Closing the Jewish Agency offices would be a serious event that would affect relations.

Israeli Prime Minister **Yair Lapid** after Russia moves to close the agency which played a key role in the creation of the state of Israel in 1948

President Ranil Wickremesinghe has reaffirmed Sri Lanka's commitment to upholding the rights of peaceful, non-violent assembly.

Office of Sri Lanka president

As prime minister, I am determined to see the Rwanda policy through to full implementation as well as exploring other countries where we can work on similar partnerships.... I will not cower to the ECHR and its continued efforts to try and control immigration policy.

UK Foreign Secretary **Liz Truss** as Britain's two remaining contenders for PM post promise to tackle illegal immigration

The Oak Fire burns near Darrah in Mariposa County, California, US, on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

US bakes in record heatwave

Emergency declared in parts of California as wildfires rage in US, Europe

AGENCIES

A California wildfire ripped through thousands of acres Saturday after being sparked a day earlier, as millions of Americans sweltered through scorching heat with already record-setting temperatures due to climb.

The heat wave encompassing multiple regions has increased the risk of blazes, such as the major Oak Fire, which broke out Friday in California near Yosemite National Park, where giant sequoias have already been threatened by flames in recent days.

The fire -- described as "explosive" by officials -- grew from about 600 acres to around 11,900 acres within 24 hours.

More than 6,000 people had been evacuated, said Hector Vasquez, a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection official, as the fire remained uncontained as of Saturday evening.

California Governor Gavin Newsom on Saturday declared a "state of emergency" in Mariposa County, citing "conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property."

The blaze left ashes, gutted vehicles and twisted remains of properties in its wake, as emergency personnel worked to evacuate residents and protect structures in its path.

More than 500 firefighters are working to extinguish the flames and are being assisted by aircraft, Vasquez said. Officials cited by the Los Angeles Times said it could take a week to contain.

Evidence of global warming could be seen elsewhere in the country, as more than a dozen states were under a heat advisory.

The central and northeast US regions face the brunt of the extreme temperatures, which are not expected to peak until Sunday at the earliest and have sent public health officials scrambling.

Central US metropolitan areas such as Dallas and Oklahoma City were expected to reach highs of more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit (above 38 degrees Celsius) for at least the next five days.

A heat emergency is in effect for cities up and down the northeast coast, from Boston to Philadelphia to Washington. Not even the usually cool Pacific Northwest will escape the far-reaching heat, with the region expected to face several days in the 90s next week.

Across the Atlantic, Greece yesterday battled three major wildfires across the country which forced hundreds to evacuate.

The country is in the grip of a heatwave that began on Saturday and is expected to last 10 days. Temperatures were set to rise to 42 degrees Celsius (107 degrees Fahrenheit) in some regions.

Arrest Gotabaya

Rights group urges Singapore

REUTERS, *Colombo*

A rights group documenting alleged abuses in Sri Lanka has filed a criminal complaint with Singapore's attorney general, seeking the arrest of former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa for his role in the South Asian nation's decades-long civil war. The International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) said Rajapaksa committed grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions during the civil war in 2009 when he was country's defence chief, according to a copy of the complaint seen by Reuters. Rajapaksa submitted his resignation in Singapore, a day after fleeing on July 13.

Manila university shooting kills 3

REUTERS, *Manila*

Three people died in a shooting at a university graduation ceremony in the Philippines' capital region yesterday, including a former mayor from the volatile south of the country, police said. Local Quezon City police chief Remus Medina said the shooting appeared to have been an assassination of the former mayor of the southern Lamitan city, Rose Furigay. The suspect, wounded in a shootout with a campus security officer and arrested after a car chase, was now in custody and being interrogated. Furigay was about to attend the graduation of her daughter at the law school of Ateneo de Manila University, Medina said. The suspect was also a native of Lamitan city in Basilan province, a stronghold of Abu Sayyaf, a pro-Islamist State extremist group.

'PELOSI'S VISIT TO TAIWAN'

China heightens warning to US

REUTERS

China has issued stark private warnings to the Biden administration about a possible trip to Taiwan in August by US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the Financial Times reported on Saturday. The report cited six people familiar with the Chinese warnings as saying they were significantly stronger than the threats that Beijing has made in the past when it was unhappy with US actions or policy on Taiwan, which is claimed by China. The private rhetoric suggested a possible military response, the Financial Times cited several people familiar with the situation as saying.

'Economic crisis' not ending soon

FROM PAGE 1

Rising inflation has a more adverse impact on people with lower income groups, so they need to be protected. Poor households should be provided with government supports, she also said.

To tackle inflation, the economist recommended, the central bank should increase the interest rate on loans to control the money supply to the market. She also suggested the government follow the ongoing austerity measures.

She thinks the high energy price is likely to continue in the global market in the coming days, which is why more foreign exchanges will be needed.

To check the declining trend of the ongoing foreign reserves, Fahmida said, the government should borrow from the Islamic Development Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Bank and foreign nations.

Last week, the country's foreign exchange reserves stood at $39.67 billion, down from $46.15 billion in December last year.

Mohammad Tamim, a professor at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, said the country has hardly made any investment in recent years in exploring natural gas and coal.

"It [the government] relies on imports for the items to reduce the financial risks associated with exploration. This has created a risk for the supply and prices of energy products."

The government had allowed setting up quick rental power plants by using petroleum to address the electricity crisis on the short-term basis. There was a decision that the plants would run for the period of three-five years, but they are still operating, he said.

Dependency on petroleum to generate electricity has created the existing crisis, said the energy expert and recommended putting focus on coal-based power production and renewable energy to meet energy demand.

Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow at the CPD, said the commoners could have avoided the inflationary pressure to some extent had the central bank depreciated the taka against the dollar gradually in the last five-six years.

The BB should continue the floating exchange rate of the taka, he said.

The exchange rate of the taka stood at Tk 94.45 per dollar on the inter-bank platform on Thursday.

On July 21 last year, the rate was Tk 84.80, which means there has been a 11.38 percent loss in value in a year.

Mustafizur Rahman said both the BB and the government should give efforts to stop money laundering in the name of exports and imports.

Salehuddin Ahmed, a former governor of the BB, said the central bank would not be able to bring stability in the foreign exchange market by injecting dollars consistently.

Rather, it should beef up its monitoring on import payments such that import of non-essential items could be arrested, he said.

Since the end of last year, import payments have been going up because of a rise in the prices of commodities in the global market, playing a major role in destabilising the economy.

Between July and May of last fiscal year, import payments went up by 39 percent year-on-year.

"The lack of corporate governance is a major challenge for the country's banking sector. The vested quarter is now influencing the central bank's decision," he said.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of the Power and Participation Research Centre, said there is an "iron triangle" prevailing in the country's economic governance.

The " iron triangle" can be defined as a government that functions through connections between politicians, lobbyists (on behalf of business owners or interest groups), and bureaucrats.

Under the system, Hossain Zillur said, anomalies are getting shaped through the legal process. "The term of the mismanagement is not applicable for the current economic system. The economy is being driven by the conflict of interest."

He also said, "We are proud of the country's resilience. It is time to say goodbye to the resilience as the influential groups are enjoying outputs from such a situation. But the commoners have to bear the brunt."

AB Mirza Azizul Islam, a former finance adviser to a caretaker government, said the government should give efforts to increase remittances with a view to resolving the forex crisis.

The inflow of remittance, the cheapest source of foreign currencies for Bangladesh, fell 15 percent year-on-year to $21.03 billion in fiscal year 2021-22.

Exporting human resources should be given priority to get back the tempo of remittances, he said.

Impunity, inaction lead to recurrences

FROM PAGE 1

"Those who are responsible should be punished," he said, adding that perpetrators involved in the 2012 Ramu mayhem are yet to be punished.

Investigators are yet to produce a charge sheet on last year's communal violence in Cumilla.

Hamlet Saha, a resident of the Narail village that recently came under attack, also spoke at the event and narrated how his family was affected.

Some 500 to 600 people, many of whom were familiar faces, suddenly attacked their village -- many carrying locally-made weapons.

The attackers formed separate small groups of 10 to 12 persons and each group marched towards separate houses. They first demanded money from the residents and threatened with vandalism if they did not pay. The families who paid were spared, he said.

Terming communal violence a "disease", former Supreme Court judge Justice MA Matin said the main reason behind it is the "separation" between religions after the recognition of Islam as the state religion.

The Supreme Court needs to revisit this, he said, adding that there has been call for social reforms which could start with constitutional amendment.

To move past the scourge of communal violence, the country needs to stop misuse of religion in the name of politics, said Liberation War Museum Trustee Sarwar Ali.

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation Chairman Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad said civil society has to be more vocal and proactive in protesting such incidents and urged for the formation of a citizen's commission in this regard.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, eminent economist and convener of Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, moderated the event.

He said following the communal mayhem in Cumilla in October last year, they had raised several demands, which included neutral and independent probe to identify the culprits and ensure their punishment as per the country's law.

"We did not expect that we'd have to raise our voice for similar demands again."

Despite being citizens of independent Bangladesh, many are living like refugees here, said eminent theatre personality Nasiruddin Yousuff.

He said although the political party that has been credited for achieving the country's independence in 1971 is in power now, it remains to be seen whether they can establish their pro-Liberation War ideology in every sphere of society.

It also needs to be asked whether present-day society is challenging the state and refusing secular Bangladesh, he added.

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said the state has to take the responsibility for ensuring punishment of the perpetrators of communal violence.

It is very disrespectful that people have to face harassment for belonging to a different religion, said Bangladesh Mahila Parishad General Secretary Maleka Banu.

She said communal forces rose up in the country following the political changeover in 1975, and the country could not rid itself of the evil influences afterwards, despite having opportunities.

Human rights activist Rani Yan Yan said the monitoring system has to be strengthened to prevent communal violence and repression of minority communities.

Kajal Debnath, a leader of the Hindu community, said incidents of communal violence in the country over the years are interlinked as those have stark similarities.

Those who spoke at the event included noted theatre personality Mamunur Rashid; Prof Kaberi Gayen of Dhaka University; Sanjeeb Drong, general secretary of Bangladesh Adibashi Forum; Sara Hossain, Supreme Court lawyer and human rights activist; Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association; Asif Ibrahim, a core group member of Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh; Ushatan Talukdar, a former lawmaker of Rangamati; Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh; and Zakir Hossain, chief executive of Nagorik Uddyog.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Nine Bridge Construction Project in Brahmanbaria District (NBCPB)
Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.0000.726.07.032.2022.978 Date: 24.07.2022

Request for Expressions of Interest
For Selection of Individual Consultant

Name of Project: Nine Bridge Construction Project in Brahmanbaria District (NBCPB)

The Project Director, NBCPB has been allocated public funds from the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GoB) towards the cost of the Nine Bridge Construction Project in Brahmanbaria district (NBCPB) and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of these funds to payments under the contract for the provision of consultancy services for the Project by Individual Consultants. The qualification and experience required for the consultants are given below:

Package No.	Proposed post and tentative duration	Minimum qualification	Minimum experience
9BB/S4.1	Senior Supervision Engineer (1 person) (33 months. Duration may be increased if project period extended)	B.Sc. in Civil Engineering from any reputed University	• At least 15 years of overall experiences and 10 years relevant experience, in Construction and Supervision of PC/RCC/Arch bridge construction. • Computer proficiency in (MS Word, Excel, Power Point, AutoCAD etc). • Excellent presentation skills with written and oral communications are desired. • Training in relevant areas etc.
9BB/S5.1.1 & 9BB/S5.2.1	Junior Supervision Engineer (2 person) (30 months. Duration may be increased if project period extended)	B.Sc. in Civil Engineering from any reputed University or Diploma in Civil Engineering	• At least 8 years of overall experiences and 5 years relevant experience, in case of B.Sc. Engineering (Civil) & in case of Diploma Engineering (Civil) with 15 years of overall experience out of which 10 years relevant experience in Construction and Supervision of PC/RCC bridge/ Arch construction. • Computer proficiency in (MS Word, Excel, Power Point etc). • Excellent presentation skills with written and oral communications are desired. • Training in relevant areas etc.

The Project Director, NBCPB of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) now invites eligible applicants to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants are invited to provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services. The services include: analyze hydrological and morphological data, carry out structural analysis and design of 9 bridges with appropriate foundation, protective works, BoQ preparation etc.

Consultants will be selected using the selection of individual consultant sub-method in accordance with the Public Procurement Rules, 2008. It is expected that the services will commence on September, 2022. The advertisement is also available on LGED and CPTU website (www.lged.gov.bd & www.cptu.gov.bd).

A complete set of "Request for Application" including Terms of Reference may be obtained from the office of the undersigned during normal office hours. Further information may be obtained at the address below during office hours.

Expression of Interest shall be submitted by **2:00pm on 16/08/2022** in sealed envelope delivered to the office of the undersigned on Level-11, LGED Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207 and be clearly marked **"Request for Expression of Interest for Selection of Senior Supervision Engineer or Junior Supervision Engineer as Individual Consultant"**.

The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Md. Sohrab Ali
Project Director
Nine Bridge Construction Project in Brahmanbaria District
(NBCPB)
LGED Bhaban, Level-11, Agargaon
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh
Tel: +880-2-44826200
E-mail: pdrlp2.lged@yahoo.com; pd.rlp2@lged.gov.bd

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