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16 PAGES PLUS LIFE STYLE : Tk 15.00



### BB gives loan defaulters a big break



### Cox's Bazar a new hotspot for dengue



### Imran Khan calls for early polls



### Ben Stokes declares ODI retirement

## Energy reality bites hard

### Govt announces up to 2-hour load shedding from today, shuts all diesel-fired power plants, mulls other measures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There will be up to two hours' countrywide load shedding from today as the government is taking various measures to cope with the ongoing energy crisis.

The government has temporarily shut down all diesel-fired power plants, which contribute 1,000-1,500MW to the national grid daily.

The decision was taken yesterday at a high-level meeting at the PMO on the overall situation of energy and power generation, said PM's Energy Adviser Towfiq-e Elahi Chowdhury, who attended the meeting.

Before the temporary closure, diesel-fired power plants formed part of the daily production of 12,000-13,000MW against the demand of 14,000-14,500MW, according to Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) data.

The other measures discussed at the meeting were keeping fuel pumps shut one day per week, reducing office time by one to two hours and holding all government meetings virtually.

The websites of the Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC), Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd (DESCO), Northern Electricity Supply Company Ltd (NESCO) and BPDB yesterday included sections on the schedules of load shedding in respective areas.

Two other power distribution organisations, West Zone Power Distribution Company and Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB), were yet to put up schedules till last night.

"We want to let customers know about the load shedding in their areas earlier, and we are working on it," said Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, yesterday.

At a press conference at the Secretariat, he said from today there will be one hour of load shedding daily over the next week.

"If that is not sufficient, we would go for two hours," he added.

"The power supply to the industrial and commercial sectors will remain uninterrupted," he added.

An official of the power division said there are still over four to five hours of power outages under Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board.

The state minister denied that there was load shedding in rural areas. "There might be some technical problems. The rural areas have long distribution lines. If any problem was being fixed anywhere, the whole area went dark."

Some more decisions to reduce the fuel use in cars will be announced through government notifications, said sources with knowledge of yesterday's meeting at the PMO.

They said the meeting also recommended strict implementation of the decision to close shopping malls and markets by 8:00pm.

Asked about shutting petrol pumps for one day a week, Nasrul replied, "A final decision on the closure of petrol pumps is yet to be taken. The decision will be taken after discussion with all concerned."

He said 10 percent of the country's diesel stock is used in the power sector, and that amount will be saved by closing diesel-based power plants. Another 10 percent diesel will have to be saved from the transport sector through measures to be announced soon.

After the PMO meeting, PM's Energy Adviser Towfiq-e Elahi Chowdhury said that as a result of the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, the energy cost skyrocketed and that is why there was no alternative to load shedding.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR LOAD SHEDDING SCHEDULES

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

### MEASURES IN THE OFFING

- Keeping petrol pumps shut one day a week
- Reducing office time by an hour or two
- Strictly enforcing closure of shopping malls, markets by 8:00pm
- Taking steps to reduce diesel use by 20 percent



Through a 200-metre breach in an embankment along the Kapotaksha, water gushes into Charamukha village in Khulna's Koyra upazila. Four other villages nearby have been inundated since the breach developed in the levee on Sunday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

### PVT POWER PLANTS Operators ask govt to pay \$1.5b in arrears

UNB, Dhaka

Despite an improvement in payment, the government still owes \$1.5 billion to the private power plant operators for purchase of electricity, according to official sources.

The sources confirmed this week that the state-owned Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), the single buyer on behalf of the government, partially cleared the payments until February last.

"We have not received any payment against the electricity purchase bills of March till the current month," said Imran Karim, president of the Bangladesh Power Producers' Association (Bippa), the representative body of the private power producers.

"Some of us received the highest 60 percent of the SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

## Sri Lanka crisis a warning sign for many

### Says IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva

STAR REPORT

IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva has cited the example of the unprecedented economic crisis in Sri Lanka to warn other countries that they could also face a similar situation in the face of high debt levels and limited policy space.

"Countries with high debt levels and limited policy space will face additional strains. Look no further than Sri Lanka as a warning sign," said Kristalina Georgieva, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, at the meeting of G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors in Indonesia on Saturday.

The comment comes as Sri Lanka is in the midst of a deep and unprecedented economic crisis.

In mid-April, the Sri Lankan government declared bankruptcy by

refusing to honour its international debt, and now, the island nation is struggling to pay for crucial imports like food, fuel and medicine for its 22 million people for want of foreign exchange.

Inflation has soared about 50 percent, with food prices 80 percent higher than a year ago. The Sri Lankan rupee has slumped in value against the US dollar and other major global currencies this year.

While Georgieva did not mention any country, the same global headwinds -- rising inflation and interest rate hikes, depreciating currencies, high levels of debt and dwindling foreign currency reserves -- have affected other economies in the region, according to BBC.

"Worryingly, other countries appear SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



## Economic jitters felt by stock market

AHSAN HABIB

The jitters surrounding the state of the economy are reverberating on the stock market, with the key index dropping for the fifth day in a row.

Between July 7 and yesterday, DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, which has been on a declining trend since the start of this month, shed 150 points or 2.4 percent to close at 6,216.9. Yesterday, it dropped 87.4 points.

"Investors are tensed about the economic situation," said Abu Ahmed, a stock market analyst.

Yesterday's announcement of a load-shedding plan heightened the investors' jitters as it heralds tougher days ahead.

"I have not seen such pessimism among investors in the last three years." As much as 90 percent of the stocks found no buyer yesterday, said Ahmed, a former chairman of Dhaka University's economics department.

Turnover, an indicator of the level of activity in the bourse, stood at Tk 515.3 crore yesterday, down 13.2 percent from the previous day.

"Most are trying to dump their shares and wash their hands off the stock market for a while as they fear deepening SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

### NARAIL MAYHEM

## Police backup came a little too late

### Five attackers arrested, at least 15 others identified

DIPANKAR ROY

Though a mob of several hundred people thronged the Sahapara village in Narail's Lohagara upazila around 4:00pm on July 15, police reinforcement was nowhere to be seen until 11:00pm.

By then, the attacks had already taken place.

Before additional troops arrived, only around 20 policemen had to be up against hundreds of people attacking Hindu villagers, and pillaging shops and homes, even setting one on fire.

This was the situation even after the upazila nirbahi officer, an hour into the onslaughts on the village, arrived on the spot and promised additional reinforcement.

Multiple eyewitnesses, village police and law enforcers have confirmed this.

The attacks began around 4:00pm, after hundreds of people arrived at the home of Shibnath Saha, president of Sahapara's Radha Govinda temple, in the upazila's Dighalia union.

Shibnath was asked to mete out justice for the alleged transgression of a college student named Akash Saha, who "hurt religious sentiments" through a Facebook post.

During his visit, UNO Md Azgar Ali assured the mob SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



Vehicles line up to get fuel near the capital's Matsya Bhaban. The government is mulling over keeping fuel stations closed a day every week to cut consumption amid price hike of petroleum products in the international market. The photo was taken around 2:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## EC in crisis over next nat'l polls

### Says CEC Awal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal yesterday said they were in crisis over holding the next general election with two major political parties divided over taking part in it.



If the BNP refuses to join the parliamentary election, it won't be participatory and acceptable, and the commission doesn't want to see a "play staged in the name of election", the CEC said as he sat with four political parties as part of a series of dialogues.

The Election Commission opened the talks on March 13 to seek recommendations from a cross section of people on how to hold a free and fair general election. SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## Indian army chief here on a 5-day visit

To meet the prime minister today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian army chief General Manoj Pande yesterday lauded Bangladesh Army's leadership and overall high standards.

The visiting general attended an event at the Army Headquarters in Dhaka Cantonment.

He received a briefing on Bangladesh Army's war preparedness, training, role in maintaining global peace and overall administrative structure, according to a statement of the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR).



A three-member Indian delegation, led by its chief of army staff, arrived in Dhaka on Sunday at the invitation of the Bangladesh Army chief.

This is General Manoj's first foreign trip after he took charge as the Indian army chief early May. He is accompanied by his spouse, Archana Pande.

Yesterday, the Indian army chief also paid a courtesy call on his Bangladeshi counterpart, General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, at the Army Headquarters in Dhaka Cantonment.

At the meet, they discussed various issues related to the good relations between the armed forces of the two countries and future cooperation.

In the afternoon, General Manoj paid homage to the memory of the martyrs of Bangladesh's Liberation War by laying a wreath at Shikha Anirban in Dhaka Cantonment.

He also called on Prime Minister's Security Adviser Maj Gen (ret) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, the chiefs of Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Air Force.

The Indian delegation visited Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi and paid tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Indian army chief is scheduled to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today.

The delegation will leave Bangladesh on July 21.

The visit of the Indian army chief is expected to further strengthen the close ties between the armed forces of the two countries, the ISPR statement said.



This handout picture released by Ukraine Emergency Service yesterday, shows firefighter putting out the fire on a wheat field burned as a result of shelling in Kherson region, amid Russian military invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

## Russia targets Ukraine's long-range missiles

Shelling kills six in Donbas town Toretsk; Zelensky sidelines close allies in war's biggest purge

AGENCIES

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu ordered generals to prioritise destroying Ukraine's long range missile and artillery weapons after Western-supplied weapons were used to strike Russian supply lines.

Nearly five months since President Vladimir Putin ordered the February 24 invasion of Ukraine, Russian forces are grinding through the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine and now occupy around a fifth of the country.

Shoigu, one of Putin's closest allies, inspected the Vostok group which is fighting in Ukraine, the defence ministry said.

Shoigu "instructed the commander to give priority to the enemy's long range missile and artillery weapons," the defence ministry said.

The ministry also said the weapons were being used to shell residential areas of Russian-controlled Donbas and to deliberately set fire to wheat fields and

grain storage silos.

The United States and its allies have supplied billions of dollars' worth of weaponry to Ukraine, including long-range arms which Kyiv says are beginning to help on the battlefield.

Ukraine has carried out a string of successful strikes on 30 Russian logistics and ammunition hubs, using several multiple launch rocket systems recently supplied by the West.

Ukrainian emergency services said yesterday that Russian shelling had destroyed a building, killing six people in the town of Toretsk in the eastern region of Donetsk.

"Early in the morning, the town of Toretsk was shelled. A two-story building with people inside was destroyed," the emergency services said in a statement on social media.

Meanwhile, President Volodymyr Zelensky sidelined his childhood friend as head of Ukraine's security service, and another close ally as top prosecutor, in the biggest internal purge of the war, citing

their failure to root out Russian spies.

Ivan Bakanov, head of the powerful SBU security agency, and Iryna Venediktova, the prosecutor general, had been emblematic of Zelensky's policy of putting young loyalists in charge of combatting corruption since sweeping to power in 2019.

But nearly five months after Russia's invasion, the president acknowledged that his two allies had failed to root out traitors and collaborators in their organisations, reports Reuters.

Zelensky said on Sunday the two had been removed from their posts. The deputy head of Zelensky's administration clarified yesterday that they had been suspended pending further investigation, rather than fired.

More than 60 officials from the SBU and prosecutor's office were working against Ukraine in Russian-occupied territories, and 651 treason and collaboration cases had been opened against law enforcement officials, Zelensky said in a video address.

## UPDF man killed as '2 factions trade gunfire'

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

A UPDF member was killed and another injured in a "gunfight between two factions" of the organisation in a remote area of Khagrachhari's Matiranga upazila early yesterday.

The dead, Uttam Kumar Tripura, 25, was a member of United People's Democratic Front (Prasit Khisa). Injured Chigi Chakma, 24, also belongs to the same faction.

Locals said about 5-7 armed men of UPDF (Democratic) faction entered Sukumar Para in Matiranga around 5:00am, surrounded the house of Uttam's father and opened fire at it.

Retaliatory shots were fired from the home, prompting the gunfight. The gun battle continued for about half an hour, local union parishad member Sulumar Chakma told The Daily Star.

Uttam died on the spot from bullet wounds and Chigi suffered bullet injuries.

BGB Jamini Para Zone Commander Lt Colonel ABM Jahidul Karim said a BGB team went to the spot and recovered the body of Uttam, an AK-22 rifle and some bullets. Later, those were handed over to police.

## 2 men sent to jail for stabbing journalist

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A Narayanganj court yesterday sent two men to jail on charges of stabbing a journalist in Bandar area. The accused Babu Mollah alias Razib, 26, and Shanto, 30, were arrested by police hours after a case was filed against them.

On Sunday, Nuruzzaman Mollah, 45, vice-president of Bandar Press Club and Bandar correspondent of Manab Zamin, was returning from a visit to the home of an abducted girl at Madanpur when the suspects stopped him near Haluapara Bridge, said his wife Irin Sultana.

The criminals stabbed him indiscriminately, leaving him critically injured, she added.

Nuruzzaman is being treated at a local hospital. Irin filed a case against 19 named and 30-40 unnamed individuals hours after the incident, Bandar police said.

## Mugger stabs CNG driver to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver, who was stabbed by a mugger in Khilgaon on Sunday afternoon, died at a city hospital early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mamun Hawlader, 45, a resident of Kamrangirchar area.

A Dhaka court placed the attacker, one Mizanur Rahman who was handed over to police by locals after the stabbing, on a three-day remand yesterday.

Mamun died around 4:30am at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Inspector Bachchu Mia, in-charge of the police outpost at the hospital.

Before dying, Mamun told police and journalists that an attacker, trying to snatch Tk 1,500 from the him, stabbed him repeatedly at a roadside shop in Khilgaon's Taltola Market.

Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Rampura Police Station, said the victim's family filed a case against Mizanur yesterday.

## Economic jitters EC in crisis

FROM PAGE 1

challenges in the coming months," said a top official of a stock brokerage firm requesting anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Since the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission is not allowing any stock to drop more than 2 percent in a day, the index has been saved from registering massive drops.

"The global turmoil impacted the Bangladesh economy and that was reflected on the stock market," said Ershad Hossain, chief executive officer of City Bank Capital.

Both the DS30, the blue chip index; DSES, the Shariah index; and DSMEX, the SME index, dropped 31.7 points, 16.6 points and 189.9 points respectively yesterday.

CASPI, the broad-based index of the port city's bourse, lost 242 points, or 1.3 percent, to close at 18,280.

Turnover at the CSE stood at Tk 13.61 crore yesterday, down from Tk 19.5 crore the previous day.

## 18 women killed in Pak wedding boat capsized

AFP, Sadiqabad

At least 18 women drowned and dozens more people are missing after an overcrowded boat carrying a Pakistan wedding party capsized yesterday, officials said.

The boat was ferrying about 100 members of one family across the Indus river in a marriage procession between the villages of Machka and Kharor in the Sadiqabad subdistrict of Punjab province, according to police and local authorities.

Eighteen women were "confirmed dead" and 25 to 30 people "were either rescued by locals who live along the river or managed to swim ashore", according to Sadiqabad spokesman Rana Kashif Mehmood.

"Rescue teams are at the scene," he said.

FROM PAGE 1

Three political parties — Revolutionary Workers Party, Khelafat Majlis and Bangladesh Islami Front — while taking part in the talks at the EC office yesterday urged the commission not to use Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) in the next general election.

Workers Party and Khelafat Majlis also called for formation of a neutral polls time caretaker government.

CEC Awal said the polls may take place in late December 2023 or early January 2024.

"A major political party already decided that it would not take part in the election unless an election-time government is formed. From the commission's side, we consider it a crisis," he said at the meeting with the Revolutionary Workers Party in the afternoon.

"If one of the major political parties does not participate in the election, in our view it won't be acceptable."

He requested the political parties to reach a consensus so that the election becomes a participatory one, and said the commission wants the BNP and its like-minded parties to take part in the election.

Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Huq said over-enthusiasm regarding EVM has raised questions about the motive of the EC as the ruling party also wants the voting machine to be used in the national election.

He also asked how the EC would deal with all MPs of an aggressive government during the parliamentary election if it could not rein in a lawmaker during the recent Cumilla City Corporation polls.

He castigated the CEC for his comment made at Sunday's talks that "if someone stands with a sword, you will have to stand with a rifle or sword".

In response, the CEC said he made the comment symbolically and jokingly.

About the allegation raised by Saiful that the electoral system has

been destroyed, Awal said, "Not only the electoral system but also politics and many other things have been ruined."

The CEC also said, "Make me the election commissioner of Australia or the United Kingdom, I will be able to conduct elections easily. It's very difficult to hold elections here. There is money power at play in politics here — how can we control it?"

Earlier in the day, Awal at the meeting with Khelafat Majlis said there were "doubts" centring on the election as the BNP and some other like-minded parties have decided not to participate in it.

He said the commission is ready to hold the election but considers that if the BNP does not participate in this election, its goal to hold an inclusive election will not be achieved.

The BNP's issues on how the election should be conducted could be addressed by sitting with other parties, especially the ruling Awami League, and reaching a consensus, he added.

At the meeting with Islamic Front in the morning, Awal said the BNP should establish through movements and discussions what it wants. "The EC doesn't want to see any play staged in the name of an election."

Islamic Front proposed cancelling a mandatory provision of keeping 33 percent positions in all committees of a party reserved for women as all parties cannot ensure it.

Bangladesh Sanskritik Muktijote, another political party, proposed that the ministries of public administration and home should be brought under the EC during the polls.

Khelafat Majlis recommended keeping local government, public administration, defence, home and finance ministries under the EC during the election.

Muktijote also proposed forming a Jatiya Parishad comprising all registered political parties and that Parishad would be in charge of the government during the election.

## Energy reality bites hard

FROM PAGE 1

"All the countries, including the UK and USA, are also experiencing load shedding," he said.

Principal Secretary to the PM, Ahmad Kaikaus, presided over the meeting attended by the high-ups of power and energy division, BPC, Petrobangla, BPDB and the power distribution companies.

On July 7, another high-level meeting recommended setting thermostats at 25 degrees Celsius at every government office, reducing the use of air conditioners at religious

establishments, and wrapping up social events like weddings by 7:00pm.

Yesterday's meeting recommended that these measures be implemented as soon as possible.

"Devotees in all religious establishments can use air conditioners during prayers but are requested to maintain austerity by keeping those off the rest of the time," said the state minister at the press conference.

According to the BPDB, the country has a capacity to produce

22,348MW. Of it, around 52 percent comes from gas-based power plants, 27 percent from furnace oil-based plants, 5.86 percent from diesel-based, 8.03 percent from coal-based plants and the rest from hydro, solar and import.

Since the government decided to stop the import of liquefied natural gas from the international spot market at a high price, there were shortfalls in power generation. Since June 30, the country started load shedding to meet the shortfalls.

## Sri Lanka crisis a warning sign for many

FROM PAGE 1

to be on a similar trajectory," BBC said in its report titled "Sri Lanka crisis is a warning to other Asian nations".

The countries are Bangladesh, Pakistan, Laos and the Maldives, it said.

"For economies running current account deficits — such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka — governments face serious headwinds in increasing subsidies. Pakistan and Sri Lanka have turned to the IMF and other governments for financial assistance," Kim Eng Tan, a sovereign analyst at S&P Global Ratings, told the BBC.

Bangladesh has also requested the IMF for \$4.5 billion to prop up its fast-draining foreign currency reserves, and an IMF mission is in Dhaka to discuss the matter.

As of July 13, foreign currency reserves stood at \$39.79 billion, enough to cover just about five months' import bill.

In the first 11 months of fiscal 2021-22, Bangladesh's current account deficit stood at \$17.2 billion, up from \$2.78 billion a year earlier, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

In May, inflation hit an eight-year high of 7.42 percent.

"Bangladesh has had to re-

prioritise government spending and impose restrictions on consumer activities," Tan said.

Over in Pakistan, the government is trying to rein in spending as it negotiates with the IMF to resume a bailout programme, BBC said.

Since August last year, Pakistan's foreign currency reserves halved. As of July 7, it stood at \$15.61 billion.

Inflation hit a 13-year-high of 21.3 percent in June.

Fuel prices in Pakistan are up by around 90 percent since the end of May, after the government ended fuel subsidies.

The Maldives has seen its public debt swell in recent years and it is now well above 100 percent of its GDP.

Like Sri Lanka, the pandemic hammered an economy that was heavily reliant on tourism, BBC said.

Countries that depend so much on tourism tend to have higher public debt ratios, but the World Bank says the island nation is particularly vulnerable to higher fuel costs because its economy is not diversified.

US investment bank JPMorgan has said the holiday destination is at risk of defaulting on its debt by the end of 2023.

Laos' public debt amounted to

88% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021, according to the World Bank, with almost half of that figure owed to China.

Laos, which is already heavily in debt, is struggling to repay those loans or pay for imports like fuel. The World Bank says the country had \$1.3bn of reserves as of December last year.

But its total annual external debt obligations are around the same amount until 2025 — equivalent to about half of the country's total domestic revenue.

As a result, Moody's Investor Services last month downgraded the communist-ruled nation to "junk", a category in which debt is considered high risk.

China has been a dominant lender to several of these developing nations and therefore could control their destinies in crucial ways, BBC said.

But it is largely unclear what Beijing's lending conditions have been, or how it may restructure the debt, the report said.

Where China is at fault, according to Alan Keenan from International Crisis Group, is in encouraging and supporting expensive infrastructure projects that have not produced major economic returns.

## HUMAN RIGHTS Bangladesh seeks time to respond to UN

DIPLOMATIC  
CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has sought a week from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to respond to a letter wanting to know the country's human rights issues and the government's relations with rights bodies.

"We have sought some time so that we can provide a suitable response to the organisations," Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen told journalists.

On June 27, OHCHR sent a letter to Bangladesh's Permanent Mission to the UN in New York, seeking response on the cases of human rights abuses -- including enforced disappearances, killing of Rohingya leader Mohibullah, harassment of rights activists and revoking of registration of rights body Odhikar.

The UN Human Rights Council's Working Group

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Amid the ongoing heatwave, a sudden drizzle surely brings a sigh of relief, as is evident in the smiles of a rickshaw-puller and the passenger. This photo was taken on Satmasjid Road yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## BISWAJIT MURDER Another life- term convict held in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab has arrested a fugitive convict who was sentenced to life-term imprisonment for killing Biswajit Das during a blockade enforced by BNP-led alliance 10 years ago.

Kamrul Hasan (35) was arrested from Dhaka's Paltan area on Sunday night, said Bina Rani Das, operations officer of Rab-3.

On December 9, 2012, Biswajit (24) was hacked to death in broad daylight by BCL activists while he was on the way to his tailoring shop at Shakhribazar in Old Dhaka during the blockade.

In 2013, Dhaka Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 announced the verdict in the murder case. The trial court sentenced eight accused to death and 13 to life imprisonment. The convicts later appealed against the verdict.

On August 6, 2017, the High Court upheld the death penalty of two of the eight convicts

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

**PRAYER  
TIMING**  
JULY 19

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-15	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-15
JAMAT 4-50	1-15	5-15	6-58	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

# Wait for BRT service gets longer

Likely to become functional from July next year; authorities start process to hire operator, procure 130 buses

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Operation of the country's first dedicated rapid bus service -- from Dhaka airport to Gazipur -- is likely to start in July next year, more than six and a half years after its original deadline.

The infrastructure has gone over double the estimated cost. Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Company Ltd has started the process to procure 130 air-conditioned buses and assigning operating companies to start services.

The development came at a time when the extended deadline of the long-delayed project ended last month, with around 22 percent of physical works still unfinished.

All basic structures are expected to be readied by December this year, while it would take six more months to complete all other processes, including procurement of buses and hiring operators, said Shafiqul Islam, managing director of Dhaka BRT Company.

"We will start operation of BRT in July next year," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, at a press conference in September last year, Shafiqul said operation would start from December this year.

Asked about the delay, he said although basic infrastructure would be completed by this December, some other works



### REASONS FOR DELAY

Issues related to land acquisition

Shifting utility services

Lack of drainage

Contractors' poor performance

Pandemic

### AT A GLANCE

Process to get 130 AC buses started

22pc of physical works still unfinished

All basic structures expected to be readied by this Dec

Latest deadline was June 2022

would remain incomplete.

The project -- formally known as Greater Dhaka Sustainable Urban Transport Project -- witnessed 77.77pc progress till this June.

The project was taken up in November 2012, to be completed by December 2016, at a cost of Tk 2,037.9 crore.

But it got delayed due to various reasons, including issues related to land acquisition and shifting utility services, lack of enough drainage, insufficient money flow of contractors and the pandemic.

The project has gone through four revisions, with its total cost

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## India for 4th Dhaka- Kolkata train service

BSS, Dhaka

India has formally proposed to operate a fourth inter-country train service from Dhaka to Kolkata.

The proposal came while Indian High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswami called on Railways Minister Mohammad Nurul Islam Sujan at the minister's office yesterday.

Presently, three train services -- Maitree, Bandhan and Mitali Express -- are in operation between Bangladesh and India. One more may be operated on Dhaka-Kolkata via Darshana, considering the demand, said the Indian envoy.

During the discussion, the minister urged the Indian envoy to complete the Indian part of railway construction from Banglabandha as early as possible.

Sujan also requested the high commissioner to extend Sirajganj-Bogura railway line up to Shantahar, as the line is being constructed with financial assistance from India.

They also discussed the problems that surfaced during construction of Khulna-Mongla rail lines, and the third and fourth rail lines from Dhaka to Tongi, constructed with Indian financial assistance.

## NARAIL MAYHEM

# Demand for justice reverberates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society members in the capital and Chattogram have condemned the recent spate of attacks on the minority community in Narail.

In Dhaka, Sammilita Samajik Andolon yesterday formed a human chain in front of National Museum and placed a five-point demand.

The demands included an impartial inquiry commission to uncover the root cause of the attacks, disposing of all cases of violence against the minorities under speedy trial laws within six months, fair compensation for all victims, a ban on religion-based politics, and enacting National Minority Commission and Minority Protection Act.

The organisation's general secretary Saleh Ahmed, presidium member Asit Baran Roy, international affairs secretary Parvez Hashem and others spoke in the protest programme. It was presided over by Dhaka University Prof and presidium member Robayet Ferdous.

"There have been many cases of violence against minorities, but no information is available whether any cases have been settled or whether the perpetrators have been punished," said Prof Ferdous.

PROTEST IN CTG

Different socio-political organisations staged a demonstration in the port city yesterday protesting the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## Review freedom fighters' benefits Recommends JS body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Liberation War Affairs Ministry yesterday recommended that the government review the ration and benefits provided to freedom fighters.

It also recommended sending urgent letters along with necessary directions through virtual meetings to all district hospitals and 22 specialised hospitals aiming to ensure medicare facilities for freedom fighters.

The decisions were taken at the 30th meeting of the Standing Committee on Ministry of Liberation War Affairs of the 11th National Parliament held at Sangsad Bhaban with Shajahan Khan in the chair.

It recommended the Ministry take necessary measures through discussions with Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) regarding the further reduction of service charge from 8 percent on loans given to the freedom fighters.

The meeting also recommended necessary amendments to the draft booklet containing various benefits provided to freedom fighters and their families.

## CJ constitutes 50 HC benches

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique has constituted 50 High Court benches for conducting judicial functions as the court will reopen tomorrow following annual vacation.

Among the 50 benches, 30 are two-judge (division) benches and 20 are single-judge benches, according to a notification issued by the chief justice yesterday.

Both the Appellate and High Court Divisions of the Supreme Court went on annual vacation on July 3.

Both the divisions will reopen on Wednesday.

## Keep market open for all valid agencies

Says platform of recruiters  
on sending workers to  
Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A platform of recruiting agencies yesterday demanded amendment to some clauses of the agreement signed between Bangladesh and Malaysia over recruitment of Bangladeshi workers, saying those go against Bangladesh's sovereignty.

Organising a press conference at the capital's Jatiya Press Club, members of Shommilito Somonnoy Front, Baira also demanded keeping the Malaysian labour market open for all valid Bangladeshi recruiting agencies.

Besides, they further demanded repeal of or amendment to the decisions taken during the Joint Working Group meeting between Bangladesh and Malaysia in Dhaka on June 2.

Addressing the conference, Mostafa Mahmud, secretary general of the front, said as per clauses of the signed memorandum of understanding (MoU), the Malaysian government shall select Bangladeshi recruiting agencies from a list supplied by the Bangladesh government.

This means the Malaysian government has full power over selecting recruiting agencies from Bangladesh, Mostafa said.

"We vehemently oppose this," he said, adding that all valid recruiting licence-holders should be provided with the opportunity.

Reading out a 10-point demand, the front's president

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



To commemorate the martyrs of the Language Movement, a gate was supposed to be constructed beside Dhaka Medical College. However, many years have passed since the construction work got halted. At present, the unfinished structure is being used by locals to hang their clothes, while many plaster its surface with posters. This photo was taken in Aamtola area recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## 4 more hajj pilgrims die in Saudi Arabia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four more Bangladeshi hajj pilgrims died in Saudi Arabia during this year's pilgrimage. Of them, two were female and two male. With the three, a total of 23 Bangladeshi pilgrims died so far in Saudi Arabia during this year's hajj, Hajj Management Portal, Religious Affairs Ministry said in its website.

The three pilgrims died between July 14 and July 17. Nothing was mentioned on the website about the cause of their death.

A total of 60,146 Bangladeshi pilgrims went to Saudi Arabia to perform hajj this year. This year hajj was held on July 8. The return hajj flights started from July 14.

In 2019, around 1.27 lakh Bangladeshis were allowed to perform hajj. Due to the pandemic, the congregation was held on a limited scale in last two years. This year, around one million Muslims performed hajj in Saudi Arabia.



# Cox's Bazar a new dengue hotspot

HELEMUL ALAM and MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAT

Cox's Bazar has become a hotspot for spreading dengue after Dhaka. Two dengue patients died and 103 patients were hospitalised with dengue in the district this year so far.

However, the number would be far more than that if members of the forcibly displaced Rohingya community — who are currently in Bangladesh's shelter — are included in the list.

Dr ATM Rezwanul Haque Bhuiyan, coordinator of the health sector under the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, said the dengue outbreak in Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar is much higher.

According to data obtained from Rohingya camps, the number of dengue patients there was 3,029 till June this year, he mentioned.

According to the Directorate General of Health Service (DGHS), a total of 1,789

dengue patients were hospitalised this year till yesterday, of whom 254 were from outside Dhaka.

A total of three patients have died so far, of whom, two were in Cox's Bazar and one in Dhaka.

In 20 other districts, 151 dengue patients have been admitted to hospitals this year.

In Cox's Bazar, Rohingya camps at Ukhiya and Takenaf have been identified as the prime hot spots.

Civil Surgeon of Cox's Bazar Md Mahbubur Rahman told this newspaper that after Dhaka, the number of dengue patients is the second highest in Cox's Bazar, of whom, most are from forcibly displaced Rohingya community.

He said different combined activities have been going to control the spread of Aedes mosquitoes.

Dr Rezwanul said camp administration and NGOs are conducting anti-mosquito drives at the field level to control Aedes

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



**Two dengue patients died and 103 were hospitalised with dengue in the district this year so far.**



With floodwater receding in some areas of Sylhet and the fields emerging again, local children finally got a chance to enjoy a game of football among themselves. And so what they became all muddy? All that mattered at that moment was the match. This photo was taken in Sylhet Sadar's Baishtila area.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## Holding tax based on land not rent Demand homeowners as CCC starts collection process

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

Despite objections from homeowners, Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) will start collecting holding tax based on property rent, instead of area. This new method will reportedly raise the tax by many times.

CCC started sending notices to homeowners in this regard on April 23.

Officials of the corporation's revenue department said the previous system could not assess a building's true value, as calculations were done based on estimation mostly. Moreover, there was no specific guideline on how to realise holding tax.

CCC used to collect tax based on the land's square feet (Tk 1 to 5 for per square foot) of a respective building, depending on the locality.

Under the new system, holding tax will be collected based on a building's total rent. The tax will be equivalent to 17 percent of the total rent. As a result, homeowners will have to pay way more tax than before, according to officials and homeowners.

The process to reassess the system started in March 2016 and found 1.85 lakh holdings in the port city. CCC set a target of realising Tk 851 crore as holding tax for fiscal 2017-18, which was Tk 131.91 crore earlier.

In 2017, however, local government ministry suspended tax collection based on the reassessment, due to the movement of homeowners, who say the tax amount is too high, and its impact will fall on tenants.

The ministry withdrew the suspension in January this year. Since then, CCC has been preparing to collect the increased tax.

Omar Faruk, a resident of South

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

# A story of scarcity and negligence

Only one doctor for hundreds of cancer patients in Khulna Medical College Hospital

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Due to scarcity of trained professionals, unavailability of equipment and overwhelming treatment costs, cancer care is still inaccessible to hundreds of patients in Khulna and surrounding southern districts.

The Cancer Institute of Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) is the sole destination for low-income families in Khulna and Barishal.

Cancer patients in Bangladesh usually receive treatment in three ways: radiotherapy, chemotherapy and surgery.

At present, there is only one doctor for 1,000 patients who receive treatment at KMCH. The highly technical work of giving chemotherapy and radiotherapy is overseen by seven nurses, leaving a huge question mark on their ability to perform the task.

Although there is one radiotherapy machine at the hospital, it is not operational.

As a result, the treatment for terminally ill patients has come to a standstill. Dr Mukitil Huda, the head of the department, works only three days a week. He is the only doctor at the institute as his only colleague Happy Saha has recently been transferred to Dhaka.

There are practically no doctors in the unit on the remaining days. As a result, cancer patients in the region are in great distress.

Regarding the transfer of a doctor, Director of KMCH Md Rabiul Hasan said, "I have nothing to say about the government



decision, but it would have been better for us if she stayed."

A linear accelerator or radiotherapy machine was brought to KMCH in July 2012 to provide better services for cancer treatment. The machine has been lying there almost ever since.

According to KMCH, Tk 7 crore was sought in the 2015-16 financial year for making the machine operational and constructing related infrastructure. But the call for investment at the facility has fallen on deaf years, claimed hospital authorities.

Mukitil Huda, associate professor and

in charge of the radiotherapy department, said, "Since its inception, the unit has been lagging due to lack of necessary manpower and medical equipment."

Patients have to go through a painful ordeal to receive treatment and care due to overcrowding and lack of essential services.

At KMCH, hundreds of patients and their attendants were seen standing in long queues to buy tickets for treatment. Many patients, who were too weak to stand, were seen lying on the dirty floor as all the chairs were occupied.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Starting his day at the break of dawn, 64-year-old Thakur roams from village to village, carrying around 30 kilos of "ghol", also known as "Mattha". A familiar face for the last 27 years, Thakur sells a glass of the yoghurt and milk-based drink for Tk 15 and offers a much-needed respite to locals from the heat. This photo was taken in Dighaliya area of Khulna recently.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Locals block road protesting load-shedding in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Protesting prolonged load-shedding, residents of Dakshin Surma and Osmaninagar upazila in Sylhet blocked Dhaka-Sylhet highway on Sunday night.

The blockade started around 10:00pm at Nazirbazar in Dakshin Surma and Khasikapon in Osmaninagar. Around 11:30pm, the blockades were withdrawn after police and the Palli Bidyut Samity assured them of electricity.

The upazilas have been facing severe load-shedding since Friday.

Md Muzibur Rahman Chowdhury, deputy general manager of Palli Bidyut Samity in Sylhet, said, "As the main supply line of power was snapped accidentally, the service is being disrupted. We're looking into it."

## LAWACHHARA FOREST Man sent to jail for arranging ad shoot with fire, light

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A Moulvibazar court has sent a line producer of Pran's production house to jail for arranging shooting for an advertisement inside the Lawachhara National Park, disturbing wildlife with fire, bright lights.

The accused is ABM Rintu.

This is the first time a case has been filed for the crime of harming the forest environment.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Moulvibazar Wildlife and Nature Conservation Department Divisional Forest Officer Md Rezaul Karim Chowdhury confirmed the matter.

Senior Judicial Magistrate of the Forest Court Md Saifur Rahman refused Rintu's bail plea and ordered to send him to prison on Sunday, he said.

Suhel Shyam, a member of Sreemangal Stand for Our Endangered Wildlife (SEW), said on June 8, an advertisement team of Pran broke the forest law by setting a fire inside Lawachhara National Park and operating two large generators.

Later in the night, the forest department seized

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## CMP gets new commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Police's Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Krishna Pada Roy yesterday took charge of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) as the commissioner.

He was greeted as the 31st commissioner with flowers by senior officials at the CMP headquarters.

An officer of Bangladesh Civil Services' 15th batch, Krishna severed as additional commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police before his new posting on June 30.

The outgoing CMP Commissioner Saleh Mohammad Tanvir was posted to Central Police Hospital (CPH) as its director.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## 'I did not expect this unnecessary drama'

PUJA CHERY

ZAHID AKBAR

Puja Chery has charmed her fans with her versatility and charisma in films like "Poram 2", "Dohon" and "Shaan". Her film "Golui", which was recently released at Jamaica Multiplex in New York, also brought with it praise for the actress.

Marking Eid-ul-Azha, her latest film "Psycho" was released and is currently running in 17 cinema halls across the country.

We caught up with Puja to find out more about her recent endeavors and future plans.

**How did your fans respond to the theatrical release of "Psycho"?**

Having worked in commercial projects like "Prem Amar 2", I had high expectations from "Psycho". I was offered the role of a smart and intelligent girl. However, I was anxious if the audience would accept me in this character.

My anxiety was replaced by joy when I visited the theatres to watch "Psycho", as the audience loved the movie. They also cheered for my performance and their praise has motivated me to keep experimenting with new and unique roles.

**You visited your hometown, Khulna to promote your film. How was the experience?**

The love and warmth I received from my hometown was amazing. The day I went to see "Psycho", the show was houseful. I am blessed to have such fans who appreciate my efforts.

**You previously shared the screen with Shakib Khan and Siam Ahmed. How was the experience of acting alongside Ziaul Roshan?**

Shakib Khan can't be compared with anyone in this industry. He is the superstar of Dhallywood. He kept the cinema industry ahead. However, in recent times, Siam and

Roshan are making their place in the industry. The audience appreciated my chemistry with both of them. Roshan works really hard on his acting skills, and he has a drive to perform to the best of his ability. I think this will take him far in this industry.

**You gave a status on your social media that reads, "We don't talk. Our audience talks for us". What's the story behind this status?**

This Eid, three films titled "Din - The Day", "Poran" and "Psycho" were released in theatres. Whenever I go on social media, I see people belittling each other's films. They fight with each other about whose movie is better. I do not expect this type of unnecessary drama, mostly when the cinema industry is struggling. I am not pointing at anyone specific, but I hope everyone's movie does well. That's why I posted this status.

**Your film "Golui" has now been released in the USA. How have you felt about this achievement?**

I feel very proud at this moment. I want Bangla cinema to get global attention. It is a great achievement for all of us if our films make a place for themselves worldwide.



## SI Tutul ties the knot in the US

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK



Renowned Bangladeshi singer SI Tutul has tied the knot with television presenter Sharmin Siraj Sonia. The couple got married on July 4, in the United States of America.

Tutul's new marriage came a year after his divorce with renowned actress Tania Ahmed.

"Tania and I were separated for five years. Our official divorce was last year", said Tutul to The Daily Star. "Since then, I've been working in New York for concerts. I met Sonia through the reality show 'Bangla Gayen' on RTV."

## Jennifer Lopez, Ben Affleck get married in Las Vegas



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Popular celebrity couple Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck have finally said "I do" on Sunday. The couple rekindled their romance after almost 20 years.

The couple known popularly as "Bennifer" got engaged in April of this year. According to a newsletter, Jennifer changed her name to "Mrs Jennifer Lynn Affleck" after the marriage.

The couple announced their matrimony in a newsletter from Lopez revealing that they flew to the desert city in Nevada to gain a marriage license, and were wed at a chapel late Saturday.

## COUNTRYWIDE

### Auto rice mill near school

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

An influential quarter is setting up an auto rice mill close to a government primary school at Atharodana in Ghatail upazila, ignoring local people's objection.

Villagers said if the rice mill near Atharodana Badeparshi Government Primary School goes into operation, it will destroy local environment and pose health risk to the students and teachers of the educational institution.

Meanwhile, agitated locals staged a demonstration recently and demanded to stop the ongoing construction of the rice mill there.

Local administration, however, could not stop the construction work as the owner of the mill got approval from the Directorate of Environment (DoE).

Locals said construction of Dhaleshwari Agro Food Mills, which is only a few hundred feet away from Atharodana Badeparshi Government Primary School,

started in October last year.

They also submitted a complaint to the local administration and DoE in this regard, but to no effect, villagers further said.

A number of guardians including Anwarul Kabir and Azmat Ali said if the mill is constructed there it will badly hamper the kids' education.

"If the mill is constructed beside the school, I will have to shift my son to other school," Anwarul said.

Headmaster of Atharodana Badeparshi Government Primary School Khorshed Alam said although they raised their objection against the construction of the rice mill, the owner did not bother.

Contacted, Anwar Hossain, owner of the under-construction rice mill, said before the start of the mill construction work, an advertisement was published in the newspapers, saying if anyone has any objection in this regard, but no one raised any objection then.

Later, I got approval from the DoE, he said, adding that although

construction of another mill is going on some distance away, a section people is instigating the villagers to raise objection against his mill.

When asked about the environment pollution, Anwar said now everything is automated.

Because of using modern technologies, it will pose no threat to local people and the school kids, the further said.

Ghatail Upazila Education Officer Masudur Rahman said although investigations had been conducted in this regard on several occasions, the construction work is still going on.

Ghatail Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Munia Chowdhury said the mill owner has valid approval from the DoE.

Md Ziaul Haque, director of DoE (Dhaka region), said they held three hearings in this regard. Although the mill owner appeared in the hearing, the school authorities did not, he added.



Despite protest by locals, construction of an auto rice mill is going on near Atharodana Badeparshi Government Primary School in Tangail's Ghatail upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

### Special drive today

FROM PAGE 12

in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, said a press release from the Directorate General of Health Services.

During the same period, 1,072 people tested positive for the infection after 10,974 samples were tested across the country.

The positivity rate stood at 9.77 percent.

With the latest, the total number of deaths rose to 29,241.

### Ghazal legend

FROM PAGE 12

on February 6, 1940 in Amritsar, performed on Delhi's All India Radio at the beginning of his career, while also being associated with its famed Doordarshan Center.

He was also proficient in guitar and violin.

In 1962, music director Madan Mohan gave him his first break and called him to Bombay to lend his voice to the song "Hoke Majboor Mujhe Usne Bulaya Hoga" with Mohammed Rafi, Talat Mahmood and Manna Dey in Chetan Anand's "Haqeeqat".

Bhupinder was given his solo break in the film "Aakhri Khat".

The artiste is remembered for his unforgettable works in films "Mausam", "Satte Pe Satta", "Ahista Ahista", and "Dooriyan", amongst many others.

A few among his many hits are "Dil Dhoondta Hai", "Naam Gum Jaayega", "Ek Akela Is Shaher Mein", "Beeti Na Beetai Raina", "Huzoor Is Kadar bhi na Itra ke Chaliye", "Kisi Nazar Ko Tera Intezar Aaj Bhi Hai" and "Baadalon Se Kaat Kaat Ke".

He also sang populist Bengali tracks, including "Kobe Je Kothay", "Keu Bhul Kore", "O Amar Monjusa" and "Tomay Cheye Ar Na Chawa".

He was known for his deep voice and unmatched work ethic.

As a guitarist, he played in classics like "Dum Maro Dum", "Chura Liya Hain", "Chalte Chalte", "Mehbooba o Mehbooba" and "Chingari Koi Bhadke".

In the mid-1980s, Bhupinder married the Bangladeshi singer Mitali. He is also survived by his son Nihal Singh, also a musician.

### HC orders judicial probe

FROM PAGE 12

officials and police should not be declared illegal.

The home ministry secretary, inspector general of police, deputy commissioner and superintendent of police in Narail and officer-in-charge of Narail Sadar Police Station are respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice Bhishmadev Chakraborty and Justice SM Maniruzzaman delivered the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Ain O Salish Kendra

(ASK).

During hearing, ASK lawyer ZI Khan Panna told the court that Swapan's humiliation would not have happened if those who humiliated teachers Shaymal Kanti Nag in Narayanganj and Hridoy Mondal in Munshiganj were given exemplary punishment.

Lawyers Aneek R Haque and Shahinuzzaman Shahin also represented the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General Samarendranath Biswas represented the state.

### Police backup came a little

FROM PAGE 1

that the administration would take care of the matter. To appease the irate crowds, Akash's father Ashoke Saha was taken into custody.

A police official, who accompanied the UNO, said, "After we assured [the attackers] that Akash would be arrested and justice would be served, the crowd left. However, it returned after a while."

Around 5:00pm, a rally congregated again and police dispersed it by charging batons.

Half an hour later, it came back stronger than before, and there were only 20 police personnel to handle the situation.

"We had nothing to do. There was no way to tackle such a large rally. They were retaliating and even harassed a police officer, who did not have a name tag, calling him a Hindu," a sub-inspector of Lohagara Police Station, requesting anonymity, told The Daily Star.

"We did not have any sound grenades. We only had a few tear gas shells... But around evening, when more people started pouring in from every direction to attack the village, we had nothing to do except leave the area."

"They were pelting us with brick chips," he said, adding that they were fearing the consequences of going on a stronger offensive.

Abu Hena Milon, officer-in-charge of the station, said they fired at least 25 rounds of live ammunition and lobbed eight tear gas shells.

Sahapara village is around eight kilometres away from the station, with no police camps in between.

Shibnath Saha said, "When the attacks began, [most] police [officers present] watched silently. We implored them to take action when the house next to ours was being vandalised. They did nothing... Additional forces came around 11:00pm."

Prabir Kumar Roy, superintendent of police in Narail, said, "It is true that police [reinforcements] took a while to reach the locality. The district police camp is 30km away. However, we had enough force to cover the area."

Meanwhile, a case was filed against around 250 unnamed people over the attacks.

Mizanur Rahman, sub-inspector of Lohagara police and investigating officer in the case, said they have identified 15-20 people from different video footages of the incident.

"We have arrested five people -- Sayeed Sheikh, Rasel Mridha, Kabir Gazi, Rezaul Sheikh and Masum Billah. They are all residents of Lohagara."

Each of them has been taken into a three-day remand.

"We are hoping to find the main instigator after questioning them during the remand."

Akash Saha was arrested on July 16 in a case filed under the Digital Security Act. He too was placed on a three-day remand.

## PUNJAB BY-POLLS WIN Imran Khan calls for early election

AFP, Lahore

Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan yesterday called again for an early national election after his party seized control of the state assembly in Punjab, the country's most populous province.

Twenty seats were up for grabs in the Punjab by-election, which was seen as a popularity test for the former international cricket star dismissed by a no-confidence vote in April.

His Pakistan Tehreek e-Insaf (PTI) party won 15, with the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) of current Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif taking four, and one going to an independent.

Sunday's vote was also seen as a bellwether for national elections that must be held by October next year, although Khan has campaigned across the country for an earlier poll since being dismissed.

"The only way forward from here is to hold free and transparent elections," Khan tweeted early yesterday after the Punjab votes were tallied.

"Any other way will only lead to increased political uncertainty and further economic chaos."

Khan has drawn thousands to rallies since being ousted, giving lengthy speeches claiming the government was imposed on Pakistan by a US-led conspiracy.

He also blames the current government for soaring inflation, although most analysts agree Sharif inherited the country's economic woes — which were given some relief last week by an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to resume a rescue package.

Pakistan newspapers suggested the Punjab result was a consequence of the economic hardships currently felt by the country.



A member of the Queen's Guard receives water to drink during the hot weather, outside Buckingham Palace in London, Britain, yesterday. Britain and France went on heatwave alert yesterday bracing for record temperatures as southwest Europe wilted under a scorching sun and ferocious wildfires devoured more forests.

PHOTO: REUTERS

"Clearly, we cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, but we won't. In today's world, you can't just, you know, circle everything with a compass and put up a huge fence, it's just not possible."

Russian President Vladimir Putin says it would be impossible to cut Russia off from the rest of the world, and that the country must focus on developing its own technology and supporting fast-growing companies.



## Voting begins to elect India's new President

AFP, New Delhi

India's parliament yesterday began voting for a new President, with a female politician from the country's marginalised tribal community the favourite for the post.

Droupadi Murmu, from the Santhal tribe, has been nominated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party for the largely ceremonial position.

If elected, she would be India's first tribal President and second female President. The incumbent, Ram Nath Kovind, is the country's second President from the Dalit community, the bottom of the Hindu caste system.

Murmu, 64, began her career as a schoolteacher in the eastern state of Odisha before going into politics. She has held ministerial positions in the state government, and been governor of the neighbouring state of Jharkhand.

Her main opponent for the presidency is veteran politician Yashwant Sinha, an ex-BJP member and former finance and external affairs minister, who has been backed by opposition parties including Congress.

The counting of votes will be held on July 21 and the new President will take oath on July 25, under the schedule announced by the Election Commission.

## Nearly half of EU territory 'at risk' of drought

Researchers at the European Commission warn as the region wilts under punishing heatwave

AFP, Brussels

Researchers at the European Commission warned yesterday that nearly half of the EU's territory is currently at risk of drought, as southwest Europe wilted under a punishing heatwave.

In a report for July, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre said that 46 percent of the EU's territory was exposed to warning-level drought, with 11 percent at an alert level, with crops already suffering from the lack of water.

Italy was the hardest hit, with the Po River basin in the north of the country facing the highest level possible of drought severity, the EU said.

In Spain, water reservoir volumes are currently 31 percent lower than the 10-year average, the report said, while in Portugal, water to produce hydroelectric energy is at half the average of the previous seven years.

The EU researchers also warned that the lack of water and strong heat are driving crop yields lower in France, Romania, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

Weather forecasts predict more of the same, the report said, adding to an already "very critical situation" that will exacerbate the effects on agriculture, energy and water supply.

Weather catastrophes triggered by climate change have cost Germany at least 80 billion euros since 2018, another "horrifying" official study said yesterday, as disasters grow more frequent and intense.

The report commissioned by the economy and environment ministries estimated the impact of drought, floods and extreme heat in Germany between 2000 and 2021 was nearly 145 billion euros (\$147 billion), most of it seen in recent years.

Since 2018 alone, damage to buildings and infrastructure as well as lost revenue in sectors such as forestry and farming in Europe's top economy reached over 80 billion euros.

Environment Minister Steffi Lemke said the "horrifying scientific data" illustrated the "enormous

damage and costs" of the climate crisis.

"The numbers sound the alarm for more prevention when it comes to the climate," she said in a statement. "We have got to and will invest more in climate protection and adaptation to protect our people."

Economy Minister Robert Habeck, whose brief includes climate policy, said national measures would have to go hand-in-hand with accelerated global action to "keep the impact of the climate crisis at a bearable level".



The study showed accelerated effects over time, with the abnormally hot, dry summers of 2018 and 2019 and deadly floods in the Rhineland one year ago recorded as particularly devastating.

The 2018-2019 droughts were shown to have cost 34.9 billion euros, the floods an estimated 40.5 billion euros, and damage from severe storms another 5.2 billion euros.

However, the authors of the study said their estimates were almost certainly too low as key factors including health effects and the consequences for biodiversity were not included.

The report came as a heatwave engulfing parts of southwest Europe was expected to reach regions of Germany. Scientists blame climate change and predict more frequent and intense episodes of extreme weather.

## UK TV debate axed over Tory image fears

AFP, London

Television bosses were yesterday forced to scrap a planned debate between contenders for the leadership of Britain's Conservative party, as MPs voted again to narrow down the field.

The five remaining candidates — Rishi Sunak, Liz Truss, Kemi Badenoch, Penny Mordaunt and Tom Tugendhat — had been due to appear in the third televised debate on Tuesday night.

But former finance minister Sunak and Foreign Secretary Truss pulled out, Sky News, which was due to host the programme, said.

"Conservative MPs are said to be concerned about the damage the debates are doing to the image of the Conservative party, exposing disagreements and splits within the party," it added in a statement.

Conservative MPs are holding a series of votes to whittle down the candidates to just two, before a wider ballot of the Tory grassroots.

The latest starts at 1600 GMT, with Tugendhat expected to win the least number of votes and be eliminated when the result is announced from 1900 GMT. Boris Johnson announced on July 7 he was quitting as Conservative leader after a government rebellion in protest at his scandal-hit administration.

## CONTENT VIOLATIONS Russia fines Google \$370m

REUTERS, Moscow

Alphabet's GOOGL.O Google was fined 21.1 billion roubles (\$373 million) by a Russian court for a repeated failure to remove content that Moscow deems illegal, the state communications regulator Roskomnadzor said yesterday. Russia has long objected to foreign tech platforms' distribution of content that fall foul of its restrictions, but what had been a simmering dispute has erupted into a full-on battle since Moscow assembled its armed forces before sending them into Ukraine in February. Late last year, Google was fined 7.2 billion roubles for failing to remove or block content.

## Three slain in US shooting, 2 hurt

AFP, Washington

A man opened fire at a mall in the US state of Indiana on Sunday killing three and injuring two, officials said, the latest armed rampage in a country plagued by gun violence. The attack ended when a "good Samaritan" shot the gunman dead, police said. "We experienced a mass shooting this evening at the Greenwood Park Mall," Mark Myers, mayor of Greenwood, Indiana, said in a statement. The town is about 10 miles south of downtown Indianapolis, the state capital. The gunman, who has not been identified, entered the mall's food court at about 6:00 pm carrying a rifle along with several magazines of ammunition and opened fire, said Chief Jim Ison of the Greenwood Police Department.



## US school shooter faces death penalty

AFP, Miami

A young man who gunned down 17 people at his former high school in Parkland, Florida went on trial yesterday, with jurors set to hand down either the death penalty or a life sentence.

Nikolas Cruz took an AR-15 assault rifle into Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on Valentine's Day in 2018 and killed 17 students and staff members.

Cruz — who was 19 at the time — has already pleaded guilty to 17 counts of first-degree murder and 17 counts of attempted murder for those wounded during the massacre.

The trial is being held to determine his sentence. The death penalty requires a unanimous decision by the jury; Cruz will otherwise be handed life without parole.

The Florida shooting stunned a country accustomed to gun violence and sparked new efforts, led by students from the school itself, to get lawmakers to pass tougher gun control laws.

## Operators ask govt to pay

FROM PAGE 1

payments against the bills of February," he told UNB.

He hoped that there would be a major breakthrough in bill settlements soon as their persuasion continued at the highest policy-making level.

The BPDB usually purchases electricity worth Tk 4,000 crore per month.

Now, the payments against the bills of four months — March, April, May and June — are to be cleared. In addition, payments of some partial bills of February have also not been cleared.

By this calculation, the total amount of the pending bills will be over \$1.5 billion, said Imran, also the director of Confidence Group, which owns a number of power plants.

The BPDB has been facing a cash crunch for the last few months which forced it to move a proposal to Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) to raise the electricity price at retail level.

The energy regulator is yet to make any decision though it recently held a public hearing on the issue.

The BPDB, however, disagreed with the calculations done by Bippa saying that it normally takes 45 days to clear a bill

## Sri Lanka renews

FROM PAGE 12

state intelligence officers loyal to Rajapaksa directly or indirectly supported the bombers.

Rajapaksa was forced to flee last week when tens of thousands of protesters stormed his official residence after months of demonstrations across the country demanding his resignation over Sri

payment after submission.

"If the due payment is calculated this way, the amount will be equivalent for two and a half months," said Saiful Hasan Chowdhury, director of public relations of the BPDB.

He said BPDB has cleared most of the payments against the bills of February.

BPDB documents show that the government has to spend a total of Tk 71,878 crore in the FY2021-22 for power production, of which Tk 44,434 crore will be spent for purchasing electricity from the private sector.

Of this amount, Tk 37,963 crore will be required for purchasing electricity from the independent power producers (IPP) and small IPP plants in the private sector, which produces 38 percent (8,807 MW) of the total generation.

Bippa leaders said the delay in payment is not the only problem that the private power producers are facing.

"The rising price of US dollars, unavailability of the green backs with banks and paying penalties for delayed payment to foreign lenders and equipment suppliers have been the major problems," said the Bippa president.

Lanka's economic crisis.

The nation's 22 million people have been enduring severe shortages of essentials since late last year after the country ran out of foreign exchange to finance even the most vital imports. The country defaulted on its \$51 billion foreign debt in mid-April and is in talks with the IMF for a possible bailout.

## Solar storm

FROM PAGE 12

These storms come as the Sun is in the active phase of its 11 year-long solar cycle, with incidents like these expected to increase in frequency.

Over the weekend, an enormous structure of plasma and magnetic field known as a "prominence" broke away from the Sun.

"The sheer size of the prominence is impressive," says Dr Sebastian Voltmer, who captured an image of it, told SpaceWeather. "It was spectacular to see a very fast moving part of it ejecting and detaching to the side."

Potent solar storms can have serious effects on human activities. Some research suggests that satellites have been dropping out of their orbits due to increased solar wind activity and smaller craft, known as CubeSats, have been destroyed completely. The decrease in altitude for these satellites is 10 times faster than it has been in the past, at a cost of tens of millions of dollars.

## Ghana reports first cases of deadly Marburg virus

AFP, Accra

Two cases of the deadly Marburg virus have been identified in Ghana, the first time the Ebola-like disease has been found in the West African nation, health authorities announced Sunday.

Earlier in the month, blood samples taken from two people in the southern Ashanti region suggested the Marburg

virus.

The samples were sent to the Pasteur Institute in Senegal which confirmed the diagnosis, the Ghana Health Service (GHS) said.

"This is the first time Ghana has confirmed Marburg Virus Disease," said GHS head Patrick Kuma Aboagye said in a statement.

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## Lawmakers blinded by power

### Who gave them licence to brutalise their constituents?

WE are deeply worried by the activities of some of our lawmakers who have recently made headlines by assaulting and threatening people, including teachers, local public representatives, traders and public officials. In the latest incident on July 16, a ruling party lawmaker from Cumilla allegedly attacked an upazila chairman on the parliament premises. According to media reports, he punched and kicked the chairman during a meeting. On July 7, another lawmaker from Rajshahi beat up a local college principal in front of his fellow college principals. These are just some examples from the recent past. Such stories of power abuse were also occasionally reported over the past few years.

Going through the details of such incidents, we cannot help but be appalled at the unruliness of these MPs who, rather than standing by the people in their hour of need, brutalised them or allowed violence in their presence. Regardless of the circumstances behind their action, such vulgar display of intolerance from persons in authority is totally unacceptable.

We wonder how they would justify the impropriety of their behaviour. What could make them feel so emboldened to behave in such a manner? The first reason that comes to mind is that they feel beholden to no one because of their power. They were blinded by it, having possibly emerged from a culture of thug politics. Otherwise, why would someone assault a respectable person such as a college principal in such a way? Why would an MP hurl abuse or threaten public officials for petty reasons? Why would an MP assault another public representative?

The second, and equally important, reason for their unruliness is that none of them were ever held to account or have had to face any legal consequence for their actions. This has further emboldened them to continue with their objectionable activities.

While, as elected representatives, lawmakers are supposed to look after their constituents, often they end up forgetting their role and use their positions of power to gain personal benefits or assault those who either stand in their way or who they deem disloyal. They forget that their position is not a license to do whatever they want.

We urge the government to investigate all incidents of assaults by lawmakers and take legal action against them. At the same time, the party in power should also take punitive action against leaders/members who have been using its name for their petty gains. We hope the senior leadership of the party would take this issue seriously and do the needful to discipline them, not only for the sake of its image but to preserve democratic values as well.

## We can't afford another dead river

### Authorities must save Dhaleswari before it's too late

DESPITE having a parliamentary committee to oversee – and a number of laws and agencies to protect – our rivers, it's alarming that precious little is being done to stop the scourge of water pollution or punish those who are violating the laws. We are helplessly watching the slow death of the Dhaleswari River right before our eyes, as state functionaries remain unmoved for unknown reasons. This is a major river of the country and used to have clear water and plenty of fish before the tanneries were shifted to Savar. But with the tannery owners indiscriminately dumping toxic waste in the river, it may soon embrace the fate of Buriganga River, unless preventive action is taken.

Recently, the Department of Environment (DoE), at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on environment, forest and climate change, highlighted how aquatic life and biodiversity of the river are being destroyed due to unbridled pollution caused by the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate. Worryingly, while the minimum level of oxygen at Dhaleswari should remain 200mg/per litre, its current oxygen level is said to be two to three times less than the permissible limit. This speaks volumes about the state of the river at the moment, and why it should be saved before it is too late.

Reportedly, besides the oxygen level, the amount of metal chromium in Dhaleswari River has also gone much higher than the permissible level, which is contributing to the extinction of different types of sweet water fish and a wide range of biodiversity. The question is: where is the Central Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) that was supposed to prevent this? It is utterly puzzling that with the sad plight of Buriganga available for everyone to see and learn from, the relevant authorities still allowed the tanneries to start operation at Savar before installing the CETP. Environment experts, activists and the media were quite vocal about it right from day one, but it all fell on deaf ears.

The tannery sector generates huge foreign currency, and therefore it was expected that the authorities would give full attention to removing the bottlenecks existing therein. But it is beyond our comprehension that they come up with the same excuses every time questions are asked of the state of the CETP, paying no attention to the negative impact that the industry is having on the environment and public health. Therefore, to save the Dhaleswari River and avoid another major environmental disaster, everything that needs to be done must be done without delay.

## DIGITAL BANGLADESH

# One step forward, two steps back?



OF MAGIC & MADNESS

Badiuzzaman Bay is an assistant editor at The Daily Star.

BADIUZZAMAN BAY

IN a technological backwater like Bangladesh, a full digital transformation with all of its administrative procedures moved online – and all citizens enjoying unrestricted access to its benefits – is perhaps too much to expect. But it's a dream that has shown tremendous resilience. "Digital Bangladesh" continues to be a central plank of the ruling Awami League, despite the failure of its technological Vision 2021, which had brought it to power in 2008. Citizens, too, are warming up to the idea of an increasingly networked life.

But the transformation achieved so far has been quite chaotic. Take the example of the digitalisation drive, meant to replace the analogue government work culture by putting all public services online. Before the drive, interacting with responsible agencies was a Sisyphean nightmare: You had to slog through a mess of paperwork and countless offices, not to mention the corruption and mismanagement that became synonymous with the "system." Digitalisation is supposed to make life easier by bringing bureaucracy at the fingertips of service seekers. So, how has been their experience?

Two recent reports published by *The Daily Star* show mixed results: while many services have been digitalised and had some positive changes, their cumulative effects have been anything but satisfactory, thanks to website and connectivity issues as well as disruptive practices inherited from the analogue time.

The first report, based on a review by the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), leaves room for hope. It says that 161 services out of the 244 provided under six ministries/divisions – that is, about 66 percent of their services – have been digitalised, and it helped save both time and money for ordinary people. Of them, according to the survey, 92 percent saved money, 96 percent saved time, and 70 percent were relieved of the hassles of the pre-digital era. Among the ministries they sought service from are education, land, and health and family welfare.

The land ministry, once dreaded for its labyrinthine system, saw noticeable progress. The government reportedly

digitalised 10 services under five departments of the ministry. These include e-mutation, mutated ledger, payment of land development tax, collection of e-leaflets, etc. Since July 1, 2019, when the door to e-mutation was opened, land mutation can be obtained in seven days. Earlier, it would take at least 28 days. So far, more than 30 million people reportedly

irregularities and corruption, allowed through manual processes involving officials and middlemen, which makes things further problematic.

The picture that emerges from these contrasting findings is of a multi-year, multimillion dollar drive not being allowed to reach its full potential. No one expects Bangladesh to have the digital infrastructure that advanced countries do. But corruption and inefficiency, either of the system in place or the people running it, are challenges that a good infrastructure alone can't fix. If digitalisation hasn't turned out to be the huge boon that it was supposed to be, it's because of these persistent problems.

Unfortunately, our e-office and e-government frameworks still seem to be in a nascent state. There is no clear guideline for digital transformation, no central monitoring authority for all digital services, and no centralised data storage to streamline all the information – NID, TIN, passport, birth, land, vehicle or other registration records, for example – passing through the system. Proper utilisation and sharing of data are as important as proper digitisation of it. But ours is an island of misfit agencies, each with their unique digital architecture, with little interoperability among them. You hear ministers talk about digitalising all 2,800 of public services, but rarely do they acknowledge the governance issues that can cripple their chances of success.

Can the government go fully paperless anytime soon? Perhaps that's the wrong question now. The more important question is how we are preparing for that. Besides setting up more digital centres and putting more public services online, the government should also focus on fixing the loopholes of the existing system. Asking the right questions is vital. For example, what percentage of citizens are requesting services online? How many of them are doing it without the help of intermediaries? What percentage of citizens are being alienated by the digitalisation process, and why? How to ensure their inclusion? How future-proof are the services offered? How to make them easier to obtain? How to reduce manual interventions? Last but not least: how to stop the digitalisation of corruption and inefficiencies?

There is a lot that remains to be done, and reformed. Strengthening our broadband networks, improving the internet penetration rate, and closing the digital divide are key priorities. But the government should urgently fix the problems plaguing its digitalisation drive. The future rests on its success to do so.



ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLOB CHAKROBORTY

paid land development tax online, without spending additional money. Half of the people surveyed by the IMED said their sufferings reduced because of the digitalisation of these services.

This is only half the picture, however. We come to know of the other half from another review done by the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU). The CPTU, after evaluating the performance of digital services provided by 26 ministries/divisions, concluded that people were not getting the maximum benefit from the 761 government services digitalised so far, mostly because of user-unfriendly sites, bad servers and poor internet speed. Additionally, a number of those services exist in name only.

Although the surveyed beneficiaries generally expressed optimism about the digitalisation drive, many admitted facing problems while trying to obtain services such as e-dockets, land mutation, e-passport, machine readable passport, loan service, e-trade licence, etc. Either the websites through which services can be requested are not updated, or certain services are no longer operational because of a lack of skilled manpower, or user interfaces are too complicated, or servers are down frequently. Add to that the pre-existing challenges such as poor planning,

**The picture that emerges from these contrasting findings is of a multi-year, multimillion-dollar drive not being allowed to reach its full potential.**

## What one must do to get climate finance

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MD BODRUD-DOZA AND MAHZABEEN MAHFUZ

THE Green Climate Fund (GCF), though the youngest financial mechanism under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is one of the largest multilateral climate funds. However, only 19 percent of direct entities receive this funding, since only accredited entities are eligible to apply for it due to very high transparency and fiduciary standards set by the GCF governing board. This is the case for all large climate funds. Thus starts a dilemma, as the entities best at acquiring these funds are often not the ones best at implementing the project activities at the grassroots level.

Local organisations are always the first to respond in case of an emergency due to both their proximity and understanding of the local population. Development projects are cyclic, and so are the involvement of international actors, but local organisations constantly serve the communities. This is why they are trusted and taken seriously by people. This, along with their localised knowledge and colloquial communication methods, enables them to help the inhabitants of climate-vulnerable regions in the most effective manner.

However, only a small portion of the funds designated for climate actions comes their way, which is not enough for them to deliver up to their potential. Funding from global sources and bilateral agencies are disseminated in a trickle-down approach. After covering overhead costs at various levels, a bare minimum amount is left for achieving the desired goals at the ground level. Due to the funding situation, these organisations also face a huge challenge of recruiting and retaining human resources as they can't compete with the salaries and benefits offered by international NGOs.

Why can't or don't the donors fund these local organisations directly? One of the main reasons they give is that local organisations often don't have the capacity to comply with their requirements and spend money effectively. Multilateral

and bilateral organisations also prefer to channel the funds through a few trusted partners, since this method involves fewer risks and is better compliant with their own rules. It's also difficult for such organisations to channel funds directly to local NGOs because of their strict anti-money laundering rules, and the local organisations often don't have the capacity to ensure the level of transparency and accountability that such donors require.

Local organisations also often lack the technical skills that can appropriately express the value for their work. Therefore, their proposals for funding often fall short in competitive biddings. However, they, too, can work on building their institutional capacity and compete for global funding. In order to stand out, these local organisations need to address three aspects of institutional capacity-building.

First comes profile-building, for which proper documentation of all the projects an organisation is involved with must be preserved. The documentation should be done from a knowledge management perspective, including internal and external evaluations to track the impact of the projects. It helps greatly to track their progress and archive all the achievements so that they can be presented to the donors at any given point. Publishing good newspaper articles and in peer-reviewed journals is another excellent way of getting into the spotlight. Professionalism is the key – following the working style of international NGOs could help with building trust with donor organisations. Furthermore, these organisations can also give the impression of being more professional and trustworthy when they have and follow proper environmental and social safeguards. So preparing these frameworks and adhering to them are highly recommended.

Preparing a five-year strategy and action plan could also be very valuable for local organisations. Additionally, concept notes can be prepared on various topics related to climate change adaptation, such as water security and sanitation, agriculture, aquaculture, nature-based solutions, migration and urban livelihood, and skills development. Building a global and national network is

the second essential aspect of institutional capacity-building. The more people know about an organisation and its achievement, the more inclined they will be to fund its projects. Getting to know the government stakeholders and identifying champions within it is key towards building national presence. Additionally, it is important to build a network with bilateral and multilateral agencies. Proactively engaging with and offering to present projects and ideas to different stakeholders help in increasing visibility of an organisation's work. Attending relevant national and international conferences is a good starting point when it comes to building networks and increasing visibility.

Lastly, when it comes to accessing funds, it is extremely important to stay updated on who the potential donors are, and which funds are available for Bangladesh. Keeping lists of other relevant stakeholders is just as important. Staying updated with political changes in large donor countries is mandatory too. Note that funding flow towards different sectors by bilateral donors often vary according to the agendas of the political parties in power. In fact, climate-related funding is politically sensitive. Local organisations can also boost their chances of accessing funds by becoming part of a consortium.

Development discourse dictates where the funding is targeted; with the current global focus on climate change, there will be funds available for addressing over time. In recent times, even the donors have started to recognise the effectiveness of local organisations and are focusing on "localisation" in the humanitarian sector. Major bilateral donors have made it a requirement for international NGOs and other agencies to partner up with local NGOs and provide them with 25 percent of the project funding. Furthermore, international organisations are also working on capacity-building of their local partners. This concept could potentially be adopted in combating climate change in Bangladesh.

Therefore, these grassroots organisations need to keep working on building their institutional capacity by focusing on the three aspects to get access to climate funding.

**Why can't or don't the donors fund these local organisations directly? One of the main reasons they give is that local organisations often don't have the capacity to comply with their requirements and spend money effectively.**

# What should be our food security strategy?



NAWSHAD AHMED

Dr Nawshad Ahmed, a former UN official, is an economist and urban planner.

THE rapid increase in global food prices in recent months have put many countries including Bangladesh in a crisis, especially affecting low and middle-income families as they spend a large share of their income on food. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Food Price Index has reached 158.5 points, higher than the previous peaks of 132.5 and 137.6, reached during the 2007-2008 and 2011 food crises, respectively. The Russia-Ukraine war, dry weather in several countries, and high prices of agricultural inputs such as fertiliser are responsible for lower food production and higher prices.

Across the world, rising food prices and reduced purchasing power due to inflationary pressure are worsening food security in many countries. Globally, according to FAO, as many as 46 countries including Bangladesh require external assistance to meet their food import needs. As per the Global Report on Food Crises 2022, 193 million people in 53 countries and territories are facing food insecurity.

According to FAO's July 2022 forecast, total global cereal production in 2022 is expected to be 2,792 million tonnes, which is 0.6 percent lower than that of 2021. Ukraine's maize production is forecasted to be 30 percent less than the average output of the last five years. Wheat production will be lower in the European Union, Argentina, and Iraq this year due to drier-than-normal weather, although improved harvest is expected in Canada, Australia, and the Russian Federation. Global rice production is forecasted to be 520.5 million tonnes, 0.4 percent lower in 2022 than in 2021. However, for Bangladesh, as per FAO's forecast, the total cereal production is expected to increase by 1.7 percent - from 62.6 million tonnes

in 2021 to 63.6 million tonnes in 2022. Bangladesh imported 4.86 million tonnes of rice and wheat till June 16 in the 2021-22 fiscal year.

Along with the requirement of additional foreign exchange to import food grain, the import of fertiliser and fuel will also put pressure on Bangladesh's foreign exchange situation. Russia and Belarus are the two major fertiliser-exporting countries, and fertiliser prices surged by



Rising food prices and reduced purchasing power due to inflationary pressure are worsening food security in many countries, including Bangladesh.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Climatic factors such as reduced rainfall and flooding have affected food production in several countries this year. Supply chain related disruptions caused by the Russia-Ukraine war - reducing exports from the Russian Federation and Ukraine and leading to higher global prices of agricultural inputs - are difficult to deal with. Moreover, the tight monetary policy pursued by developed economies to address inflationary trends

economy grew by 6.1 percent in 2021, with the growth continuing into the first quarter of 2022, the growth rate came down even before the start of the Ukraine war due to global supply chain disruptions and record public debt. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reduced the global growth forecast for 2022 by 0.8 percentage points to 3.6 percent. The lower growth rate will affect the income levels of the poor and vulnerable people and their effective demand for food will go down which will exacerbate poverty and malnutrition.

Bangladesh has been trying to tackle the sharp rise in food and fuel prices in a number of ways. Foremost among them is a deficit financing policy in both the last year's and the current year's budgets, with a gap of 6.2 percent and 5.4 percent of GDP, respectively. Bangladesh had to devalue the taka against the US dollar this year. This is expected to have a positive effect on export in due course. However, the tight monetary policies in the developed West and contraction of the global economy are challenges, against which the government has focused its attention to raising domestic resource mobilisation and employment generation to keep economic growth at a reasonably high level. The total public expenditure is earmarked to increase by 14.2 percent in FY2022-23 from the previous budget. Public services, education and technology, and transport and communication are three top sectors where budgetary expenditure will increase by 21 percent, 14 percent, and 24 percent, respectively, from the revised budget of last year.

To encourage the export sector and ensure stable foreign exchange inflow, the government has created a special fund of Tk 5,000 crore for salaries and wages of export-oriented industries. The export development fund has been nearly doubled to Tk 55,200 crore in FY2022-23. Also, an additional Tk 73,000 crore has been set aside for affected industries and service sector enterprises, and Tk 40,000 crore for lending against working capital for cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises (CMSMEs). The success of the government's strategy will, however, depend on adequate mobilisation of domestic resources.

has reduced the availability of credit to deal with falling foreign exchange reserves that are crucial for the import of food, fuel, and fertiliser. The depletion of foreign exchange reserves due to payment of higher import bills against stagnant export volume is causing currency depreciation. This is forcing countries to adopt austerity measures, including restrictions on imports that are having adverse impact on household income.

The solution to the food crisis lies in the revival of the global economy, which contracted by 3.1 percent due to the Covid pandemic in 2020. Although the global

## PROJECT SYNDICATE

# The Betrayal of the Left



SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

Dr Slavoj Žižek, professor of philosophy at the European Graduate School, is international director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities at the University of London and the author of *Heaven in Disorder*.

AT the end of David Fincher's 1999 film, *Fight Club*, the unnamed narrator (played by Edward Norton) dispatches his alter ego, Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt), and then watches as the buildings around him burst into flames, fulfilling his and his alter ego's desire to destroy modern civilisation. But in the Chinese version released earlier this year, the ending was replaced with an English-language title card that explained, "The police rapidly figured out the whole plan and arrested all criminals, successfully preventing the bomb from exploding. After the trial, Tyler was sent to a lunatic asylum to receive psychological treatment. He was discharged from the hospital in 2012."

Why would the Chinese authorities change the ending of a film that is highly critical of Western liberal society, disqualifying its critical political stance as an expression of madness? The reason is simple: For China's leaders, defending established power is more important than advancing a particular ideological agenda.

Recall that in mid-October 2019, the Chinese media launched a propaganda campaign claiming that, as CNN puts it, "demonstrations in Europe and South America are the direct result of Western tolerance of Hong Kong unrest," the implication being that protesters in Chile and Spain were taking their cues from those in Hong Kong. As is often the case, the Communist Party of China (CPC) was discreetly promoting a sense of solidarity among all who hold power and face a rebellious or unhappy populace. Western and Chinese leaders, the CPC seemed to be saying, ultimately have the same basic interest - transcending ideological and geopolitical tensions - in maintaining political quiescence.

Now consider recent developments in the US. On June 18, Texas Republicans declared that President Joe Biden "was not legitimately elected," echoing similar statements by other Republicans around the country. Consider this fact alongside the American public's growing fatigue over the Ukraine war, and a dark prospect emerges: What if Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, wins the 2024 presidential election? In addition to cracking down on dissent and political opposition at home he might also enter a pact with Russia, abandoning the Ukrainians in the same way that he did the Kurds in Syria. After all, Trump has never been reluctant to stand in

solidarity with the world's autocrats.

During Ukraine's 2014 Maidan uprising, a leaked recording of a telephone call captured a senior US State Department official, Victoria Nuland, saying to the US ambassador to Ukraine, "F\*\*\* the EU." Since then, Russian President Vladimir Putin has been pursuing precisely that objective, supporting Brexit, Catalan separatism, and far-right figures such as Marine Le Pen in France and Matteo Salvini in Italy.

The anti-European axis that unites Putin with certain trends in the US is one of the most dangerous elements in today's politics. If African, Asian, and Latin American governments follow their old anti-European instincts and lean towards Russia, we will have entered a sad new world in which those in power stand in lockstep solidarity with each other. In this world, what would happen to the marginalised and oppressed victims of unaccountable power, whom the left traditionally has defended?

Sadly, some Western leftists, such as film director Oliver Stone, have long parroted the Kremlin's claim that Maidan was a US-orchestrated putsch against a democratically elected government. This is plainly false. The protests that began on November 21, 2013, in Kyiv's *Maidan Nezalezhnosti* (Independence Square), may have been chaotic, featuring a variety of political tendencies and foreign interference, but there is no doubt that they were an authentic popular revolt.

By contrast, the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol most certainly was not an "American Maidan." There is growing evidence to show that it was largely orchestrated ahead of time, and that Trump - then the most powerful man in the country - more or less knew what was in store for that day. Still, immediately following the insurrection, before all the details were known, some of my leftist friends channelled a sense of loss. "The wrong people are taking over the seat of power," they lamented. "We should be doing it!"

It is worth revisiting what Putin said on February 21, 2022. After claiming that Ukraine was created by Lenin, he went on to remark that the Bolsheviks' "grateful progeny" in Ukraine had "overturned monuments to Lenin. They call it decommunisation. You want decommunisation? Very well, this suits us just fine. But why stop halfway? We are ready to show what real decommunisation would mean for Ukraine." With that, Putin launched his "special military operation."

Putin's logic is clear: since Ukraine is (supposedly) a Communist creation, true decommunisation requires that Ukraine be eliminated. But "decommunisation" also conjures an agenda that aims to erase the last traces of the welfare state - a central pillar of the left's legacy. For years,

**Putin's logic is clear: since Ukraine is (supposedly) a Communist creation, true decommunisation requires that Ukraine be eliminated. But "decommunisation" also conjures an agenda that aims to erase the last traces of the welfare state - a central pillar of the left's legacy.**

Russian and Chinese leaders have panicked whenever a popular rebellion has exploded somewhere in their sphere of influence. As a rule, they interpret such events as plots - their term for them is "colour revolutions" - instigated by the West. China's regime is now at least honest enough to admit that there is deep dissatisfaction around the world. Its answer is to appeal to the shared

sense of insecurity that many in positions of power feel. The left's response, by contrast, should be to maintain solidarity with those who resist aggressive, arbitrary power, whether in Ukraine or elsewhere. Otherwise, well, we all know how that movie ends.

To read the full article, please visit our website.

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স্মারক নং: ০৬.০৬.০০০০.০২৫.১৫.০০১.২২/১৯২০		
তারিখ: ১৭/০৭/২০২২খ্রিঃ		
কম্পিউটারে প্রক্রিয়াকৃত প্রস্তাবনা "বাংলাদেশ শিল্প কারিগরি সহায়তা কেন্দ্র (বিটাক), সুনামগঞ্জ, বরিশাল, হুগুড়া, জামালপুর ও হাশের জেলায় বিটাকের ৬টি কেন্দ্র স্থাপন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্প এর জন্য আট্টোসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় জনস্বার্থে সেবা সরবরাহের লক্ষ্যে আট্টোসোর্সিং নিতিমালা ২০১৮ অনুসারে প্রকৃত জনস্বার্থে সেবা সরবরাহকারী/সেবারাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিম্নলিখিত তথ্যে সীমাবদ্ধকৃত বাস্তব দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।		
(০১)	মহাপত্র/বিস্তার	শিল্প মহাপত্র।
(০২)	স্বাক্ষর পত্র	বাংলাদেশ শিল্প কারিগরি সহায়তা কেন্দ্র (বিটাক), ১১৬/খ, চেম্বার্স ৩ শিল্প এলাকা, ঢাকা-১২০৮।
(০৩)	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	বিটাক কর্তৃক বাংলাদেশ শিল্প কারিগরি সহায়তা কেন্দ্র (বিটাক), সুনামগঞ্জ, বরিশাল, হুগুড়া, জামালপুর ও হাশের জেলায় বিটাকের ৬টি কেন্দ্র স্থাপন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্প।
(০৪)	প্রতিষ্ঠানের মেসজ	বেঙ্গল প্রকল্প (OTM)।
(০৫)	আহ্বানকৃত কাজের ধরন	আট্টোসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় জনস্বার্থে সেবা সরবরাহ।
(০৬)	দরপত্র নম্বর ও তারিখ	নং: ০৬.০৬.০০০০.০২৫.১৫.০০১.২২/ তারিখ: ১৭/০৭/২০২২খ্রিঃ।
(০৭)	টেন্ডার নিতিমালার মূল্য	প্রতিটি নিতিমালার মূল্য ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা (অক্ষরহীনভাবে)।
(০৮)	দরপত্র বিক্রয় প্রক্রিয়ায় অর্থ	১৭/০৭/২০২২খ্রিঃ।
(০৯)	দরপত্র বিক্রয় শেষ তারিখ	০১/০৮/২০২২খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিক্রেতা ৫:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
(১০)	দরপত্র ব্যর্থ বন্ধ করার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	০২/০৮/২০২২খ্রিঃ, সকাল ১১:০০ ঘটিকা, অফিস বিল্ডিং, বিটাক, ঢাকা।
(১১)	দরপত্র ব্যর্থ ঘোষণার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	০২/০৮/২০২২খ্রিঃ, সকাল ১১:৩৫ ঘটিকা, সনাক্তকৃত (শিটডেলা), বিটাক, ১১৬/খ, চেম্বার্স ৩ শিল্প এলাকা, ঢাকা-১২০৮।
(১২)	যে অফিস হতে দরপত্র পর্যায়ে আসবে তার পদবী	হিসাবরক্ষক, প্রকল্প অফিস, বিটাক, ১১৬/খ, চেম্বার্স ৩ শিল্প এলাকা, ঢাকা-১২০৮।
(১৩)	জমনি ও জামনি প্রদান প্রক্রিয়া	সরকারকে সরবরাহকারী জনস্বার্থে সেবা সরবরাহের ক্ষেত্রে বিটাকের আওতাধীন পরিচালক, বিটাকের ৬টি কেন্দ্র স্থাপন শীর্ষক প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়ন করা হতে হবে।
(১৪)	দরপত্র দাখিলকারীর যোগাযোগ	আট্টোসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় জনস্বার্থে সেবা সরবরাহের ক্ষেত্রে বিটাকের আওতাধীন পরিচালক, অফিস বিল্ডিং, বিটাক, ১১৬/খ, চেম্বার্স ৩ শিল্প এলাকা, ঢাকা-১২০৮।
(১৫)	কাজের বিবরণ	আট্টোসোর্সিং প্রক্রিয়ায় নিম্নলিখিত জনস্বার্থে সেবা সরবরাহ।
	ক্রম নং	সেবার নাম
	০১	সেবার পরিমাণ
	০২	সেবার পরিমাণ
	০৩	সেবার পরিমাণ
	০৪	সেবার পরিমাণ
(১৬)	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্তৃক তার নাম ও পদবী	ড. মোঃ জালাল উদ্দিন, প্রকল্প পরিচালক, "বাংলাদেশ শিল্প কারিগরি সহায়তা কেন্দ্র (বিটাক), সুনামগঞ্জ, বরিশাল, হুগুড়া, জামালপুর ও হাশের জেলায় বিটাকের ৬টি কেন্দ্র স্থাপন" শীর্ষক প্রকল্প।
(১৭)	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্তৃক তার নাম	প্রকল্প অফিস, বিটাক, ঢাকা, ১১৬/খ, চেম্বার্স ৩ শিল্প এলাকা, ঢাকা-১২০৮।
(১৮)	অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীতকৈ দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা দরপত্রের স্বত্বাধীনে সরবরাহ করবে।
(১৯)	বিজ্ঞপ্তি বিটাকের প্রোগ্রামিং	www.bitac.gov.bd-তে পাওয়া যাবে।
তারিখ: ১৭/০৭/২০২২খ্রিঃ		
ড. মোঃ জালাল উদ্দিন প্রকল্প পরিচালক		

**CONVOCATION 2022**  
**An Environment Designed for Learning**  
**IUBAT—International University of Business Agriculture and Technology**  
 Founded 1991 by Md. Alimullah Miyan

**IUBAT - A Profile**

**HISTORY**

Established in 1991 by Prof Dr M Alimullah Miyan, IUBAT is the first non-government university in Bangladesh. The university was established through cooperative agreements with Kansas State University, USA, Assumption University and Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand.

**MISSION**

The overall mission of IUBAT is human resources development through quality education fostering the creation of knowledge conducive to socio-agro-economic advancement of developing societies in general and of Bangladesh in particular. This overall mission is being attained through outcome-based education curriculum, quality teaching, change adaptation, internationalization, equity in access by all groups and promotion of scholasticism through research and application of knowledge in different subject areas.

**VISION**

The vision of the university is to produce at least one professional graduate from each village/mohalla of Bangladesh under the concept of Knowledge Based Area Development (KBAD): A Step Towards Community Self-Reliance for social mobility and professionalization of Bangladesh society through higher education accessible to all qualified men and women.

**ACCREDITATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS**

IUBAT is recognized nationally and globally by the Government of Bangladesh, University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC), Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development of UNU-IAS, Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA), United Nations Yearbook of International Organizations-Belgium, International Education Directory of Colleges and Universities -Australia and 15 other international organizations. It has research and academic exchange collaboration agreements with over 100 universities in 27 countries of USA, Canada, Australia, Europe and Asia.

**CAMPUS AND LEARNING ATMOSPHERE**

IUBAT's river view, green and scenic campus is specially designed by a British architect for a university of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is ranked 257<sup>th</sup> University of the World in Green Metric Index. IUBAT is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> University of Bangladesh (public and private combined) in the Times Higher Education Impact Factor and 43<sup>rd</sup> Ethical University in World University Ranking Index (WURI).

IUBAT curriculum is of international standard, approved by the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, and taught by full-time, qualified, and experienced local and foreign faculty. The cooperating universities abroad are a big resource base for visiting faculty to reflect the intercultural orientation of the university. The grooming provided to students is professional and career-oriented. The University has international students from SAARC, other Asian and African countries.

English is the medium of instruction and communication in all IUBAT programs and activities. IUBAT programs emphasize task-based and participative methods of instruction and use advanced technologies. Heavy reliance is placed on experiential learning using case studies, project work, practice sessions, laboratory work, and internships. Educational programs, particularly in engineering, nursing, physics & chemistry, computer science, hospitality and agriculture are backed-up by laboratories on the campus and field stations. IUBAT has cooperative arrangements with hospitals and clinics in Dhaka for practical and internships for students in nursing and health sciences.

IUBAT provides myriad facilities for the students as mentioned below:

- English and computer skills development for all students
- International standard learning experience
- Professional counseling and guidance
- Financial support through scholarship, grant, fee waiver, deferred payment, campus job etc.
- Career guidance with practicum and job placement at home and abroad
- Well-connected campus with all sections of metropolitan Dhaka and neighboring towns
- Transport and shuttle services
- WiFi connections throughout the campus
- Student Group Health Insurance
- Eleven students' societies and five clubs for promotion of co and extra-curricular activities.

**ACADEMIC CALENDAR**

IUBAT operates a trimester system i.e. Spring, Summer and Fall beginning 5<sup>th</sup> January, 5<sup>th</sup> May and 5<sup>th</sup> September, respectively. The Academic Calendar is strictly followed and the university has uninterrupted operation throughout its 31 years' history.

**DEGREES**

IUBAT offers bachelor's degrees in Business (BBA), Computer Science and Engineering (BCSE), Civil Engineering (BSCE), Mechanical Engineering (BSME), Electrical & Electronic Engineering (BSEEE), Nursing (BSN), Tourism and Hospitality Management (BATHM), Agriculture (BSAg), Economics (BAEcon) and English (BAEng)

It also offers a Master's degree in Business (MBA). Recently a Master's degree in Public Health (MPH) has been approved by the UGC and five other Master's degree programs and a Bachelor's degree program are in

the approval process at UGC. In addition to degree programs, there are 10 specialized centers in IUBAT dedicated to training and research.

**INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**

The International Office constitutes the focal point for all international activities of the university and provides all the services required by the ever-growing international network of IUBAT. This Office extends support to an ever-growing number of visiting faculty, scholars, and volunteers as well as international students.

**IUBAT ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

The graduates of the university obtaining degrees, diplomas, and certificates are organized into an IUBAT Alumni Association (IUBATAA). The association maintains the personal data of the alumni; promote professional fellowship and arranges for meetings and conventions. The secretarial support for the IUBAT Alumni Association is provided by the university. IUBATAA is represented in the policy-making of the university.

**EDUCATIONAL FINANCING**

The theme of the university is *Higher Education for Every Qualified Person with Finance for Meritorious but Needy*. To materialize this theme, IUBAT has special provisions for supplementing the family resources of a student through scholarships, grants, fee waivers, deferred payment, campus jobs, student loans, and the like. It is IUBAT policy to cater to the needs of all qualified students who aspire for higher professional education regardless of the income level of his/her family through appropriate educational financing arrangements. IUBAT Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd. (IMCSL) mobilizes funds for providing educational loan and scholarship to its members and their dependents to help them pursue higher education and professional training.

**RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS**

IUBAT places great importance on research with a special focus on applied research and innovative projects of teachers and students for benefit of the society. Dr. Miyan Research Institute promotes research through funding, training, and coordination. In addition to research funding for faculty, their publications in indexed journals are rewarded.

Research has been carried out in a number of areas such as education, industry, agriculture, disaster management, climate change, environment, sustainability, health service delivery, solar energy, food and nutritional security and so on. So far, 12 research monographs and one book have been published. IUBAT carries out research on the topic of international importance in collaboration with international organizations like the World Meteorological Organization, Food and Agricultural Organization, World Health Organization, Asia Pacific Network (APN), IRRI, and more.

**EVENTS**

Each semester IUBAT remains vibrant with many research seminars, conferences and workshops, exhibitions and competitions, games, sports, and cultural events. The campus becomes lively with the widespread participation of faculty, students, officers, staff, neighboring communities as well as visitors from around the world. Besides these, events are organized in observance of various national and international days and in-house events like convocation, orientation, foundation day, and parents' night throughout the year. These events serve as a medium of developing solidarity among the IUBAT family in addition to building bridges of cooperation with the outer world.

**THE FOUNDER OF IUBAT**

- Prof Dr M Alimullah Miyan**
- Education : PhD (UK), MBA (USA), BCom (Hons) & MCom , DU (Bangladesh)
  - Pioneer : Non-Government Universities in Bangladesh
  - Founder : IUBAT (1989), CPMR, Dhaka University (1979)
  - Founding Member : AMDISA-India; Rotary Club of Greater Dhaka, Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh, Human Development Society
  - President : IUBAT (1991-1994), Rotary Club of Greater Dhaka , Rotary Club of Dhaka
  - Vice-Chancellor : IUBAT (1994-2017)
  - Director and Professor : IBA, Dhaka University (1986-1990)
  - Visiting Professor : Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria (1981)
  - Author/Co-Author & Research : 16 Books/Monographs, 51 Articles, 14 Basic Works, 45 Applied Research and Consultancy, 101 Seminars, Workshops, and Conferences
  - Visited : 42 countries
  - Lived in : Bangladesh, USA, UK and Nigeria
  - Membership : IAUP-USA, AMDISA-India, ISL&SSL -Switzerland;
  - Life Member : Bangla Academy; BETA, GAMA, & SIGMA, USA; SID Bangladesh Chapter; Bangladesh Economic Association; IBA Alumni Association; American Alumni Association of Bangladesh;
  - Permanent Member : Dhaka Club, Uttara Club.



**Message**  
 04 Sraban 1429  
 19 July, 2022

I am pleased to learn that International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) is going to hold its 6<sup>th</sup> convocation on July 19, 2022. On this occasion, I extend my heartfelt felicitations to the graduating students, their guardians, faculties and the university authority as well.

At the age of globalization universities play the most important role in producing skilled manpower by providing quality education and practical experience. The Government of Bangladesh is heavily investing on the digital and physical infrastructures for all levels of education to shape and secure the future of the nation for shared prosperity. IUBAT is implementing Knowledge Based Area Development (KBAD) with the vision of producing at least one professional graduate from each village of Bangladesh. It is heartening to know that a graduate of today's graduating batch have been enabled to pursue higher education with financing under the KBAD program. I hope IUBAT would impart state-of-the-art education to their students and continue to play a vital role in creating skilled manpower to materialize the enormous development potential of our country.

Convocation is the most auspicious moment in the life of a graduate. It is a landmark event as it replicates and celebrates the achievements of the students, teachers and of the university authority as a whole. I hope the graduating students of IUBAT would be able to prove themselves to become successful in real life.

I wish the 6<sup>th</sup> Convocation of IUBAT a grand success.

Joi Bangla  
Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid



**Message**  
 04 Sraban 1429  
 July 19, 2022

It's a matter of immense pleasure to preside over the 6<sup>th</sup> Convocation of IUBAT—International University of Business Agriculture and Technology on behalf of the Honorable Chancellor on July 19, 2022 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Dhaka. On this occasion, I convey my heartfelt felicitations to the graduating students, their parents and to the members of the university community.

Our government is relentlessly working on improving the environment of education throughout the country by institutionalization, digital transformation, physical facility development, policy initiatives and enactment of laws and rules. All the achievements and transformations in education have been possible because of the able leadership of our respected Prime Minister HE Sheikh Hasina.

The knowledge and skills that a good university imparts to the students allow them to navigate an increasingly complex world and confront emerging challenges with greater confidence. I am sure that during their pursuit of knowledge, the graduates of IUBAT have made the best use of all the resources and prepared themselves for the future with a view to bringing about welfare for our people.

I wish the Convocation of IUBAT a grand success and I also wish all the graduating students continued success in their professional life.

Dr Dipu Moni, MP  
Minister, Ministry of Education



**Message**  
 04 Sraban 1429  
 19 June, 2022

I am delighted to know that the 6<sup>th</sup> Convocation of International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) is taking place on July 19, 2022 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Dhaka. It is, indeed, a very special day for this university because it bears testimony to the accomplishments of students, faculty members, and the management of the university. On this auspicious occasion, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the graduating students and their parents, faculty, university staff, members of the Board of Trustees and all concerned.

Private universities in Bangladesh represent a vital segment of our higher educational institutions. Since these universities are an integral part of our higher education system, quality educational facilities must be provided at an affordable cost by these universities for the benefit of our nation.

I am aware that IUBAT has gain reputation at home and abroad for quality education. The university has been ranked as one of the premier universities in the World Universities with Real Impact (WURI), the Times Higher Education Impact Factor, and the Green Metric Index.

The University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) is continuously striving to create a common ground for all private universities so the universities can flourish with harmony in terms of quality, conformity and operations. I am optimistic the universities and the students will be highly benefited out of the UGC's endeavors.

I wish the all-out success of the 6<sup>th</sup> Convocation of International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) and believe that the graduating students will work with patriotic zeal, utmost efficiency and honesty to create a bright image of this nation.

Joy Bangla  
Professor Dr Dil Afroza Begum  
Chairman (in-Charge)  
University Grants Commission of Bangladesh



**Message**  
 04 Sraban 1429  
 July 19, 2022

I am honoured to be invited to attend the IUBAT 2022 Convocation and to write a message for this most auspicious occasion. The graduates of IUBAT have worked hard to achieve the success that will be recognised at this event and I am delighted to see that the legacy of the illustrious Dr M Alimullah Miyan lives on and that IUBAT continues to go from strength to strength.

I first met Dr Miyan in London in 2001 and I followed up this meeting with a visit to Bangladesh in 2002 when Dr Miyan showed me the IUBAT campus and explained his plans for the development of IUBAT in the future. My association continued with meetings in London and Bangladesh and in 2009 Dr Miyan arranged for my son, Leo Phillips, to spend an extended period with IUBAT as a visiting fellow. This experience has been a fundamental touchstone to my son's burgeoning career for which I and he are most grateful. I know that the students of IUBAT graduating today, as well as those who have graduated in years gone by, will look back at their days there with pride and affection and will go on to achieve their deserved success with the foundation that their years at IUBAT have bestowed. With the foundation and success of IUBAT Dr Miyan lit a match and changed a slice of the world and each of today's graduates can do the same in their own unique ways.

I look forward to the continued success of IUBAT and I hope to be able to continue my involvement for many years to come.

Judge Julian Phillips  
Honorary Consul for Finland in Wales, UK



**Message**

Convocation is always a solemn yet joyful event for the graduates, their parents, faculty members, and other members of the university. I wholeheartedly congratulate the graduates on this happy occasion.

IUBAT was established in 1991 by its founder Dr. M. Alimullah Miyan with an inspiring vision of graduating at least one higher educated professional from every village/ward of Bangladesh under the theme of "higher education for every qualified person with financing for meritorious but needy" and with the mission of human resource development. By now, IUBAT has at least one student from 11,300 villages of 538 thanas / Upazilas, and the University is relentlessly working to achieve its vision.

The University implants among the students a thirst for knowledge and skills, inspires them to apply the knowledge and skills, and creates an urge to become good global citizens. The rigorous quality assurance processes at every stage of the journey to graduation ensure the delivery of quality education at IUBAT.

In pursuance of its vision and mission, it is envisaged that by 2025, IUBAT shall be a globally ranked, more international, further inclusive, more sustainable, and innovative institution of higher education. To achieve the vision and the mission, IUBAT shall strive to enroll at least one student from each of additional 5,000 villages through the Knowledge-based Area Development (KBAD) Program and secure and improve its place in local and global rankings and accreditations. The total number of students shall be at least 10,000 and the teacher-student ratio shall be 1:20 in all programs/departments. The number of indexed publications shall be 30,000 plus and research expenditures shall be five times the present amount. IUBAT Journal will attain indexed status and be published quarterly. At least 80% of teachers will be with PhD, IUBAT shall add at least three PhD programs, 6 Masters and 6 Undergraduate programs. Lab building, Medical Centre, and Agriculture Research station shall be ready for use from 2024. Above all, the quality of education will be raised to a global standard.

I wish all the graduates great success in their careers and life.

Prof Dr. Abdur Rab  
Vice-Chancellor



**Message**

I congratulate the new graduates on this occasion of sixth convocation. The last three years have been unprecedented times for IUBAT, Bangladesh and the world in general. I am proud to see that the university through the dedication of its teachers, admin and adaptable student body was able to continue operating so that students did not miss out of years of education and growth. This convocation is a milestone for the new graduates and marks what we all hope will be the new normal in the world.

IUBAT was established in 1991 through its visionary founder Dr M Alimullah Miyan. A vision from the 1980s is now a reality and our graduates today are a testament to what is possible through hard work and dedication. Dr Miyan faced many challenges in the early days to establish and grow this self funding non profit institution. He had help from many of you and many others from around the world who saw the good the university could do for Bangladesh. There are many inspirations that one can take from Dr Miyan and IUBAT but the one I am immensely proud of is the development of KBAD (Knowledge Based Area Development: A Step Towards Community Self-Reliance), under which students can study with financial assistance, join the workforce after graduation, earn a standard living and then payback to the university so others can enjoy the same opportunity. Having removed the financing impediment IUBAT has graduates/students from all 64 districts of Bangladesh under this program. We see this program as vital in helping those who need help the most in our country. Breaking the cycle of poverty at the micro level is key to sustainable long term growth.

To our graduates today, I wish you all the best for the future. Your graduation today is an important step in our journey through adulthood. IUBAT has empowered you to become a global citizen to do good and thrive in this world. I hope you can take this opportunity to do something unique, be it small or large, to help improve the lives of those around you. Your potential is boundless and you must persevere to make your dreams come true. Always remember you have a community here at IUBAT and a support network you can rely on when you need.

I am grateful to the members of IUBAT community for their unity in prospering the vision of producing highly qualified graduates and in shaping the future of our nation.

Zubier Alim  
Chairman  
Board of Trustees



**Message**  
 04 Sraban 1429  
 19 July, 2022

I am happy to know that the 6<sup>th</sup> Convocation of the International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) is being held on 19 July 2022. On this joyous occasion, I extend my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all the graduating students, their parents, current and ex-students, faculty members, officials and staff of the university.

In the light of the philosophy of education of the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Awami League government has attached top priorities to the education sector and taken various steps for its overall development. Following various timely initiatives taken during the last 13 years of our government, commendable achievements have been made in the education sector. This has, in tandem, accelerated human resource development. Our government has enacted 'Private University Act-2010' to develop the quality of education at the private universities. While 'Bangladesh Accreditation Council Act-2017' has been passed to ensure standards of quality in higher education both at the public and private universities. To ensure higher education facilities to the doorsteps of the people, our government has significantly increased the number of public and private universities in the country.

"Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project" has been implemented to improve the quality of higher education through promoting academic innovation in teaching, learning and research; institutional and connectivity capacity building for research centres and universities, and project management. An academic innovation fund has been allocated to promote creativity and research at the higher education institutions. Bangladesh Research and Education Network has been established to increase technical skills of the universities and connect foreign universities and research institutes with the local universities. Our government has adopted the "Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Bangladesh: 2017-2031" to improve the quality and scope of higher education and make it internationally competitive through appropriate curriculum development, support for Science and Technology, encouragement of research and training to prepare and equip the next generation to meet the challenges of globalization successfully and contribute to the country's socioeconomic development.

To accelerate the development of education by overcoming the impact of COVID-19, we have laid emphasis on technology-based modern education system. We have taken a number of initiatives to leverage ICT and digital technology in education management and education programmes considering the importance of science and technology-based education, especially the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4R).

I hope that the IUBAT will play a proactive role to help implement our vision to ensure quality education at higher education institutions and enhance quality of teaching, learning and research. I believe that the students of the university will apply their acquired knowledge, talent and creativity to build a hunger-poverty-free Golden Bangladesh as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

I wish the 6<sup>th</sup> Convocation of the International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) a grand success, and a bright future for all the graduates.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu  
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina



**Message**  
 04 Sraban 1429  
 July 19, 2022

I am happy to know that the International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) is holding its 6<sup>th</sup> Convocation on July 19, 2022 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Dhaka. Congratulations to the graduating batch.

The Awami League Government is all set to transform Bangladesh into a developed nation by 2041. To this end, our able government has drawn The Bangladesh Delta Plan (BDP) 2100 – a plan for around hundred years, first time in the history of Bangladesh. I would say this is a long-term integrated techno-economic mega plan for Bangladesh.

While directing resources for improvement of education at all levels to make long term development sustainable, our policy initiatives, scientific and goal specific endeavors are deriving results for quality education. Our endeavors are bringing discipline to education institutions and providing more institutions for education at all levels. The number of higher education institutions, and the financial and digital infrastructures that we have established for education are unprecedented in the history of Bangladesh.

I hope the new graduating batch will harness the benefits of the all-out development investments that we are making and will play pivotal role in building Sonar Bangladesh as dreamt by the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

I wish the 6<sup>th</sup> Convocation of IUBAT all the successes.

Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury, M.P  
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education



**Message**

It is my pleasure to learn that the 6<sup>th</sup> convocation of the International University of Business Agriculture and Technology will be held on July 19<sup>th</sup> 2022. I extend my sincere congratulations to than 2,400 graduating students that celebrate the culmination of years of their strenuous pursuits of study.

Celebration of such an important achievement is always a moment of great emotional investment for both students and professors.

Today knowledge is the primary driver and integrity the main resource of the world. It is the minds and hearts of today's graduates that will support and direct the country tomorrow. Education is the most important product that modern country can invest in and Bangladesh has demonstrated that conviction, heavily investing in the development of universities and education industry today. It is my sincere conviction that the International University of Business Agriculture and Technology will continue upholding its leading role in the development of young professionals and education sector as a whole.

In closure, on behalf of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP) and Caucasus University (CU) we wish bright and successful future to the new graduates, a life that they aspire to live. We also give our heartfelt gratitude to the parents and guardians of the graduates, as well as to the professors and administrators of the IUBAT for their sacrifices and toil that allowed these young professionals to have the time and opportunity to be here today.

Dr. Kakha Shengelia  
President, Caucasus University, Tbilisi, Georgia  
Chairman, Board of Directors of International Association of University Presidents

## 'Three formats are just unsustainable'

REUTERS, London

England's talismanic all-rounder Ben Stokes announced his shock retirement from one-day cricket on Monday citing the "unsustainable" rigour of playing all three formats of the game.

Tuesday's match against South Africa at his home ground in Durham will be Stokes's 105th and final one-day international, the 31-year-old said in a statement issued by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

"Three formats are just unsustainable for me now," said Stokes, who will continue to play Twenty20 Internationals.

"Not only do I feel that my body is letting me down because of the schedule and what is expected of us, but I also feel that I am taking the place of another player who can give (captain) Jos (Buttler) and the rest of the team their all."

Stokes, who took over as the test



captain in April, was player-of-the-match when England beat New Zealand in the final to win their maiden 50-overs World Cup at Lord's in 2019.

One of the most exciting players of his era, Stokes has battled a spate of injuries in recent times and took a break from the game last year to focus on his mental well-being.

Stokes has made ODI debut against Ireland in Dublin in 2011.

He has played 104 one-day internationals scoring 2919 runs, including three hundreds, at an average of 39.44 with a 95-plus strike rate.

With the ball, he has claimed 74 wickets and is one of the sharpest fielders in the side.

### ODI Numbers

\*In a career spanning over a decade, Stokes featured in **104 ODIs**, scoring **2,919 runs** at **39.44 average** and scalping **74 wickets**.

\*Stokes' **84** against New Zealand in 2019 World Cup final is the fifth-highest score in a run-chase of a World Cup final.

\*Stokes is one of **three** English players to have slammed **10** or more sixes in an ODI.

\*Stokes could bow out with **3000** runs in ODIs if he scores 81 in his final ODI against South Africa today.



Bashundhara Kings players chase Matin Mia (2nd from R) after the winger opened the scoring during their 2-0 win in the Bangladesh Premier League against Saif SC at the Birshreshtha Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj yesterday. (Inset) Coach Oscar Bruzon celebrates with the players and coaching staff after the win ensured a third consecutive league title for the Kings.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Kings' latest triumph 'sweetest' for Bruzon

ANISUR RAHMAN, from Munshiganj

Bashundhara Kings coach Oscar Bruzon termed the triumph of the hat-trick title of Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) as the 'toughest and sweetest' one compared to their previous two league titles.

"You know, we are facing adversity from the start of the season with injury problems. And we played most of the first-leg matches with only one foreign player. But the determination of our guys was fantastic as we have the best Bangladeshi players and the foreign players increased our squad depth. So, it has been the toughest and sweetest title," Bruzon told the Daily Star after notching up a tough 2-0 win over Saif Sporting Club at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj yesterday.

Since their emergence in the top-flight football in 2018-19 season, under the guidance of the Spaniard, Kings won six titles - three BPLs, two Federation Cups and one Independence Cup - out of eight competitions in the last four seasons, in which one season was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The beginning of the season saw Kings remain content with a runners-up trophy after losing to Abahani before skipping Federation Cup, citing the unfit pitch at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium.

Once BPL kick-started after Federation Cup's completion, Kings started their campaign on the wrong foot with a defeat against newcomers Swadhinata KS. Moreover, the injury-suspension of some

key players - Tapu Barman, Brazilian Fernandes and Serbian forward Stojan Vranjes - widened their problem but Bruzon's charges eventually sealed the league successfully with two matches in hand.

"There are two lines to the secret to success. One way is suffering. I think we have resilience, resistance, adversity-facing ability and that is what happened this year.

"There were problems with injury, pitch, calendar and controversy over refereeing

**"Apart from my personal satisfaction, all our family members, coaches, our guys and players are here to praise us live. I can tell you today I'm fully satisfied with this achievement."**

Bashundhara Kings coach **Oscar Bruzon**

but that made us stronger," Bruzon continued.

"The other way is the players really worked hard every day and every player knew their responsibility. We have 12 national players who are at the same level and they compete with each other every day in the training session and that is another way to do better and better in every season."

The successful Spanish coach was also

delighted to have added another feather to his successful career.

"Apart from my personal satisfaction, all our family members, coaches, our guys and players are here to praise us live. I can tell you today I'm fully satisfied with this achievement."

Soon after the final whistle, Kings' supporters rushed to the center of the pitch to join in the celebration with the Kings players, who were seen to have selfies with their fans. It was literally tough for the media to separate the Kings players from their fans, who backed their beloved team throughout the away match in Munshiganj.

Defender Bishwanath Ghosh highly praised his teammates, who showed sheer determination since the league began.

"We did not think we can finish in this fashion because some key players were sidelined due to injuries but the rest of the players were confident to show their ability despite the absence of key players," said Bishwanath adding they were also determined to wrap up the league title by winning the match against Saif SC.

Throughout the league campaign, goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico continuously displayed stellar performances and carried his form against Saif.

"I have been with Kings since 2018 and this journey has been really challenging. Now I feel really proud to be a member of Kings. We are getting success in the domestic circuit regularly and we have to get success at international level," said Zico.

## RCAs in focus at BCB AGM today

SPORTS REPORTER

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) will take place at a city hotel in Dhaka today. The board will hold its first Aim since the last BCB election that took place last year in 2021.

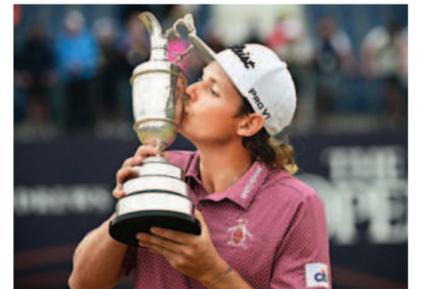
he amendment of the constitution for the approval of the long-promised Regional Cricket Association for the development of the country's cricket is expected to be among the major topic of discussion in the meeting.

"We will first need to amend the constitution in order to establish regional cricket structure. There is nothing mention in the BCB constitution on regional cricket. So it is not possible to establish something new if not mentioned in the constitution. So need an approval on this from the general body," said BCB's media committee chairman Tanvir Ahmed Titu to the media yesterday.

"If the matter gets approved in the in the AGM then we will need to have a detailed discussion on the how to establish the Regional Cricket Associations," he said.

the changes in the councillorship is also expected to be placed in the table along with the approvals of several budgets and projects.

"The yearlong works and projects will be presented at the AGM for discussion and approval. There will be approval of budgets and approval of overall matters of the board," Tanvir added.



## 'Jeez, what a week'

REUTERS, St Andrews

Australian Cameron Smith was almost lost for words after shooting a flawless closing 64 to win the 150th British Open on Sunday.

The 28-year-old world number six overhauled a four-shot deficit to claim his maiden major title, becoming the first Australian to lift the Claret Jug since Greg Norman in 1993.

"Jeez, what a week. It's unreal to look at the names on this trophy and then see mine... I'm lost for words," he said after receiving the trophy.

"I'm going to fall apart here I know. I want to thank the team here for all their hard work, and this one makes it worth it.

"To the R&A - a fantastic week, to St Andrews Links and everyone involved - it was absolutely awesome out there.

"The course was exactly how an Open championship should be played."

A large group of Australians in the crowd celebrated wildly, a week after they had watched Nick Kyrgios lose the Wimbledon tennis final to Novak Djokovic.

"Lastly to you guys the fans - I had a lot of support out there, especially the Aussie guys," Smith said.

"You guys really kept me going. Seemed like that there was a lot of you guys and you kept me plugging away. This one's for Oz."

## Packed schedule a double-edged sword

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh concluded their Caribbean tour on a high after defeats in the Test and T20 series with a 3-0 whitewash in the ODIs, but the team will have little time to catch their breath as they are scheduled to head to Zimbabwe towards the end of the month.

That busy schedule is something the Tigers will have to get used to in light of the news that Bangladesh have 34 Tests, 59 ODIs and 51 T20Is lined up for the 2024-2027 cycle under the proposed scheduled of the ICC Future Tour Programme (FTP).

Bangladesh are only behind England (42), Australia (41) and India (38) in terms of the number of Tests that each nation will play in the proposed cycle, reported by ESPNcricinfo. Bangladesh also have the highest number of ODI assignments and their total number of matches stands at 144, only behind the West Indies, who will play 146 matches.

Since Bangladesh received Test status, their performances in the longest format of the game has remained an area that they have looked to desperately improve. Discussions about how that could be

achieved always noted that playing more Tests was a pre-requisite and, to some extent, the BCB's diplomatic success at the ICC table in this regard is praiseworthy.

"We have been trying to increase the number of games in our international calendar for the past eight years or so," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star yesterday.

But, similar to the previous FTP

Bangladesh have 34 Tests, 59 ODIs and 51 T20Is lined up for the 2024-2027 cycle under the proposed scheduled of the ICC Future Tour Programme (FTP).

cycle, none of Bangladesh's 34 Tests in the proposed FTP feature matches against England or Australia.

After playing bilateral series against all Test-playing nations in the 2001-2006 FTP cycle, Australia did not play a Test series against the Tigers during the 2006-2011 cycle. Bangladesh did then host Australia and England in 2016 and 2017, but have had no Test series against the

teams since. So questions remain how Bangladesh can improve the standard of Test cricket without facing top opponents in tougher conditions like Australia and England.

On the flip side, the increase number of matches will pose a big challenge to the BCB's aims of lifting the standards of domestic cricket. Given such a busy international schedule, top cricketers' participation is likely to be an issue that makes domestic competitions less competitive.

"We are not doing well in Tests and T20Is. We already have a few plans for Test cricket. But the thing is that we have not able to understand what to do to make domestic cricket more competitive. The pitches are better now so I don't think we need to make any massive changes from that aspect.

"If we need the participation of national players to make domestic cricket more competitive but we are unable to ensure that, then how can we make the domestic cricket competitive? It's tough, but we have discussed the issue. Let's see," BCB president Nazmul Hassan told the media on Sunday.



Red hot Dinesh Chandimal struck his second successive half-century to take Sri Lanka's lead past 300 and thwart the Pakistan attack on day three of the opening Test on Monday. The hosts were 329 for nine when bad light stopped play for the day in Galle. Chandimal, on 86, and Prabath Jayasuriya, on four, were batting at close of play with Sri Lanka leading by 333 in their second innings.

PHOTO: TWITTER

IN THE MAIN STRUCTURE OF PADMA BRIDGE  
**MORE THAN 95% OF RODS ARE BSRM**



**PADMA BRIDGE**

Proud Construction Partner




PHOTOS: ANISUR RAHMAN

Vehicles parked in the space where the historic Neelam Ghar once stood. The century-old establishment on Old Dhaka's Court Street was recognised by conservationists as a rare feat of masonry. However, after the heritage site was leased out to the Dhaka Bar Association by the Deputy Commissioner's Office, the two-storey building was demolished to make room for a 20-storey one. The photo was taken yesterday. *Inset*, what the Neelam Ghar, literally meaning auction house, used to look like.



## COVID VACCINATION Special drive today to jab 75 lakh people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special nationwide campaign to inoculate 75 lakh people with the second and booster doses of the Covid-19 vaccine will take place today, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

The day-long campaign is being launched to help constrict the recent spike in infection rates, he added.

He made the announcement at the health directorate headquarters at noon.

Those who received their second jabs at least four months ago can now get their booster dose. While those who took the first dose at least 28 days ago can get their second jab.

The jabs will be provided to those aged 18 and above.

For the campaign, 16,181 centres will be operational in all public hospitals, wards in city corporations and municipality areas, the minister said, adding that 33,246 health workers and 49,869 volunteers will be working across the country.

"The country currently has a stock of around 2.78 crore shots of five types of Covid-19 vaccines."

Meanwhile, the government is preparing for a vaccination campaign for children aged 5-11, the minister also said.

"The primary action plan already has been framed. Now, [other] necessary preparations are underway."

Meanwhile, seven more Covid-19 patients died

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## Sri Lanka renews state of emergency

Police, military step up security ahead of parliament's vote for new president tomorrow



Ghazal legend Bhopinder Singh no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted playback singer, ghazal maestro and musician Bhopinder Singh passed away yesterday at 7:45pm in Mumbai's Criticare hospital.

The 82-year-old was known to be the voice of many a memorable Bollywood songs.

"He was suffering from several health complications, including bladder issues, for some time," his wife and popular singer Mitali Mukherjee, now known as Mitali Singh, told Indian media.

Bhopinder, born [name], SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's acting president renewed the country's state of emergency yesterday ahead of a parliamentary vote to pick a new head of state -- a poll in which he is a leading candidate.

Ranil Wickremesinghe automatically became acting president when Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigned last week after fleeing to Singapore.

A state of emergency allows troops to arrest and detain suspects, and the president to make regulations overriding existing laws to deal with any unrest.

One was already in place but parliament had not met to ratify the declaration as required, and Wickremesinghe extended it from yesterday "in the interests of public security", he said.

Police and the military, armed with emergency powers, stepped up security in the capital ahead of tomorrow's election of a new president.

Wickremesinghe, a six-time former prime minister, is being backed for the position by

Rajapaksa's party, which remains the largest in the legislature.

In what was seen as a possible appeal to 14 Catholic legislators for their support, Wickremesinghe said he had asked Britain's help to complete investigations into the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings that killed 279 people.

Sri Lanka's small but influential Catholic minority believes the coordinated suicide attack against three churches and three hotels was a "political plot" to bring Rajapaksa to power, and has long sought an independent investigation.

Wickremesinghe was "requesting the assistance of the UK government and their intelligence services", his office said.

There was no immediate comment from the British High Commission.

The bombings were blamed on local jihadists and 25 men were indicted in October over alleged involvement.

But the Church and opposition parties claim

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

## Man arrested for 'hurting religious sentiment'

A CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

A Narsingdi court sent a man to jail last night after police arrested him in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Earlier on Sunday night, a mob surrounded the house of Prashanta Kaur Shrabon in Jinardi area of Palash upazila, saying that his posts and comments on Facebook had hurt their religious feelings.

Kamrul Islam, chairman of Jinardi Union Parishad, said, "When local mobs gathered, we calmed them down and called the police."

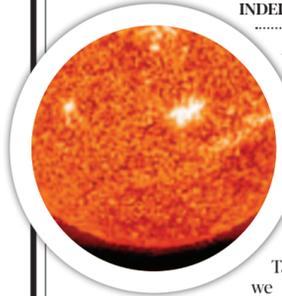
Police then detained Prashanta, 23, from his house around 10:00pm on Sunday.

A Narsingdi court sent him to jail last night after Palash police accused him in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Prashanta used to work at a garment factory in Gazipur. He is a resident of Rabon village in the upazila's Jinardi Union Parishad.

## Solar storm about to strike Earth in a 'direct hit'

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



A solar storm is predicted to hit the Earth today that could disrupt GPS and radio signals.

The impact of a "snake-like filament" from the Sun, which Nasa predicts will happen on July 19, will be a "direct hit" according to Dr Tamitha Skov, adding that we should "expect signal disruptions on Earth's nightside".

It is also possible that aurora might be visible in some regions of the Earth.

However, it is possible that the storm could also come later this week. The G1-class storm -- which is "minor" but could impact satellite operations -- could strike the Earth on 20 or 21 July, according to SpaceWeather.

The origins of the storm come from a coronal mass ejection, a release of plasma and magnetic energy, which leapt from the Sun on 15 July by an unstable filament of magnetism. These eruptions are capable of releasing 100,000 times more energy than all the power plants on Earth generate throughout a year.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

## CASE UNDER ICT ACT Three officials of Deepto TV land in jail Its MD secures bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chattogram Cyber Tribunal yesterday sent two directors of Deepto TV and its chief operating officer to jail in three cases filed under the controversial section 57 of the ICT act.

The court also ordered sending Deepto TV's Managing Director Kazi Jahedul Islam to jail, but granted him bail after a couple of hours because of his ailing health.

Those who landed in jail are Kazi Jahin Hasan, Kazi Rabet Hasan, and Kazi Urfi Ahmed, officials said.

They are accused of defaming the former overseas employment minister Nurul Islam and his son Mujibur Rahman with fake news.

The accused are also the top officials of Kazi Farms Group.

Judge Jahurul Kabir passed the order. The cases were filed in 2016 against three journalists and the four officials of Deepto TV.

Sheikh Ahmad, manager of Sanowara Group, and Jahangir Alam, manager of Sanowara Poultry and Hatchery, filed the cases.



The seventh and last span of the Rupsha railway bridge has been installed recently. With all spans in place over the Rupsha river, the Khulna-Mongla Rail Link project inches towards completion. This 5.13km-long railway bridge will be the country's longest one. The photo was taken near Lobon Chora Road in Khulna's Rupsha upazila recently.

PHOTO: HABTUBUR RAHMAN

## TEACHER'S ASSAULT HC orders judicial probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered a judicial enquiry into the allegation of humiliation of a college teacher in Narail on June 17.

The Narail chief judicial magistrate has been asked to conduct the probe and submit the findings to the HC in six weeks.

In a video clip that went viral last month, some students and locals were seen forcing Swapan Kumar Biswas, acting principal of Mirzapur United Degree College in Narail, to wear a garland made of shoes.

Yesterday, the HC also directed the government authorities concerned to provide security and medical support to Swapan and his family members.

The court also issued a rule asking the respondents to explain why their failure to prevent such occurrences in presence of local administration

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5