



Bahadur Shah Park now 'Café Bahadur'



'Shonibar Bikel' gets censor board clearance



Argentina's visit a case of sportswashing?



Wheat acreage expands

MONEY LAUNDERED ABROAD ACC ill-equipped to probe cases

MAHUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Money laundering cases are not making much headway for a lack of cooperation from foreign countries, bureaucratic complexities and a shortage of skilled lawyers, said officials of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

For example, since 2018 the ACC has made 34 requests for information on the wealth of 24 persons stashed abroad. To date, it has received no effective response to prosecute the offenders.

"The developed countries talk the talk but are reluctant in providing information on laundered money. They make unnecessary queries to delay the process," said Mahmudul Hossain Khan, ACC's director general for money laundering.

In its requests, the ACC asked the countries to give information on moveable and non-moveable assets worth about \$62.6 million, CAD 12.75 million, AUD 12.39 million, SGD 113.722 million, HKD 16 million, JPY 2.62 million, MYR 3.9 million, £59,341, THB 18,000 and Tk 16.8 million.

About Tk 5 lakh crore was laundered to different countries in five years from 2015, according to the Global Financial Integrity's report published in 2021, he said.

✓ About Tk 5 lakh crore was laundered to different countries in five years from 2015, according to the Global Financial Integrity's report published in 2021.

✓ Canada, the US, the UK, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia and Thailand are identified as haven for Bangladeshi money launderers.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The Hori river is reduced to a ditch due to encroachment and uncontrolled siltation. Locals say the river remains almost in a similar state even in monsoon and local farmers can no longer rely on it for irrigation. The photo was taken in the Sholgotia area of Dumuria upazila, Khulna, last week.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

UPPER MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRY BY 2031

WB keen to help Bangladesh in its transition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank has given the highest priority to helping Bangladesh reach the upper middle-income status by 2031 in its new country partnership framework (CPF), said the lender's managing director of operations.

Axel van Trotsenburg, the WB's managing director of operations, conveyed the intent during his meeting with Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal yesterday, according to a finance ministry statement.

The Dutch-Austrian national is responsible for the WB's operations across the world, with a footprint spanning more than 140 offices. He is in Dhaka on a three-day visit to mark 50 years of partnership between Bangladesh and the World Bank Group.

During the meeting, van Trotsenburg discussed different issues of the CPF in detail with Kamal.

The new CPF encompasses fiscal



Trotsenburg

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

INFLATION IN DHAKA CITY Middle-income group most affected

Says CAB, its report puts inflation at 11.08pc last year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The middle-income group has suffered the most throughout 2022 as the average annual inflation rate was 11.08 percent in Dhaka city that year, according to the Consumer Association of Bangladesh.

Although the lower-income households faced comparatively less pressure, they had to compromise on their diet and living standards due to the increase in the prices of essential commodities and services.

The CAB, in a report, said the hiked prices of around 17 food and non-food products have directly contributed to the surge in the inflation rate last year.

The report was presented at a virtual press briefing by Mahfuz Kabir, research director of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, on behalf of the CAB.

It was prepared on the basis of monthly price data of 141 food items, 49 non-food products and 25 services, from 11 markets under Dhaka North and South City Corporations.

Of the items, those majorly included in the CAB price monitoring report were rice, flour, pulses, bakery products, sugar, fish, eggs, domestic poultry, edible oil, imported fruits, vegetables, spices, tea and coffee, local and imported milk, washing and personal hygiene items, and transport costs.

Speaking about the methodology, Kabir said they have used January 2022 as the base month to compare with the other months' inflation.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) calculates the inflation on a point-to-point basis, under which the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is estimated based on price changes the same month a year ago.

He added that they have used the data of the CPI of the BBS to understand the inflationary pressure on ordinary consumers in

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Ex-GCC mayor Jahangir now un-expelled from AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League has withdrawn the expulsion order of disgraced Gazipur mayor Mohammad Jahangir Alam who was the general secretary of the party's Gazipur city unit.

Jahangir was expelled from the party in November 2021 after a video clip of him making derogatory remarks about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and expressing doubts about the numbers of martyrs in the Liberation War went viral in social media.

An AL central committee member, requesting anonymity, said Jahangir was among the nearly 100 formerly expelled leaders who had been annested by the party.

A significant number of these individuals were expelled when they participated in different elections as independents



SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Rab man, two others held after robbery attempt They tried to rob people on Mohakhali flyover

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested a Rab member on charges of being involved in an attempted robbery on Mohakhali flyover in the capital around 2:15am yesterday.

Police said the arrested law enforcer is Abdul Momen, 26, of Rab-1, but did not reveal his designation in the force.

The incident happened when travel agent Shahidul Islam, 42, along with his nephew Muhammad Riaz, 20, was returning home in Manikganj in a rented car after meeting his friend at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka, said Noor e Azam Mia, officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station.

On Mohakhali flyover, another car stopped their car and four men claiming to be Rab officers handcuffed Shahidul and Riaz and tried to rob them brandishing a toy pistol, he said, referring to the case filed by Shahidul.

As Shahidul and Riaz started crying for help, several other vehicles stopped there. The four men then tried to flee in their own car, but people present at the scene caught a 23-year-old man named Arian Ahmed Joy, who claimed to be a Rab informant.

In primary interrogation, Joy told police that the gang was led by a Rab member.

Within hours, police arrested two others including the Rab member Momen and Farhad Hossain, the driver of the rented car, OC told The Daily Star.

The OC said Farhad is a member of the gang.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

AL to have special train for Rajshahi rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

A special train will take Awami League leaders and activists to Rajshahi where they will attend a rally on January 29.

State Minister for Information and Communication Technology Zunaïd Ahmed Palak made the announcement at a meeting in Natore yesterday.

The special train from Natore will be able to carry 8,000 to 10,000 people, he said, adding that the train will leave Madhabnagar station and stop at Naldanga, Basudevpur, Natore Sadar, and Yasinpur before reaching Rajshahi.

Asked whether a train can be arranged for a political event, Palak said, "We have hired the train. This special train will not affect the schedule of regular trains."

The AL men would pay for the ride, he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Children of a fishing family cuddling chickens on their boat on the Meghna in Nabipur area of Bhola. The family doesn't have a traditional home and live on the dinghy. Many families like this, locally known as Mangta people, can be seen in the district.

PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

BUSINESS

State banks' lending suffers

Four state-run banks are struggling to generate revenue from their core business of lending due to voluminous non-performing loans and lending rate ceiling.

STORY ON B1



আহমদ সফি চৌধুরী

আমরা গভীরভাবে শোকাহত

পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড পরিচালনা পর্ষদের পরিচালক

আহমদ সফি চৌধুরী

২০ জানুয়ারি ২০২৩ রাত ১১.৪৫ মিনিটে ঢাকার ইউনাইটেড হাসপাতালে চিকিৎসাধীন অবস্থায় ইন্তেকাল করেন (ইম্মা লিল্লাহি ওয়া ইম্মা ইলাইহি রাজিউন)। তাঁর মৃত্যুতে পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড পরিচালনা পর্ষদ এবং সকল স্তরের নির্বাহী, কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারী গভীরভাবে মর্মান্বিত ও শোকাহত।

আমরা মহান আল্লাহতায়ালার কাছে মরহুমের বিদেহী আত্মার মাগফেরাত কামনা করছি এবং মরহুমের শোক সন্তুষ্ট পরিবার পরিজনদের প্রতি সমবেদনা জ্ঞাপন করছি।

মহান আল্লাহতায়ালার যেন তাঁর পরিবার পরিজনকে এই অপূরণীয় ক্ষতি সহ্য করার ক্ষমতা দান করেন।

পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
PUBALI BANK LIMITED

Dhaka will have own Indo-Pacific strategy: Shahriar Alam

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will come up with its own strategy for the Indo-Pacific for a robust socio-economic regional cooperation, at a time when the region sees great power competition.

The priorities of the strategy would include strong regional connectivity, peace and stability, trade and investment, technology, climate change and energy, said State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam yesterday.

He said this at a dialogue on “Bangladesh and the Indo-Pacific Collaboration: Priority Issues and Concerns” jointly organised by the Bangladesh Centre for Indo-Pacific Affairs (BCIPA) and the Department of International Affairs of Jahangirnagar University at a city hotel.

In May last year, the US launched the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) that now has 13 members. Washington wants Dhaka to be on its side in the Indo-Pacific, something that Dhaka says it's still studying.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Journo found dead in his home

STAR REPORT

Police recovered the decomposed body of a journalist of an English daily, The Financial Express, from his rented flat in Dhaka's Mirpur area yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Biplab Zaman, aged around 60, a news consultant of the daily, his colleagues said.

Police broke open the door of his house on the fourth floor of the building in Mirpur's Journalist Colony and recovered the body lying on the balcony, said Jasim Uddin Mollah, deputy commissioner of



Biplab Zaman

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



Local resident Mariia, 78, carries a cart with humanitarian aid, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in the village of Nykyforivka, Donetsk region, Ukraine, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

REFUSAL TO GIVE UKRAINE TANKS Germany faces backlash from allies

Kyiv denounces ‘global indecision’; Russia launches offensive in Zaporizhzhia

AFP, Kyiv

Germany yesterday faced a strong backlash from allies over its refusal to supply Ukraine with its vaunted Leopard tanks to bolster its fighting capacity in the nearly year-long war with Russia.

On Friday, some 50 nations agreed to provide Kyiv with billions of dollars' worth of military hardware, including armoured vehicles and munitions needed to push back Russian forces.

But German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius told reporters on the sidelines of the event at the US Ramstein Air Base that despite heightened expectations, “We still cannot say when a decision will be taken, and what the decision will be, when it comes to the Leopard tank.”

Ukraine yesterday denounced the “global indecision” of its allies on providing heavy-duty modern tanks, saying “today's indecision is killing more of our people.”

“Every day of delay is the death of Ukrainians. Think faster,” presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted.

Several allies echoed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in saying the tanks were essential to Ukraine's fight with its much larger neighbour.

In a joint statement – and a rare public criticism of Europe's top power – the foreign ministers of the three Baltic states said they “call on Germany to provide Leopard tanks to Ukraine now.”

“This is needed to stop Russian aggression, help Ukraine and restore peace

in Europe quickly. Germany as the leading European power has special responsibility in this regard,” said the statement, tweeted by Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics.

Berlin has been hesitant to send the Leopards or allow other nations to transfer them to Kyiv, with reports earlier in the week saying it would agree to do so only if the US provided its tanks as well. Washington has said providing its Abrams tanks to Ukraine is not feasible, citing difficulties in training and maintenance.

But expectations had grown ahead of Friday's Ukraine Contact Group meeting of around 50 US-led countries that Germany would at least agree to let other countries operating Leopards transfer them to Kyiv's army.

ACC ill-equipped to probe cases

FROM PAGE 1

Canada, the US, the UK, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia and Thailand are identified as a haven for Bangladeshi money launderers.

Five organisations – National Board of Revenue, Criminal Investigation Department of Police, Department of Narcotics, Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC), Department of Environment and ACC – are tasked to deal with money laundering.

Of these, only the ACC has a separate investigation unit and prosecution team for money laundering cases.

But its jurisdiction is limited: it can only investigate the laundering case related to corruption and bribery, said an ACC official referring to the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

There is a working committee on the prevention of money laundering to supervise the activities of organisations.

About 80 percent of the laundering takes place through over-voicing and under-voicing and the NBR and CID are responsible for monitoring that, said one of the members of the working committee on the condition of anonymity to speak candidly on the issue.

But they rely on public prosecutors who remain burdened with other cases and lack the required skills to deal with money laundering cases.

“ACC is left crippled while others are not given proper support to fight money laundering – it shows a lack of willingness of a section in the government,” he added.

Bangladesh lost approximately \$8.27 billion on average annually between 2009 and 2018 from mis-invoicing import-export goods to

evade taxes and to illegally move money across international borders, according to the report.

In September last year, the CID estimated that Bangladesh may have lost about \$7.8 billion (around Tk 75,000 crore) in remittance between 2021-22 through mobile financial services.

Let alone repatriating the wealth, the investigation authorities face several obstacles to just find out about the money is laundered abroad, the official said.

Initially, the ACC requests the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) to confirm the information on wealth laundered abroad. The BFIU collects it from its counterparts abroad.

“But there is an embargo on using this information in public. Therefore, we cannot use it before the court,” Khan said.

In such instances, as per the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the ACC files Mutual Legal Assistance Requests (MLAR) to the respective countries for information.

“The ACC cannot file the MLAR directly to the authority concerned either,” Khan said, while pointing out 12 steps to obtain information.

The first step entails writing to the home ministry, which forwards the letter to the foreign ministry. If the foreign ministry finds the request implementable, it sends it to the respective authority of the foreign country through embassies.

The respective country's authority sends a reply via its foreign ministry.

Bangladesh's lost foreign ministry gets the information from the embassy and channels it to the home ministry. Investigators get a reply only when

Bangladesh's home ministry sends it to the ACC or other investigation agencies.

“It's a lengthy process. It becomes lengthier when the responding authority seeks supportive information,” said an investigation officer.

The ACC had filed an MLAR to Japan about laundered money in January 2020.

“In response, the country's authority asked us to refile requests in the Japanese language,” he said, adding that the ACC requested both Dhaka University's Institute of Modern Languages and the local Japan International Cooperation Agency office for translation.

But the ACC's request was refused.

“Another reply came from Cyprus partly in the Greek language,” he said, adding that out of the 34 requests so far they got just two responses and even then the responses did not inform much.

The main drawback of MLAR is that a country is at liberty to accept or refuse Bangladesh's request, according to ACC officials.

“Not only foreign offices, local offices often do not give importance to our requests. It seems to us they assume regular follow-up as an extra burden,” said an investigation officer.

To quicken the process, the anti-graft watchdog in September 2021 wrote to the cabinet division to take measures for Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) with the countries where huge amounts of money are laundered, Khan said.

The home ministry is now finalising the draft treaty. At present, Bangladesh has MLAT with only two countries: India and South Africa.

WB keen to help Bangladesh in its transition

FROM PAGE 1

2022-23 through 2026-27 and is synced with the government's 8th Five-Year Plan. The WB's latest Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) update informs the CPF.

The SCD update identified four frontier challenges which, if tackled properly, can enable Bangladesh to accelerate its transition to a higher-middle income country level of development.

The challenges include the private sector's inability to drive growth and job creation for a lack of competition.

“Only a few large firms, including conglomerates, drive formal sector markets. Such firms remain mostly inward-looking and benefit from rents from protected domestic markets and RMG exports under special incentive programmes, and from being supported by close links with the banking sector,” the WB said in the SCD.

Another challenge identified is that the pattern of spatial transformation is inefficient, unsustainable, and less inclusive.

“The current urbanisation process is creating significant negative externalities from environmental degradation and congestion, such as decreased productivity and inclusivity, and has resulted in a rising number of urban poor.”

The recent increase in spatial welfare disparities across the country, such as access to quality education, health and other basic services highlights the country's challenges in managing the country's overall spatial transformation, the WB said.

Climate and environmental vulnerabilities pose serious risks to

sustainable growth.

“Bangladesh is one of the world's most vulnerable countries to climate risks. Adapting to climate change remains a serious challenge to the country's development, especially in terms of managing its delta environment, which makes it particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise.”

Climate change poses a serious threat to the country's agricultural productivity growth, said the Washington-based multilateral lender.

“Fourth, cutting across the above three challenges are weak institutions and markets.”

There are significant gaps Bangladesh needs to overcome in terms of the overall quality of institutions, including capacity, regulatory quality and availability of formal institutions to create markets and make them contestable, it said.

Key areas for institutional capacity enhancement in the public sector include public service modernisation, public financial management, public procurement, statistics and citizen engagement.

“In addition, the current regulatory environment is not conducive to developing broad-based private sector growth.”

The country's poor performance in terms of business environment can be partly explained by many outdated laws governing economic issues such as foreign exchange, land and company formation.

“Regulatory rules often overlap or contradict one another, and administrative processes are opaque and poorly enforced. Such business environment challenges

are underscored by the weakness of institutions available to support market-based development.”

This SCD Update identified eight priorities to tackle the four frontier challenges and support the country's transition to upper middle-income status.

Four priorities are foundational, as they provide an essential basis to propel the country's transformation towards the upper middle-income status. Another four priorities are enabling priorities to shift gears for accelerated transformation.

During the meeting yesterday, Kamal requested the WB to fund the country's mega projects.

Besides, he stressed that WB can share its vast experience in different countries with Bangladesh for its graduation from the least-developed country bracket.

Rab man

FROM PAGE 1

Police are looking for another suspect named Jalal, 25.

Banani police seized a black vest of Rab, a toy pistol, a pair of handcuffs, a hand traffic light of police and a car.

Shahidul told a reporter of Jamuna TV who happened to be near the scene that some of those who stopped his car were wearing black vests that said Rab. “They pointed a pistol through the window. After we got out of the car, they said that we were gold smugglers. As we told them to check, they started hitting us.”

“They said that they would shoot us. Then they cuffed our hands. We started screaming for help. A man then stopped his car and a policeman who was returning home on his motorcycle after his duty also stopped.”

The policeman named Sakib told the TV reporter, “When I went forward, people wearing Rab vests showed me their ID cards. The ID card had expired. Then I had doubts. Later they also wanted to take me in the car. At one point, the men fled. But we caught one of them.”

Shahidul then called 999 and a team of Banani police appeared there soon afterwards and uncuffed the victims.

Joy, the man caught at the scene, told officers that he works at a garment factory in Tongi and was a Rab informant.

He told police that Momen told about an operation and took him to Mohakhali flyover that night.

This correspondent repeatedly tried to contact Rab-1 commanding officer and Rab media director but they did not pick up phone calls.

Police informant stabbed to death in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A police informant was brutally stabbed to death by unidentified criminals in Karnaphuli upazila of Chattogram.

Md Kayes, 33, of Koigram area in Patiya upazila, went missing Friday night and his body was spotted at CDA Residential's field at around 10:00am yesterday, said police.

“We found stab injuries on his shoulder, abdomen, chest, and back. His phone was found switched off in his pocket. Family members said he had been working as a police informant. We are investigating the matter,” said Arifur Hossain, the assistant commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (Karnaphuli Zone).

His body was sent to Chattogram Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Rangpur man sent to jail for raping 7-yr-old

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A man accused of raping a 7-year-old girl in Rangpur's Kaunia was sent to jail by a district court yesterday.

Mofazzal Mondal, 52, of Dhushmara village, was arrested after the girl's mother filed a case Friday night.

According to the case, he raped the girl Friday afternoon after abducting her as she left home to meet her mother who was working in a nearby field.

Hearing the girl's screams, two women rushed in and rescued her while Mofazzal fled the scene.

Kaunia Police Station OC Montaser Billah said she was undergoing treatment at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

2 black bear cubs rescued in Cox's Bazar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Police rescued two Asiatic black bear cubs during a raid in Digar Pankhali area in Chakaria, Cox's Bazar around 9:30pm on Friday.

The cubs are around two months old and weigh over a kilogram each.

The district DB Police also arrested Deepak Das, 32, a member of an international wildlife trafficking ring, who had the cubs in his possession with the intent to smuggle them abroad.

The Asiatic black bear is categorised as “vulnerable” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in its Red List.

Middle-income group most affected

FROM PAGE 1

urban areas of Bangladesh throughout 2022 compared to the first month of the year.

The general inflation rate started rising from February last year.

After a slight decrease in May, the rate began going up again in June and became much higher in August after the fresh hike in fuel prices. It continued increasing for two months before coming down slightly in December, the report said.

The food inflation rate in the capital for the low-income group was on a declining trend up to April last year, but both the food and non-food inflation rates started rising from May.

It stood at 10.32 percent in June. In July, it had slightly come down, just before hitting the year's highest of

15.31 percent in August.

After August, the rate continued to fall and it finally stood at 7.04 percent in December.

Meanwhile, the non-food inflation rate went all the way up to 18.86 percent in July last year.

Kabir assumed that due to the increase of house rent and prices of electricity and gas, the non-food inflation rate might go up further in 2023.

The CAB has proposed policy recommendations in its analysis of inflation trends.

The recommendations suggest the government increase subsidised food aid and social protection to reduce pressure on the people.

It also suggested the government extend social protection schemes in urban areas to protect low- and middle-income consumers from the

rising inflationary pressures.

The government had significantly increased OMS activities during the pandemic, which was further extended in 2022 to protect the consumer groups from the economic slowdown and inflationary woes.

But there is an inadequacy of OMS food supply against extremely high demands, and a lack of proper monitoring to ensure equitable distribution of OMS food products among low-income people.

The CAB recommendation has also opposed the decision to increase gas and fuel oil prices at the retail level as the bulk price hike of those would further affect the lower-income people.

Speaking at the virtual press briefing, CAB Chairman Ghulam Rahman said there has been a lot of

development in the country over the last decade and the per capita income of the people has also increased. However, the income of the upper class has been much higher than those of the lower- and middle-class people.

“The year 2022 was not a relief for the general people. The Russia-Ukraine War has also had an impact on Bangladesh. There is no way to deny that the incomes of many people had decreased during the coronavirus [pandemic] and its post period.”

Rahman urged the government to take special measures to increase the income of the common people to reduce inequality.

He said that once the price of a product increases in the country, it cannot be expected to come down quickly.

Ahmed Shafi Choudhury passes away

CITY DESK

Ahmed Shafi Choudhury, director of the Board of Directors of Pubali Bank Limited, passed away while undergoing treatment at United Hospital in Dhaka on Friday.

The Board of Directors of Pubali Bank, officers and employees expressed deep grief over his death.



DENGUE FEVER

1 dead, 11 hospitalised in 24 hours



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least one dengue patient died and 11 were hospitalised across the country in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new figure, the total number of dengue deaths this year rose to seven.

A total of 466 dengue cases were logged during this period, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Some 74 dengue patients are still under treatment.

Meanwhile, 201 patients were released from hospitals.

The total number of dengue deaths last year was 281 while the total number of cases was 62,382, of which 23,162 were from outside Dhaka.

A school in a shambles

Institution in Patuakhali sees no renovation in 3 decades



Students of Uttar Charkhali Secondary School in Patuakhali's Galachipa upazila attend class in a risky building.

PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Educational activities at Uttar Charkhali Secondary School in Patuakhali's Galachipa upazila is being severely hampered as the schoolhouse has turned too risky to use due to lack of renovation in the last 30 years.

The iron rods of the roof at many places have rusted are jutting out, while the plaster of the ceiling and walls is falling off. As there is no alternative, more than 500 students of the institution are compelled to attend classes in the ramshackle school building, risking their safety.

In 1970, the secondary school was established on three acres of land under an initiative by the villagers.

Meanwhile, the children's education was about to come to a halt when the old tin-shed schoolhouse was completely damaged during the flood in 1991. But later in 1993, the disaster management ministry constructed a two-storey academic building in place of the old one.

However, that too has now become almost unusable as no initiative has been taken to renovate it even after 30 years of its construction. A number of teachers of the institution said almost all the doors and windows of the school building have been badly damaged.

Moreover, rainwater enters the classrooms through the leaky ceiling during monsoon.

During a recent visit to the institution, this correspondent saw a female teacher conducting lessons for some 10th-graders in a ramshackle classroom. The school authority has put up a large polythene underneath the ceiling to protect the students from the falling chunks of plaster.

Educational activities were going on in the risky schoolhouse comprising seven rooms, including five classrooms, a science laboratory and an office room. The institution has a total of 15 teachers including the headteacher.

Tenth-grader Harija Akhtar said she cannot concentrate on classes as plasters from above often fall on them.

Hanif Gazi, one of the guardians, said they have no alternative as this is the only secondary school in the area.

Headteacher Haroon-or-Rashid said students are compelled to attend classes in risky classrooms as authorities are yet to make any alternative arrangements.

Local UP chairman Jahangir Hossain, also president of the school managing committee, said they have urged the education directorate on several occasions to renovate the building, but no initiative has been taken yet.

Fifty teen activists get bicycles

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nymensingh

"Team Aparajita", a forum of teenagers have now geared up to fight child marriage as the upazila administration recently distributed 50 bicycles among them in Netrakona's Kalmakanda upazila.

Kalmakanda UNO Md Abul Hasem said 50 schoolboys and schoolgirls are involved with this team.

The upazila administration has given the bikes so that the youngsters can reach their destination fast.

Earlier, the volunteers were given caps, t-shirts and identity cards.

They also receive allowance and food when they visit different areas with an aim to stop child marriages, the UNO said.



No scope

FROM PAGE 3

The law minister said the next national elections will be held under the Constitution's guidelines. The government departments will provide all assistance to the Election Commission during the election period.

Replying to a question, he said, "Please, do not pay any heed to the rumours about the next president."

Bahadur Shah Park

FROM PAGE 3

another place from the side of the memorial as per the demand of the citizens. "The place for exercise is still there and the café will not create any problems."

Surrounded by greenery, Bahadur Shah Park stands proud of its rich history and architectural features.

The place was known as Victoria Park, named after Queen Victoria. Later in 1957, the park was renamed after the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II.

In 1857, during the Sepoy Mutiny, English soldiers publicly executed the captured mutineers by hanging them from different trees of the place.

There are two memorials at the park entrances. The tallest one is situated on the eastern side, in memory of the martyred sepoy.

The DSCC took up a mega project in 2016 involving 70 architects to modernise 19 parks and 12 playgrounds. This park was developed under the guidance of Md Rafiq Azam, principal architect of "Shatotto", an architecture firm and consultant team leader of the mega project.

There was no food court in the initial designs.

Asked, Azam said he was not aware that the DSCC permitted a foodcourt to operate inside the park.

Earlier, DSCC Chief Estate Officer Md Rasel Sabrin said they permitted a makeshift food court, not a permanent structure.

Adil Mohammad Khan, former GS of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said, "Leasing out open spaces for commercial use has become a tendency of city corporations. The same was seen in Suhrawardy Udyan."

Towards a new

FROM PAGE 3

"The faults in textbooks of the ninth and tenth grades have already been identified. The mistakes have been there since 2013 without anyone noticing. We will improve the quality of textbooks by maintaining accuracy."

At the ceremony, 300 students from 18 countries were awarded certificates.

Six students were awarded "The Andy Matsui Award" for their academic achievements. AUW VC Rubana Huq and founder Kamal Ahmad were also present at the programme.

BNP now desperate

FROM PAGE 3

millions of dollars and is going to foreign masters to spread propaganda against the country. They are constantly conspiring to impose "sanctions" against the people of the country with false and fabricated information.

Quader said sitting abroad, corrupt leaders of BNP run the party through and incite their activists to sabotage. "But people now know their schemes. The truth has been revealed. For that reason, BNP leaders are aimless."

He said BNP-

Jamaat, the "sponsor of Bangabandhu's killers and war criminals", does not want the welfare of people. The country's development and progress are not visible to them.

"We expect responsible behaviour from BNP as a political party. I urge them to prepare for the upcoming elections without spreading propaganda and rumours against the government for political gain. State power can be changed only through elections in a constitutional manner," added Quader.

Barring Adarsha

FROM PAGE 3

Reporters Unity, Adarsha chief executive officer and publisher Mahabub Rahman told journalists that the publication's stall allocation in the fair has been postponed.

He said this is just a blatant attempt to suppress "dissent".

He also informed journalists that over 600 books have already been published by Adarsha, and

more than 300 authors are associated with those. But out of all the books, allegations of "dissent" have been brought against only three books, for which the publication has been denied permission.

Meanwhile, the press statement by the eminent citizens said, "The state shall guarantee human dignity, rule of law and fundamental rights... and these are the major principles of Bangladesh born after the Language Movement and Liberation War. But we believe this denial of permission will violate an author's freedom to express their opinion."

"Bangla Academy is said to be the 'symbol of Bangalee intellect and mind'. Then why will it engage itself in such partisanship?" it mentioned.

The signatories include writer and politician Badruddin Umar, Prof Sarajul Islam Chowdhury, Prof Abul Kasem Fazlul Haque, poet and critic Farhad Mazhar, Prof Dilara Chowdhury, Prof Anu Muhammad, women leader Farida Akhtar, Dhaka University's Prof Asif Nazrul, Jahangirnagar University teacher Syed Ferdous, and DU teacher Robayet Ferdous.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষকের কার্যালয়

সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল

মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকা-১২২১।



মোমা নং সইআমেকব/টি-১৩(রাজস্ব)/২০২২-২০২৩/OTM/ ৩৫

তারিখ: ২১.০১.২০২৩ ইং

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (রাজস্ব)- ২০২২-২০২৩

সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল, মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকা এর ২০২২-২০২৩ অর্থ বৎসরের জন্য (১) ঊষধ (১/ক)- ইউনানী এবং (১/খ)- আয়ুর্বেদিক (২) মেডিকেল যন্ত্রপাতি (৩) লিফেন (৪) গজ, ব্যাডেজ এবং তুলা (৫) পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষার কেমিক্যাল ও রি-এজেন্ট (৬) বইপত্র সামগ্রিকী (৭) ইউনিফর্ম (৪র্থ শ্রেণীর পোশাক) (৮) ক্রীড়া সামগ্রী (৯) অন্যান্য মনিহারি (১১) পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্নতা সামগ্রী (১২) পথ্য (২০২৩-২০২৪ এর জন্য) এর মালমাল ক্রয়ের নিমিত্তে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর সর্বশেষ সংশোধনীর বিধিবিধান মোতাবেক প্রকৃত ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক ঊষধ প্রস্তুতকারী/টিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হইতে সীল মোহরকৃত নামে দরপত্র আদান করা যাহে।

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য শিক্ষা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ বিভাগ, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়।
২।	এজেন্সী/প্রতিষ্ঠান	সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল, মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকা।
৩।	সম্বন্ধিত সংস্থার নাম	অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষক
৪।	দরপত্র ক্রয় বাবদ চালানের কোড নং	১৬২০১০১১৩৩৩২১-১১০০০০০০০-১১০০১০০০-১৪২২৩২৮
৫।	কাজের নাম	(১) ঊষধ (১/ক)- ইউনানী এবং (১/খ)- আয়ুর্বেদিক (২) মেডিকেল যন্ত্রপাতি (৩) লিফেন (৪) গজ, ব্যাডেজ এবং তুলা (৫) পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষার কেমিক্যাল ও রি-এজেন্ট (৬) বইপত্র সামগ্রিকী (৭) ইউনিফর্ম (৪র্থ শ্রেণীর পোশাক) (৮) ক্রীড়া সামগ্রী (৯) অন্যান্য মনিহারি (১১) পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্নতা সামগ্রী (১২) পথ্য (২০২৩-২০২৪ এর জন্য)
৬।	দরপত্র ক্রয় প্রক্রিয়া/পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত (OTM)
৭।	বাজেট ও তহবিলের প্রকৃতি	রাজস্ব বাজেট
৮।	দরপত্রের কাজের বিবরণ	গ্রুপ নং-১ (রাজস্ব), ঊষধ (১/ক)- ইউনানী এবং (১/খ)- আয়ুর্বেদিক গ্রুপ নং-২ (রাজস্ব), মেডিকেল যন্ত্রপাতি গ্রুপ নং-৩ (রাজস্ব), লিফেন গ্রুপ নং-৪ (রাজস্ব), গজ, ব্যাডেজ এবং তুলা গ্রুপ নং-৫ (রাজস্ব), পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষার কেমিক্যাল ও রি-এজেন্ট গ্রুপ নং-৬ (রাজস্ব), বইপত্র সামগ্রিকী গ্রুপ নং-৭ (রাজস্ব), ইউনিফর্ম (৪র্থ শ্রেণীর পোশাক) গ্রুপ নং-৮ (রাজস্ব), ক্রীড়া সামগ্রী গ্রুপ নং-৯ (রাজস্ব), অন্যান্য মনিহারি গ্রুপ নং-১০ (রাজস্ব), পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্নতা সামগ্রী গ্রুপ নং-১১ (রাজস্ব), পথ্য (২০২৩-২০২৪ এর জন্য)
৯।	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	গ্রুপ নং-১, ঊষধের (১/ক)-ইউনানী এবং (১/খ)-আয়ুর্বেদিক ক্ষেত্রে প্রকৃত ঊষধ প্রস্তুতকারী লাইসেন্সধারী কোম্পানী হইতে হইবে এবং ঊষধ প্রস্তুতকারী কোম্পানীসহ অন্য সকল গ্রুপের জন্য প্রকৃত টিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী হিসাবে হাসানাদান ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, মূল্য সংযোজনক নিবন্ধনকরণ, টিআইএনএসআর সনদপত্র, আর্থিক সম্ভলতা সম্পর্কে ০১ (এক) বৎসরের ব্যাংক স্ট্যাটমেন্ট, মালিকানা সনদপত্র/প্রতিনিধির ক্ষেত্রে ক্ষমতাপত্র, ছবি-০২ কপি, নথুনা স্বাক্ষর, কালো তালিকাভুক্ত নয় এর অধীকারনামা গেজেটেড কর্তৃক কর্তৃত্ব সত্যায়িত, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের সফটকপি, পূর্ণ অভিজ্ঞতার স্বাক্ষর বিধত ২টি কর্মীদের সত্যায়িত সফটকপি ও ব্যাংক সলভেন্সী সনদপত্র দরপত্রের সহিত দাখিল করা দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা হিসাবে বিবেচিত হইবে।
১০।	দরপত্র তফসিলের মূল্য (অফারের যোগ্য) ও প্রাপ্তিস্থান	* গ্রুপ নং- ১, ঊষধ (১/ক)-ইউনানী এবং (১/খ)-আয়ুর্বেদিক এবং গ্রুপ নং-১২ পথ্যের জন্য ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা হারে এবং অন্য সকল গ্রুপের জন্য ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা হারে টেন্ডারী চালানদের মাধ্যমে অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষক, সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল, মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকার অফিসে যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংকে অনলাইনের মাধ্যমে জমা দিয়ে, অনলাইন ডিপোজিট স্লিপের মূল কপি জমা পূর্বক দরপত্র তফসিল সরাসরি নিম্নাধীক্ষকারীর দস্তর এবং পরিতালক, হোমিও ও দেশজ চিকিৎসা, স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর, মহাখালী, ঢাকা এর অফিস হইতে, অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সংগ্রহ করা যাইবে।
১১।	দরপত্র তফসিল সংগ্রহের তারিখ ও সময়	২২/০১/২০২৩ইং রোজ রবিবার হইতে ১৩/০২/২০২৩ইং রোজ সোমবার পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে।
১২।	দরপত্র তফসিল দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	১৪/০২/২০২৩ইং রোজ মঙ্গলবার সকাল ৯-০০ ঘটিকা হইতে দুপুর ১২-০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত দরপত্র সমূহ অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষক এবং পরিতালক, হোমিও ও দেশজ চিকিৎসা, স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর, মহাখালী, ঢাকা এর অফিসে কক্ষ নিকট টেন্ডার বাজারে দাখিল করিতে হইবে।
১৩।	দরপত্র তফসিল খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৪/০২/২০২৩ইং রোজ মঙ্গলবার মধ্যাহ্ন ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৪।	দরপত্র আদানকারীর পদবী	অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)।
১৫।	দরপত্র আদানকারীর ঠিকানা	সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল, মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকা-১২২১।
১৬।	দরপত্র আদানকারীর টেলিফোন নম্বর	ফোন ০২-৪৮০৮০০০৩৮/মোবাইল ০১৮১৯-২১৯৩৩৩।
১৭।	অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী	ক. দরপত্র দাখিল ও খোলার দিন সরকার কর্তৃক ছুটি ঘোষণা করা হইলে, সেই ক্ষেত্রে পরবর্তী কর্মদিবস দরপত্র দাখিল ও খোলার তারিখ হিসাবে গণ্য করা হইবে। খ. দরপত্রের সকল শর্তাবলী দরপত্র তফসিলের অনুচ্ছেদ সমূহে সন্নিবেশিত আছে।
১৮।	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	ক. কর্তৃপক্ষ সকল দরপত্র/অফিসপত্র দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও বাতিলের সর্বময় ক্ষমতা রাখেন। খ. সর্বক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর সর্বশেষ সংশোধনীর বিধিবিধান অনুসরণ করা হইবে।

২১/০১.২০২৩
ডাঃ ইপন কুমার দত্ত

অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)

সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল

মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকা-১২২১।

ফোন নং- ০২-৪৮০৮০০০৩৮/০১৮১৯-২১৯৩৩৩

Email : guamc@ac.dghs.gov.bd

GD- 102

FOR SALE
PRESTIGIOUS PROPERTY AT GULSHAN
POTENTIAL ALSO FOR EMBASSY, VISA/INFO OFFICE, BANK, MFS
Gulshan 2, near Azad Masjid. An iconic classic property, approx. 8 kathas with duplex house. Unique attractive and prime location. This landmark property is a rare offering. Email: prestige.property.one@gmail.com. Full confidentiality will be maintained. No broker enquiries.

APARTMENT FOR SALE
4 bedroom 4400 sft new apartment at prime location in North Gulshan 2nd circle with all modern amenities.
Contact: 01301241065

PHARMA AIDS LIMITED
345 Segun Bagicha, Ramna, Dhaka-1000
PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION
This is for information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of the Company in its Board Meeting held on Saturday, January 21, 2023 at 11:30 A.M., has approved the 2nd Quarter (Half Yearly) Financial Statements (Un-audited) ended on 31st December, 2022 and taken following decisions:

	31st Dec.-2022	31st Dec.-2021
1. Net Profit After Tax (NPAT)	Tk.38.53 (lacs)	Tk.333.38 (lacs)
2. NAV per Share	Tk.94.73	Tk.98.83 (June-2022)
3. Earning per Share (EPS)	Tk.1.23	Tk.10.69
4. Net Operating Cash Flow per Share (NOCFPS)	Tk.2.92	Tk.14.56

The reasons for significant deviation in NPAT, EPS, and NOCFPS are given in the details of the 2nd Quarter (Q2) Un-Audited Financial Statements for the period ended on 31st December, 2022, available in the website of the Company at www.pharmaaids.com

By order of the Board
Sd/-
(Muhibul Hassan Adil)
Executive Director & CFO

Date: January 21, 2023



Disability-inclusive National Budget 2023-24

Perspective on the post-COVID effect and global economic recession

Access Bangladesh Foundation in association with The Daily Star, DCF, NCDW, Sitakund Federation, TurningPoint and WDDF, and with the support of Disability Rights Fund, organised a virtual discussion titled “Disability-inclusive National Budget 2023-24: Perspective on the post-COVID effect and global economic recession” on December 18, 2022. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.

Albert Mollah,
Co Founder and
Executive Director,
Access Bangladesh
Foundation



Access Bangladesh Foundation is conducting local and national campaigns to make the national budget more inclusive for people with disabilities. The purpose of this virtual discussion ahead of the budget's release is to ensure that our recommendations are reflected in the final draft.

Typically, disabled people receive direct benefits in two main categories: disability allowance and education stipend. There are specific allocations for institutions such as neuro-developmental disability protection trust and national academy for autism and neuro-development. Only 0.42% of the total budget is allocated for this group, or 2.52% if converted to safety net funding. We believe this is inadequate.

Bangladesh is a signatory to the

people and realize the benefits of an inclusive society.

It is essential to ensure direct interaction between people with disabilities and the government to assess their needs and current situation. If the government decides to reduce certain facilities in the future, considering the post-COVID situation and current global economic crisis, it will not be justified for these people.

Tanjim Ferdous,
In Charge,
NGOs & Foreign
Missions section
of the Business
Development Team,
The Daily Star



According to research jointly conducted by BBS and the Ministry of Planning, 1.43% of Bangladeshi people live with disabilities. It will be impossible to achieve the SDG goals if these people are left out of the mainstream development process in Bangladesh.

It is important to find ways to support these people by ensuring their needs, such as job opportunities, education, and health, are met in the coming years, especially during the impending global economic crisis caused by COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war.

Nasima Akter,
President, National
Council of Disabled
Women (NCDW)



The rate of violence against women with disabilities also increased during the pandemic due to a lack of caregivers and basic healthcare facilities, as well as a lack of opportunities for in-person communication and coordination with protection providers due to COVID-19. Additionally, we were unable to provide legal support to these people due to a lack of funding.

Bangladesh's graduation as a Least Developed Country (LDC) impacts overall funding, particularly for people with disabilities. In addition, the incentives provided by the government during and after the COVID-19 pandemic for people with disabilities were not sufficient due to certain requirements. For example, many persons with disabilities were unable to access government incentives because they did not have a Shuborno Nagarik Card.

If appropriate steps are not taken to ensure the proactive involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities, relevant ministries, departments, and the directorate, we will not be able to bring real change to the lives of these people.

Nazrana Yeasmin
(Hira),
Coordinator
Programme,
Manusher Jonno
Foundation



The former finance minister used to contact us to hold roundtable discussions on how to create a budget for people with disabilities by assessing their needs. However, we have not had such opportunities in recent years. We want the opportunity to sit with the finance ministry and other relevant ministries to ensure that the necessary budget is allocated for people with disabilities.

Despite having inclusive laws such as the RTI law (Right to Information), the Disaster Management Act 2012, education policies, women's development policies, the standing order on disability, and the national skill development policy in Bangladesh, our budget is not yet inclusive.

Murteza Rafi Khan,
Chief Executive
Officer, Bangladesh
Business and
Disability Network
(BBDN)



In many cases, when the development partner leaves after completing a project, the sustainability of the intervention is uncertain. There is no budget allocation for

this, and there is no plan to ensure that disability inclusion is embedded programmatically within these departments and the ministry. Instead of a project-based approach, we must treat this as a regular task.

In 2020 the government announced a tax incentive, allocating a 5% tax incentive for a 10% inclusion rate, which was still high. In 2022, the rate was adjusted again, allowing employers to receive a tax rebate for 75% of the salary of 25 people they hire. However, employers believe that this amount is still not sufficient incentive for them to adopt this approach. A simple slab system could make the mechanism more transparent and easier to implement

Amrita Rejina Rozario,
Country Director,
Sightsavers
Bangladesh



The upcoming budget should be viewed through the lens of disability and include extra costs in all areas to accommodate people with disabilities. There should be an allocated budget for accessibility and assistive devices to ensure that people with disabilities receive a quality education and have equal employment opportunities.

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2022 emphasized the theme of 'innovation', which also requires budget allocation. The Eighth Five-Year Plan addresses the issue of disability well, and the government is also keen to work on the issue. We hope that the next budget will reflect the directives of the Eighth Five-Year Plan.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many children with disabilities discontinued their education due to a lack of allowance. We hope that 100% of children with disabilities will receive stipends.

Vashkar Bhattacharjee,
National Consultant-
Accessibility, a2i



This year, the government ratified the Marrakesh Treaty, which makes it easier to produce and transfer specially adapted books for persons with visual disabilities. To efficiently implement this treaty, we need specific budget allocation. A trusted intermediary of selected institutions is needed to produce these books, along with an online repository for preserving them.

a2i is working on four aspects to increase acceptance of people with disabilities on both private and public platforms. This includes training corporates and having people with disabilities work as accessibility auditors. a2i is also making 70% of e-services and websites accessible and creating national web-accessibility guidelines and a national portal plug-in with features such as color and font size changes, underlining, reading guide, and free screen reading software. They are also focusing on availability by providing free laptops through the Ministry of Information Communication Technology and working to provide no-cost or low-cost technology to persons with disabilities. Finally, a2i is creating awareness through citizen talks, promotional materials, and celebrating Global Accessibility Awareness Day. The challenge is how we can sustain and expand these initiatives, which require more financial support. The Ministry of Social Welfare should advocate for inclusivity in the budget so that other relevant ministries can take appropriate actions.

Farjana Reza,
National Programme
Officer, Social
Protection,
International Labour
Organisation (ILO)



Social protection has two key aspects: social insurance, which goes beyond government allocation and depends on private and business initiatives and other

budget sources that should be explored, and active labor market policy, which provides opportunities for marginalized communities, such as people with disabilities, to engage in income-generating activities and contribute to the economy. The budget should have a reflection on how the state will ensure access of persons with disabilities to the labour market.

This year, ILO is starting a national employment injury insurance scheme under the supervision of the government's Ministry of Labour and Employment. The scheme is intended to provide coverage for accidents at work for 4 million workers in the RMG sector. In addition, we are working to create a universal social protection program that provides support from childhood to work, in partnership with the government and other UN organizations.

Jowaherul Islam Mamun,
Mentor,
SWID Bangladesh



We have noticed that those who are autistic or have behavioral issues require 24-hour care for things such as toileting, transportation, and so on, which can be both exhausting and costly. While there is an allowance for caregivers worldwide, we have some facilities for people with disabilities but no arrangement for caregivers. I request the Minister to allocate an allowance for caregivers in the next budget.

The Protection of Persons with Neuro-developmental Disability Trust Act was formulated in 2013, but it has not yet been implemented.

Ashrafun Nahar Misti,
Executive
Director, Women
with Disabilities
Development
Foundation



We need to prioritize inclusive health from the outset as this issue is often undervalued. Inclusivity involves addressing the specific needs of people with disabilities. Children with disabilities require support for early detection as parents may be concerned about their child's lifelong special needs. We need a proper initiative, particularly for female children with disabilities, to ensure early detection, which should be led by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Social Welfare may not be able to provide this service.

After detection, there are steps that need to be taken to improve mobility and maintain physical stability for people with disabilities to become self-sufficient. For example, they may need physiotherapy, psychological therapy, or speech therapy. The health ministry needs to provide sufficient training for these therapists and ensure their travel to local hospitals, which requires a budget.

Iftekhar Mahmud,
Coordinator,
Bangladesh Society
for the Change and
Advocacy Nexus
(B-Scan)



The allowance for persons with disabilities in Bangladesh should be increased in accordance with our per capita income, as all of our neighboring countries' allocation for a person with a disability is greater.

In Nepal, allowance is given to persons with disabilities in accordance with the complexities of their disability. In Bangladesh, identity cards have been issued to persons with disabilities since 2015, but the complexity level of the disability is not mentioned on the card. As a result, those with severe disabilities are not receiving an adequate allowance. The government in Bangladesh is now planning to provide smart cards to persons with disabilities, and it is important that the severity of the disability is included on these cards.

Nasrin Jahan, Executive Director,
Disabled Child Foundation

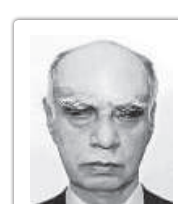
In 2015, regulations were developed

based on the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act of 2013. The law established five committees at the city, district, sub-district, and ministry levels (executive and coordination committees). However, most of these committees have not yet been formed using the standard framework and their meetings are not regular.

There should be three meetings per year, but in the past nine years, only five meetings have taken place, two of which were online during the COVID period. The current situation is a result of a lack of adequate manpower, logistics support, and budget to organize and monitor these meetings.

The ministry of social welfare should provide clear instructions and allocate a budget for these committees. A chain of command should also be established for reporting from each committee.

Dilip Kumar Ghosh, President,
National Forum
of Organisations
Working with the
Disabled (NFOWD)



The budget should be allocated in accordance with the activities of different ministries. It is also important to consider cases involving persons with disabilities, such as disinheritance, lack of sign language interpreters for taking witness statements, and oppression, while planning the budget. These issues need to be addressed in order to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are protected.

Badiul Alam,
President, National
Alliance of
Disabled Peoples
Organisations
(NADPO)



Most of the Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) are localized and do not have any international funding but they are playing an important role to ensure better lives for people with disabilities along with the government. There should be an allotted budget for these OPDs smooth operations.

Md. Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru, MP,
Honourable State
Minister, Ministry
of Social Welfare
(MoSW)



The current government is working continuously to implement programs that support disabled people and improve their lives and livelihoods. One such program is the provision of a monthly allowance of BDT 850 to insolvent persons with disabilities. Additionally, students with disabilities are receiving stipends based on their grades at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education. This is a significant initiative by the government. Other programs include providing cochlear implants facility at government hospitals across the country and the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

Unfortunately, good initiatives are often hindered by unscrupulous practices. For example, the program to establish special schools for children with disabilities and enroll functioning private special schools under MPO has been disrupted due to unethical actions by interested parties. The number of students in special schools, according to statistics, does not match the national statistics. As a result, this program has been interrupted.

Budget is not a major obstacle. However, transparency, accountability, and sincerity are necessary to achieve this. We must prevent opportunists from corrupting the system. It is important for all stakeholders to ensure that the allocated budget is used properly. Other stakeholders should support the government in educating citizens about these issues through seminars and advertisements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase the overall budget allocation for people with disabilities.
- The budget should reflect the inclusive policies of the government to protect the rights of people with disabilities.
- Ensure the proper use of the allocated budget.
- Allocate budget for organizations of persons with disabilities.
- The allowance for persons with disabilities in Bangladesh should be increased in accordance with increase in per capita income.
- Direct interaction between persons with disabilities and the government is necessary to assess their needs and understand their current situation.
- Caregivers for persons with disabilities should be given an allowance by the government.
- The severity of disability should be mentioned on the smart card.
- The relevant ministries, departments, and directorates must work together to mainstream persons with disabilities by allocating ministry-wise budget.
- The upcoming budget should include skill development training facilities for people with disabilities to ensure quality education and employment opportunities for them.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and has national documents, such as action plans, legislation, and policy documents, that aim to protect the rights of people with disabilities. The 8th Five-Year Plan, which focuses on promoting prosperity and fostering inclusiveness, includes a specific direction to foster the inclusion of people with disabilities. However, these are not reflected in the budget.

The Plan mentions issues related to people with disabilities, such as education, health, and accessibility. For example, the government has mentioned taking appropriate social protection measures, such as child dependency benefits for young children and school-age children, adult disability benefits for young and working-age adults, and pension for old age. Is the budget being prepared with these aspects in mind?

If the government addresses private organizations and NGOs' recommendations, it will help fulfill global commitments and implement local policy documents. We cannot achieve the goals of the UNCRPD and SDGs solely with the budget of the Ministry of Social Welfare.

The social welfare ministry, health ministry, and education ministry must work together and involve every relevant ministry in the process of allocating a substantial budget for people with disabilities. Without this, we won't be able to mainstream these

Ahmed Shafi Choudhury passes away

CITY DESK

Ahmed Shafi Choudhury, director of the Board of Directors of Pubali Bank Limited, passed away while undergoing treatment at United Hospital in Dhaka on Friday.

The Board of Directors of Pubali Bank, officers and employees expressed deep grief over his death.



DENGUE FEVER

1 dead, 11 hospitalised in 24 hours



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least one dengue patient died and 11 were hospitalised across the country in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new figure, the total number of dengue deaths this year rose to seven.

A total of 466 dengue cases were logged during this period, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Some 74 dengue patients are still under treatment.

Meanwhile, 201 patients were released from hospitals.

The total number of dengue deaths last year was 281 while the total number of cases was 62,382, of which 23,162 were from outside Dhaka.

A school in a shambles

Institution in Patuakhali sees no renovation in 3 decades



Students of Uttar Charkhali Secondary School in Patuakhali's Galachipa upazila attend class in a risky building.

PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Educational activities at Uttar Charkhali Secondary School in Patuakhali's Galachipa upazila is being severely hampered as the schoolhouse has turned too risky to use due to lack of renovation in the last 30 years.

The iron rods of the roof at many places have rusted are jutting out, while the plaster of the ceiling and walls is falling off. As there is no alternative, more than 500 students of the institution are compelled to attend classes in the ramshackle school building, risking their safety.

In 1970, the secondary school was established on three acres of land under an initiative by the villagers.

Meanwhile, the children's education was about to come to a halt when the old tin-shed schoolhouse was completely damaged during the flood in 1991. But later in 1993, the disaster management ministry constructed a two-storey academic building in place of the old one.

However, that too has now become almost unusable as no initiative has been taken to renovate it even after 30 years of its construction. A number of teachers of the institution said almost all the doors and windows of the school building have been badly damaged.

Moreover, rainwater enters the classrooms through the leaky ceiling during monsoon.

During a recent visit to the institution, this correspondent saw a female teacher conducting lessons for some 10th-graders in a ramshackle classroom. The school authority has put up a large polythene underneath the ceiling to protect the students from the falling chunks of plaster.

Educational activities were going on in the risky schoolhouse comprising seven rooms, including five classrooms, a science laboratory and an office room. The institution has a total of 15 teachers including the headteacher.

Tenth-grader Harija Akhtar said she cannot concentrate on classes as plasters from above often fall on them.

Hanif Gazi, one of the guardians, said they have no alternative as this is the only secondary school in the area.

Headteacher Haroon-or-Rashid said students are compelled to attend classes in risky classrooms as authorities are yet to make any alternative arrangements.

Local UP chairman Jahangir Hossain, also president of the school managing committee, said they have urged the education directorate on several occasions to renovate the building, but no initiative has been taken yet.

Fifty teen activists get bicycles

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nymensingh

"Team Aparajita", a forum of teenagers have now geared up to fight child marriage as the upazila administration recently distributed 50 bicycles among them in Netrakona's Kalmakanda upazila.

Kalmakanda UNO Md Abul Hasem said 50 schoolboys and schoolgirls are involved with this team.

The upazila administration has given the bikes so that the youngsters can reach their destination fast.

Earlier, the volunteers were given caps, t-shirts and identity cards.

They also receive allowance and food when they visit different areas with an aim to stop child marriages, the UNO said.



No scope

FROM PAGE 3

The law minister said the next national elections will be held under the Constitution's guidelines. The government departments will provide all assistance to the Election Commission during the election period.

Replying to a question, he said, "Please, do not pay any heed to the rumours about the next president."

Bahadur Shah Park

FROM PAGE 3

another place from the side of the memorial as per the demand of the citizens. "The place for exercise is still there and the café will not create any problems."

Surrounded by greenery, Bahadur Shah Park stands proud of its rich history and architectural features.

The place was known as Victoria Park, named after Queen Victoria. Later in 1957, the park was renamed after the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II.

In 1857, during the Sepoy Mutiny, English soldiers publicly executed the captured mutineers by hanging them from different trees of the place.

There are two memorials at the park entrances. The tallest one is situated on the eastern side, in memory of the martyred sepoy.

The DSCC took up a mega project in 2016 involving 70 architects to modernise 19 parks and 12 playgrounds. This park was developed under the guidance of Md Rafiq Azam, principal architect of "Shatotto", an architecture firm and consultant team leader of the mega project.

There was no food court in the initial designs.

Asked, Azam said he was not aware that the DSCC permitted a foodcourt to operate inside the park.

Earlier, DSCC Chief Estate Officer Md Rasel Sabrin said they permitted a makeshift food court, not a permanent structure.

Adil Mohammad Khan, former GS of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said, "Leasing out open spaces for commercial use has become a tendency of city corporations. The same was seen in Suhrawardy Udyan."

Towards a new

FROM PAGE 3

"The faults in textbooks of the ninth and tenth grades have already been identified. The mistakes have been there since 2013 without anyone noticing. We will improve the quality of textbooks by maintaining accuracy."

At the ceremony, 300 students from 18 countries were awarded certificates.

Six students were awarded "The Andy Matsui Award" for their academic achievements. AUW VC Rubana Huq and founder Kamal Ahmad were also present at the programme.

BNP now desperate

FROM PAGE 3

millions of dollars and is going to foreign masters to spread propaganda against the country. They are constantly conspiring to impose "sanctions" against the people of the country with false and fabricated information.

Quader said sitting abroad, corrupt leaders of BNP run the party through and incite their activists to sabotage. "But people now know their schemes. The truth has been revealed. For that reason, BNP leaders are aimless."

He said BNP-

Jamaat, the "sponsor of Bangabandhu's killers and war criminals", does not want the welfare of people. The country's development and progress are not visible to them.

"We expect responsible behaviour from BNP as a political party. I urge them to prepare for the upcoming elections without spreading propaganda and rumours against the government for political gain. State power can be changed only through elections in a constitutional manner," added Quader.

Barring Adarsha

FROM PAGE 3

Reporters Unity, Adarsha chief executive officer and publisher Mahabub Rahman told journalists that the publication's stall allocation in the fair has been postponed.

He said this is just a blatant attempt to suppress "dissent".

He also informed journalists that over 600 books have already been published by Adarsha, and

more than 300 authors are associated with those. But out of all the books, allegations of "dissent" have been brought against only three books, for which the publication has been denied permission.

Meanwhile, the press statement by the eminent citizens said, "The state shall guarantee human dignity, rule of law and fundamental rights... and these are the major principles of Bangladesh born after the Language Movement and Liberation War. But we believe this denial of permission will violate an author's freedom to express their opinion."

"Bangla Academy is said to be the 'symbol of Bangalee intellect and mind'. Then why will it engage itself in such partisanship?" it mentioned.

The signatories include writer and politician Badruddin Umar, Prof Sarajul Islam Chowdhury, Prof Abul Kasem Fazlul Haque, poet and critic Farhad Mazhar, Prof Dilara Chowdhury, Prof Anu Muhammad, women leader Farida Akhtar, Dhaka University's Prof Asif Nazrul, Jahangirnagar University teacher Syed Ferdous, and DU teacher Robayet Ferdous.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষকের কার্যালয়

সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল

মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকা-১২২১।



মোমা নং সইআমেকব/টি-১৩(রাজস্ব)/২০২২-২০২৩/OTM/ ৩৫

তারিখ: ২১.০১.২০২৩ ইং

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (রাজস্ব)- ২০২২-২০২৩

সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল, মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকা এর ২০২২-২০২৩ অর্থ বৎসরের জন্য (১) ঊষধ (১/ক)- ইউনানী এবং (১/খ)- আয়ুর্বেদিক (২) মেডিকেল যন্ত্রপাতি (৩) লিফেন (৪) গজ, ব্যাডেজ এবং তুলা (৫) পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষার কেমিক্যাল ও রি-এজেন্ট (৬) বইপত্র সামগ্রিকী (৭) ইউনিফর্ম (৪র্থ শ্রেণীর পোশাক) (৮) ক্রীড়া সামগ্রী (৯) অন্যান্য মনিহারি (১১) পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্নতা সামগ্রী (১২) পণ্য (২০২৩-২০২৪ এর জন্য) এর মালমাল তরফের নিম্নে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর সর্বশেষ সংশোধনীর বিধিবিধান মোতাবেক প্রকৃত ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক ঊষধ প্রস্তুতকারী/টিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হইতে সীল মোহরকৃত নামে দরপত্র আদান করা যাবে।

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য শিক্ষা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ বিভাগ, স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়।
২।	এজেন্সী/প্রতিষ্ঠান	সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল, মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকা।
৩।	সম্বন্ধিত সংস্থার নাম	অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষক
৪।	দরপত্র ক্রয় বাবদ চালালের কোড নং	১৬২০১০১১৩৩৩২১-১১০০০০০০০-১১০০১০০০-১৪২২৩২৮
৫।	কাজের নাম	(১) ঊষধ (১/ক)- ইউনানী এবং (১/খ)- আয়ুর্বেদিক (২) মেডিকেল যন্ত্রপাতি (৩) লিফেন (৪) গজ, ব্যাডেজ এবং তুলা (৫) পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষার কেমিক্যাল ও রি-এজেন্ট (৬) বইপত্র সামগ্রিকী (৭) ইউনিফর্ম (৪র্থ শ্রেণীর পোশাক) (৮) ক্রীড়া সামগ্রী (৯) অন্যান্য মনিহারি (১১) পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্নতা সামগ্রী (১২) পণ্য (২০২৩-২০২৪ এর জন্য)
৬।	দরপত্র ক্রয় প্রক্রিয়া/পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত (OTM)
৭।	বাজেট ও তহবিলের প্রকৃতি	রাজস্ব বাজেট
৮।	দরপত্রের কাজের বিবরণ	গ্রুপ নং-১ (রাজস্ব), ঊষধ (১/ক)- ইউনানী এবং (১/খ)- আয়ুর্বেদিক গ্রুপ নং-২ (রাজস্ব), মেডিকেল যন্ত্রপাতি গ্রুপ নং-৩ (রাজস্ব), লিফেন গ্রুপ নং-৪ (রাজস্ব), গজ, ব্যাডেজ এবং তুলা গ্রুপ নং-৫ (রাজস্ব), পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষার কেমিক্যাল ও রি-এজেন্ট গ্রুপ নং-৬ (রাজস্ব), বইপত্র সামগ্রিকী গ্রুপ নং-৭ (রাজস্ব), ইউনিফর্ম (৪র্থ শ্রেণীর পোশাক) গ্রুপ নং-৮ (রাজস্ব), ক্রীড়া সামগ্রী গ্রুপ নং-৯ (রাজস্ব), অন্যান্য মনিহারি গ্রুপ নং-১০ (রাজস্ব), পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্নতা সামগ্রী গ্রুপ নং-১১ (রাজস্ব), পণ্য (২০২৩-২০২৪ এর জন্য)
৯।	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	গ্রুপ নং-১, ঊষধের (১/ক)-ইউনানী এবং (১/খ)-আয়ুর্বেদিক ক্ষেত্রে প্রকৃত ঊষধ প্রস্তুতকারী লাইসেন্সধারী কোম্পানী হইতে হইবে এবং ঊষধ প্রস্তুতকারী কোম্পানীসহ অন্য সকল গ্রুপের জন্য প্রকৃত টিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী হিসাবে হাসানাদান ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, মূল্য সংযোজনক নিবন্ধনকরণ, টিআইএনএস আয়কর সনদপত্র, আর্থিক সম্ভলতা সম্পর্কে ০১ (এক) বৎসরের ব্যাংক স্ট্যাটমেন্ট, মালিকানা সনদপত্র/প্রতিনিধির ক্ষেত্রে ক্ষমতাপত্র, ছবি-০২ কপি, নথুনা স্বাক্ষর, কালো তালিকাভুক্ত নয় এর অধীকারনামা গেজেটেড কর্তৃক কর্তৃত্ব সত্যায়িত, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের স্টোকোপি, পূর্ণ অভিজ্ঞতার স্বাক্ষর বিধত ২টি কর্মীদের সত্যায়িত স্টোকোপি ও ব্যাংক সলভেন্সী সনদপত্র দরপত্রের সহিত দাখিল করা দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা হিসাবে বিবেচিত হইবে।
১০।	দরপত্র তফসিলের মূল্য (অফারের যোগ্য) ও প্রাপ্তিস্থান	* গ্রুপ নং- ১, ঊষধ (১/ক)-ইউনানী এবং (১/খ)-আয়ুর্বেদিক এবং গ্রুপ নং-১২ পণ্যের জন্য ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা হারে এবং অন্য সকল গ্রুপের জন্য ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা হারে টেন্ডারী চালালের মাধ্যমে অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষক, সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল, মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকার অফিসে যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংকে অনলাইনের মাধ্যমে জমা দিয়ে, অনলাইন ডিপোজিট ট্রিগার মূল কপি জমা পূর্বক দরপত্র তফসিল সরাসরি নিম্নাধীক্ষকারীর দস্তর এবং পরিসালক, হোমিও ও দেশজ চিকিৎসা, স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর, মহাখালী, ঢাকা এর অফিস হইতে, অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সংগ্রহ করা যাইবে।
১১।	দরপত্র তফসিল সংগ্রহের তারিখ ও সময়	২২/০১/২০২৩ইং রোজ রবিবার হইতে ১৩/০২/২০২৩ইং রোজ সোমবার পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে।
১২।	দরপত্র তফসিল দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	১৪/০২/২০২৩ইং রোজ মঙ্গলবার সকাল ৯-০০ ঘটিকা হইতে দুপুর ১২-০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত দরপত্র সমূহ অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষক এবং পরিসালক, হোমিও ও দেশজ চিকিৎসা, স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর, মহাখালী, ঢাকা এর অফিসে কক্ষ নিকট টেন্ডার বাজারে দাখিল করিতে হইবে।
১৩।	দরপত্র তফসিল খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৪/০২/২০২৩ইং রোজ মঙ্গলবার মধ্যাহ্ন ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৪।	দরপত্র আদানকারীর পদবী	অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)।
১৫।	দরপত্র আদানকারীর ঠিকানা	সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল, মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকা-১২২১।
১৬।	দরপত্র আদানকারীর টেলিফোন নম্বর	ফোন ০২-৪৮০৮০০০৩৮/মোবাইল ০১৮১৯-২১৯৩৩৩।
১৭।	অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী	ক. দরপত্র দাখিল ও খোলার দিন সরকার কর্তৃক ছুটি ঘোষণা করা হইবে, সেই ক্ষেত্রে পরবর্তী কর্মদিবস দরপত্র দাখিল ও খোলার তারিখ হিসাবে গণ্য করা হইবে। খ. দরপত্রের সকল শর্তাবলী দরপত্র তফসিলের অনুচ্ছেদ সমূহে সন্নিবেশিত আছে।
১৮।	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	ক. কর্তৃপক্ষ সকল দরপত্র/অফিসীয় দরপত্র/অনুচ্ছেদ সমূহে সন্নিবেশিত আছে। খ. সর্বক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর সর্বশেষ সংশোধনীর বিধিবিধান অনুসরণ করা হইবে।

২১/০১.২০২৩
ডাঃ ইপন কুমার দত্ত

অধ্যক্ষ-কাম-অধীক্ষক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
সরকারি ইউনানী ও আয়ুর্বেদিক মেডিকেল কলেজ ও হাসপাতাল
মিরপুর-১৩, ঢাকা-১২২১।
ফোন নং- ০২-৪৮০৮০০০৩৮/০১৮১৯-২১৯৩৩৩
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PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION
This is for information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of the Company in its Board Meeting held on Saturday, January 21, 2023 at 11:30 A.M., has approved the 2nd Quarter (Half Yearly) Financial Statements (Un-audited) ended on 31st December, 2022 and taken following decisions:

	31st Dec.-2022	31st Dec.-2021
1. Net Profit After Tax (NPAT)	Tk.38.53 (lacs)	Tk.333.38 (lacs)
2. NAV per Share	Tk.94.73	Tk.98.83 (June-2022)
3. Earning per Share (EPS)	Tk.1.23	Tk.10.69
4. Net Operating Cash Flow per Share (NOCFPS)	Tk.2.92	Tk.14.56

The reasons for significant deviation in NPAT, EPS, and NOCFPS are given in the details of the 2nd Quarter (Q2) Un-Audited Financial Statements for the period ended on 31st December, 2022, available in the website of the Company at www.pharmaaids.com

By order of the Board
Sd/-
(Muhibul Hassan Adil)
Executive Director & CFO

Date: January 21, 2023



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

‘No filmmaker should have to go through what I did’

Farooki on Shonibar Bikel’s censor board clearance

SHARMIN JOYA

Amidst the excitement for the trailer for Hansal Mehta’s *Faraaaz*, a film based on Bangladesh’s tragic Holey Artisan attack in 2016, a sour aftertaste was felt by many. Hidden behind the frankly stellar cinematography and characterization of the Indian film was a glaring question – is it appropriate for our neighbouring country to make a film, with however ‘noble’ intentions, about one of the darkest days of our history?

The sentiment was echoed by many, including the family of the victims – Ruba Ahmed, mother of victim Abinta Kabir, in a press conference questioned, “who exactly gave Hansal Mehta the right to make a film on this attack? Imagine having to relive the death of your daughter on the big screen, just because a director wanted to capitalise on a national tragedy.”

She, however, did not have much to comment about Bangladeshi filmmaker Mostofa Sarwar Farooki’s *Saturday Afternoon*, noting that it was completely up to Bangladesh’s censor board. The reason, partially at least, was the fact that Farooki did not use the names or likenesses of any real victims of the attack in his 83-minute one-shot endeavour.

After waiting for four long years, *Saturday Afternoon* received clearance from Bangladesh Film Censor Board, that too on a Saturday afternoon, yesterday.

The film got the clearance from the appeal



committee led by actresses Suborna Mustafa and Sucharita, former Additional Secretary Nurul Karim, journalist and censor board member Shyamal Dutta.

“I feel relieved now,” the director told The Daily Star. The film was submitted to the censor board on January 9, 2019. “It felt like I was stuck on that date of the calendar for the last four years, until today.”

After reviewing the film, the board members initially had expressed their impressions as mostly positive to several media outlets at that time. Mushfiqur Rahman Gulzar was one of the jury members to have appreciated the film.

A day later, however, controversy started brewing over social media about how the film might hurt religious sentiments of Muslims in the country, owing to Zahid Hasan’s beard and Nusrat Imrose Tisha’s hijab.

Then, tragedy struck. The film was scheduled to be re-screened by the censor board on January 15, 2019. Peculiarly, they denied the film’s theatrical release, on the grounds that it may deepen the religious divide in the country, and distort Bangladesh’s image globally.

“For a filmmaker, it was extremely painful,” he shared, “There was no clear communication at that time, however, I want to forget everything and keep moving ahead.”

“We are now waiting for the official letter, and as soon as we complete the formalities, I will request them to complete the procedures as soon as possible, so that we can release it either on January 27 or February 3.”

“I am grateful to my colleagues of Film Alliance of Bangladesh (FAB), to my audience and people from all walks of life who have stood with me,” shared the director. “I hope that no filmmaker has to go through what I have, ever again”.

NEWS

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12

foxing out three scalps to make things interesting.

Bangladesh appeared to have attuned themselves to the wicket at Willowmoore Park in Benoni in the previous games but on Saturday, the new wicket tested Disha Biswas’s troops.

In-form batters – Afia Protasha, Dilara Akter, and Sumaiya Akter – scored 21, 17, and 24, respectively, with strike rates below 100 and Shorna Akter could not replicate her big hits from the first three games. Shorna scored 20 runs off 18 balls before departing to off-spinner Reyneke, who managed to break the spine of Bangladesh’s batting by sending back three of the aforementioned four Tigresses.

Chasing a low total, South Africa didn’t have the best of the starts as they lost opener Elandri Rensburg to a run out before Rabeya castled Simone Louren inside the Powerplay.

The South African camp got the jitters when Rabeya sent back Reyneke and Miane Smit in the eighth over to have the hosts reeling at 33 for four.

But a 70-run stand between Landsman and Meso ensured South Africa’s victory.

India blocks BBC

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veterans yesterday slammed the BBC documentary as a “motivated charge sheet against our leader, a fellow Indian and a patriot” and a reflection of its “dyed-in-the-wool negativity and unrelenting prejudice”.

They said “it is the archetype of past British imperialism in India setting itself up as both judge and jury to resurrect Hindu-Muslim tensions that were overwhelmingly the creation of the British Raj policy of divide and rule.”

Momen defends

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The minister said Tauhidul was withdrawn and suspended after an allegation was made against him. But after a number of investigations, the allegations against Tauhidul were proved to be false. Later, he was promoted to ambassador.

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen said Austria has been informed about the results of the investigations. However, the Austrian government still decided not to accept Tauhidul.

Dhaka will have own

FROM PAGE 2

The Indo-Pacific region is home to more than 50 percent of the world’s population and produces about 60 percent of global GDP, making it the global focus, said Shahriar, adding that healthy competition can usher in healthier growth.

However, an unstable Myanmar, Rohingya crisis, illegal fishing, drug smuggling, human trafficking are some of the major threats the region faces.

Burma’s [Myanmar] military is going to be a major security challenge and the country’s instability also affects Bangladesh, US embassy political section chief Arturo Hines said.

He said the US Indo-pacific strategy highlights resilience, security, prosperity, democracy. And, Bangladesh is already advancing those principles by peacefully settling maritime demarcation, becoming a leader in health and climate change

initiatives.

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute Distinguished Fellow Farooq Sobhan suggested that Bangladesh gives a hard look before joining the IPEF. Bangladesh can opt to become an observer first as Canada is, he said.

Noting US Senate passing Burma Act late last year, he said the Burma Act contains provisions for substantial humanitarian aid, support for the democracy movement. “We should take advantage of the act for a sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis.”

Foreign ministry’s Maritime Affairs Unit Secretary Rear Admiral (retd) Khurshed Alam, Brig Gen (retd) M Sakawat Hussain, UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Gwyn Lewis, Australian High Commissioner Jeremy Bruer, EU Ambassador Charles Whiteley, Japanese Ambassador Iwama Kiminori also spoke at the event moderated by BCIPA Executive Director Prof Shahab Enam Khan.

Ex-GCC mayor Jahangir

FROM PAGE 1

after the AL didn’t nominate them.

The decision to withdraw the expulsion orders for those who formally apologised to the party was made at a meeting of the AL National Committee on December 17 last year.

A source close to Jahangir said the former mayor received a letter regarding the withdrawal of his expulsion yesterday.

The letter, signed by AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader on January 1, also mentions that any further violation of the organisation’s rules will be deemed unfavorable.

“It is to let you know that you were expelled from the organisation for your involvement in activities against the interest, ideal, discipline as well as the constitution and declaration of the Bangladesh Awami League.”

Quader said since Jahangir apologised and promised not to get involved in such activities, he has been pardoned.

The ruling party expelled Jahangir at a meeting of its Central Working Committee on November 19, 2021 at the Gono Bhaban.

Ijtema ends today

FROM PAGE 12

Health camps were set up for the devotees to provide them with treatment like the previous years.

The metro rail service will run from 8:00am to 5:00pm today for smooth movement of the devotees.

The first phase of the three-day Bishwa Ijtema ended on January 15.

Tabligh Jamaat has been organising the congregation in Tongi since 1967. In 2011, it divided Ijtema into two phases to accommodate a large number of attendees.

Besides, as done during the first phase of Bishwa Ijtema, Gazipur Metropolitan Police (GMP) has issued some traffic directives to ease devotees commuting to and from the congregation ground.

Movements of vehicles from Tongi to Bhogra Bypass on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, Kamarpada Road, Abdullahpur to Bypile on Ashulia Road will remain suspended from 6:00am today till the end of Akheri Munajat, said GMP Commissioner Mollah Nazrul Islam.

The GMP commissioner requested commuters to use the bypass road to avoid traffic gridlock.

Police have no clue

FROM PAGE 12

various progressive and social welfare works and had no dispute with anyone.

Patgram police said an investigation has been launched.

Project to save the Karnaphuli

FROM PAGE 12

The project, to be implemented by the BWDB, was scheduled to begin in July last year and be completed by June 2025 with full government funding, according to the DPP.

After primary approval, the proposal was forwarded to the planning wing of the ministry by its DPP board, said Tayan Kumar, adding that that was where the project ground to a halt.

He, however, said, “We spoke to AKM Enamul Haque Shamim, deputy minister of the water resources ministry, when he recently visited the port city. He promised a quick approval of the project.”

According to the proposal, a 7.4km-long sustainable dam will be built, while 2.4km-long dams will be built on both banks of the river. In addition to those, dams will be built to guard the banks of five branch canals of the river.

The board’s data showed that due to rapid erosion, 150 small industrial structures, 45 roads, 20 bridge-

culverts, 3,750 homes, 140 km of electric lines, five markets, 12 different public and private educational and religious institutions, six different public and private buildings, and 2,500 hectares of agricultural land are at risk.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent found that there was no permanent embankment, due to which the residents of numerous settlements near the river live in constant fear of erosion.

“The Karnaphuli had earlier devoured my house and crop lands. I had to rebuild my entire life. I demand that the [issue of] erosion be solved permanently,” said Nur Uddin, a resident of Boalkhali.

Aliur Rahman, general secretary of Chattogram River and Canal Protection Movement, told The Daily Star that the socioeconomic situation in Boalkhali is not improving due to frequent river erosion.

“Many people have been uprooted and lost their homes. Meanwhile, children living near the riverbanks

are unable to attend school.”

If long-lasting dams are not constructed to stop river erosion, it will worsen the situation and the people will suffer more, he added.

Speaking to The Daily Star, SM Rezaul Mustafa Kamal, additional secretary of the planning wing of the ministry, said that due to the government’s cost containment policy, they cannot sanction projects unless there is a dire need.

However, he said the deputy minister has asked them to specifically look into this project, and so the DPP will be sent to the water commission soon.

According to a 2012 assessment by the Department of Environment, at least 35 of the 140 different species of the river are not found there anymore.

On the other hand, a list created by the Chattogram District Administration, in response to a 2010 High Court order, said the Karnaphuli has fallen victim to 2,112 grabbers along its 40km-long banks, from Kalurghat to Patenga.

Boy rescued from container

FROM PAGE 12

“After hearing the incident, I went to Faruk’s house. Faruk and his wife told me that the boy is their son Ratul,” said Shahidullah.

When the news spread in the area, local journalists also went to Faruk’s house for his interview.

“My son Ratul left home on a Friday afternoon around two months ago and never came back. We searched for him in our area and at some of our relatives’ houses. But we could not find him,” Faruk said during a television interview.

“At one stage, we gave up any hope of getting him back. All of a sudden, we came across photos of our son in the media,” Faruk added.

His wife Rokeya Begum told reporters, “I want my son back. I request the authorities concerned to take necessary measures to bring back my son as early as possible.”

Contacted, Monohargonj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shafiqul Alam said, “After hearing about the matter, I sent an officer to Faruk’s house. Faruk and his wife are claiming that the boy is their son. We are looking into the claim.”

On January 17, a boy was rescued from an empty container in Malaysia’s Port Klang. A video clip of

it went viral on social media.

The Daily Star obtained several clips in which the boy called himself “Fahim” when Bangladeshi employees at the port asked him his name in Bangla.

Journo found dead

FROM PAGE 2

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Mirpur division).

The door was locked from the inside and police found all his belongings in a neat and tidy state, he said.

Zaman rented the flat, owned by one of his former colleagues at the newspaper, two years ago. He used to live alone.

Concerned over his well-being, his colleagues contacted the house owner as Zaman was absent from the office for the last seven days, the DC said.

The house owner then informed the police as Zaman did not respond.

Police officials suspected it was a case of natural death. The Criminal Investigation Department has collected evidence from the spot.

The body will be sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College for autopsy, Jasim said.

He also served The Daily Star as a sub-editor.

Starved, tortured, forced to scam

The plight of Bangladeshi ‘cyber slaves’ in Cambodia must be addressed

The digital space is notorious for traps and scams that require users to be extremely careful. But how much do we know about those behind the scams? While online fraudsters are by design secretive, an investigative report by *The Daily Star* has thrown an unlikely twist into the mix, as it revealed how Bangladeshi victims of trafficking in Cambodia – where scam operations proliferated during the pandemic – are being forced to work for transnational cyber-scam gangs. The report highlights the plight of several such victims who shared their experiences, with hundreds more feared to be still trapped, doing the bidding of their captors.

These victims form an unlikely community of scammers rounded up from a number of Asian countries, including Bangladesh, representing what is being called “cyber slavery”. One of them is 25-year-old Foyzal Hossain who, after visiting Cambodia in early 2021 for the job of a receptionist, found himself sold to cyber-scammers. As he narrated to this newspaper, he was held captive in a fortified complex called The Crown College, and equipped with digital tools to syphon off money from unsuspecting US citizens. He refused initially, but relented after seeing that it only led to beating, electric shocks and solitary confinement in a toilet for days.

Apparently, there are many prison-like compounds like The Crown College, the conditions of which were likened to a “living hell” in a 2022 report by Viti Muntarbhorn, UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia. Thousands are kept in these heavily-guarded compounds after being lured with enticing job offers, and then sold at what appear to be marketplaces for humans. Extortion and violence are two of the methods of abuse used by criminal syndicates against victims who refuse to become scammers. Poor performers are sold multiple times, many dying in torture.

This paper talked to a number of victims who shared horrifying details of their ordeal as they worked for criminal networks linked to online gambling and fraud. Lured, sold, tortured and forced to scam, they all had similar stories, and were lucky to have escaped. What was equally hurtful for them was non-cooperation from the Bangladesh embassy in neighbouring Thailand (Bangladesh has no embassy in Cambodia). Some of the survivors alleged that they had to pay bribe for papers/permits, and faced negligence when they approached embassy officials for help. When contacted, representatives at the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and the ministry of foreign affairs claimed that they were not aware of the enslavement of Bangladeshis in Cambodia, which is hard to believe.

Clearly, the authorities are still in a state of denial, which can be costly for those still trapped. The importance of proper response in this regard cannot be stressed enough. We urge the higher authorities to step up their anti-trafficking activities. They must raise awareness among aspirant migrants, take firm action against fraudulent recruiting agencies/brokers, especially those operating online, and ensure quick rescue of victims with the cooperation of the authorities in destination countries, including Cambodia. Bangladesh must up its game to address the growing threat of trafficking and cyber slavery.

Sara’s gift to humanity should inspire us

Popularising posthumous organ donation can save many lives

A 20-year-old woman has shown us how generosity can go beyond a person's death. By giving instructions to donate her organs after her passing, Sara Islam, who was suffering from a debilitating disease, has saved the lives of two people with kidney failure and may have given back the sight of two other individuals. For Bangladesh, this is the first successful transplant of organs from a brain-dead person, thanks to an amended law that allows collection of organs from clinically dead individuals with the consent of relatives. In Sara's case, it was her mother who helped to fulfil her daughter's noble wishes.

The significance of this selfless act cannot be emphasised enough. In Bangladesh, there are more than 20 million people suffering from some type of kidney disease, with about 40,000 estimated to suffer from kidney failure every year. More than 20,000 of them die as they cannot afford the continuous dialysis that they need to stay alive. The plight of those struggling with the high cost of treatment has recently come to the fore after patients and relatives protested a hike in kidney dialysis fees in Chattogram. Against this backdrop, Sara has given hope to many individuals who face death or years of painful dialysis that comes with risks.

Kidney transplants have taken place since 1982, but until 2018, when the organ donation law was amended, it was illegal to take kidneys from a clinically dead person. While living-donor kidney transplants do occur in the country, the law states that it has to be from a relative. The costs of kidney transplants are also very daunting and beyond the financial capacity of most patients. The law was passed after reports of desperate people selling kidneys for money. This means many patients have to wait indefinitely or give up their chance to get a kidney.

The two persons who have received Sara's corneas are recovering in hospital, and doctors are hopeful that their eyesight will be restored. With such miraculous consequences, why is organ donation so scarce? While cornea donation has gained certain acceptance, the practice of donating other organs has not caught on. Religion and cultural taboos have made people reluctant about organ donation. But as other countries have shown, thousands can have a second lease on life through this practice. Just as successful campaigning has made blood donation popular among people, the concept of organ donation after death has to be made acceptable and well-received. We commend BSMU, National Kidney Foundation and Sandhani Eye Hospital for the success in these life-changing transplants, and for making Sara's wishes come true.

We express our heartfelt condolences to Sara's family for losing such a remarkable young member. But we also applaud Sara and her mother for their love of humanity. May their example inspire others to donate similarly so that many lives can be saved.

Who really benefits from higher electricity prices?



Kallol Mustafa is an engineer and writer who focuses on Power, Energy, Environment and Development Economics.

KALLOL MUSTAFA

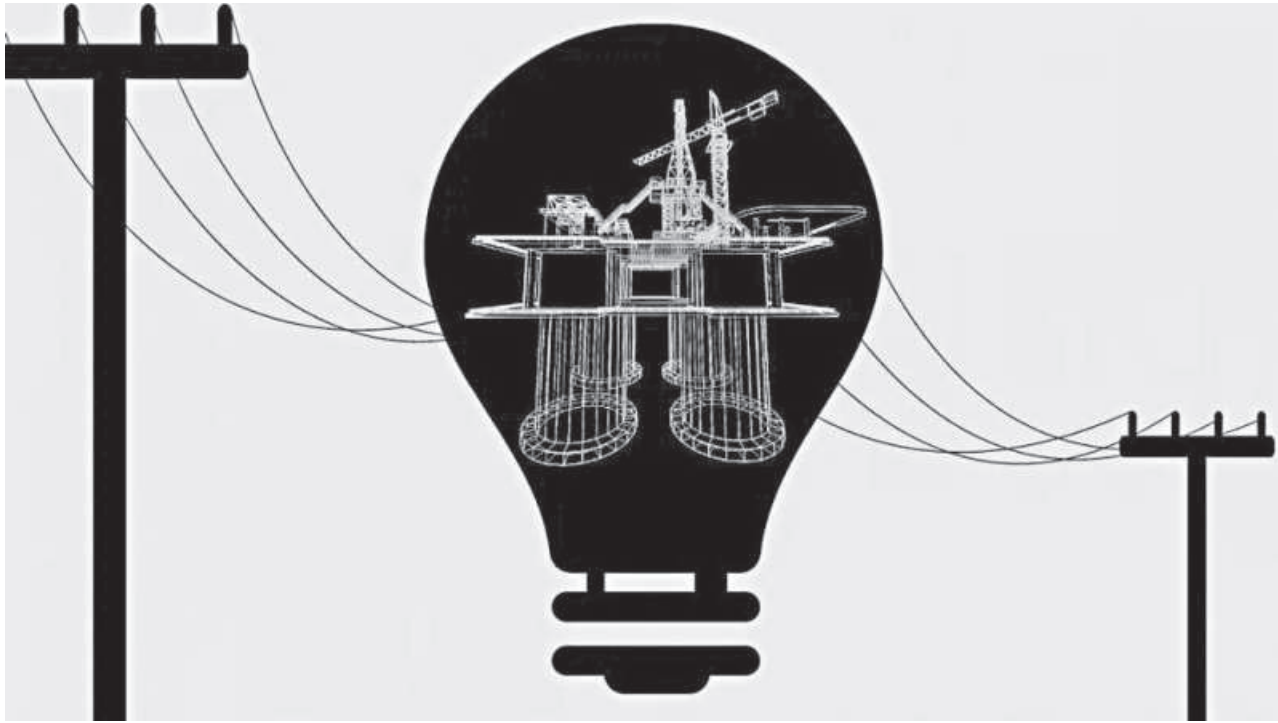
The government has recently raised the electricity price for consumers by five percent on average, bypassing the procedures of the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC). Not only that, the State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid said that, from now on, electricity prices will be “adjusted” in the first week of every month by executive order.

The concern is that, since the single buyer Power Development Board (PDB) continues to suffer huge losses while purchasing electricity from the private sector, it will practically be price hikes in the name of adjustments, at a time when people are already under huge pressure due to rising prices of daily commodities. Last August, the government increased fuel prices (diesel, kerosene, petrol and octane) by Tk 34 to Tk 46 per litre. After widespread criticism, it was later reduced by Tk 5 per litre, but it did not have any effect on rising prices of goods. So, past experience indicates that even if the price of electricity is reduced in any month, it is unlikely to reduce pressure on prices of goods and services. Rather, this monthly adjustment is only likely to further disrupt prices.

It has been reported that electricity price was raised to fulfil IMF conditionalities of reducing power and energy subsidies. But why do these subsidies have to be paid in the first place? Where does the money go, and who benefits? The subsidies exist because the PDB buys power at high costs from privately owned power plants that are dependent on imported liquid fuels.

On top of that, a large part of Bangladesh's power generation capacity remains idle, but the PDB is contractually obliged to pay rent (capacity charge) to power plants. In the last 12 years, from FY2010-11 to FY2021-22, the PDB has spent Tk 90,000 crores on capacity charges only. Every year, with the increase in private sector power generation capacity, capacity charges also increase. In turn, PDB's losses go up, and there is pressure to hike prices. While electricity prices for consumers have gone up 11 times in 14 years, losses and subsidies have not decreased.

If there is a leak at the bottom of a water tank, no matter how much water is poured, the tank will not be filled. Private power plants are the holes in the tank of the power and energy sector. In 2020-21, the average generation



VISUAL: STAR

cost of per unit electricity was Tk 6.61, which increased by 43 percent to Tk 8.84 in 2021-22. But the PDB's own power plants cost Tk 5.02 per unit, and state-owned power plants cost Tk 4.47, whereas private sector rental power plants cost Tk 9.80 and independent power producers (IPP) cost Tk 11.55.

It is clear that PDB is incurring losses by buying electricity from private sector IPPs and rental power plants. Due to capacity charges, it costs up to Tk 55 per unit to buy electricity from some IPPs, and up to Tk 27 per unit from rental power plants. Excess expansion of power generation capacity on one hand, and increasing dependency on imported primary fuels such as LNG, diesel and coal, without giving due importance to local exploration and extraction on the other, is also responsible for PDB's losses.

For example, in 2012-13, when the power generation capacity was 8,500 MW, PDB's loss was Tk 5,430 crore. In 2017-18, against production capacity of 15,410 MW, PDB losses increased to Tk 9,310 crore. In 2021-22, against production capacity of 21,680 MW, the loss was about Tk 28,000 crores.

The government has to provide this money as loans or subsidies so that PDB can pay private power producers. And in order to reduce this amount, an arrangement has been made to

private owners at higher prices, while keeping the losses bearable.

The IMF sets many loan conditions for reforms, but it has no position against private sector profiteering on public money. Nor did it give any conditions to scrap the undemocratic Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provision) Act 2010, using which the government is giving lucrative contracts to local and foreign investors without any competitive bidding. The IMF agenda is to either privatise the country's public sector, or operate the public sector with profit-oriented policies by reducing subsidies, so that they become open to private investors. So, it is expected that if a country seeks an IMF loan, it will receive conditions to reduce subsidies.

The question is, why did the economy fall into a situation where dwindling reserves forced the government to seek an IMF loan? Although the Russia-Ukraine war has been blamed for the ongoing economic crisis, in reality, the growing budget and trade deficit, money laundering through bank loans and transfer pricing, construction of expensive debt-based infrastructure, and increasing dependency on expensive energy imports had been there long before the war started. By giving excuses about IMF conditionalities, the government cannot avoid responsibility

for increasing electricity price, because it is their mismanagement that led to Bangladesh's economy falling into the trap of IMF conditions.

Finally, it needs to be clarified whether it is mandatory or beneficial for the overall economy to increase the price of electricity if there is a shortfall between the generation cost and selling price of electricity.

With the right policies, we can be cautiously optimistic about 2023



AN OPEN DIALOGUE

Dr Abdullah Shibli is an economist and works for Change Healthcare, Inc., an information technology company. He also serves as senior research fellow at the US-based International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI).

ABDULLAH SHIBLI

Earlier this month, The World Bank came out with an upbeat forecast. Emerging markets and developing economies are expected to grow at the rate of 3.4 percent, maintaining the steady growth from 2022's expansion. And while Bangladesh's projected growth rate of 5.2 percent for 2023 is 1.5 points less than what was forecast last June, it is expected that, in 2024, the growth rate will accelerate to 6.2 percent – one of the highest among South Asian countries.

Is this too optimistic? After the poor performance of 2022 in terms of inflation, GDP growth and shortages, how can we be sure that 2023 will be any better? Inflation is still raging in many parts of the world, particularly Bangladesh, and the threat of recession is still serious. We haven't yet turned the corner on supply chain issues and the resurgence of COVID, and there is plenty of evidence that global economic demand weakened towards the end of 2022.

Recently, IMF Managing Director

Kristalina Georgieva also cautioned that most of the world economy will face “a tough year, tougher than the year we leave behind. We expect one-third of the world economy to be in recession.” She added that “even [in] countries that are not in recession, it would feel like recession for hundreds of millions of people.”

We know that, recession or not, the poor of Bangladesh will need continuous support to overcome uncertainty and rising prices. In 2022, Bangladesh slipped from 76th to 84th position in the global hunger index (GHI).

We must now ask, what does the government of Bangladesh need to do to build resilience during a possible recession? If the global recession gets worse in the coming days, what steps could Bangladesh take to cushion the blows from rising prices, shortage of fuel, and a possible decline in foreign exchange reserves?

First, the government needs to realise that what Bangladesh needs is

a determination at the highest levels to help our under-served masses. We must go beyond our obsession with GDP growth and strengthen social safety nets and healthcare services.

The PM recently said, “I believe and I can assure everyone that we will be able to achieve our targeted growth rate.” But around 30 percent of people in Bangladesh are facing food scarcity. Research suggests the number of people who went to sleep hungry almost doubled to 13 percent in May 2022 from seven percent in June 2021. Whether we get a seven or five percent growth rate really doesn't matter to the vast majority.

Secondly, the government must make coordination among various government agencies an immediate priority. In the run-up to elections, it would surely be in the government's interests to alleviate the sufferings of low-income voters.

Thirdly, the forthcoming global recession will affect our exports and remittances, since most of our export earnings come from Europe and the US. A recession will decrease their purchasing power, which will then reduce purchase orders in the RMG sector. Economists have singled out our “unbalanced” balance of payments as a vulnerable issue, and advised the government to keep an eye on controlling capital flight and delays in paying import dues.

There are three policy areas we must focus on. The Bangladesh Bank

is facing multiple pressures – banking sector reforms, interest rate dilemma, remittances through unofficial channels, and compliance with the Basel-III regulatory framework. State-owned banks have consistently exhibited capital inadequacy, and this has raised its own set of problems.

The government is increasingly losing its credibility, as it appears to be inflating its GDP growth rates. Recently, it lowered GDP projection from 7.5 to 6.5. It appears that the government is in a state of denial since there is a gap, currently exceeding 1.5 percentage points, between its claims and those reported by international agencies.

The real income of the majority of the population appears to be in free fall. Food and energy prices are going up, but income growth has not kept pace. The government decided earlier this month to hike electricity price by five percent to Tk 7.48 per unit and the new rate came into effect from January 1, 2023. Globally, the prices of many goods are coming down, such as gasoline, air travel, and new and used cars and trucks. However, our kitchen markets are showing no signs of winter price declines, despite a good harvest.

However, I think inflation has peaked and we could expect to see some decline in the year-to-year rate. But getting from nine percent to five percent is a much easier task than getting from five to three percent. Inflation is cooling off, but the fire isn't out yet.



Workers of a printing press in the capital's Matuail area readying the textbooks that were given to students this year.

New textbooks, same old errors



Wasim Bin Habib is deputy planning editor at The Daily Star.

WASIM BIN HABIB

The first morning of the New Year comes with a special gift for millions of schoolchildren across the country, as they are handed new textbooks in a festive atmosphere. For the past 13 years, the education ministry has successfully distributed free school textbooks to all students from grade 1 to 10 to mark the start of a new academic year.

This year, the government started distributing about 35.16 crore textbooks to over 4.27 crore students. Undoubtedly, this is a great feat that has led to significant improvements in enrolment at primary and secondary levels. The government, especially the education ministry and National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), the state-owned publishing house looking after the printing and distribution scheme, deserve applause for delivering such a mammoth task without any major hiccups. It should be mentioned that the government has overhauled the curriculum, and textbooks of classes 1, 6 and 7 have changed accordingly. Students of other classes will also, in the next few years, receive books from the new curriculum.

But the students' joy and government's success have been overshadowed by a sizeable number of errors and anomalies in the textbooks, including structural and factual errors, outdated information, spelling mistakes and distortions of history. Such mistakes have, over the years, occurred repeatedly. However, the NCTB seems to be paying no heed to these controversies, which only damages the reputation of the textbook board and the government as a whole.

As a reporter covering education for over a decade, I have seen how journalists compete with each other over breaking stories on mistakes as soon as the new textbooks are distributed. This year has been no exception. A large portion of them appears to be printed on low-quality paper, with poor printing quality. And like in previous years, the mistakes in textbooks have triggered a barrage of criticism on social media.

For example, the English book for class 6 holds many grammatical errors and spelling mistakes, but the factual errors in

the history book are far more shocking. A chapter of the book "Bangladesh History and World Civilisation" for class 9 and 10 gives the confusing information that the Pakistan army were engaged in torture, genocide and destruction in Bangladesh from March 26 to December 16, 1971. But the Pakistani army officially launched its campaign of genocide in erstwhile East Pakistan on the fateful night of March 25, 1971.

On page 200 of the same book, it is mentioned that Chief Justice Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem presided over the oath-taking ceremony of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on Jan 12, 1972. But in reality, Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury had already been appointed as the country's president by then. Surprisingly, the book is based on the existing curriculum, which means these mistakes have been there for years.

Does this not speak of sheer callousness and irresponsibility on the part of the authorities concerned? Following criticisms, the NCTB in a statement on January 17 issued corrections to nine mistakes (including the aforementioned two) in three class 9 and 10 textbooks – History and World Civilisation, Bangladesh and Global Studies, and Civics and Citizenship – saying they would be sent to all schools in a day.

Sadly, this is not the first time such mistakes have been found. In 2013, when the government revised the curriculum, gross mistakes were found. In 2017, the government courted controversy by excluding write-ups and literary works of progressive authors and poets from textbooks following demands from Qawmi madrasa-based Islamist group Hefazat-e-Islam – a move that many believed to be a compromise to placate religious pressure groups. Despite massive criticism, the government still has no plans of bringing these write-ups back.

This year, apart from the mistakes, an embarrassing allegation of plagiarising content for a class 7 science textbook has been raised. Reportedly, a particular section of the first chapter of the book "Science: Investigative Study" was taken

from the National Geographic website and translated into Bangla using Google Translate, which drew widespread criticism. Prof Dr Muhammed Zafar Iqbal and Prof Haseena Khan, who were involved in the writing and editing of the book, admitted that the allegations are true. In a statement, they accepted the responsibility as editors of the book, and assured that plagiarised sections and errors will be fixed in the next print edition.

The question is, who will take responsibility for the mistakes? It lies equally on the writers and editors, and the NCTB. The board follows several steps before printing textbooks. It has separate panels of writers and editors for two wings – primary and secondary. Once a book is written, officials (who are supposed to be skilled and experienced) in the editing wing examine the textbooks to find mistakes. Books are also sent to teachers of schools and colleges, and officials of education boards, for evaluation.

It is natural to question how the mistakes exist if all these steps were properly followed. We have learnt that the NCTB carries out this complex but very crucial job in a hurry, which leaves room for mistakes, and has even caught the notice of the High Court. The HC has summoned the NCTB chairman twice, most recently in November last year, to explain the mistakes and distortions of history in textbooks.

Regrettably, the textbook board appears to have not learned lessons from the past. What is more concerning is that we have not seen actions being taken against the persons responsible for the mistakes, except for transferring some officials in the past, even though handing textbooks riddled with errors and misinformation to the future generations of the country should be considered a grave offence.

The government needs to take a deeper look into the ills plaguing the NCTB, and ensure stern actions against the people responsible for feeding wrong information to children. It spends a huge amount of money every year to print and distribute textbooks to students – a tremendous amount of work that no other country in the world does. It must now investigate why a state-run institution is yet to achieve the capacity to carry out this work, even after so many years. It should also revisit the entire process of formulating curriculum and textbooks, and if need be, equip the board adequately with logistics and other facilities to deliver error-free textbooks to students. We cannot afford to see such mistakes in textbooks anymore.

The Dreamer and Doer

The Unfinished Journey of Farzeen Ferdous Alam

Prof Dr Selim Raihan is a professor at the Department of Economics of the University of Dhaka, and executive director at the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem). Zihan Farah is a manager of financial planning and analytics at Standard Chartered Bank Singapore.

SELIM RAIHAN and ZIHAN FARAH

Our student Farzeen Ferdous Alam, born on January 6, 1989 in Dhaka, departed the world at the very young age of 33 on July 14, 2022. Younger son of Professor Dr Ferdousi Begum and Late Khorshed Alam, and younger brother of Tanzeen Ferdous Alam, Farzeen was a brilliant youth leader on a remarkable quest to change Bangladesh's agriculture. He loved to introduce himself by saying "I am a proud farmer; an economist-turned-farmer". He loved his motherland and was determined to make life better for everyone.

Farzeen was the Founder Chairman of Oggro Ventures, a social enterprise – the first of its kind in the country – dedicated to the agriculture and social development of Bangladesh. He completed high school from SFX Green Herald International School, Dhaka, and graduated from Dhaka University's Economics department in 2014. He established Oggro Ventures in 2007, modelling the business as a social enterprise where the profits went into solving social and humanitarian problems. Within a decade of his professional journey, he succeeded in establishing himself as the country's youngest social entrepreneur. He chose an unconventional path early on in life, and it came with big personal sacrifices.



Farzeen Ferdous Alam (January 6, 1989 - July 14, 2022).

PHOTO: COURTESY

At his TEDx talk in 2019, Farzeen mentioned to a young audience that his vision was to transform rural Bangladesh through sustainable agriculture and education. He wanted young Bangladeshis to see the cool side of being a 21st century farmer.

In 2004, when he was 14, he was awarded by the Jacob Foundation in Switzerland for writing a composition about Bangladesh, and invited to visit Oxford University. He had always been active in UN youth volunteering activities, and visited more than 20 countries representing for this social work, including as the special envoy of Ban Ki Moon, Former UN General Secretary, in Doha.

In 2007, Farzeen worked in Hounslow, UK for three months as part of a volunteer exchange programme. At the time, Bangladesh was affected by cyclone Sidr. He then engaged the local community there to raise funds to help the affected people of Sharankhola. He also worked in remote areas of Bangladesh, where he established the Horizon School, and helped set up female toilets and drainage systems.

His first inspiration came from a documentary by the famous singer Bono, where he learnt that every three seconds, a child somewhere was dying of hunger. It got him to start reading books on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and the more he read, the more he realised his true calling lay in the development sector. He decided he could start by supporting farmers in rural communities, who desperately needed access to markets and technology.

As an adolescent entrepreneur, he took risks and remained optimistic, even declining a job offer with the UN. He singlehandedly sorted out logistics and sat for hours with his farmer friends in the paddy fields, or sometimes on rooftops of trains from Badarganj to Rangpur. The uncertainty of building a business from scratch did not bother him. His favourite quote was, "I want to be the Richard Branson of social business."

His relentless efforts did not go unnoticed. The UN featured Oggro via the UN Web TV in

of 17 visually impaired girls by personally importing Braille machines and funding their studies. He also established Oggro Stationary and Oggro Crafts so the visually impaired could have a stable livelihood.

Despite the gruelling demands of Oggro, he found respite in his favourite subject, economics. By 2022, he had taught about 2,500 O level and A level candidates over a period of 15 years, and his young students looked up to him as their mentor and life coach. Farzeen also attended many programmes of SANEM as a guest speaker. In a podcast with Stephen Ladek, he had said, "I love economics religiously and spiritually," and mentioned, "Time management is nothing, but just managing energy which comes from the love for the work." He was preparing for a PhD at the London School of Economics and had started writing a book about agriculture, education and health.

Farzeen was a great listener, and could break a tense moment with a good joke. The bonds he made in his lifetime keep him alive in many hearts. He touched everyone around him through selfless acts, and stood by his friends in their darkest times. Farzeen used to say that he was able to fulfil his dreams only because his family stood by him. In his own words: "I could achieve my dreams, only because my family allowed me to be crazy."

He was popular in school and played sports zealously, with a bevy of followers drawn to his natural charm. He was a prodigy bowler and had played with national cricket legends until a back injury put an end to his dreams of becoming a cricketer.

Deep down, Farzeen relished the small things in life, like kicking a ball that rolled his way, reading stories to his doting nieces, or staying up late to finish his favourite book. His presence will live on in the hearts of every person who crossed paths with him, and all those who knew him are now left with a sense of sudden, inconceivable loss. As darkness looms over us all with the fall of this bright, shining star, we hope that his story inspires us to work towards a better future for all.

Opinion

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CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Waiting rewards

5 Twitch

10 Plain silly

12 lasagna or linguine

13 Navel

15 Mendes of movies

16 Poetic "always"

17 Harry's friend

18 Think back about

20 Venice official

21 Push away

22 Not new

23 Panache

25 Face feature

28 Quick snacks

31 Angry states

32 Dwellings

34 A thou thou

35 Some amount of

36 First numero

37 Shimmy expert

40 Loosen, as laces

41 Nephew's sister

42 Organ parts

43 Nicholas II, for one

DOWN

1 Rome's river

2 Indignant cry

3 Royal home

4 NBC show since 1975

5 Boot attachment

6 Light touch

7 Texas team

8 Fall guy

9 Like some space flights

11 Lace's place

14 Narrow book jacket

19 Church areas

20 Because of

24 Tripoli resident

25 Rain cloud

26 Set straight

27 Have as a customer

29 Draws out

30 New York tribe

33 More tender

35 Pro votes

38 Mouth part

39 Minor complaint

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

Help new mothers feel less sad by encouraging them to breastfeed!

DR NUR-A-SAFRINA RAHMAN

Postpartum depression (PPD), often known as “baby blues,” may occur among new mothers after giving birth. PPD can make a mother depressed, hopeless, lose interest in activities, and have problems connecting with their infant.

PPD is caused by the following factors:

Pregnancy boosts oestrogen and progesterone production. A rapid decline in these hormones after giving birth may increase PPD risk. Changes in the levels of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which regulate mood, might also alter a woman's emotions.

Remember that postpartum hormone fluctuations



affect women differently. Stress, a lack of support, prior mental health issues, and important life events may all induce PPD.

How breastfeeding helps reduce PPD:

Breastfeeding helps both mother and child. Breast milk gives the finest nourishment and antibodies to prevent babies from major childhood illnesses and makes mothers happier, calmer, and less worried. Breastfeeding releases prolactin and oxytocin. Researchers believe oxytocin relaxes mothers and prolactin lessens their anxiety.

Researchers found that PPD was lowest in women who wished to and could breastfeed. Thus, breastfeeding requires a predetermined attitude, and counselling may help with this. The WHO and other experts advise breastfeeding babies from the first hour.

Patients with PPD should talk to their doctors about their worries. PPD can be treated with medication, therapy, and counselling. Finding reliable people and getting their support are also important. PPD can often be reduced with the help of therapy and peer support.

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A fistula operation at Hope Hospital in Cox's Bazar.

PHOTO: HOPE FOUNDATION

Repairing obstetric fistula in remote Bangladesh

DR IFTIKHER MAHMOOD

An obstetric fistula usually happens to poor, pregnant women in remote areas. If a dead baby stays inside the uterus for a long time, the blood flow to different parts of the reproductive organs is stopped, the different parts of the birth canal are damaged, resulting in a wound that creates a hole between the reproductive organs and the bladder and/or anus, resulting in the continuous leakage of urine or feces.

Fistula is a physically painful and psychologically damaging disorder. Women with fistulas are unable to have intercourse with their husbands due to the continuous leakage of urine and/or feces. They have bad body smells all the time. In almost all cases, their husbands abandon them, and they are even rejected by their parents or other close relatives.

Obstetric fistula is almost never seen in the developed world today due to improved obstetric care. It remains a significant cause of morbidity in Bangladesh and other developing countries where maternal health is lagging. Generally, most women, before developing obstetric fistula, experience labour pain for three days or more. These women are often from poor communities and do

not have access to good health care.

Often the deliveries are done by traditional birth attendants or family members. Many of them do not receive any prenatal care. Therefore, they have no prior knowledge of the size, position, and health risks of their unborn child and no prior preparation is made for delivery that may be obstructed or require cesarean section.

In rural areas where health awareness is low, obstetric fistula is not well understood and is considered a curse of fate and instead of helping they are blamed for the dreaded disease. Everyone considers them a social and family burden. The kinds of mental depression, anxiety and restlessness that a fistula patient experiences are terrible. Fistula-afflicted women have many other problems such as kidney disease, difficulty in walking due to nerve damage in legs etc.

Obstetric fistula is usually treated surgically. If an experienced physician is consulted within a short time after fistula develops, it can be cured without surgery with antibiotics. But for those who have fistula for a long time, only treatment is surgery. Fistula operation is complex and can only be performed by skilled surgeons.

Currently, fistula surgeries are performed in 17 hospitals across the country, among which Hope Hospital in Cox's Bazar is notable. Other institutions that perform fistula surgery in Bangladesh are Lamb Hospital, MAMM's Institute, Kumudini Hospital, Ad-din Hospital, BSMMU and some government medical college hospitals.

Fistula surgery is expensive. Almost all fistula surgeries done in the country, including those at Hope Hospital, are done free of charge, through help of donor agencies. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government of Bangladesh has undertaken a major initiative to make the country fistula free by 2030 with the technical support of UNFPA Bangladesh.

The Government of Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in maternal health and has received international recognition for the achievements. Now, it is the demand of the time to make the country free from fistula by 2030 by bringing all the fistula patients under treatment with the cooperation and collective efforts of all government and non-governmental organisations.

The writer is the Founder of Hope Foundation.
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HAVE A NICE DAY Mr Vagabond: The superpower nerve

DR RUBAIUL MURSHED

We all know that 'a crust eaten in peace is better than a banquet participated in stress and anxiety.' There is no such thing as a stress-free life. Today, vagus nerve massages are popular for stress relieve. But, in the early eighties, we focused more on 'vagotomy' to treat severe cases of peptic ulcer disease.

The Latin word vagus means "wandering" (the words vagrant, vagabond, and vague come from the same root). It supplies the nervous system, heart, lungs, and most of the intestines. The vagal nerves, the longest superpower cranial nerve, have the widest distribution in the body. They are the main nerves of our parasympathetic nervous system, that controls specific body functions such as digestion, heart rate, and immune system. These functions are involuntary, meaning you cannot consciously control them.

Our parasympathetic nervous system is a network of nerves that relaxes your body after periods of stress or danger. It counteracts your fight or flight system. It's how you develop a healthy stress response and become resilient.

When stimulated, you feel calmer, more compassionate, and clearer. Stimulating the vagus nerve benefits your autonomic nervous system and mental health, which reduces neurophysiological experience of stress. It lowers our heart rate and blood pressure. It affects our limbic system in the brain, where emotions are processed.

Moderate neck and shoulder massage improves the functioning of vagus nerve. But a painful massage may not be a great choice because muscle pain may trigger the sympathetic nervous system, causing a "fight or flight" response.

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INTERVIEW

Prevention and regular check up for managing cancers

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Gastrointestinal cancers are leading cause of cancer-related mortality and remains a major challenge for cancer treatment. They account for 26% of the global cancer incidence burden and 35% of all cancer-related deaths; in 2018, there were an estimated 4.8 million new cases and 3.4 million related deaths worldwide.

Recently Dr Foo Kian Fong, a medical oncologist at Mount Elizabeth Hospitals and Gleneagles Hospital, Singapore visited Bangladesh and shared some views with Star Health. His clinical interests are in gastrointestinal cancers.

Despite the combined administration of modern surgical techniques and chemoradiotherapy (CRT), the overall 5-year survival rate of gastrointestinal cancer patients in advanced stage disease is less than 15%, due to rapid disease progression, metastasis, and CRT resistance.

Dr Foo mentioned the recent advancement of immunotherapy, especially targeted immunotherapy



Dr Foo Kian Fong, medical oncologist at Mount Elizabeth Hospitals and Gleneagles Hospital, Singapore

in cancer treatment. Although expensive, they are promising and providing breakthrough treatment options. Immunotherapy has been developed in the last few years a lot and changing the whole scenario of cancer treatment which was not possible earlier. Some of the treatment modalities are still in experimental stage, but they are quite promising.

Hepatobiliary cancer is very common due to many reasons.

Dr Foo advised that lifestyle plays a vital role managing them. For example, fatty liver is quite a common condition due to urban lifestyle. Regular exercise and dietary modification can slow down the condition to a great extent. We can delay the damage to the liver by simple measures.

Quite often, the only treatment option for end stage liver disease is liver transplant. It is very expensive and is not available everywhere. But lifestyle changes can prolong the quality of life significantly in this regard.

Along with preventive measures like vaccination, healthy food habit and lifestyle modifications, Dr Foo suggests for regular check up (twice a year) for the early detection of cancer. It is very helpful to maximise the benefit of cancer treatment. Regular follow up is the reason why people get more benefit in cancer treatment in the developed world.

Dr Foo Kian Fong is a member of the American Society of Clinical Oncologist, European Society of Medical Oncologists and the Hong Kong College of Physicians.

How to prepare for labour

Having a baby is a big life event that can feel overwhelming. There is a lot to consider, but preparation can make the move into parenthood easier.

Ways to prepare for labour

Your body naturally prepares for labour on its own, but there are a few things you can do to help lower your stress.

Make a birth plan

A birth plan is an outline of what you want for your delivery. This plan helps your doctor or midwife, nurses, and support people understand your personal wishes.

Be flexible and open to change, as births don't often go exactly as expected.

Visit the hospital

Knowing what to expect and what to do can help you feel more comfortable on the day of the birth.



Pack your bag

You will need supplies for both you and your baby at the hospital. Hospitals may have different rules about what they give to moms and what you will need to bring from home.



Set up your nursery and home

Getting your home ready for your baby and making it a safe and

comfortable place is an important step in preparing for labour.



Preparing for the cost of labour and a new baby


You will need to plan for the cost of your hospital stay and regular check-ups for you and your baby. Find out how much money you will need to pay for your delivery and doctor's visits.




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Dr. Rezaul Hassan




Dr. Mirza Abul Kalam Mohiuddin



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Kings make it six in six

SPORTS REPORTER

Bashundhara Kings continued their perfect start to the Bangladesh Premier League with a 3-0 win away to Chittagong Abahani at the Birshreshtho Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj yesterday.

Rakib Hossain, Dorielton Gomez and Yeasin Arafat scored the goals as the defending champions moved to 18 points from six matches, six clear of second-placed Abahani and Sheikh Jamal.

Rakib opened the scoring with a delightful chip from the edge of the box in the fourth minute before Dorielton made it 2-0 seven minutes later with a powerful attempt from inside the box after running on to a cut-back from Yeasin, who wrapped up the win in the 70th minute.

The defeat left the port city side second from bottom with two points from five matches.

The other match of the day between Muktioddha Sangsad and Fortis FC ended in a 1-1 draw in Gopalganj, leaving Fortis on six points from five matches and Muktioddha on four points from six matches.

Four U-19 players in WT20 WC squad

STAR SPORT REPORT

Four members of the Bangladesh U-19 team earned a place in the squad for ICC Women's T20 World Cup, which will be held in South Africa next month.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board announced a 15-member team including Disha Biswas, Marufa Akter, Dilara Akter and Shorna Akter – four players currently playing in South Africa playing in the U-19 Women's T20 World Cup. There was no place, however, for Afia Protashah, the opening batter who made an impression in the tournament.

The team will leave for Cape Town on January 23 for a training camp and two practice matches against Ireland.

The Bangladesh side will also play two warm-up matches against Pakistan (February 6 in Cape Town) and India (February 8 in Stellenbosch) before they kick off their World Cup campaign against Sri Lanka on February 12.

SQUAD: Nigar Sultana Joty (Captain), Marufa Akter, Dilara Akter, Fahima Khatun, Salma Khatun, Jahanara Alam, Shamima Sultana, Rumana Ahmed, Lata Mondol, Shorna Akter, Nahida Akter, Murshida Khatun, Ritu Moni, Disha Biswas, Sobhana Mostary



Bangladesh's Marufa Akter gets stumped after being beaten by South Africa off-spinner Kayla Reyneke in their first Super Six game of the Women's U-19 T20 World Cup at Senwes Park in Potchefstroom yesterday. Reyneke was the destroyer in chief, scalping four wickets to restrict the young Tigresses to a modest 106-run total, which the hosts chased down with five wickets and seven balls to spare.

PHOTO: TWITTER

The inexplicable case of Argentina's second coming

ATIQUE ANAM

Bangladesh is a queer case of polar extremes.

While a majority of the population continues to live in hardship, barely making ends meet in the face of the global economic crisis stemming from the aftereffects of the pandemic and exacerbated by Russia's war with Ukraine, there is a section of people who continue to get richer, profiting from the crisis of essentials and holding people hostage to market manipulation.

This may be a global trend, but what sets Bangladesh apart from much of the developing and developed world is the utter disregard for the privileged few in society towards the plight of the common people.

Take the case of the Argentine football team's purported visit to Bangladesh in June this year and it will be crystal clear how indifferent some people are to the ongoing economic hardship.

Our banks are struggling to open credit lines to import daily essentials owing to a sliding foreign reserve, the government is withdrawing subsidies on oil and gas to industries, and the prices of power and gas in households are being consistently increased – all putting more pressure on the middle-and-lower-income families as inflation keeps rising. Take a look at the ever-extending queues for the OMS commodities on the streets and there should be no doubt about what it is all leading to.

As the World Bank foresees a global recession in 2023 and our government adopts belt-tightening policies at all levels, the idea of hosting a football match between two foreign nations, however popular they may be, is not just perplexing but downright indecent.

What can we realistically achieve from such a match if it does really take place? Will it create a resurgence in our football as is preached by some of our football officials? Not an iota of a chance. We all know what happened the last time Argentina came to Bangladesh, back in

2011, towards the end of Kazi Salahuddin's first four-year term at the BFF helm.

Bangladesh's FIFA ranking at that time was 139. Twelve years later, Bangladesh are languishing at 192nd position – just 19 places from the bottom of the table – having endured a freefall in the intervening period and never really looking like taking an upturn.

Salahuddin has been re-elected to the top position of the country's football three times since, and all that he can boast about is regional successes in women's football and being able to stage the top-tier league regularly.



The men's team, which is what countries' footballing standing is identified mostly by, has not been able to make it to the semifinal stage of the SAFF Championship even once over these years.

However, the biggest failure of the Salahuddin-led committees has been a failure to produce quality footballers from the grassroots level, owing partly to a stagnant and irregular football scene outside the capital. The inability to set up a decent football academy due to a lack of funds is another issue that, experts believe, has stunted the potential growth of the country's football.

If the allegations of misappropriation of funds and the lack of transparency in audits of the accounts are thrown into the mix, we get a fair idea of what the country's football is going through and where it is headed.

While there was euphoria among the

masses regarding Argentina's match against Nigeria on September 6, 2011, the BFF was in a spot of bother when it was asked to clear the payments for the Argentina team on the eve of the team's arrival. IFIC Bank, whose chairman is the owner of Beximco Group – the main sponsors for that match – bailed the BFF out with a loan of Tk 8 crore.

12 years after that event, the BFF still owes IFIC Bank more than Tk 5.4cr in principal and interest, according to BFF high-ups. That match reportedly cost 40 crore taka. And, barring a mere pittance, most of that amount went out of the country as we did not have either the marketing tools or the ability to sell the match to foreign sponsors or broadcasters.

There is no reason to believe much has changed in that regard, except for the fact that Argentina will come this time as world champions, meaning their price tag is much higher.

Salahuddin recently told the media that it would take around seven million dollars at least to bring the Albiceleste to Dhaka, with the whole package, including expenses for the other team, very well seeing costs balloon to as much 10 million dollars.

While the BFF initially backtracked a bit after having announced that Argentina's visit was a sure shot, they have since claimed that the negotiations with their Argentine counterparts were on the right track. Salahuddin, along with his colleagues at the federation, has always remained confident that sponsorship for this match will not be an issue.

How can they be so certain of arranging sponsors for such an expensive venture when the federation struggles to find a half-decent sponsor to run the leagues or even a football academy? Isn't it time we lay the foundations to produce our own Messis and Di Marias instead of burning all that money for just a 90-minute spectacle?

It all begs the question whether the desperation over bringing Argentina to Bangladesh is just a case sportswashing for Bangladesh and Bangladesh football.

End of the Joy-ride?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced the 21-member central contract list for the year 2023 on Saturday, and although there were no major surprises in store, one particular choice did leave scope to wonder.

Youngster Mahmudul Hasan Joy and the 26-year-old Yasir Ali, who were handed central contracts for the first time last year, were dropped just a year later.

"Their performances were not up to the mark and that's why they were left out. But they do have the chance to get back in the list by performing in the domestic circuit," BCB chief selector Minhajul Abedin told The Daily Star about the four cricketers – Shadman Islam, Mohammad Naim, Joy and Yasir – who failed to retain their central contracts.

As Yasir yielded a total of only 337 runs at a 16.04 average in five Tests, seven ODIs and 10 T20Is in 2022, with single digit scores in eight of the 10 T20Is and a 55-run knock in a Test being his highest score across formats, the exclusion of the right-hander seemed justified.

However, the 22-year-old Joy, who only featured in the longest format for the Tigers so far, may feel hard done by. Joy featured in seven of the Tigers' 10 Tests last year and the youngster managed to grind out a few good knocks despite not having the most solid technique.

His 78 in Bangladesh's historic Test win over New Zealand at Mount Maunganui in January last year and a marathon seven-plus-hour long 137 – his career-best score – on the tour of South Africa in March provided glimpses into how the right-hander could make up for his gap in technique with his tenacity and determination.

Joy struggled with consistency, with only one fifty in the five Tests played since the century in Durban, and was understandably dropped for the final two Tests in 2022, against India.

His replacement Zakir Hasan did not fail to grab the opportunity, scoring a century on his Test debut and then following it up with a fifty in the second game – performances that helped him land a central contract for the first time.

It could make one wonder whether Joy would still have squeezed into the 21-member list had Zakir not turned up with such performances.

However, from how things turned out for Joy, Zakir and Hasan Mahmud – the two new inclusions in the contract list – could take some lessons and take any and all the chances that come their way.

BCB CENTRAL CONTRACT (2023)		
» Test, ODI, T20I	Shakib Al Hasan, Liton Das, Taskin Ahmed and Mehedi Hasan Miraz	Islam and Mustafizur Rahman,
» ODI	Mahmudullah Riyad	» ODI
» ODI and Test	Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim	» T20I
» Test and T20I	Najmul Hossain Shanto, Nurul Hasan Sohan	Nasum Ahmed, Mosaddek Hossain, Mahedi Hasan, Hasan Mahmud
» Test	Mominul Haque, Taijul Islam, Ebadot Hossain, Khaled Ahmed and Zakir Hasan	» New inclusion
» ODI and T20I	Afif Hossain, Shoriful	Zakir Hasan and Hasan Mahmud
		» Excluded
		Yasir Ali, Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Shadman Islam and Mohammad Naim

Murray runs out of steam

AGENCIES, Melbourne

Andy Murray's brave Australian Open run ground to a halt against Roberto Bautista Agut, the Spaniard fending off the fatigued former world number one 6-16-7(7) 6-3 6-4 in the third round to advance on Saturday.

After back-to-back five-set wins over Matteo Berrettini and Thanasi Kokkinakis, a ragged Murray hung tough against the 24th seed but was gradually worn down over the course of a three-and-a-half hour slog at a floodlit Margaret Court Arena.

Murray's previous match against Kokkinakis, which ended past four in the morning after nearly five hours of play, left him with little sleep, a bad back and a slew of blisters that needed draining in his feet.

"My feet didn't feel great. My legs were actually OK ... but I was struggling with my lower back," Murray told reporters. "That was affecting my serve and that was really the main thing today."

It has been a long and punishing road back for the three-times Grand Slam champion since being fitted with a metal

hip. But he was encouraged by his week at Melbourne Park, if disappointed not to reach the second week.

"Lots of mixed emotions, I feel like I gave everything I had to this event, so I'm proud of that," he said. "But, yeah, I'm also disappointed because I put loads of work into the beginning of this year and was playing well enough to have a really good run, have a deep run. I'm disappointed because I feel like I could have gone quite a bit further."

Earlier, an ailing Novak Djokovic said every moment counted now that he was in the "last stage" of his career, after battling past Grigor Dimitrov 7-6 (9/7), 6-3, 6-4.

Djokovic needed treatment twice on his troublesome hamstring.

"Every season counts I guess now, when you come to the last stage, the last

quarter, of your career," the 35-year-old said. "Obviously you start appreciating and valuing each tournament more because you might not have a lot left in the tank."

"I've been truly fortunate to do what I love, I love the sport, I love competing. It's been almost 20 years now of professional sport. I can't be more grateful than I am."

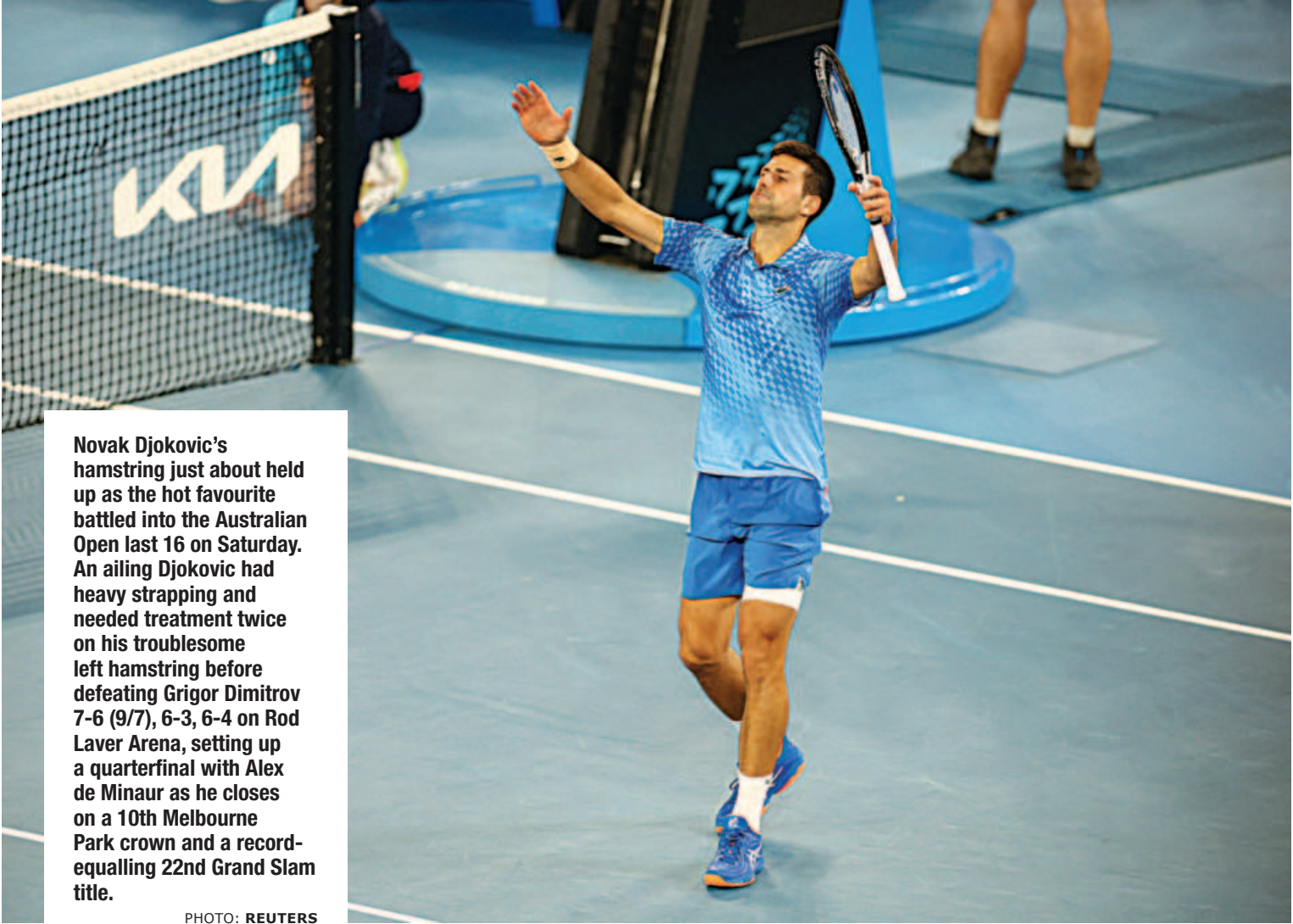


PHOTO: REUTERS

Novak Djokovic's hamstring just about held up as the hot favourite battled into the Australian Open last 16 on Saturday. An ailing Djokovic had heavy strapping and needed treatment twice on his troublesome left hamstring before defeating Grigor Dimitrov 7-6 (9/7), 6-3, 6-4 on Rod Laver Arena, setting up a quarterfinal with Alex de Minaur as he closes on a 10th Melbourne Park crown and a record-equalling 22nd Grand Slam title.



AMBASSADOR TO VIENNA Momen defends rejected diplomat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday defended Md Tauhidul Islam, who was tipped to become the ambassador of Austria but was refused by Vienna.



Momen said Tauhidul is a top diplomat and blamed backstabbers for the controversy.

A row erupted after a recent report of a national daily said the Austrian government refused Tauhidul's candidacy citing his alleged misconduct with a woman when he was working as the consul general in Milan.

"He is a very good officer. He is brilliant and intelligent. He is a performer. I will continue to defend him as long as I am here [in the ministry]," he told reporters while responding to a question in Sylhet.

According to the Bangla daily report, Momen on September 19 last year wrote to the Austrian federal minister for European and International Affairs, defending Tauhidul without any success.

Tauhidul is now the high commissioner of Bangladesh in Singapore.

Hinting at a conspiracy, Momen, when asked, said the government wanted to send Tauhid to Vienna as he had a good track record.

"He [Tauhidul] is a top diplomat. He stood first in his MBBS exam. When he entered the administrative service, he stood first in his batch. He is very good. Now his colleagues in the ministry, friends are continuously trying to bring him down," Momen said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Illegal structures built on three sides of the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) canal and garbage dumping have shortened the length of the water body. The photo was taken yesterday from the Shimrail area of Narayanganj on the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Ijtema ends today

Several roads to
close, metro to
run till 5pm

UNB, Dhaka

The second phase of Bishwa Ijtema is set to end on the banks of the Turag in Tongi today through Akheri Munajat.

The second phase of the 56th Bishwa Ijtema began on Friday with "Aam Bayaan" after Fajr prayers with the participation of the followers of Indian Islamic preacher Maulana Muhammad Saad Al Kandhalvi.

Devotees from home and abroad thronged the banks of the Turag to take part in the religious event to seek divine blessings.

Today, Indian Islamic scholar Maulana Yeakub Ali conducted a sermon after Fajr prayers.

Meanwhile, five devotees have so far died at the Ijtema venue during the second phase as two more devotees died due to old age complications on Friday night and Saturday morning.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

India blocks BBC docu on Modi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Indian government has issued directives for the blocking of multiple YouTube videos and Twitter posts sharing links to BBC documentary "India: The Modi Question", several Indian media outlets reported yesterday.

The directions were reportedly issued by Apurva Chandra, secretary of India's information and broadcasting ministry, on Friday using the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021, the media said quoting unnamed sources.

They said senior officials of several ministries, including external affairs, home, and information and broadcasting, examined the documentary and found it to be an attempt to cast aspersions on the authority and credibility of the Supreme Court, sow divisions among various Indian communities, and make unsubstantiated allegations regarding actions of foreign governments in India.

They said the documentary was found to be undermining the sovereignty and integrity of India and having the potential to adversely impact friendly relations with foreign states, as well as, public order within the country.

Orders have also been issued to Twitter to block over 50 tweets containing links of the YouTube videos concerned, they said, adding that social media platforms have complied with the directives.

The Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Arindam Bagchi on Thursday described the BBC documentary as a "propaganda piece" that lacked objectivity and reflected a colonial mindset.

The two-part BBC documentary claims it investigated certain aspects relating to the 2002 Gujarat riots when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the chief minister of the state.

A group of 302 former judges, ex-bureaucrats, and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Project to save the Karnaphuli stuck in red tape

SIFAYET ULLAH

Bangladesh Water Development Board's project to save the Karnaphuli has been in limbo as the water resources ministry is yet to review the estimated cost in line with the government's cost containment policy.

Meanwhile, BWDB officials say river erosion in Chattogram's Boalkhali upazila keeps wreaking havoc on the lives of at least 120,000 people, and that number would gradually rise if the project is not implemented soon.



In July last year, the government rolled out a mix of austerity measures for development projects in the face of strained foreign currency reserves, elevated global and domestic inflation, and continued tensions surrounding the Russia-Ukraine war.

Tayan Kumar Tripura, project director and executive engineer of Rangamati BWDB, told The Daily Star they sent the ministry a development project proposal (DPP) with a cost estimation of Tk 144 crore in 2021, mentioning that the project was crucial.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Boy rescued from container is from Cumilla A family claims

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Cumilla

The boy found in a cargo container in Malaysia's Port Klang on January 17 is from Cumilla. He went missing more than two months ago, a family from the district claimed yesterday.

His name is Ratul, 14, the eldest son of day-labourer Faruk Mia from Satpukuria village in Monoharganj upazila, said one Azgar Mia, who identified himself as the boy's uncle.

"We identified Ratul after seeing his photos in the media ... He is mentally challenged. He went missing around two months ago," Azgar told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

"Faruk has three sons. Ratul is the eldest among them. Faruk is poor and did not have the money to go and file a general diary with police when his son went missing," claimed Azgar.

The correspondent yesterday spoke to Md Shahidullah, a local union parishad member.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Buzz Aldrin marries on 93rd birthday

AFP, Los Angeles



Legendary Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin, the second person to set foot on the Moon, said he had married his longtime girlfriend on Friday, his 93rd birthday.

Aldrin and Anca Faur, executive vice president of Buzz Aldrin Ventures, were wed in a private ceremony.

"On my 93rd birthday... I am pleased to announce that my longtime love Dr. Anca Faur & I have tied the knot," Aldrin tweeted along with pictures of himself and Faur, who is reportedly 63.

"We were joined in holy matrimony in a small private ceremony in Los Angeles & are as excited as eloping teenagers."

According to her LinkedIn profile, Faur earned a doctorate in chemical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh in 1996 and had previously worked for Union Carbide and Johnson Matthey before joining Buzz Aldrin Ventures. She had also served as treasurer for the California Hydrogen Business Council.

Aldrin's three previous marriages ended in divorce.

The US astronaut is the last surviving member of the Apollo 11 mission, during which he and Neil Armstrong become the first people to set foot on the Moon, on July 20, 1969.

Michael Collins, who piloted the command module while his crewmates walked on the lunar surface, died in April 2021 and Armstrong died in 2012.

WOMEN'S U-19 T20 WC Bangladesh suffer first defeat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following three solid batting displays, Bangladesh batters faltered as the young Tigresses tasted their first defeat in the ongoing ICC Women's Under-19 T20 World Cup, losing by five wickets to hosts South Africa in the first Super Six encounter at Senwes Park in Potchefstroom yesterday.

The young Tigresses struggled to rise to the occasion, managing to post a meagre 106 for six, with South Africa off-spinner Kayla Reyneke turning destroyer in chief with four for 19 in four overs.

South Africa, in reply, had to rely on Madison Landsman's 38-ball 37 and Karabo Meso's unbeaten 32 to get over the line with seven balls to spare in what transpired to be a trickier-than-expected chase for the hosts with Bangladesh leg-spinner Rabeya Khatun

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Overrun by street vendors and cluttered with banners, a lone signboard reading "Historic Amtala Site" is now the only reminder of the location where Language Movement activists gathered in defiance of Section 144 on February 21, 1952.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

MURDER OF FREEDOM FIGHTER Police have no clue about who killed him

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Freedom fighters in Lalmonirhat yesterday held a rally protesting the killing of a former college principal, also a freedom fighter, as police said they couldn't find any clue pointing to the motive of the killing or the killers.

The 68-year-old M Wazed Ali was hacked to death by unidentified criminals near his house in Sahebdaanga area of Patgram on Friday around 10:30pm, said Omar Farooq, officer-in-charge of Patgram Police Station.

Wazed, the former principal of Patgram Women's College, was the deputy commander of the district Freedom Fighters' Council and a member of the upazila unit Awami League. Wazed was also the younger brother of late Abed Ali, a former AL MP of Lalmonirhat-1.

After the rally, freedom fighters demanded that police identify the killers and arrest them. They also demanded exemplary punishment of the killers.

Police, locals and family members told The Daily Star that the unidentified assailants fled after stabbing Wazed in the head, neck and shoulder, just 10 yards away from his home.

Hearing him scream, family members and neighbours rushed to the spot and took him to the emergency department of Patgram Upazila Health Complex. The doctors there declared him dead, they added.

Chairman of Patgram Upazila Parishad and General Secretary of Upazila unit AL Ruhur Amin Babul, who is the nephew of Wazed, said that his uncle was involved in

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3