021-345

Dated: 12/07/2022

e-Tender Notice No. 01/2022-2023

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

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of work	Tender ID	Method of tender	Tender closing date & time
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	e-Tender/UZP/ Sylhet-S/2021-2022/W2.001	Maintenance of 4-Storeyed Upazila Parishad Bhaban, and Interior Design of Upazila Chairman’s Office and Meeting Room.	710863	LTM	01-08-2022 02:00pm
2	INF-2019-20-609162-1	Construction of Building of Bohor Colony Primary School.	716213	OTM	01-08-2022 02:00pm

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

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks’ branches up to 01:00pm on 01/08/2022.

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

Md. Saiful Azom

Upazila Engineer

&

Member Secretary

Tender Evaluation Committee

Mobile: 01708-161696

E-mail: [ue.sylhet-s@lged.gov.bd](mailto:ue.sylhet-s@lged.gov.bd)

GD-1372



# Don’t normalise deadly Eid journeys

## Continued road casualties proof of poor planning and lax monitoring

EID vacations are no longer just a time of joy and reunion with family and friends in village homes, or brief, self-indulgent sojourns in suburbia; they are, increasingly, also the time when most heart-breaking tragedies occur, through deadly road crashes, as people move across the country. The two Eid festivals of this year, too, brought with them news of heavy casualties. Although early estimates point to a lower death toll during this Eid-ul-Azha vacation – about 45 as of Tuesday – the number will no doubt rise by the time all home-goers return and crash figures are updated. This is really unfortunate.

We’ve repeatedly urged caution so that no unfit vehicles or unauthorised drivers are allowed on the highways during such hectic periods. But the authorities hardly seem bothered. Although stop gap measures are occasionally taken, like disallowing auto-rickshaws, proper follow-up actions are rarely taken to ensure their effectiveness. For example, between April 25 and May 5, when the Eid-ul-Fitr vacation was in place, 249 people died in road crashes. Of them, 97 were motorcycle riders and passengers. So motorcycles were banned this time, but since no alternative options were given to desperate passengers, the high demand for transport led to many unfit buses without route permits plying the highways, making passengers further vulnerable.

Reportedly, between July 7 and 9, at least 53 incidents of broken vehicles, crashes and engines stalling after running out of fuel were reported on the Jamuna Bridge and its approach roads alone, contributing to long tailbacks. The question is, how justified was the blanket ban on motorcycles? More importantly, why were unfit buses allowed to replace them? This is a good example of how decisions are often taken in the transport sector, as a knee-jerk response to a crisis, without weighing up all the pros and cons, and without a careful reading of all the contributing factors in road crashes. The combination of poor planning and lax monitoring nullifies the benefits of even well-meaning measures.

That road crashes and casualties continue to occur, and in such large numbers, despite the huge investments made in road infrastructure projects across the country, is really disconcerting. The transport authorities must change their business-as-usual approach to road safety, especially during Eid vacations, otherwise those beautiful bridges, roads and highways will be little more than beautiful traps for travellers. The road transport and bridges minister has admitted that “flawed management and lack of coordination” were responsible for the tailbacks before this Eid. We expect such admissions to be turned into concrete, preventive action so that not just tailbacks, but no deaths or injuries from road crashes can mar the experience of ordinary passengers. We must not normalise deadly Eid journeys.

# Prompt clean-up of Dhaka is encouraging

## Take similar steps to clean roadside garbage on a daily basis

IT is good to see that the two city corporations of Dhaka have promptly cleaned up the garbage accumulated on roadsides following the sacrifice of animals during the Eid-ul-Azha. The two mayors deserve kudos as they have largely kept their promise of completely cleaning the city quickly. True to their words, since July 10, conservancy workers were seen diligently shovelling up waste onto corporation trucks. The residents also played their role well, which made it possible to get the clean-up done on time.

According to an estimate, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) deployed about 10,000 conservancy workers and cleaned up 19,223 tonnes of animal and cattle market waste, with the mayor saying they had distributed 6.5 lakh garbage bags, 53 tonnes of bleaching powder, and 866 five-litre-sized containers of disinfectants among residents. On the other hand, Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) cleaned up 20,626.34 tonnes of waste in three days, with the help of around 9,950 conservancy workers. They distributed 28 tonnes of bleaching powder, 1.20 lakh garbage bags and 250 gallons of disinfectants.

It can be said that a good publicity campaign launched before the Eid by the city corporations has paid off. This was, after all, no small feat given that a huge percentage of the 99,50,763 cattle reportedly sacrificed across the country was in Dhaka – a task aided, in no small measure, by residents who took the initiative to ensure proper disposal of waste soon after the sacrifice. They kept their waste at designated places for the army of cleaners and trucks sent by the corporations to collect them without hassle.

But, like the proverbial gap between the cup and the lip, sacrificial waste could be seen even on the third day of Eid, emanating foul stench, in some areas. It would be difficult to convince the residents of those places of the good work done by the corporations in other parts of the city. Better coordination among the staff at various levels would have ensured that no area went unnoticed during the cleaning drive. However, when so many animals are sacrificed on a single day, the sheer amount of waste generated can be stupefying. Any mistake is thus understandable.

We would, therefore, like to thank the DNCC and DSCC staff and officials for undertaking such a successful operation. Hopefully, the spirit they have shown will be translated into undertaking the clean-up that this city of millions requires on a daily basis, as it slowly returns to normal activities.

# Why is there a gas crisis in a country that is gas-rich?



Dr Badrul Imam is a former professor of the Department of Geology at Dhaka University.

BADRUL IMAM

BA NGLADESH, at present, has enough power generation capacity to claim that its “electricity to all” campaign is a success, and to make load shedding a thing of the past. But that is unfortunately not the case, and load-shedding has once again become a daily affair.

There are three important questions to ask. First, why is enough power not being generated, despite the capacity being there? The answer is simple. There has been a shortage of gas required to run the power plants. Secondly, why is there a shortage of gas in a country that is supposed to be rich with gas? The answer is again quite simple. We have done minimum exploration over the last 20 years. But for the third question – why didn’t we do enough exploration? – the answer is rather complicated. Is it because of the failure of the policymakers to act when gas reserves started to show signs of depleting? Is it because of the poor capability of the gas exploration agencies to add new reserves to replace the depleted ones? Or is it because vested interests have influenced the authorities not to enter into large scale exploration so that the gas import business can continue to benefit?

The excuse that the present gas crisis and the consequent decline in power generation are solely the results of the Russia-Ukraine war is not entirely justified. The current gas crisis in the country was not inevitable, but is the result of not doing enough to find and lift the gas from below the ground. Bangladesh comprises one of the largest deltas in the world, meaning that the area is inherently prone to having natural gas. The reason that deltas around the world are always rich in hydrocarbon gas and oil is the presence of factors favourable for their generation and accumulation on the subsurface. This is exemplified by the Niger Delta, the delta on the US Gulf Coast, and the Mahakam Delta, to name a few. There is no scientific evidence to support the notion that Bangladesh is running out of its gas resources. This argument has been put forth by a group of people who believe that their businesses will be hampered if local gas sources are made abundantly available for consumption.

Several internationally reputed organisations, that have geologically evaluated the volume of yet to find or undiscovered gas resources in Bangladesh, have testified that there is more natural gas remaining in the underground than the volume already extracted and consumed in the country. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) and Petrobangla joint assessment suggest that the volume of



COLLAGE: STAR

One important parameter to judge the degree of exploration in an area is the number of exploratory wells drilled. In that regard, Bangladesh falls far behind any petroleum basin in the world.

undiscovered natural gas in Bangladesh is about 32 Tcf on average, based on a two-year long study. The Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NDP), the state-controlled oil and gas company of Norway, suggested that there is about 42 Tcf of undiscovered gas in Bangladesh. The NDP carried out its study in collaboration with a Bangladeshi counterpart, the Hydrocarbon Unit (HCU)

discovering gas has been way above the world average.

Bangladesh has a large offshore area for gas exploration, which has been divided into 26 exploration blocks. In order to engage international oil companies in offshore exploration, in 2015, Petrobangla initiated a plan to engage an international service company to carry out seismic

under the ministry of energy and power. More recently, Ramboll, a European oil and gas consultant, suggested that there is about 34 Tcf of undiscovered gas in Bangladesh. Bangladesh consumes about 1 Tcf gas per year, meaning 34 Tcf will last us for at least 30 years.

One important parameter to judge the degree of exploration in an area is the number of exploratory wells drilled. In that regard, Bangladesh falls far behind any petroleum basin in the world. Exploration rate in the developed nations is generally much higher than the developing ones, so it is probably not right to compare Bangladesh with the USA, Norway, or Australia for that matter. Comparing Bangladesh with the neighbouring Indian state of Tripura probably makes more sense. Bangladesh has an area of 147,000 sq.km and has so far drilled about 100 exploratory wells in total. Tripura, on the other hand, has an area of 10,000 sq.km and has drilled more than 150 exploratory wells. Such statistic shows how poor the rate of exploration in Bangladesh actually is. Yet, Bangladesh discovered more gas reserves than Tripura.

A few years ago, the authorities announced a plan to drill 55 exploratory wells in five years. But within a couple of years, the plan was scrapped without explanation. Bangladesh has been categorised as one of the least explored countries in the world. Only one third of the onshore area of Bangladesh has been explored for gas, and its success of

survey (multiclient survey) and to produce a database which would then be used to negotiate with foreign oil companies. A national expert committee was formed to select the best qualified service company for the job. But for unknown reasons, the selection was nullified. After the previously selected company again qualified for a second round of selection, the whole process was mysteriously stopped from moving forward. Years of inaction led to offshore exploration stalling in Bangladesh. The seismic survey was not done, and the stalemate prevails till date.

At present, only one consortium of Indian oil companies is engaged in offshore exploration under the operatorship of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, which drilled only one well in seven years. A few other international oil companies came, but discontinued their work due to contractual disagreements with Bangladesh. One of them presented its geological interpretation of its block SS-11, in the annual conference of the Southeast Asia Petroleum Exploration Society (SEAPEX) in Singapore in 2019, and showed how similar the geological structures and gas potentials in this block are to those of the already discovered gas fields in parts of Rakhine, Myanmar. With such similarities, many geoscientists believe that the next group of large gas fields will be discovered in offshore Bangladesh, adjacent to the offshore Rakhine Basin. But for that to happen, exploration is required, which we have not done.

## BRIDGE SCHOOLS

# A local solution to a global problem

Stephen Heyneman is professor emeritus at Vanderbilt University in the USA. Shahidul Islam is an education policy researcher in Canada. John Richards is professor at Simon Fraser University in Canada.

STEPHEN HEYNEMAN, SHAHIDUL ISLAM, AND JOHN RICHARDS

OVER the previous decade, Bangladesh and India achieved 80 percent completion of the primary education cycle (Grades 1 to 5). That is quite an improvement from previous decades, but there are still a lot of children who are not completing primary school and hence not enrolling in secondary school. Adding to these challenges, the Covid-19 pandemic has thrown a significant number of children out of school.

Over the last five years, Brac has undertaken an ambitious pilot project to reintegrate over 70,000 children in 2500 one-room schools. These children had completed Grade 1 or 2 before dropping out. “Bridge schools,” as they are called, offer an intensive bridging course of four months and use a compressed curriculum, which enables children to continue their education and complete Grade 5 in a shorter amount of time.

The first version of bridging schools is coming to its end; and a second version has already been launched. As part of our review of the first version, we conducted a survey of a statistically representative group of children in Grades 4 and 5, from randomly-selected schools across Bangladesh. The survey took place in the students’ homes, not in the schools.

There are five elements in any working school system: 1) a well-designed curriculum; 2) capable teachers; 3) frequent student evaluation with feedback; 4) students’ eagerness to learn; and 5) family members helping students. For a school to succeed, all five of these elements need to be in place and operative. During the survey, we posed many questions on teacher/family interaction, children’s attitude towards the

Though we would have liked better results from Bridge students, on average, children in Bridge schools performed better than the average Indian students, and performed significantly better than children attending Indian government schools.

Bridge school, why he or she dropped out of a previous school, etc. In focus groups, we gathered teachers’ responses.

In its latest education intervention, Bridge school has strived to improve the five elements – with a compressed curriculum, innovations for teachers to overcome school closure due to Covid, and more teacher-guardian interaction. The four-month bridging course worked as an excellent diagnostic tool for Brac to introduce appropriate remedies for students’ problems. The result has been better learning outcomes of Bridge school students relative to comparators in India. The current global learning crisis is of grave concern to the World Bank, Unicef, and other multilateral and bilateral organisations. A local solution like the Bridge school can make a major contribution to minimising it.

Public and private education systems around the world, especially in developing countries, focus mainly on regular students and neglect those who have never enrolled or have dropped out. The Covid-19 pandemic forced temporary school closure and kept 1.6 billion children out of school for various durations. Globally, an estimated 72 million children will be added to the already 382 million “learning poor” children. The learning poverty report estimates a USD 10 trillion loss in labour earning over the working lives of the children now in school. This loss is approximately 10 percent of the global annual GDP. A model like Bridge can minimise learning loss by bringing children back to school, improving learning outcomes, and building foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

Important as the five elements are, if children are not learning, schools are failing. To assess the two core subjects, reading and arithmetic, we adopted a protocol named the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), developed by Pratham, an Indian NGO. Pratham has conducted surveys on five lakh children

throughout India for over a decade. Using ASER enabled us to compare Bridge results with results from Indian schools. The most demanding reading test is a student’s ability to read a short story with few errors. The most demanding arithmetic question is one’s ability to divide a three-digit number by a one-digit number.

Including students across all Indian school types, in 2018 (the last pre-Covid ASER survey), 50 percent of children could read the short story and 28 percent could do the division. And in the Brac Bridge school survey, 53 percent students could read the story and 63 percent were able to do the division.

Though we would have liked better results from Bridge students, on average, children in Bridge schools performed better than the average Indian students, and performed significantly better than children attending Indian government schools. Furthermore, the typical Bridge student faces more serious obstacles than the average Indian student. Bridge children have had interrupted school careers and low family income. And due to Covid, their schools often remained closed during the last two years. To their credit, Bridge teachers adapted and were able to teach classes using mobile phones.

In trying to determine which children were more likely to succeed in reading and arithmetic, the most important factor was the frequency of teachers visiting students’ homes. Teacher visits, parental literacy, and family income are relevant in combination. After adjusting for these factors, another factor looms large – where students live. In some upazilas, over 80 percent of students successfully read the short story and did the division; in other upazilas, fewer than 40 percent succeeded. This spatial inequality can be reduced by revitalising the aforementioned five elements. Thus, Bridge schools can be replicated in other parts of the world where school dropouts and learning poverty are severe crises.



SRI LANKA CRISIS

What role would the military play?



BLACK, WHITE  
AND GREY

ALIRIAZ

Ali Riaz is a distinguished professor of political science at Illinois State University in the US, and a non-resident senior fellow of the Atlantic Council.

IN the latest twist in the ongoing Sri Lankan crisis, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country on Wednesday morning local time in an air force plane. He previously offered to resign in the face of a sustained popular uprising since March 31. On May 11, his brother, Mahinda Rajapaksa, resigned and went into hiding. The newly appointed Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, has also agreed to relinquish power as soon as his successor is chosen by the parliament.

According to the Sri Lankan constitution, if the president resigns, the PM will be the interim president until the parliament decides who should complete the remainder of Gotabaya's term. Demonstrators had taken control of the president's official residence a few days ago. Fourteen members of Gotabaya's family were barred from leaving the country as immigration officials at the Colombo airport declined to process their passports for boarding a plane. However, Gotabaya's wife accompanied him. His younger brother and former Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa has reportedly fled too. The demonstrators, on the other hand, have vowed not to leave the streets until a new interim government is in place with a clear agenda for reforming the governing system.

Demonstrations against the government began due to the spiralling cost of food, fuel, and medicine in the past year. The economic crisis became obvious in January when the country defaulted on its loans of USD 51 billion. China declined to restructure the debt and the government was disinclined to negotiate with the IMF for bailouts. In the subsequent months, it became obvious that a solution to the economic crisis is not forthcoming, and the middle class and the poorer segments of the society will have to bear the brunt of it. The ruling Rajapaksa clan was more interested in window-dressing than addressing the crisis. In June, the newly appointed Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe acknowledged that the country's economy has collapsed. While factors such as the terrorist attack in 2019 and the Covid-19 pandemic are blamed as the proximate causes of the crisis, there are other deeper factors which engendered the plight of the country. The economic policies of the government headed by Gotabaya and Mahinda Rajapaksa, especially the misplaced priorities, reckless spending, and increasing debt have been identified as the factors which accentuated the pace of the crisis. The country has fallen into a "debt trap" because it focused on many infrastructural projects with little return and widespread corruption.

However, the protests are not only about the economic woes but also about the system of governance. Since the return of Gotabaya Rajapaksa as the president in 2019 and Mahinda Rajapaksa as the prime minister in 2020, the country returned to the path of authoritarianism which was the hallmark of the Mahinda Rajapaksa's presidency between 2005 and 2015. In the past few years, a family dynasty has been created - in addition to two brothers as the president and the PM, two of their sons were inducted into the cabinet and another was appointed the chief of staff of the PM. There were reports of widespread corruption by the family members and their cronies. The constitution was reverted to the Mahinda Rajapaksa era through the 20th Amendment, which has given unlimited power to the president including control of the constitutional bodies which were meant to be the instruments of checks and balances. As such, Sri Lanka's ongoing protests are a repudiation of cronyism, dynastic rule, patronage-based



authoritarianism, and complete disregard for the citizen's concerns.

The patronages doled out in the past years also benefitted the military, among others. Enormous power and wholesale immunity had been provided to the defence forces and security agencies throughout the 25 years of civil war against the Tamils. There are credible allegations of human rights violations by the security forces during the war, including against Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who was the Defense Secretary during the last phase of the war. Although the war had ended in 2009, there has not been much of a rollback of their power and patronage. They have been engaged in enforced disappearances and various other kinds of human rights violations. The notorious "White Van" - often used to abduct political and human rights activists - remained active under the Gotabaya regime. This practice began during the civil war.

When Gotabaya came to power, he began to appoint high-ranking military officials to important positions. In early 2021, a serving military officer, Brigadier Suresh Sally, was appointed as the head of the State Intelligence Service (SIS). The SIS was previously a part of the police department. Sally previously headed military intelligence. Besides, several retired military officials were appointed as secretaries of various ministries. In early 2021, the International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) reported that at least 14 military and police officials, who served with Gotabaya during the civil war, were appointed to various official positions of great influence.

Despite such close connections to the government, the military has not openly come to the aid of the Rajapaksa regime. On May 11, the military was deployed in the capital city and given order to shoot on sight by the president. But apparently the military has not used its power to quell the demonstrators. At that time, the Chief of Defense Staff and Commander of the Army, General Shavendra Silva, refuted the allegations that the armed forces were poised to shoot at the public to provoke them.

It was reported in the press that Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa was rescued by the military when his home was attacked by the protestors on May 10. As the opposition parties are trying to select a president to replace Gotabaya, and a replacement for the PM, the protestors have vowed that they won't accept an all-party government. Instead, they would like to see a "caretaker government", which will stay in power for about a year and make necessary changes in the constitution to limit the power of the president. They are also afraid that an all-party government will only continue the influence of the deposed president and his

▲ Protesters broke through barricades and entered President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's residence and nearby office to vent their anger.

PHOTO: AFP

supporters as his party has the majority in the parliament.

In the past few days, there have been concerns about whether the situation is heading towards a direction that may lead to a military intervention in politics. Although the military has enjoyed enormous power in Sri Lanka, it has never openly intervened and never dictated to the politicians. Concerns regarding intervention have been expressed after the statement of the Chief of Defense Staff General Shavendra Silva requesting all Sri Lankans to support the armed forces and the police to ensure that peace is maintained in the country. He also said an opportunity has arisen to resolve the current crisis in a peaceful manner. The defence ministry's top official, Kamal Gunaratne, said in a press conference: "None of our officers have a desire to take over the government. It has never happened in our country, and it is not easy to do it here." Some analysts of Sri Lankan politics argue that while the military officials might have thought of helping the

Rajapaksa clan, especially Gotabaya, they are less inclined to entangle themselves in politics.

Until now, the military has remained on the sidelines, apparently behaved professionally, but has also reminded the political forces that they are not absent on the scene. As the president has fled the country with the help of the military, many will see this as the military eventually taking a side. How the opposition political parties and the demonstrators will judge the role of the military is an open question. Gotabaya's departure will bring some constitutional issues to the forefront. The opposition will have to pursue prudent and realistic solutions. If the political leaders fail to come up with an acceptable arrangement not only to govern in the coming months but an economic plan to help the citizens, and reform the system which produced authoritarian leaders, the country may have to face some unprecedented situations. The question is, what role will the military play under such circumstances?

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Designer Wang

5 Iron output

10 Daisy variety

12 Pigeon's perch

13 Showy orange blooms

15 Yale rooter

16 Toddy base

17 Sinking signal

18 Humiliate

20 Mete (out)

21 River part

22 Ceases

23 Hannah of "Splash"

25 Safekeeping

28 Like fresh brownies

31 Manual reader

32 Texas capital

34 Relaxing

resort

35 Make a choice

36 Top card

37 Striped sea predators

40 Make blank

41 Do some refining

42 Doesn't own

43 Midmonth day

DOWN

1 Went to the polls

2 Banished

3 Ruling group

4 Pro vote

5 Slander

6 — Aviv

7 Prolific inventor

8 Ancient

9 Neatnik's no-nos

11 Book goofs

14 They show orators

19 Tribal leader

20 Sub shops

24 Minors

25 Little Big Horn loser

26 Have high hopes

27 Carter's successor

29 Was rude, in a way

30 Use a feather, perhaps

33 High homes

35 Refinery rocks

38 Id —

39 French friend

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO [dsopinion@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinion@gmail.com).

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Health Services Division

Health Economics Unit

3rd Floor, 14/2, Tophkhana Road, Dhaka-1000

Expression of Interest (Eoi)

For "Hiring Scheme Operator (SO) for managing the implementation of the Shasthyo Surokshha Karmasuchi (SSK) in Barguna district"	
1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
2. Agency	Health Economics Unit (HEU).
3. Name of the procuring entity	Director-General, HEU.
4. Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
5. Type of organization	Company/Organization/NGO-registered and licensed to manage public funds in Bangladesh as Scheme Operator (SO) for managing field-level implementation of the Shasthyo Surokshha Karmasuchi (SSK) Project.
6. EOI Ref. No. & date	Ref No. 45.05.0000.007.32.008.22.1522 Date: 07.07.2022 CE
KEY INFORMATION	
7. Procurement sub-method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS).
FUNDING INFORMATION	
8. Budget and source of funds	Pool fund and funds of Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GoB), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).
PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
9. Project/program name (if applicable)	Shasthyo Surokshha Karmasuchi (SSK).
10. Eoi closing date and time	03.08.2022 at 2:00pm.
11. Brief description of the assignment	As part of the efforts for achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2030, the government has developed the Health Care Financing Strategy (HCFS) 2012-2032. To ensure the access to health care services of BPL (Below Poverty Line) households by reducing out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditure and to secure them from catastrophic Health Expenditure, in March 2016 the piloting of Shasthyo Surokshha Karmasuchi (SSK) has been started in one Upazila and in September 2017 piloting has been extended in two more Upazila of Tangail District. Now it has been expanded in all upazila including Paurashava of Tangail district and North and South City Corporation of Dhaka. SSK (Shasthyo Surokshha Karmasuchi) is the model of social health Insurance/social health protection. SSK will be implemented in all Upazila and Paurashava of Barguna district. The Scheme Operator (SO) of the SSK will be an implementing agency to manage the SSK project at the field level. The SO will professionally conduct core SK operations in the following areas with necessary applications of Information Technology (IT), but not limited to: (i) Register Below Poverty Line (BPL) households, (ii) Produce & distribute SSK health cards, (iii) Operate SSK booths, (iv) Provide support to the hospitals in claim preparation, (v) Implement SSK's Information Communication Education (ICE) strategies for awareness building among SSK health cardholder households and other stakeholders.
12. Experience, resources and delivery capacity required	The following experience is mandatory: - At least 10 years of experience related to the managing of large public funds in urban and rural settings; - Experience with health insurance/health protection schemes and contracting of health care providers. The following experiences would constitute an advantage; - Use of smart cards for identification of beneficiaries; - Managing cash and in-kind benefits; - Dealing with low-income clients.
13. Other detail (if applicable)	Not applicable.
14. Association with external firm	The main applicant should be a local organization. Partnership with international/local firms is acceptable upon submission of cooperation agreement.
15. Phasing of services	Tentative start: October 2022 with an option for additional 1 year.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS	
16. Name of official inviting Eoi	Dr. Mohd. Shahad Hossain Mahmud.
17. Designation of official inviting Eoi	Director General.
18. Contact details of the official inviting Eoi	Ansari Bhaban (3rd Floor), 14/2, Tophkhana Road, Dhaka. Tel: +880 2223356820, Email: <a href="mailto:sskcel@gmail.com">sskcel@gmail.com</a>
19. Detail information available in the website	<a href="http://www.mohfw.gov.bd">www.mohfw.gov.bd</a> ; <a href="http://www.heu.gov.bd">www.heu.gov.bd</a> ; <a href="http://www.sskcel.gov.bd">www.sskcel.gov.bd</a> ; <a href="http://www.cofu.gov.bd">www.cofu.gov.bd</a>
The procuring entity reserve the right to accept and/or reject any/all Eois.	

Dr. Mohd. Shahad Hossain Mahmud

Director General (Additional Secretary)

Health Economics Unit, Health Services Division

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

GD-1371



MESSAGE

# Celebration of the French National Day

France celebrates its National Day in commemoration of the storming of the Bastille in Paris on the 14th of July 1789. It remains the powerful symbol of the French revolutionary fight for emancipation from a then absolute monarchy, followed a few weeks later by the landmark proclamation of the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen”, opening the long and arduous way to the establishment of democracy and the rule of law.

Since the beginning of our shared history, France has been a committed partner in its relationship with Bangladesh. Our country has heard the voice of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman: in 1971, André Malraux relayed his call to

blue economy, defense and science in particular.

While Bangladesh is still facing the challenges of climate change, France commends the leading role of Bangladesh in the Climate Vulnerable Forum. France remains at the disposal of Bangladesh in this area as well as in the field of infrastructures, particularly transportation, access to clean water, energy and telecommunications.

This year is a great and special year as France and Bangladesh celebrated on 14th February 2022 the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relationships between both countries.

2022 is a milestone in many ways for Franco-Bangladeshi cooperation as we are also celebrating the 30 years archeological cooperation and exploration of the large site of Mahasthangarh, north of Bogra. This archaeological cooperation is the longest standing cooperation between our two countries. With excavations being carried out jointly by French and Bangladeshi archaeologist this endeavours stands as a perfect symbol of our two country cooperating by sharing knowledge and resources to work together towards a common goal.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, France did display vaccine solidarity, in particular within the framework of the Covax facility with the support of the vaccination program of the French Development Agency.

The French Development Agency, who opened its Dhaka office in 2012 has since become a key player in development cooperation in Bangladesh with projects in many different areas such as energy, water, transportation, health and finance. On May 12th 2022, a Host Country Agreement between the Government of France and the Government of Bangladesh has been signed to legally seal the establishment of the AFD as a Development Partner of Bangladesh. On this occasion AFD renewed its commitment in supporting green and inclusive growth in Bangladesh.

We now have to keep working together to combine our strength in order to consolidate mutual economic and social benefits and to face the numerous challenges to come.

Let me assure you that the French Embassy will continue to play an active role to further strengthen the friendly relations between our two countries.

Vive l'amitié entre la France et le Bangladesh –

Long live France and Bangladesh Friendship –  
Joy Bangla

**Guillaume AUDREN de KERDREL**  
*Chargé d'affaires*

# 30 years of Franco-Bangla Archaeological cooperation

Thirty years ago, in 1992, Bangladesh and France signed a cultural cooperation agreement, which was renewed in 2000. Still active, this agreement marks the longest cooperation between our two countries. Its main objective is to continue the archaeological exploration of the large site of Mahasthangarh, north of Bogra. The excavations are being carried out jointly by the Department of Archaeology of the Ministry of Culture, and more specifically the Regional Directorate of Rajshahi division, led by Naheed Sultana, and a French team. From 1992 to 2012, the latter was led by Prof. Jean-François Salles, from the Maison de l'Orient méditerranéen in Lyon, and then, since 2013, by Dr. Vincent Lefèvre, who is Director of Collections at the National Museum for Asian Arts - Guimet in Paris and is assisted by Dr. Coline Lefrancq.

The site of Mahasthangarh has been known since the 19th century and has been the subject of numerous excavation campaigns. But the cooperation established over the last thirty years has the great advantage of marking a real continuity in research. First of all, it has endeavoured to provide a chronological framework for the city, thanks to several years of stratigraphic exploration (along with radiocarbon dating) of key sectors of the city: the eastern rampart, from 1993 to 2000, and the Mazar sector, to the southeast of the citadel, from 2001 to 2011. This made it possible to phase in a very long occupation sequence that stretches from the 4th century BCE to at least the 14th century CE and to show that, although the rampart has been rebuilt many times, its overall layout is original and dates back to the foundation of the city. The excavations also made it possible to document periods for which written sources are rare or non-existent. For example, traces of an important siege were



discovered, which can be placed towards the end of the 7th century, or of an earthquake which seems to have affected the city in the 13th century.

Since 2012, while the general chronology is better known, joint research has focused more on the urban organisation of the site. The excavations have thus focused on a sector located to the south-east of the Bairagir Bhita temples, on the axis that runs from the north-eastern gate to the Mazar sector in the eastern part of the citadel, i.e. on the side of the Karatoya River, which environmental studies carried out in conjunction with the excavations have shown to have once been a very large river, probably as important as the present Padma and Jamuna.

Unlike the French team, which is usually able to carry out only one mission per year, the Bangladeshi archaeologists are naturally on site and thus have the opportunity, outside the joint programme, to excavate other parts of the city— notably the Bairagir Bhita temples— and other sites in the vicinity, such as the Buddhist monasteries of

Bihar and Vasu Bihar.

However, the excavations— and the publications that result from them—do not constitute the totality of the French-Bangladeshi cooperation, since it also includes a very important training component. This takes the form of hosting young Bangladeshi professionals during excavations, but also of regular internships in France, or even practical seminars organised on site, for example on the conservation and management of excavated material.

Of course, the Covid-19 pandemic put a stop to this fruitful cooperation for a while. But at the beginning of 2022, the French team was finally able to return to the site and a new excavation campaign is planned for the end of the year. It is now a question of exploring the western part of the site, where there are no visible archaeological remains. This will lead to a new methodology, giving less importance to extensive excavations and more to soundings and the use of remote sensing tools and, if possible, the use of a drone.

# Franco-Bangladeshi Economic Relationships

Economic relations between Bangladesh and France have shown a strong reprisal in 2021 after a decrease of 15% in value of our bilateral trade in 2020 caused by the pandemia of Covid-19.

Last year, our bilateral trade has reached EUR 3.26 billion, showing an increase of 18% compared to 2020.

Fueled mainly by the RMG sector and some leather products, which represent 98% of French imports from Bangladesh, the total value of imports increased by 21% in a year to reach a record EUR 3.01 billion in 2021. France remains one of Bangladesh's largest export markets, and its third customer in the European Union, all products considered.

Unfortunately, French exports

to Bangladesh decreased again, by 20% compared to 2020, amounting to EUR 191 million, back to the level reached in 2017. French exports are boosted by electrical machinery and industrial equipment, such as gas turbines & equipment manufactured by GENERAL ELECTRIC in Belfort, France and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients for pharma industry from SERVIER.

Consequently, our bilateral deficit which registered a threefold increase in the last ten years, came up to EUR 2.88 billion last year. To reduce the huge trade deficit we are facing, France is eager to put its world acclaimed know-how and experience at the service of Bangladesh and its people, especially in the sectors where our companies' excellence is proven

worldwide. Hence, we follow with a keen interest developments in such sectors as power generation (including renewable energy), rail transportation, water treatment and all environment related issues.

Few events have marked Year 2021, due to Covid-19, which forced the unfortunate cancellation in April 2020 of a visit by MEDEF INTERNATIONAL, the French equivalent to FBCCI.

The individual strength of both France and Bangladesh are to be amply utilized and shared in order to consolidate the mutual economic and social benefits. France and its companies are committed to developing their action and establishing partnerships which would allow Bangladesh to reach its ambitious economic targets.



▲  
**Guillaume AUDREN de KERDREL**

support the freedom and independence fighters. Two years later, he was received with great honors in Dhaka by the President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. A recent publication in France, “Malraux and Bangladesh” retraces in details this founding moment and the symbol of our friendship and this beautiful book is currently being translated into Bangla.

The official visit of Honorable Prime Minister to France from November 9th to November 13th of 2021 has reflected the strong bond and the friendship between our two countries.

As underlined by the joint statement adopted on November 9th, France and Bangladesh share many views, in particular the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific region respectful of international law. In this regard France was delighted to see Bangladesh take part in the Indo-Pacific ministerial Forum in Paris on February 22nd this year. France and Bangladesh once again reaffirmed their determination to strengthen partnerships in the field of



**Md. Shafquat Matin**  
President

“The French Revolution not only emancipated the French people but it was a beacon of hope for the down trodden people all over the world. This event for the very first time associated the future of the people with the land they were living on. For the first time in the history, people chanted slogans for their country and that is continuing till today globally”.

Vive la France et le Bangladesh.

Long live France & Bangladesh.



**M A Reaz**  
Vice President

“Warm wishes on French National Day, a day to honor the bravery of those who fought for the freedom of France. May France – Bangladesh friendship live long”.



# Bumrah has ‘bowled better’ before

AFP, LONDON

Jasprit Bumrah responded to a one-day international career-best haul that set-up India's 10-wicket thrashing of world champions England by saying "I have bowled so much better than this and not got wickets".

Bumrah took 6-19, including an opening spell of 4-9 in five overs that routed a proven top order, as England were skittled out for just 110 in 25.2 overs at the Oval on Tuesday.

India then sprinted to their target, with captain Rohit Sharma unbeaten on 76 as his side won with more than 31 overs to spare to go 1-0 up in a three-match series that continues on the other side of London's River Thames, at Lord's, on Thursday.

Bumrah, 28, may have been assisted by overcast conditions and a well-grassed pitch after Rohit won a good toss, but there was no denying his skill as he surpassed his previous best return in 71 ODIs of 5-27 against Sri Lanka at Pallekele in 2017.

"I don't look at end results and judge my bowling," Bumrah told reporters after a day/night match that ended so quickly there was no need for the floodlights to be switched on.

"There have been instances where I have bowled so much better than this and not got wickets."

Bumrah was well supported by new ball partner Mohammed Shami (3-31) as India made light of the fact that England were fielding arguably their strongest batting line-up in the 50-over format since winning the 2019 World Cup final.



"Both of us had a conversation and decided we should go a little fuller and try to bowl a Test-match length," said Bumrah.

"I try to keep a balanced mind, not look too far ahead... Keeping things simple, not trying to over-complicate it too much and shutting out the outside noise has always worked for me."

He started England's collapse by inducing Jason Roy to play on with just his fourth ball -- one of four ducks in an England innings where Bumrah had Joe Root, the world's top-ranked Test batsman, caught behind for nought as well.

"There's no doubt about the quality of the England side," said Bumrah. "You always want to test yourself against very good players."

England captain Jos Buttler, whose 30 was the hosts' top score, paid tribute to Bumrah's "unique action".

"He has an incredibly high level of skill -- he creates an angle but still has a phenomenal wrist to move the ball both ways from that angle to both right and left-handers," Buttler said.

"He produces tough angles and does it at high pace -- as a package that is very good."

Buttler has now lost three of his four games -- including a 2-1 T20 series defeat by India last week -- since taking over following former white-ball captain Eoin Morgan's retirement.

"It's certainly key not to panic," Buttler said.

"If I look back over the past five or six years, batting has been our super strength in this form of the game."



Tamim Iqbal wears a broad smile as he celebrates with Liton Das after his side's nine-wicket victory over the West Indies in the second ODI at the Guyana National Stadium in Providence on Wednesday. The Bangladesh skipper scored an unbeaten 50 – his 53rd in the format – as the visitors chased down 109 with 29.2 overs to spare to register a series victory and a 10th win on the trot over the hosts.

PHOTO: AFP

# Tigers can dream big with Tamim at the helm

MAZHAR UDDIN

When Tamim Iqbal replaced Mashrafe Bin Mortaza as the ODI captain of Bangladesh back in 2020, there were concerns whether the Tigers would be able to continue on the upward trajectory in their preferred format under new leadership.

With Mashrafe stepping down after recording 50 wins in the format as the skipper, Tamim sure had big shoes to fill. For someone like Tamim, who had always shied away from leadership roles, the task was even steeper considering the legacy left behind by a charismatic leader like Mashrafe.

Owing to the outbreak of coronavirus, Tamim had to wait almost over a year before officially beginning his journey. And that probably worked in the left-hander's favour as he had time to ponder on ways he would like to lead the Tigers. As things stand now, Tamim seems to have done his homework right.

Refining the squad ahead of the next fifty-over World Cup in 2023 has always been a part of Tamim's long-term plan. Considering that, the 33-year-old definitely seems to be headed the right way.

Under Tamim's captaincy, Bangladesh have already won five out of six series and, after a convincing win in the first ODI against the West Indies in their ongoing series, the Tigers are now eyeing yet another series triumph in the three-match series.

Since taking over as the captain in 2021, Tamim has led Bangladesh to 13 wins in 19 matches. Among the ones who led Bangladesh in ODIs, Tamim also boasts the highest win percentage (59.09).

Tamim had a splendid start as the Tigers



whitewashed West Indies in a three-match series at home in his very first assignment as the captain of the side. Bangladesh went on to lose 3-0 in a tough away tour to New Zealand, but that has been the only blemish in Tamim's record so far.

Bangladesh have won four series on the trot since then -- away to Zimbabwe, at home against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka before sealing a maiden ODI series win away to South Africa. Under the southpaw's leadership, Bangladesh were even on top of the ICC ODI Super League table for a while.

"If we win one or two [matches], we will probably qualify for the World Cup. [But] it is not my target. My personal target as a captain is to finish in the top four. If you want to claim that you have come to win the 2023 World Cup, it wouldn't make sense if you qualify as the seventh or eighth team," Tamim had said after the Afghanistan series earlier this year.

There were also concerns whether the added responsibility would hinder the left-hander's form with the willow. But the elegant left-hander has managed to brush off those concerns as well.

In the 19 ODIs since taking over as the captain, Tamim has scored 657 runs, averaging over 36 which is quite similar to his overall ODI career average.

His aggressive captaincy and ability to read the situation also garnered a lot of praise. More importantly, like a true leader, Tamim remained vocal and led from the front whenever the team needed.

Although Tamim and Bangladesh still have a long way to go, the Tigers are surely heading in the right direction and can dream to achieve big in the coming days.

# Tennis courts at Bosnian ‘pyramids’!

AFP, VISOKO

Recently-crowned Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic arrived in Bosnia on Wednesday to inaugurate tennis courts at a 'pyramid park' that he regularly visits to recharge his batteries.

The tennis star, known for his new-age spiritual interests, is fond of a hill town of Visoko, where thousands flock every year to what some believe are an ancient man-made pyramid complex with healing powers -- a claim rejected by scientists.

The 35-year-old Serb, who claimed his 21st Grand Slam title on Sunday, visited the site for the first time in 2020 and called it a 'paradise on earth'.

Bosnian businessman and ancient civilisation aficionado Osmanagic said the idea to construct a regional tennis training centre was born during Djokovic's last visit in March.

"We have agreed to build in our park two courts for training of the top-level players, one hard-court and another one with clay surface" Osmanagic told reporters recently.

# Sterling thanks Man City



AFP, MANCHESTER

Raheem Sterling has said he will leave Manchester City "a man" on Wednesday as his transfer to Chelsea edged ever closer.

The 27-year-old posted a goodbye message on social media ahead of an expected £50 million (\$59 million) move.

Sterling announced his exit from the Etihad with a social media post thanking those he worked with at the club over the past seven years.

"Seven seasons, eleven major trophies, a lifetime of memories," he posted on Twitter. "What a ride it's been."

"I am thankful for the ups and the downs as it's the downs that have, at times, tested my strength and resolve and enabled me to stand here in front of you as the best possible version of myself."

"I arrived in Manchester as a 20-year-old. Today, I leave a man. Thank you for your endless support. It's been an honour to wear the shirt of Manchester City."

Sterling is set to become Chelsea's first signing since Todd Boehly's consortium bought the club.

The England international won four Premier League titles among nine major trophies since joining City from Liverpool in 2015.

A key player in the early years of Pep Guardiola's reign at City, Sterling scored 131 goals in 337 appearances for the English champions.

However, his regular place in the starting line-up at City came increasingly under threat from the signing of Jack Grealish for a Premier League record £100 million last year, plus the emergence of Phil Foden from the club's academy.



Bahrain Victorious team's Belgian rider Dylan Teuns (R) leads a breakaway during the 11th stage of the 109th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, 151.7 km between Albertville and Col du Granon Serre Chevalier, in the French Alps on Wednesday. The world's most high-profile cycling event was disrupted briefly by environmentalists in the previous stage, which was eventually won by Magnus Cort Nielsen of Denmark. Two-time defending champion Tadej Pogacar held on to the yellow jersey of the overall leader.

PHOTO: AFP



# Woods, McIlroy honoured

REUTERS, ST ANDREWS

Former British Open champions Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy and Paul Lawrie have become Honorary Members of The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, the club said on Wednesday.

American Woods, a 15-times major champion, is bidding to win the British Open for the fourth time this week at St Andrews to add to his victories in 2000, 2005 and 2006.

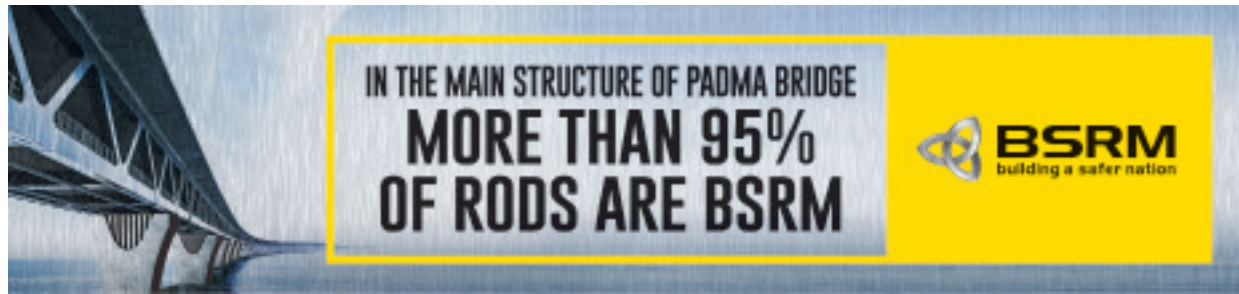
"I am grateful for this invitation to become an Honorary Member of The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews," the 46-year-old said. "It is not only the home of golf but a place in this world that I hold near my heart."

Northern Ireland's McIlroy won the Open at Royal Liverpool in 2014, one of his four major titles.

"It's a privilege to represent a club that has done so much for golf over so many years and I'm proud to play my part in promoting golf around the world," he said.

Scotland's Lawrie, who won the 1999 British Open, will have the honour of striking the first tee shot of the 150th Open on Thursday.





## Bangladeshi student dies after Kolkata road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A Bangladeshi student passed away on Tuesday, two days after she was injured in a road accident in Kolkata.

The student – Shazmila Jishman Moon, 22, hailing from Chattogram – breathed her last around 10:20pm local time at the SSKM hospital, after a special team of doctors failed to save her, police said. She was in Kolkata on her way to New Delhi with her mother Shirin Ara Chowdhury, 55, a professor at Chattogram University, for the latter's cancer treatment at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

Shazmila and Shirin were hit by a bus while they were crossing a road near the Birla Planetarium.

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People headed to India through Benapole are having to wait in line for almost 17-18 hours for immigration. The delay is mainly due to the land port's struggle to cope with a huge rush of travellers after two years of pandemic restrictions. The situation has been the same since a week before Eid-ul-Azha. Many are going for treatment purposes, and the long wait under an open sky can worsen their health. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## Covid positivity rate goes up slightly

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh logged five more Covid-linked deaths and 1,027 new cases in 24 hours till yesterday morning amid a rise in infections.

The new numbers took the country's total fatalities to 29,217 and the caseload to 1,992,058, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The daily case positivity rate increased to 13.79 percent from Tuesday's 13.78 percent as 7,523 samples were tested during the 24-hour period.

Four of the deceased were men while the other was a woman.

The mortality rate remained unchanged at 1.47 percent. The recovery rate rose to 96.25 percent as 1,559 Covid patients recovered during the period.

In June, the country reported 18 Covid-related deaths and 20,201 new cases, according to DGHS data.

Bangladesh reported its first zero Covid death on November 20 last year since the pandemic broke out here in March 2020.

The country registered its highest daily caseload of 16,230 on July 28 last year and the highest daily fatalities of 264 on August 10 in the same year.

# Red tape stalls vaccine plant work

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN and RASHIDUL HASAN

The vaccine manufacturing and research plant project in Gopalganj saw no progress over one year due to red tape.

So far, only a few meetings have been held and a delegation visited the site, raising concerns that the plant – one of the top priority projects of the country – may not see the light of day anytime soon.

The parliamentary committee on the health ministry in a meeting recently even asked the officials concerned to get a move on.

"Due to the government's complex official procedures, the project has seen almost no progress and I don't think the construction of the vaccine plant will start in one year," an Awami League MP, also a member of the parliamentary watchdog, told The Daily Star.

The MP said, "The to-do list they have placed will require a year to complete; then they will float the tender for the main project."

"But we [committee] have issued instruction to complete all the work within the next six months."

The lawmaker opined that the implementation of the project could have been faster if the government took the matter seriously.

In July last year, the government moved to set up a fully-fledged vaccine plant and research institute following the Covid-19 vaccine supply debacle earlier that year.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had also announced that her government was going to set up the institute as soon as possible.

But in reality, the development project proposal (DPP), the primary and crucial part of this project, has not been done even in a year.

In April, officials said they had submitted a pre-DPP to the health ministry, based on which they have been going ahead with other related work, including training people and sending them abroad for skill development.

Now officials are looking for an international consultancy firm to formulate the DPP, as per the requirement of the financier, Asian Development Bank (ADB), according to the officials.

The parliamentary standing committee during its meeting on April 3 had asked this issue to be solved as quickly as possible but the officials reported no progress made during the next meeting on May 22.

The institute, the first of its kind here, would have three components – a vaccine institute, a vaccine packaging plant, and a research and development site.

The government-owned Essential

Drugs Company Ltd (EDCL), which was given the responsibility to implement the project, was to acquire 6.85 acres near its factory in Gopalganj.

In reality, no progress could be made in this regard, apart from a few meetings between officials of the EDCL, ADB, and the finance ministry.

BSMMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Sharfuddin Ahmed attended one of the meetings held on April 3 as a member of the EDCL Board of Directors.

He had asked if the tender could be floated immediately. He also recommended an amendment to the Public Procurement Rules-2008 as the existing law prevents quick project implementation.

Asked why the EDCL could not finalise the DPP in 11 months, Sharfuddin said, "There are many rules to be followed. But we in the next meeting will talk about ways to make the process faster."

Contacted yesterday, the VC told The Daily Star, "There was no meeting since the last meeting of the parliamentary committee. And I know nothing new about any progress made."

Asked, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, president of the parliamentary committee on the health ministry, said, "If we can complete all the [background] tasks by August, we can start the main project."

## Rishi Sunak tops first vote to be next UK PM

REUTERS, London



Former finance minister Rishi Sunak won the biggest backing from Conservative lawmakers yesterday in the first vote to choose who will succeed Boris Johnson as party leader and British prime minister, while two more rivals were eliminated.

Sunak, whose resignation as finance minister last week helped precipitate Johnson's fall, secured support from 88 of the party's 358 Members of Parliament (MPs), with junior trade minister Penny Mordaunt second with 67 votes and foreign minister Liz Truss third with 50.

Nadhim Zahawi, who took over as finance minister from Sunak last week, and former foreign minister Jeremy Hunt were knocked out after failing to get the required minimum of 30 votes. They join three other contenders who dropped out the day before.

Those remaining – which also includes former equalities minister Kemi Badenoch, Attorney General Suella Braverman, Tom Tugendhat, chair of parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee – will go through to a second round on Thursday.

Subsequent ballots will be held among the Conservative lawmakers, eliminating the

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## Webb Telescope detects water on distant planet

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



Nasa has revealed that the James Webb Space Telescope has detected signs of water on a planet more than a thousand light years away.

The US space agency said it's multi-billion dollar space telescope "captured the signature of water" on the giant gas planet WASP 96-b, which orbits a star 1,150 light years away.

"For the first time, we've detected evidence of clouds in this exoplanet's atmosphere," Nasa tweeted.

The revelation comes as Nasa, ESA (European Space Agency) and CSA (Canadian Space Agency) share the first set of full-colour images taken by the telescope, which capture the deepest images of the universe ever made.

The ultra high-resolution images also show stellar life cycles and interacting galaxies.

The latest discovery offers hope that the most-powerful space telescope ever built could help in the hunt for alien life, or even uncover potential habitable planets for future humans to live on.

"Exploring exoplanets is now a major component of the mission," a Nasa spokesperson said.

The unveiling of the first set of images from the

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## Twitter sues Elon Musk

Accuses him of breaching contract

AFP, San Francisco

Twitter has sued Elon Musk for breaching the \$44 billion contract he signed to buy the tech firm, calling his exit strategy "a model of hypocrisy," court documents showed.

The suit filed in the US state of Delaware on Tuesday urges the court to order the billionaire to complete his deal to buy Twitter, arguing that no financial penalty could repair the damage he has caused.

"Musk's conduct simply confirms that he wants to escape the binding contract he freely signed, and to damage Twitter in the process," the lawsuit contended. "Twitter has suffered and will continue to suffer irreparable harm as a result of Musk's breaches."

The social media company's shares edged up slightly in after-market trading when the news broke.

Legal experts and market analysts see Twitter as having a strong upper hand heading into court, Wedbush analyst Dan Ives said in a note to investors.

"This will be a Game of Thrones battle in court with the fake account/bot issue front and center, but ultimately Twitter's board is holding Musk's feet to the fire to finish the deal at the agreed upon price," Ives said.

"Overall this has been a black eye for Musk and horror movie for Twitter (and its employees) with no winners since the soap opera began in April."

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Battery-run auto-rickshaws haphazardly plying a road near the Padma Bridge toll plaza at the Mawa point yesterday, increasing the risk of accidents. While such three-wheelers are illegal on highways, they are now a common sight there as the authorities are failing to control the situation.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Biman gets new managing director

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's national flag carrier, Biman Bangladesh Airlines, got a new managing director and CEO yesterday.

Zahid Hossain, director (additional secretary) of Biman, was made the new boss of the national airliner.

The public administration ministry in a circular yesterday announced the change in the vital post.

The previous holder of the post of MD and CEO of Biman, Dr Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal, has been made DG of the social welfare department, according to circular.