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Hundreds of Northern University students blocked the capital's Airport Road yesterday afternoon to protest the death of fellow student Nadia Akhter, creating long tailbacks from noon onwards. Nadia, who was on a motorcycle with a friend, was crushed under the wheels of a Victor Paribahan bus in front Jamuna Future Park in Pragati Sarani on Sunday. **HOW MANY NADIAS WILL IT TAKE? PAGE 3**

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## FOOD DISTRIBUTION FOR POOR

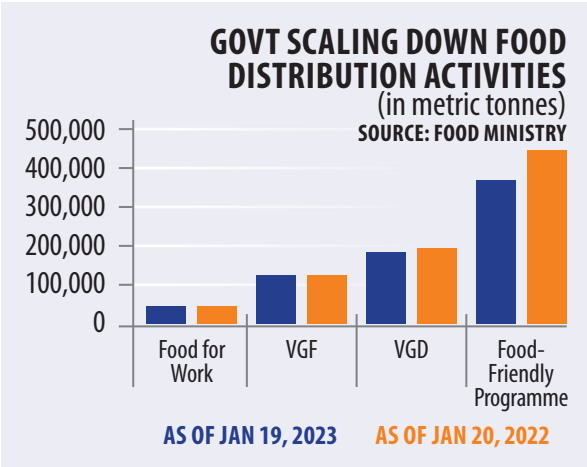
# When more is needed, govt doing less

REJAUL KARIM  
BYRON and MD  
ASADUZZAMAN

Scaling up public food distribution programmes for the poor and the vulnerable is the need of the hour — given the cost of living crisis. But the government seems to be shying away from stepping up to this task.

So far this fiscal year, it has distributed about 15 lakh tonnes of rice and wheat through its various food distribution programmes under the social safety net schemes, down 6 percent year-on-year, according to data from the food ministry until January 19.

"This is difficult to fathom at a time of soaring prices," said Zahid Hussain, a former



lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

Inflation averaged 8.76 percent in the first six months of the fiscal year, up from 5.7 percent a year earlier, according to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

In December, inflation stood at 8.71 percent and in rural areas 8.86 percent. But the

wage rate grew at 7.03 percent.

Given the recent hike in energy prices, inflation is expected to spiral further, said Bazlul Haque Khondker, chairman of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling.

How the low-income groups will manage then

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

## Ramp up support for nations hit by Covid, war

### PM calls upon World Bank

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the World Bank and other international organisations to boost their support for the countries hit by the pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and climate change.

The premier made this call when World Bank Managing Director for Operations Axel van Trotsenburg paid a courtesy call on her at her office in the morning.

PM's Speech Writer Md Nazrul Islam briefed reporters after the meeting.

Hasina said Bangladesh had gained over 8 percent GDP growth before the Covid-19, but it declined due to the pandemic. When Bangladesh was regaining the growth momentum, it was affected again by the Russia-Ukraine war fallout.

The poor and developing countries like Bangladesh plunged into trouble because significant rise in fuel and food prices, and transportation cost worldwide, she said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## 150 CONSTITUENCIES

# EC's EVM dream over, for now

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government has shelved a proposal for buying two lakh electronic voting machines, forcing the Election Commission to change its plan for using the machines in up to 150 constituencies in the next general polls.

The Planning Commission returned the project proposal involving Tk 8,711 crore to the EC on Sunday citing "the financial capacity of the government in the current global context" as a reason.

The move comes following criticism by many that spending around half a billion dollars for the EVMs would be unreasonable amid the economic crisis. Major opposition parties are also dead against the use of EVMs in the election.

Top EC officials yesterday told The Daily Star that the commission would now need to reduce the number of constituencies in which the machines would be used.

A top EC official said the commission is now capable of using EVMs in at best 50 constituencies as about 30 percent of the 1.5 lakh machines it has are usable.

Election commissioners had earlier said that they would need the additional 2 lakh machines for holding polls in up to 150 constituencies with the EVMs.

"The government decided not to go ahead with the project for now after detailed examination and review of the project considering its financial capacity in the current global context," EC Secretary Jahangir Alam told reporters at a press briefing yesterday.

Replying to questions from reporters, he said the project could be taken up again in future if the financial capacity improves.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Mosammat Nasima Begum, a member of the Planning Commission, said the government has to take up development projects based on priority.

**"The government decided not to go ahead with the project for now after detailed examination and review of the project considering the financial capacity of the government in the current global context."**

EC Secretary  
Jahangir Alam



Asked if there was political pressure on them to shelve the proposal, she refused to comment.

A top Planning Commission official, however, said the proposal was suspended following a signal from the government high-ups.

The move to buy additional EVMs came following the EC's August 23 last year decision to go for electronic voting in up to 150 constituencies in the polls despite objections from major opposition parties, like the BNP and Jatiya Party (Ershad).

The EC sent the Development Project Proposal (DPP) to the Planning Commission in October.

According to the DPP, an EVM with all its accessories would cost Tk 3.33 lakh and about Tk 6,660 crore would be needed to buy two lakh EVMs.

Another Tk 1,155 crore was asked for for building a customisation centre and a warehouse to store the machines and to buy 534 pickups and four SUVs.

About Tk 206 crore was sought for carrying out awareness

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Two three-wheelers, locally known as Nasiman, with oversized loads running on the Dhaka-Khulna highway in Bagerhat's Fakirhat upazila and a truck tries to get around them. Although the movement of slow-moving three-wheelers on highways is prohibited, such vehicles run on roads putting people's lives at risk. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## B'BARIA BY-POLLS

# Sattar's money tripled in 4yrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

The money of expelled BNP leader Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan, who is running for the Brahmanbaria-2 by-polls as an independent, tripled over the last four years.

In 2018, Sattar had Tk 33 lakh in cash. The amount now is Tk 1 crore, according to the affidavit he recently submitted to the returning officer.

As per the electoral rules, each candidate must submit an affidavit



containing different types of information, including wealth statement, educational background, record of criminal case (if any) and profession, to the office of returning officer before the election.

Sattar, in his affidavit before the 2018 national election, claimed he had Tk 32.79 lakh in cash.

But he has now almost Tk 1.03 crore, according to the affidavit he submitted to the RO recently.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

## AB Bank launches Agriculture Loan program through Smart Cards at Tungipara



AB Bank Limited Mujibur Rahman. The disbursed agricultural loans to 107 marginal farmers at Tungipara, the birth place of The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman. The loans were disbursed through smart cards which also initiated the journey of AB smart account - another first for AB Bank.

The program was organized at our Father of The Nation's memory-laden Gimadanga Tungipara Govt. Primary School where Mr. Sheikh

Tozammel Haque Tutul, Honorable Mayor, Tungipara was present as the chief guest. It was presided over by Mr. Tarique Afzal, President and Managing Director

of AB Bank Ltd. and also attended by senior officials of AB Bank and local dignitaries.

Advertisement



SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

JP MP blasts the govt over Darwin’s theory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jatiya Party MP yesterday in parliament lambasted the government for the inclusion of Darwin’s theory of evolution in school textbooks.

Golam Kibria Tipu, a lawmaker from Barishal-3, did that while participating in the thanksgiving motion on President Abdul Hamid’s speech.

“Saying human beings descended from apes is an anti-religious propaganda. As Muslims, we are the children of Adam ... It [Darwin’s theory] is an insult to Islam. A blasphemy law should be enacted in this regard.”

The opposition MP in his speech demanded that the government form a commission to find who were behind the inclusion of “such a controversial topic in the textbooks”.

He added, “Germany has a blasphemy law. If necessary, we can have that law in our country, and those involved in anti-religious activities should be prosecuted under it.”

Tipu further said, “No devout Muslim accepts this [Darwin’s theory]. I don’t know whether the government is aware of this ...”

The MP further alleged that it was done deliberately to put the government in a tough spot.

Zakir Hossain, state minister for primary education, AKM Enamul Haque Shamim, deputy minister for water resources, and AL MPs – SM Shahzada, Pankaj Nath, Nazrul Islam Babu, Ashek Ullah Rafiq – among others, took part in the discussion.

UK PM orders probe into ally’s tax affairs

AFP, London

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak yesterday ordered an investigation into a wealthy ally’s murky tax dealings as he again vowed “integrity” in his government after Boris Johnson’s scandal-plagued tenure.

As well as the probe into Conservative party chairman Nadhim Zahawi, Sunak faced hostile questions about the appointment of BBC chairman Richard Sharp, a former banker who acted as a go-between to help funnel a loan to Johnson when he was in 10 Downing Street.



PHOTO: BSS

World Bank Managing Director of Operations Axel Van Trotsenburg calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday. Van Trotsenburg is now on a visit to Dhaka to mark 50 years of partnership between Bangladesh and the World Bank Group.

Ukraine storing arms at nuke power stations

Says Russian spy service; Poland signals intent to send Leopard tanks to Kyiv

AGENCIES

Russia’s foreign intelligence service (SVR) yesterday accused Ukraine of storing Western-supplied arms at nuclear power stations across the country.

In a statement, the SVR said US-supplied HIMARS rocket launchers, air defence systems and artillery ammunition had been delivered to the Rivne nuclear power station in the northwest of Ukraine.

“The Ukrainian armed forces are storing weapons and ammunition provided by the West on the territory of nuclear power plants,” it said, adding that an arms shipment to the Rivne power station had taken place in the last week of December.

Asked about the report yesterday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the claims demonstrated the importance of maintaining dialogue with the United Nations’ nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

However, Peskov said there were currently no plans for a meeting between IAEA head Rafael Grossi and President Vladimir Putin.

Ukraine’s many nuclear power stations have been the focus of attention since the start of

the conflict. Russian forces seized the defunct Chernobyl nuclear power plant less than 48 hours after troops invaded, and also captured the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant – the largest in Europe – early in the war.

Both Kyiv and Moscow have accused each other of shelling Zaporizhzhia, and Ukraine says Russia is using the site as a de facto weapons depot, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, Germany’s Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said her government would not stand in the way if Poland wants to send its Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine, signalling a possible breakthrough for Ukraine as it tries to bolster its forces ahead of an expected new Russian offensive.

Poland said it would seek Berlin’s permission to send Leopard tanks to Ukraine, but was prepared to do so without approval, reports AFP.

Poland already announced earlier this month that it was ready to deliver 14 Leopard tanks to Kyiv but was waiting for a clear statement from Berlin authorising the transfer.

American lawmakers pushed their government on Sunday to export M1 Abrams main battle tanks to Ukraine, saying that even sending a symbolic number would be enough to

‘Only Awami voters will come to vote’ Bogura AL leader tells campaign rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Those who will not vote for the Awami League don’t have to go to the polling stations, said Mahfujul Islam Raj, general secretary of Bogura Sadar Upazila AL, in a campaign rally.

He was campaigning for an AL leader running for the Bogura-6 by-polls.

A video clip of his speech made at the rally held in the hall room of the Gokul Union Parishad on January 6 went viral on social media.

Awami League leaders distributed blankets among the locals there, locals said.

On December 18 last year, five BNP MPs submitted their resignation letters to the Speaker, and the Election Commission declared Bogura Sadar (Bogura-6 constituency) seat vacant.

By-polls to all five

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Three sentenced to life over murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Pabna court yesterday sentenced three men to life term imprisonment for killing a local influential in Sadar upazila in 2008.

The convicts were also fined Tk 20,000 each, in default of which they have to serve another six months in prison.

According to the case statement, Nawjesh Pramanik, head teacher of Dighi Goahailbari Government Primary School; Montu Pramanik, and Saheb Mollah, all residents of Dighi Gohailbari village, killed Mahatab Uddin on March 16, 2008. The convicts had a long-standing dispute over the school property and various other issues with the victim.

Following the incident, Mahatab’s nephew filed a case with Pabna Sadar Police Station, accusing 12 named and 15-20 unnamed persons.

Groundwater depletion in Dhaka 2-3m a year: LGRD minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD Minister Tajul Islam yesterday said in parliament that the underground water level of Dhaka is going down by 2-3m every year, while the rate is 3m in Chattogram city.

In reply to a query from ruling Awami League MP Morshed Alam, the minister also said at present, the average underground water level in Dhaka city is 38m to 82m, depending on areas.

For Chattogram city, the average underground water level is 100m at present.

The LGRD minister said currently Dhaka Wasa is supplying 66 percent of its water from underground, while 34 percent from the surface level.

He also mentioned that the government has taken up a project to construct three big water treatment plants to reduce the dependency on groundwater in Dhaka city by 2025.

The minister said they hope Dhaka Wasa would be able to ensure 70 percent water from surface level, and 30 percent from ground level by 2025.

For Chattogram city, the minister said at present, the rate of water harnessed from underground is eight percent, while the remaining 92 percent of water comes from the surface level.

Arrest warrant against ex-UNO in sexual abuse case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A Tangail court yesterday issued an arrest warrant against a former upazila nirbahi officer of Basail in connection with a case filed against him by a female college student over sexual harassment and cheating last year.

Tangail Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Monira Sultana passed the order after evidence was found against ex-UNO Manzur Hossain during a preliminary investigation by Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI), said Md Rasel Rana, the lawyer of the plaintiff.

The girl filed the case against Manzur Hossain with the district court on June 21 last year. The court later asked the PBI to investigate the case.

Ramp up support for nations hit

FROM PAGE 1

The PM focused on her government’s measures and endeavours to fight the climate change, including projects taken with the finance from Climate Trust Fund to mitigate the climate’s adverse impacts by creating green-belt, afforestation, sustainable housing and livelihood.

She said the world community is responsible for climate change but unfortunately they are not complying with their commitments to assist the climate vulnerable countries.

The World Bank MD praised PM Hasina for making incredible development of Bangladesh during her tenures.

He congratulated the PM on accomplishing massive development. The per capita income in Bangladesh was only some \$50 in 1972, which is now \$2,824, he added.

He said developing countries like Bangladesh need to create employment opportunities for youth to face the current challenges caused by the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

The employment generation is also needed for accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), he added.

He said the World Bank has been beside Bangladesh since 1972 and will remain beside the country.

“I’ve come here to strengthen the World Bank’s partnership with Bangladesh,” said the WB official.

About the development of Bangladesh, Hasina said the country has gained fast development in the last 14 years thanks to the continuation of political stability, the government’s tireless efforts to implement its political visions and the government’s desire to work for the people.

PM’s International Relation Affairs Gower Rizvi, PM’s Ambassador-at-large Mohammad Ziauddin, PM’s Principal Secretary M Tofazzel Hossain Miah, and Senior Secretary Fatima of the Finance Division Yasmin were present.

When more is needed

FROM PAGE 1

remains a burning issue given the government’s half-hearted response now.

“When the government needed to expand its social protection programmes, it did not,” Khondker said.

What is more puzzling is that the government has enough food stock to assist the poor and low-income families in a bigger way.

A food stock of 12 lakh metric tonnes is considered adequate and the government has 19 lakh metric tonnes at present.

“The government should insist on doing more,” said Khondker, also a professor at the University of Dhaka’s economics department.

Yesterday, coarse rice, which is consumed mostly by the poor and low-income people, sold for Tk 46-52 a kilogram in Dhaka city, up 3-4 percent from a year earlier, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

Wheat, another staple, saw its price soar 66 percent to Tk 58-60 per kg.

And it is in wheat distribution that the government has scaled back: by 27.5 percent to 254,272 metric tonnes.

The rise in the import price of wheat following the war in Ukraine appears to have played a role in the lower wheat distribution, according to Hussain.

“But this cannot be an acceptable excuse.”

The authorities could have adjusted the composition of food by increasing the quantity of rice to replace wheat.

“The government has consistently claimed that the public stock of rice never dipped below safe levels. Yet the composition of food was not adjusted.”

There was also no food distribution under the Test Relief and school feeding programmes.

“These tend to reach the poor better than many other welfare and

workfare programmes.”

Open-market sales, the only social assistance for urban households, should have been increased by a large margin, Hussain said.

“We were under the impression this was being scaled up in response to food inflation reaching levels not seen in recent memory.”

Data shows it increased by just 1.3 percent, data shows.

“It appears that the pro-poor elements of public expenditure are eroding at a time when they need to increase very significantly,” Hussain added.

If the authorities face any supply chain disruption, they must ensure the substitute product to fill up the gap, Khondker said, while calling on the government to hunt for other sources like Canada for wheat.

Tapan Kumar Das, director (in-charge) of the department of supply, distribution and marketing of the directorate general of food, acknowledged the lower food distribution, which he blamed on the supply chain disruptions brought on by the pandemic and the Ukraine war.

“Basically, we have a shortage of wheat distribution,” he said, adding that local production accounts for just 12-15 percent of the country’s total requirement.

There is sufficient wheat stock now, Das said.

He, however, denied that the government has cut back on rice distribution this fiscal year. Rather, the government saved about 75,000 tonnes of rice from the food-friendly programme after the authority detected a huge number of fake beneficiaries across the country.

Asked whether the government is considering substituting rice for wheat in the food distribution programmes, he declined to comment.

The food secretary and the director general of DG Food did not respond to The Daily Star’s request for comment.

Sattar’s money

FROM PAGE 1

The Daily Star has a copy of the affidavit in which Sattar mentioned honorarium as a lawmaker as his main source of income. However, in 2018, he mentioned business as his profession with an annual income of Tk 4.52 lakh.

The by-polls to Brahmanbaria-2 (Sarail-Ashuganj) will be held on February 1, according to the schedule announced by the Election Commission.

Sattar, in his wealth statement in 2018, said he had a house worth Tk 10 lakh in Brahmanbaria town.

After four years, he now claims that the value of the house has dropped to Tk 5 lakh, according to his affidavit.

Besides, Sattar said his wife has 40 tolas of gold which she got as wedding gifts and valued it at Tk 40,000.

About criminal records, Sattar said he was accused in two cases filed under the Special Powers Act in 2009 and 2010. But he was acquitted of the cases in 2021.

Sattar, a former adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, was elected lawmaker five times from different constituencies in Brahmanbaria and Cumilla on BNP tickets.

On December 10 last year, the BNP at its Dhaka divisional rally in the capital’s Golapbagh announced that seven of its lawmakers, including Sattar, would resign from parliament.

Subsequently, the MPs submitted their resignations to Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury.

The Parliament Secretariat later issued a gazette notification declaring the seven seats vacant.

On December 18, the EC announced the schedule for the by-polls to six constituencies.

Sattar submitted his resignation letter to the BNP chief’s Gulshan office on December 29, citing personal reasons.

He collected nomination form on January 1 to contest the by-polls as an independent candidate. Hours later, he was removed from all posts of the BNP for “violating party decisions and engaging in anti-party activities”.



# How many more Nadias will it take?

Students take to streets demanding safe road

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of Northern University took to the streets in Kawla area on the capital's Airport Road yesterday to protest the death of their peer Nadia Sultana, who met her demise on Sunday after a bus of Victor Paribahan hit the motorbike she was on.

After staging a demonstration at the university campus, near Dhaka airport, they blocked the roads around 12:15pm to press home their four-point demand – arresting the driver and helper, cancelling the bus company's route permit, compensating the victim's family, and stopping all buses at Kawla bus-stand area.

One of their demands have already been met, as Bhatara police yesterday morning arrested the driver Md Liton, 38, and his helper Abul Khair, 22.

Nadia, 19, a first-semester student of pharmacy department, was the pillion rider on her friend's motorbike. The Malibagh-bound bus hit the bike near Jamuna Future Park around 12:45pm on Sunday. Police seized the bus after the incident.

During the blockade, the students allowed vehicles carrying air passengers and ambulances with patients to pass by. They were seen checking licences of vehicles. The students made police fine a bus for not having a driving

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



After the tragic death of 19-year-old Nadia Sultana, who had just gotten admitted to Northern University, her peers started to demand for justice right away. Yesterday, they occupied Airport Road with their four-point demand, in hopes that no other student meets the same fate because of unsafe roads.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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'The ones responsible never face consequences'

JP lawmaker Firoz Rashid on road accidents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saying that the owners of the buses involved in different road accidents are the police, politicians and powerful people, a Jatiya Party lawmaker yesterday in parliament said they face no consequences of such accidents.

Speaking on a point of order, the opposition MP Kazi Firoz Rashid came down heavily on the government for not taking any punitive actions against those involved in road accidents.

"I don't know if so many people die in road accidents anywhere else in the world," he added.

Highlighting the news published in the newspapers about the recent accident, he said, "Who are these bus owners?"

'Hold direct election for reserved seats' Demand politicians, political analysts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicians and political analysts demanded that direct elections be held for the reserved seats for women in the National Parliament and 10 percent of the general seats for women.

They placed the demand during a discussion arranged by Narigrantha Prabartana at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) auditorium in the capital yesterday.

Former BNP lawmaker Rumeen Farhana, political analyst Prof Dilara Chowdhury, Biplobi Workers Party General Secretary Saiful Haque and GanoAdhikar Parishad's Senior Joint Convener Faruk Hasan were present at the meeting, presided over by Narigrantha Prabartana President Farida Akhter.

Farida Akhter said neither the mainstream opposition parties nor the progressive parties and coalitions are making any noise against the undemocratic system of women's seats in the constitution.

She placed three demands – direct elections for the reserved seats for women, reserved seats for all 64 districts and 10 percent of general seats for women.

"The reserved seats have become a comfort zone or rehabilitation centre for parties participating in the polls," said Rumeen

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

# Under the dirty water, there's a ward

The plight of DNCC wards 39, 40 and 43 under zone-9

**In July 2017, Dhaka North City Corporation took 18 wards under its wing, which were previously under the union parishad system. It divided the newly added wards into 5 zones. While this move came with a promise of development for these wards, the reality after five years is way far from that. They remain as backward as they used to be, if not more. The Daily Star explored the plight of these neglected wards in a five-story series, the first of which starts today with zone-9.**

DIPAN NANDY and ARAFAT RAHMAN

Some of the places remain under stagnant water for years, while some lack basic civic amenities, including proper roads or pure drinking water. None of these neighbourhoods has a single playground. Such are the states of the three wards in zone-9 of Dhaka North City Corporation.

In July 2017, DNCC took 18 new wards under its wings. However, even after five years, people in many of these wards are still bereft of developmental activities. The condition of wards 39, 40 and 43 is perhaps the worst. So



much so, the residents said they were better off under the union parishad system.

**WATERLOGGING, A CONSTANT**

Monsoon or not, the entire stretch of the road from Nururchala Bazar to Sayeednagar in ward-39 remains under stagnant water, thanks to the poor drainage system. Residents said they have been complaining to the local councillor for over two years but to no avail.

This newspaper found that the road was



under ankle-to-knee-deep black water, with a horrible stench. Locals said the condition deteriorates whenever it rains and their sufferings cross every limit during the monsoon.

Two rickshaws were seen stuck in the muddy water, while pedestrians were walking by covering their noses and mouth. What's worse is that when it rains, the dirty water enters households and local shops.

Jahangir Alam, a homoeopathy doctor, said it has been four years since the road remained under water.

"Every monsoon, my chamber in a ground floor room remains submerged for two months," he said.

Md Kutub Uddin, a local shopkeeper said, "The condition worsened in the last two years. We got nothing but empty promises from the authorities in this regard."

"Anything other than rickshaws or cycles cannot enter this road. Let alone conducting business, it's difficult to even breathe in this place," said local contractor Shahidur Rahman.

**OF DENGUE AND DISEASES**



PHOTO: ARAFAT RAHMAN

The stagnant water not only emits a foul smell but also poses a threat to water-borne diseases. Locals said people living in nearby areas often suffer from different skin diseases.

Besides, it's a breeding ground for mosquitoes, meaning dengue fever is a menace for dwellers of this ward.

Khairul Islam Liton, a local, said he has just recovered from dengue recently. Earlier, four out of five members of his family, including three children, suffered from the fever within a month.

Meanwhile, in the Vatara area under ward-40, there are some visible developments, which include wider roads and taller buildings, all through private corporations.

However, after strolling through the streets for an hour, these correspondents observed scenarios of poor civic amenities and despair of residents in Vatara Goli, Vatara High School, Solmaid Purbopara, Ali Market road and Noyanagar areas. Roads in these places are narrow and have poor drainage systems, which in turn causes gridlocks and waterlogging.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

# 11 CASES AGAINST KHALEDA Charge framing hearing on May 15

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday set May 15 for hearing on charge framing against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in 11 cases.

Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court adjourned the hearing and fixed the new date, said Additional Public Prosecutor Tapash Kumar Pal.

The adjournment came following petitions submitted by defence citing different reasons. Khaleda, who is out of jail following an executive order from the government, is now unwell and staying at her Gulshan residence.

Among the 11 cases, 10 were filed in the first three months of 2015 over arson attacks, while the other one was filed with a Dhaka court on charge of making seditious comments on freedom fighters and martyrs of the Liberation War.

Three corruption cases against Khaleda – Gatco, Niko and Boropukuria coalmine – are now pending with three other special courts in Dhaka.

Two more cases are pending with the Second Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

# BNP-Jamaat 'clique' conspiring ahead of polls: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP-Jamaat and the far left and right quarters are conspiring as the election inches closer, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque told parliament yesterday.

Mozammel, who is in charge of parliamentary affairs for the Prime Minister's Office, said this in response to a question from Awami League MP M Abdul Latif.

In a scripted answer, the minister said a section of people are trying to create unrest. "Jamaat-BNP... the far left, far right, associated with it... have become active in conspiracy ahead of the election. They do not see the achievements of Awami League."

The minister said the AL government wants to deal with all conspiracies with the support of people. Besides, he mentioned that social-harmony committees have been formed at union, upazila and district levels. The PM wanted to form these committees comprising people from all classes and professions.

# Nursing bill passed in parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The "Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (amendment) Bill 2023" was passed in parliament yesterday.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque placed the bill which was passed by voice vote. As per the objective of the bill, it proposes bringing an amendment to the act titled "Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council Bill-2016".

According to the bill passed yesterday, any person willing to use his or her degrees in midwifery education and nursing like a nursing diploma and postgraduate in nursing received from any institution at home and abroad must be recognised by Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council.

As per the draft law, taking up the profession of nursing, midwifery and their related professions would be prohibited without registration with the council. According to the bill, anyone taking up the profession of nursing and midwifery without a valid registration will have to face a maximum of three years of imprisonment or a maximum Tk 1 lakh fine or both.

# DENGUE FEVER 15 hospitalised in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 dengue patients were hospitalised across the country in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of them, nine are from outside of Dhaka.

With the new cases, the total number of dengue patients rose to 489, while total number of deaths this year remains at six, according to DGHS.

Some 53 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment, of whom, 26 are from outside the capital.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
JANUARY 24

| Fazr         | Zohr  | Asr  | Maghrib | Esha |
|--------------|-------|------|---------|------|
| AZAN 5:30    | 12:45 | 4:15 | 5:43    | 7:15 |
| JAMAAAT 6:05 | 1:15  | 4:30 | 5:47    | 7:45 |

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



The capital's Sher-e-Bangla area hosts a number of hospitals, and because of that, private ambulances remain parked on both sides of the main road, in front of the healthcare facilities, to receive patients at any moment. As a result, patients in-turn are the worst sufferers, as the road remains gridlocked most of the time, hampering their smooth entrance to the hospitals. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# CHILD MARRIAGE US embassy, Brac launch 'STAR' project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To strengthen the leadership abilities of adolescent girls from climate-vulnerable groups, Brac and the US embassy in Dhaka yesterday partnered for a vocational training programme for girls prone to early and forced marriage.

The launching event of the project titled "Reducing Child Marriage – Skills Training for Advancing Resources (STAR)" was held at the Brac Centre Inn of the capital.

Tasmiah Rahman, associate director, Brac Skills Development Programme, said the project will provide a one-year long training.

SEE PAGE 4 COL



## Mobile court

FROM PAGE 5

investigate the incident. The committee found the waterbody to be filled up... Abdul Halim was told to clear the canal several times, but he did not pay heed to it," the UNO said.

"Abdul's two sons and their men obstructed the operation of the mobile court under my leadership. Bricks were thrown at the members of the mobile court and a cocktail was exploded. They even tried to attack me. At least nine people were taken into custody in this incident."

Later, Nayem Hasan and Saiful Hasan, Abdul Halim's two sons, were sentenced to three months' rigorous imprisonment. "Seven more detainees were released under the custody of the local chairman and parents as they are school students," the UNO added.

## On the run

FROM PAGE 5

along with Ashraf, Rezaul Islam, Torikul Islam, and Khokon Dhali, killed one Shukkur Ali. In 2002, the court gave life imprisonment to Sohrab, Ashraf, and Khokon, and exempted Rezaul and Torikul.

## Flat For Sale

2650 Sft 3RD Floor Of 6TH  
Storied Building In Baridhara  
DOHS South And Road Facing.  
Contact : 01866552650

# NSU welcomes 2,000 freshers for spring



### STAR REPORT

The orientation programme of spring semester of North South University was held on its campus yesterday, said a press release.

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh was present on the occasion.

The event was presided over by NSU Vice Chancellor Professor Atiqul Islam.

Seema Ahmad, Shahriar Kamal, and Yasmin Kamal – members of the Board of Trustees of NSU – were also present.

Some 2,000 students were admitted to the upcoming spring semester for undergraduate (honors) courses in 16 departments across the university's four schools. Additionally, 48 students received merit-based scholarships based on their outstanding admission test results.

Other speakers included pro-VC Prof M Ismail Hossain and deans of the four schools. The programme was moderated by Dr Nazia Manzoor, assistant professor of the Department of English and Modern Languages; Asif Bin Ali, faculty member of the Media and Journalism Programme, and deputy director of the Public Relations Office at NSU.

Prof Sk Tawfique M Haque, chairman, Department of Political Science and Sociology, welcomed 23 new students of the Media and Journalism Programme.

## Under the dirty

FROM PAGE 3

No government authorities, including Wasa or DNCC, took any initiatives of infrastructural developments in these places, alleged residents.

When these correspondents reached ward-43 – which consists of 10 localities, including Kathaldia, Bagdia, Amadia, Bagdia, Tolna, Dhelna and Mostol – they could not believe these areas were part of the country's capital. Most of the roads (15 km out of 25 km) were not concrete.

Locals said they have not seen any developmental projects in the area in the five years since it came under DNCC's jurisdiction.

"We could at least see some developments when we were under the union parishad. We received nothing but assurances in the past five years," said Sushmoy Biswas, a Kathaldi resident.

All the residents this

newspaper talked to claimed that they are living in inhumane conditions due to the shortage of pure drinking water. They said their demands for clean drinking water have repeatedly fallen on the deaf ears by the authorities.

**THE AUTHORITIES' TAKE**

Contacted, Councillor of ward-43 Shariful Islam Bhuiya said, "These sufferings would not last long, as we have already started developing a three-kilometre long road along with a proper drainage system."

"What can we do if we are not given any funds or budget to run development works?" asked Nazrul Islam Dhali, councillor of ward-40.

Residents of ward-43 alleged that Councillor Shahiul Islam lives elsewhere with his family.

Shafiqul, however, denied this particular allegation.

## US embassy, Brac

FROM PAGE 3

Katrina Fotovat, senior official to the Secretary of State in the Office of Global Women's Issues, US Embassy, attended the event as chief guest.

Brac, Unicef, ILO, and Bureau of Non-Formal Education established the

STAR project in 2012.

Helen LaFave, deputy chief of mission, US Embassy in Dhaka, Brac Executive Director Asif Saleh, Safi Rahman Khan, director (Education, Skills Development and Migration), Brac, also spoke.

## Hold direct election

FROM PAGE 3

Farhana. Prof Dilara Chowdhury said, "Our political parties have no commitment. Direct elections should be held for 33 percent of the seats."

"Women suffer the most due to the lack of voting rights. It should be made mandatory to nominate women in 15 to 20 percent of the general seats," said Saiful Haque.

## IUB partners

FROM PAGE 5

climate change.

The project is expected to fill the knowledge gaps on climate change issues that exist in local, regional, institutional and national levels, and

thereby capacitate multiple actors such as researchers, the government, NGOs, community-based organisations, the private sector, think tanks, schools, etc to take up leadership in climate action.

## How many more

FROM PAGE 3

licence.

Additional police were deployed in the area to avoid any untoward incident. Severe traffic congestion was witnessed on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway due to the blockade.

Later, the students left the road around 1:15pm and went to their campus to join a doa-mahfil at 2:00pm.

At the protest, Saifuddin Siddique, a student of the pharmacy department, said three of their demands are yet to be met. They would give authorities a week to fulfil them. If they fail to do so, the students would announce another demonstration.

## Sust doubles

FROM PAGE 5

deposit Tk 5,000 initially, we thought the final fee will not be more than the previous year. However, it has doubled, posing a huge burden for middle-income families like us."

Another admission aspirant of the department of forestry said, "The university authority should have informed us that they have plans to double the admission fee. This is not a student-friendly decision and they must consider it again."

Sust Treasurer Prof Anwarul Islam said, "Sust has always charged lower admission fees than other universities in the cluster. As per the government's instruction to reduce expenditure and increase income, the academic council decided to increase the fee."

"I don't think the increased fee is unreasonable. However, some students may face problems with this decision initially," he added.

## The ones responsible never

FROM PAGE 3

Most of them are police officers and politicians. The chief whip of our party is sitting behind me. He can tell who owns these buses."

"Buses ply the roads recklessly without any consequence. The drivers don't have a licence. We are yet to educate them

and show them the right direction," said Firoz.

"What kind of smart Bangladesh we will build with this situation prevailing in the country?" he asked.

The JP lawmaker said the government has made a lot of improvements to the roads but there are still 20

to 30-tonne trucks running on the roads at night, in exchange for a bribe.

"These accidents would not have taken place had we checked whether the buses and the drivers have the required papers or not. We never check the fitness status of the vehicles," he added.

## They can uphold country's

FROM PAGE 5

not be gained without their involvement.

He said as part of the "World Conference Series-2023", they will hold events across the globe throughout the year.

Former principal staff officer of the Armed Forces division Lt Gen (retd) Mainul Islam said young diplomats should be part of Bangladesh's contribution to UN peacekeeping missions.

The UN missions are an opportunity for Bangladesh

to uphold its positive image across the globe, said former inspector general of Bangladesh Police AKM Shahidul Hoque.

Former Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi Arabia Golam Moshir urged Bangladesh mission officials in different countries to ensure better services for expatriates.

Former chief of air staff Air Chief Marshal (retd) Masihuzzaman Serniabat, former chief of Bangladesh Navy Admiral

(retd) AMMM Aurangzeb Chowdhury, International Organisation for Migration's Chief of Mission Abdusattor Esocv, and British-Bangladeshi politicians Faruk Choudhury and Henna Chowdhury, among others, spoke at the conference.

At the event, the organisers awarded 10 commercial banks for receiving the highest amount of remittance in 2022.



### Chittagong Dry Dock Limited

Bangladesh Navy  
East Patenga, Chattogram, Bangladesh  
Phone: +88 02333301117, Mobile: +8801769744450  
Fax: +88 02333301123, E-mail: [commerce@cddl.gov.bd](mailto:commerce@cddl.gov.bd), Website: [www.cddl.gov.bd](http://www.cddl.gov.bd)  
23.02.1565.341.53.006.23.431 Dated: 23 January 2023

### Invitation for Open Tender


|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Procuring entity name        | Chittagong Dry Dock Ltd.   |
| 2. Invitation for               | Purchase of CNC Plasma & Flame Cutting Machine with Standard Accessories – 01 (One) Set<br>Note: Detail Technical Specifications mentioned in schedule |
| 3. Invitation Reference No.     | 23.02.1565.341.53.006.23.432 Date: 23 January 2023   |
| 4. Tender closing date and time | 09 March 2023 at 12.15pm.  |
| 5. Tender opening date & time   | 09 March 2023 at 12.30pm.  |

N.B. All other relevant terms and conditions are available at CDDL website ([www.cddl.gov.bd](http://www.cddl.gov.bd))

**Head of Commerce & Purchase Department**

  
 For Managing Director

GD-109



### এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড

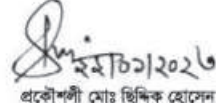
(বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম কর্পোরেশন এর একটি অঙ্গ প্রতিষ্ঠান)  
উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম-৪২০৪

### বিষয়ঃ বাক এলপিজি বিক্রির দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি


বাংলাদেশ পেট্রোলিয়াম কর্পোরেশন এর অঙ্গ প্রতিষ্ঠান এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড (এলপিগিএল) কর্তৃক সিঙ্গেল গ্যাস সিস্টেম লিমিটেড এর আগতধীন হবিগঞ্জ জেলার রশিদপুরস্থ ক্যাটালাইটিক রিসার্মিং ইউনিটে (CRU) মজুতকৃত/মজুতবা এলপিজি আগামী ০১ (এক) বছরের জন্য সরাসরি বিক্রয়/সরবরাহের নিমিত্তে সরকার কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত বেসরকারি পন্থায় পরিচালিত এলপিজি বটলিং প্রাইভেট/পাবলিক এলপিজি প্রাইভেট/পাবলিক স্টেশন পরিচালনাকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

| ডেলিভারি পয়েন্ট  | তফসিলের মূল্য (অফারতথ্যে) | জামানতের টাকা (ফেরতযোগ্য)   | দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়    | দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময় |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| রশিদপুরস্থ ক্যাটালাইটিক রিসার্মিং ইউনিট (CRU) থেকে বাক এলপিজি বিক্রি। | ৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার টাকা) | ২০,০০,০০০/- (বিশ লক্ষ টাকা) | ২০/০২/২০২৩ ১৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত | ২০/০২/২০২৩ ১৪:০৫ ঘটিকায়  |

- ১। বিজ্ঞপ্তির নিয়ম ও শর্তাদি সম্বলিত দরপত্র সিঙ্গেল সকল কার্টনিসে নান্দ মূল্যে ক। এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড, উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম-৪২০৪ এবং ষ। এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড, গোলাপগঞ্জ, সিঙ্গেল থেকে ১৯/০২/২০২৩ তারিখ বেলা ১৬:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত ক্রয় করা যাবে।
- ২। দরপত্র খোলার দিন কোন দরপত্র বিক্রি করা হবে না।
- ৩। সীলমোহরকৃত দরপত্র এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড, উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম-৪২০৪ এর সংশ্লিষ্ট টেন্ডার বক্সে উল্লিখিত তারিখ ও সময়ে দাখিল করতে হবে।
- ৪। দরপত্রদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) এলপিগিএল এর চট্টগ্রাম কার্যালয়ে যথাসময়ে দরপত্র খোলা হবে।
- ৫। অনিবার্য কারণে নির্ধারিত দিনে দরপত্র গ্রহণ সম্ভব না হলে পরবর্তী অফিস খোলার দিন উল্লিখিত স্থানে ও সময়ে দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও খোলা হবে।
- ৬। দরপত্র তফসিল [www.bpc.gov.bd](http://www.bpc.gov.bd) এবং [www.lpgl.gov.bd](http://www.lpgl.gov.bd) থেকে ডাউনলোড করা যাবে, তবে ডাউনলোডকৃত তফসিলের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র দাখিল করার ক্ষেত্রে যথানিয়মে তফসিল ক্রয় বাবদ মূল রশিদ জমা দিতে হবে।
- ৭। এ বিষয়ে কোন তথ্যাদি জানতে সংশ্লিষ্ট কর্মকর্তার মোবাইল নম্বর- ০১৭৯৯-২৪৯১৯০/০১৭১৯-০৭৪৪৬৬-৬৬ মোবাইলযোগ করা যাবে।
- ৮। এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীতপক্ষে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

  
**প্রকৌশলী মোঃ হিদ্বিক হোসেন**  
 উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক (চট্টগ্রাম প্রান্ত)  
 এলপি গ্যাস লিমিটেড  
 উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম  
 ই-মেইলঃ [lpgaslimited@gmail.com](mailto:lpgaslimited@gmail.com)

জিডি-১০৭



### Bangladesh Land Port Authority

Sher-e Banglanagar, Agargaon  
Dhaka-1207  
[www.bsbk.gov.bd](http://www.bsbk.gov.bd)

Memo No.- 18.15.0000.022.56.035.21 - 282 Dated: 22/01/2023

## e-Tender Notice

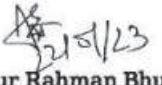
Only e-Tender shall be accepted covered National e-GP portal and submission of any offline/hard copies shall be rejected at once.

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


The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents of following Packages shall have to deposit online through registered Bank's branches as designed of national e-GP system.

| Sl. No. | Package No.               | Name of work  | Tender ID | Last Date & Time of Selling Documents | Last Date & Time of Submission Documents | Tender/ Proposal Opening Date & Time |
|---------|---------------------------|---|-----------|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1.      | BLPA/Tra/eGP/05/2022-2023 | Appointment of cargo handling Contractor (Manually) for Benapole Land Port, Jashore Group-A | 774853    | 26.02.2023 at 14:00                   | 26.02.2023 at 13:30                      | 26.02.2023 at 14:30                  |
| 2.      | BLPA/Tra/eGP/06/2022-2023 | Appointment of cargo handling Contractor (Manually) for Benapole Land Port, Jashore Group-B | 774928    | 26.02.2023 at 13:30                   | 26.02.2023 at 14:00                      | 26.02.2023 at 14:45                  |
| 3.      | BLPA/Tra/eGP/07/2022-2023 | Appointment of cargo handling Contractor (Manually) for Benapole Land Port, Jashore Group-C | 779154    | 26.02.2023 at 14:00                   | 26.02.2023 at 14:30                      | 26.02.2023 at 15:00                  |

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

  
**(Md Masudur Rahman Bhuiyan)**  
 Director (Traffic)  
 Phone: 02-41025306  
 E-mail: [directortraffic@bsbk.gov.bd](mailto:directortraffic@bsbk.gov.bd)

GD-108



### গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

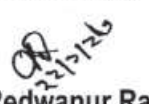
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ এর কার্যালয়  
সড়ক বিভাগ, শরীয়তপুর  
☎- ০৬০১-৬১৪০৬  
ই-মেইলঃ [eesar@rhd.gov.bd](mailto:eesar@rhd.gov.bd)

স্মারক নংঃ ৩৫.০১.৮৬৬৯.৪৬৮.০৭.০০২-২২-৮৫ তারিখঃ ২২-০১-২০২৩

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

| Tender ID No. | Package No.              | Name of work/package description   | Last selling date & time | Opening date & time | Remarks            |
|---------------|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 780096        | e-GP/13/EE/SRD/2022-2023 | Re-Construction of Culvert Single vent Two Nos. 2x3.00mx3.00mx10.25 RCC Box-Culvert at 5th (Ch. 4+114) & 10th (Ch. 9+745) km of Shariatpur-Gonganagor-Mongalmazirghat Road (Z-8065) under Shariatpur Road Division, during the year-2022-2023. | 06-02-2023 16:00am       | 07-02-2023 14:00pm  | Only online tender |

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

  
**Bhuiya Redwanur Rahman**  
 ID No. 602254  
 Executive Engineer (c.c.), RHD  
 Road Division, Shariatpur

GD-115



## CANAL RECOVERY

## Mobile court attacked in Barishal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

A mobile court came under attack by a group of grabbers in Barishal while conducting drives to recover a grabbed canal yesterday.

The incident took place at Arjikalika Pur area in Babuganj upazila of the district some time in the afternoon.

Two of the grabbers were given three months rigorous imprisonment in connection with the attack and cocktail explosion, said officials.

Seven others, who were also involved in the attack, were released as they were minor, said Babuganj Upazila Nirbahi Officer Nusrat Fatima.

“Abdul Halim built a structure on the century-old canal next to his house in the upazila’s Chadpasha union. In response to the locals’ request, a committee was formed to SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



A policeman grabs the backpack of a student protester, who was demonstrating in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday along with others, demanding a chance to sit for admission for a second time at public universities. The students staged a demonstration on the road for an hour. Police then dispersed the crowd using force.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## They can uphold country's image Say speakers about Bangladeshis in UN missions, expatriates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshis in UN peacekeeping missions and expatriates are two groups that can uphold the country's positive image across the globe, said speakers at a conference yesterday.

They said this at the inauguration of “World Conference Series 2023” on the theme “Branding Bangladesh beyond Bangladesh”, organised by Centre for NRB at a Dhaka hotel.

Addressing the conference as chief guest, Prime Minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashur Rahman said Bangladeshis who are going abroad for employment need to know the destination countries' rules and regulations properly.

He said Bangladeshi workers often have to pay hefty amounts for their migration, stressing that such costs should not be “unnecessarily high”.

He stressed on ensuring services for Bangladeshi expatriates so that they can remit money home at low cost.

The necessity of remittance appears to be “even more important” amid the economic pressure Bangladesh is facing, he said, adding that remittance is crucial since the country's import bills are higher than export earnings.

He further said illegal transactions, like through hundi, not only negatively affects remittance but also creates challenges in maintaining exchange rate.

In his opening remarks, MS Shekil Chowdhury, chairperson of Centre for NRB, said about 1.5 crore Bangladeshi expatriates live in over 160 countries, and that “positive image for Bangladesh” will SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## 2 top militants of new outfit held

Claims Rab after arresting them in Cox's Bazar

STAR REPORT

Rapid Action Battalion yesterday claimed to have arrested two members -- the military-wing commander and the explosives expert -- of the newly surfaced militant outfit “Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya” from a place adjoining Kutupalong Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar, after a gunfight.

The arrestees are commander Mashukur Rahman, who goes by the aliases Ronobir and Masud, and expert on improvised explosive devices (IED) Abul Bashir Mridha, who goes by the alias Alam, Rab said.

Mashukur Rahman is also a member of the “majlish e-shura (policy-making body)” of the militant organisation.

Rab seized one foreign-made pistol, two guns, three pistol magazines, 111 rounds of bullets, 11 cartridges, one blank cartridge, one phone and Tk 2.57 lakh during the raid.

Based on information from Maruf Ahmed alias Manik, deputy chief of the outfit's military wing, Rab members launched an operation at Block A of Rohingya Camp 7 around 5:00am. The drive continued till 10:00am.

During a raid in the hills of Bandarban and Rangamati on

October 20 last year, Rab arrested seven members of the outfit, including Manik, and three members of Kuki-Chin National Front.

During that time, Mashukur and Mridha moved to the nearby hills, sensing the presence of the elite-force members.

“As the Rab members started the operation there [camp-7], the armed men opened fire on them. Rab also fired back,” said Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab Legal and Media Wing, at a briefing on the spot after the operation.

At one point, the two militants tried to escape when Rab arrested them, he added.

Moin said led by Mashukur, the militant outfit has been motivating youths to join militancy and providing weapons training.

He said so far 38 people of the militant organisation have been arrested.

Law enforcers will grill the arrestees to collect detailed information about the outfit and its activities.

Replying to a query, the Rab director said they were working to find out why the outfit members came to the Rohingya camp, and what are the connections between the militants and Rohingya people.

**As the Rab members started the operation there [camp-7], the armed men opened fire on them. Rab also fired back. At one point the two militants tried to escape when the Rab members arrested them.**

KHANDAKER AL MOIN

Rab Legal and Media Wing Director

## IUB partners with Sweden for climate action

STAR REPORT

Sweden and Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) have launched a four-year partnership to strengthen climate action in Bangladesh, said a press release.

Tanweer Hasan, vice chancellor of IUB, and Maria Stridsman, head of cooperation and deputy head of mission of the Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka, yesterday signed the agreement on behalf of the two parties.

The project, “Capacity Strengthening of Multi-actors to Limit Climate Change Impacts and Enhance Resilience”, will be implemented by the International Centre for Climate Change and Development of IUB.

The cooperation also aims to improve collaborations among actors to develop common and coherent approaches to address

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Sust doubles admission fees

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sparkling criticisms, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) almost doubled its fee for undergraduate admission for the 2021-22 session scheduled for January 23-25.

The fee has increased from last year's Tk 8,060 to Tk 15,000 this year.

The move has been met with criticisms among admission aspirants, who think many students have been thrown into uncertainty regarding their education amid the financial crisis with this move.

However, the university administration said the academic council has taken this decision to incorporate the university's cost structure, considering the admission fees of other universities under the cluster of 22 GST (General and Science-Technology) universities.

After completing initial admission processing, the university recently declared its date for final admission. However, out of 1,666 seats in three units, 108 seats remain vacant.

In the notification of the final admission circular, the admission committee asked students to deposit another Tk 10,000 by January 23-25. The circular also mentioned that the Tk 5,000 initially deposited by students will be adjusted accordingly.

Prof Md Rashed Talukder, head of the admission committee, said, “The academic council has fixed the admission fee and informed us. I think there will be no impact on the admission of students due to the increased fee as other universities charge even more.”

Seeking anonymity, an admission aspirant of the department of statistics said, “When we were asked to SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Rangpur Medical College Hospital director transferred

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Following the agitations and 24-hour ultimatum issued by interns and fourth-grade employees, the director of Rangpur Medical College Hospital was transferred yesterday.

The transfer order was issued in a notification signed by Alamgir Kabir, senior assistant secretary of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, yesterday afternoon by the order of the president.

The director, Shariful Hasan, has been posted as divisional director (health) in Rangpur division, as per the notice.

Earlier, intern doctors and fourth-grade employees of the hospital staged a demonstration demanding removal of the director, accusing him of corruption and mismanagement.

After the protest, they handed over a memorandum to various officials, including the president of the hospital's health committee and local MP.

The protesters had then issued a 24-hour ultimatum. There are around 266 intern doctors at the hospital on duty round the clock, but they hardly got any better service from the authorities.

The interns had alleged that many of them still do not have their identity cards. Also, there is an accommodation and water crisis for the interns at the hostels.

These issues have been placed before the director several times, but things remain unchanged, Kishor Hasan, general secretary of the Intern Doctors Parishad of the hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday.

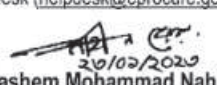
Shariful Hasan could not be contacted for comments.

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| Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD   |                                  |   |                          |                     |                     |  |
| Munshiganj Road Division  |                                  |   |                          |                     |                     |  |
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| 2   | 772197, 41/e-GP/Mundiv/2022-2023 | Construction of Vehicle Shed at Munshiganj Division office compound under Munshiganj Road Division, during the year 2022-2023.  | 05/02/2023 17:00         | 06/02/2023 15:05    | 06/02/2023 15:05    |  |
| 3   | 772199, 43/e-GP/Mundiv/2022-2023 | Supplying Local Sand, Sylhet Sand, Stone Chips (14mm & 20mm down grade), 1st Class Bricks/P.J Bricks & Fire Wood for Routine Maintenance works at different roads of Munshiganj Road Sub-Division under Munshiganj Road Division, during the year 2022-2023.  | 05/02/2023 17:00         | 06/02/2023 15:10    | 06/02/2023 15:10    |  |
| 4   | 781813, 47/e-GP/Mundiv/2022-2023 | Emergency Supply, Fitting & Fixing of C.C Camera with monitoring system for Munshiganj Division office under Munshiganj Road Division, during the year 2022-2023.   | 05/02/2023 17:00         | 06/02/2023 15:20    | 06/02/2023 15:20    |  |
| 5   | 781784, 49/e-GP/Mundiv/2022-2023 | Repairing & Renewing the Cement Plaster, Painting, Weather Coat & Sanitary work etc. at Staff Shed for Munshiganj Road Sub-Division office under Munshiganj Road Division, during the year 2022-2023.   | 05/02/2023 17:00         | 06/02/2023 15:15    | 06/02/2023 15:15    |  |

1. The above tenders are online tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

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**Dewan Abul Kashem Mohammad Nahin Reza**  
 ID No. 602143  
 Executive Engineer, RHD  
 Road Division, Munshiganj

GD-114

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| 01  | 779105        | OTM                | e-Tender/ PEDP4/ MLB/JUR/ 2022-23/ W17.01237 | Major Maintenance of Dakshin Sagarnal GPS, Belagaon GPS, Jangalia GPS & Ruthna Tea Estate GPS | 08-Feb-2023 17:00                          | 09-Feb-2023 14:00                      |

This is on an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

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**Noni Gopal Das**  
 Upazila Engineer  
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 E-mail: [uk.juri@lged.gov.bd](mailto:uk.juri@lged.gov.bd)

GD-112



# Invest in the future by focusing on education

SARAH BINTAY SHAKHAWAT

Despite being small in terms of geography, Bangladesh currently ranks 8th in terms of population. Additionally, it is currently experiencing a demographic dividend, with 65.6% of its population being of working age. In order to turn this large

strides in increasing access to primary education in recent years. The Annual Primary School Census 2021 reports that nearly 98% of primary-school-aged children are enrolled in school, indicating near-universal access to primary education. Additionally, Bangladesh has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary schools, with

the Bangladesh Education Statistics 2021 report, there was a 6% decrease in secondary school completion rates for girls and a corresponding increase in dropout rates from 2020 to 2021. One major factor contributing to this trend is early marriages, which have become more prevalent as households have faced financial difficulties during

23, only 1.83% of the country's GDP is allocated for education, which falls short of the recommended minimum of 2% according to Prof. Serajul Islam Choudhury. He also points out that the budget that is allocated is not being implemented properly.

### Quality of education

Bangladesh boasts a literacy rate of 74.91%, but a report by UNICEF (2022) shows that only 34% of third graders in the country can read proficiently, and only 18% can do basic math. The prolonged school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have greatly impacted these young learners' foundations. However, it is important to note that the education challenges faced by children in Bangladesh predate the pandemic.

Bangladesh is on the brink of the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR), which calls for its citizens to possess a diverse set of skills, including digital literacy, ICT knowledge, emotional intelligence, analytical thinking, etc. to be able to compete in the global economy. To fully participate in this revolution, the country must re-evaluate its education system and ensure that it meets the demands of the 4IR.

Private universities have played a crucial role in producing graduates with the necessary skills and competencies. However, recent complaints have emerged that these institutions have become mere degree-issuing machines. Graduates are facing difficulty in getting employed and employers are expressing their dissatisfaction with the lack of suitably skilled candidates.

Dr. Md. Anwarul Kabir, Vice Chancellor of the State University of Bangladesh, emphasizes the importance of improving the quality of education in the country. He suggests investing more in labs, research, and quality textbooks in all universities in order to reach the level of success of countries like South Korea. He also points out that a well-educated population is essential for achieving the goal of a developed Bangladesh

by 2041, and that failure to provide quality education will hinder progress.

The quality of education is closely tied to the quality of the learning environment. Public universities have traditionally been a source of well-educated individuals, but due to factors such as politicization, haphazard expansion, and inadequate facilities, the standard of these environments has declined.

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Dhaka, Professor Dr. Md. Akhtaruzzaman, notes that the situation has improved significantly from what it was 20 to 25 years ago. He acknowledges that it is a continuous effort to improve education and that the country is still catching up with technological advancements. However, he expresses optimism that in 10 years, the country will reach its desired destination.

### Next steps

Education is considered to be the great equaliser, yet in Bangladesh, the three streams of education (English medium, Bangla medium, and Madrassa) are a significant weakness in the education system. According to Prof. Serajul Islam Choudhury, these streams are widening and deepening class divisions and undermining national unity.

He also highlights that quality education is impossible without dedicated and talented teachers. He suggests that teachers be given proper allowances and the respect they deserve in society and government should create a sustainable and promising career path for them.

In conclusion, the development of Bangladesh is heavily dependent on its ability to tap into the potential of its population and turn them into valuable human resources, which can only be achieved through quality education. Therefore, investing in education is the key to investing in people, and ultimately, prosperity.

*Sarah Bintay Shakawat is a journalist at The Daily Star.*



PHOTO: STAR

population into a valuable resource, Bangladesh must invest in its people, and one essential way to do that is through providing proper education. This aligns with the theme of this year's International Education Day, "Invest in People, Prioritize Education"

### Current scenario

Bangladesh has made significant

49.5% of girls enrolled in primary and 54.92% in secondary schools.

While the progress in primary education is commendable, the trend of students dropping out at secondary and tertiary levels is a significant concern. The prolonged school closures caused by the pandemic have exacerbated this issue. According to

the pandemic.

Additionally, a report by the University Grants Commission indicates that 2.49 lakh university students have dropped out between 2020 and 2021. The lack of attention from the government to revamp the education sector is also concerning. As per the budget for the fiscal year 2022-



## মাইলস্টোন কলেজ

৩০ ও ৪৪ গরিব-ই-নেওয়াজ এডিনিউ, সেক্টর-১১ এবং ডিয়াবাড়ি (মেন্টোরেল স্টেশন-১ সংলগ্ন), তুরাগ, উত্তরা মডেল টাউন, ঢাকা-১২৩০। [www.milestonecollege.com](http://www.milestonecollege.com), [www.milestonecollege.edu.bd](http://www.milestonecollege.edu.bd)

• শ্রেষ্ঠত্বের স্বীকৃতি: ২০০৮ সালে ঢাকা বোর্ড কর্তৃক শ্রেষ্ঠ শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান হিসেবে স্বীকৃতিপ্রাপ্ত এবং ISO 9001:2015 সনদপ্রাপ্ত।

• এইচএসসি, এসএসসি, জেএসসি এবং পিএসসি পরীক্ষার ফলাফল (বাংলা মাধ্যম ও ইংরেজি ভাষায়):

| এইচএসসি | ২০২১ সালে পরীক্ষা দেয় ২৮৭৮ জন। পাসের হার ১০০%, জিপিএ-৫ অর্জন করে ১৮২৯ জন যা সর্বাধিক সংখ্যক শিক্ষার্থী নিয়ে শতভাগ পাসের এক অনন্য রেকর্ড। ২০০৯ এবং ২০১৪ সালে ঢাকা বোর্ডে যথাক্রমে ১০ম ও ৭ম স্থান অর্জন করে।   |
|---------|--|
| এসএসসি  | ২০২২ সালে ১৬৭৯ জন পরীক্ষার্থী অংশগ্রহণ করে, পাসের হার ৯৯.৮২%। জিপিএ-৫ অর্জন করে ১২৫০ জন পরীক্ষার্থী। এসএসসিতে ২০০৯, ২০১৩ এবং ২০১৪ সালে ঢাকা বোর্ডে যথাক্রমে ৫ম, ১০ম ও ৪র্থ স্থান অর্জন করে। তথ্যানুযায়ী, ২০২০ সালে এসএসসিতে শতভাগ পাসের ভিত্তিতে ঢাকা মহানগরের শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানগুলোর মধ্যে মাইলস্টোন কলেজের অবস্থান প্রথম। |
| জেএসসি  | ২০১৯ সালে শতভাগ পাসসহ জিপিএ-৫ অর্জন করে ৫৮৯ জন। ২০১৭ সালে শতভাগ পাসসহ জিপিএ-৫ অর্জন করে ৮৪৮ জন। জেএসসিতে ২০১০, ২০১২ এবং ২০১৩ সালে ঢাকা বোর্ডে যথাক্রমে ১৩তম, ৭ম ও ৪র্থ স্থান অর্জন করে।  |
| পিএসসি  | ২০১৯ সালে ১১৮১ জন পরীক্ষার্থী অংশগ্রহণ করে, শতভাগ পাসসহ জিপিএ-৫ অর্জন করে ১১৩৮ জন। জিপিএ-৫ অর্জনের হার ৯৬.৩৬%। ২০১১ ও ২০১২ সালে ৪র্থ স্থান এবং ২০১৩ ও ২০১৪ সালে সারাদেশে ৩য় স্থান অর্জন করে।  |

• বিশেষ সুবিধা: মফস্বল এলাকার ছাত্র ও ছাত্রীদের জন্য আলাদা হোস্টেল এবং পরিবহনের ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে। ছেলে ও মেয়েদের এবং বাংলা ও ইংরেজি ভাষার ট্রাস পৃথক ভবনে অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। সার্বক্ষণিক সিসি ক্যামেরার আওতায় থাকা প্রতিটি ভবনে রয়েছে সর্বাধিক নিরাপত্তার ব্যবস্থা।

• ব্যবস্থাপনা ও পরিচালনা: মাইলস্টোন কলেজের বিভিন্ন ক্যাম্পাসে ৪৫০ জন অভিজ্ঞ ও সুদক্ষ শিক্ষক-কর্মকর্তা [ক্যাডেট কলেজের প্রাক্তন ২ জন অধ্যক্ষ, ১ জন উপাধ্যক্ষ, সরকারি কলেজের প্রাক্তন ২ জন অধ্যক্ষ, ২ জন কর্নেল (অব.), ৩ জন লে. কর্নেল (অব.), ৫ জন মেজর (অব.), ৯ জন সহযোগি অধ্যাপক, ৯১ জন সহকারি অধ্যাপক এবং ৩৩৫ জন প্রভাষক ও সিনিয়র শিক্ষক] শিক্ষা ও প্রশাসনিক কার্যক্রম পরিচালনা করছেন।

• কলেজটি এমএনআরএস ট্রাস্ট কর্তৃক পরিচালিত। উত্তরাঞ্চ মেইন ক্যাম্পাস ছাড়াও উত্তরা ওয় প্রকল্পে ডিয়াবাড়িতে (মেন্টোরেল স্টেশন-১ সংলগ্ন) ২৫ বিঘা জমির উপর অবস্থিত মাইলস্টোন কলেজের নিজস্ব সুবিশাল স্থায়ী ক্যাম্পাস। সবুজ শ্যামল মনোরম পরিবেশে অবিস্থত আনন্দময় শিক্ষা উপযোগি ক্যাম্পাসটিতে ১৮০০ আবাসিক ছাত্রছাত্রীসহ সার্বিক শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম পরিচালিত হচ্ছে।

কর্নেল নূরু নবী (অব.), উপদেষ্টা  
প্রাক্তন অধ্যক্ষ-মৌজদারহাট ও বিনাইদহ ক্যাডেট কলেজ এবং  
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অধ্যক্ষ  
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# How girls are realizing their potentials: Opportunities and challenges

UNFPA Bangladesh and CARE Bangladesh in association with The Daily Star organized a roundtable titled “How girls are realizing their potentials: Opportunities and challenges” on January 5, 2023. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.



**Golam Mortoza,**  
*Editor (Bangla),  
The Daily Star*

The saying goes, “if creating opportunities isn’t possible, remove the roadblocks so they can create their own.” Unfortunately, there is a prevalent mindset to restrict, particularly girls, from exploring their potential. We must recognize girls’ potential and work to remove the barriers that prevent them from realizing it.

While we have yet to fully address this issue, it’s important to conduct discussions like this, notify policymakers, and engage in grassroots work simultaneously. The progress that has been made thus far is a result of this grassroots work.



**Sakina Sultana,**  
*Team Leader,  
CARE Bangladesh*

Adolescent girls often face child marriage, interruptions in education and employment, and difficulties in accessing their rights, including sexual and reproductive health services, due to stereotypical mindsets and negative social norms. We aim to transform this negativity into positivity, empowering adolescent girls to reach their full potential and succeed in life.

CARE Bangladesh is currently implementing a project funded by UNFPA Bangladesh called “Accelerating Action to End Child Marriage” which is working in six districts to empower adolescent girls with a set of life skills, including knowledge and skills related to sexual and reproductive health, communication, negotiation, and decision-making. This enables them to self-reflect through education.



2017). These systemic dropouts result in diverse consequences in realizing and achieving life aspirations, including education and employment. The direct consequence observed in labor force engagement is that female youth comprise 26% of the labor force compared to their male counterpart, which comprises 54.5% (BBS, 2018). Also impacts crucial stages of life, such as child marriage, unfortunately, results in early childbearing. Bangladesh is home to 38 million child brides, and 50% gave birth to their first child before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2020).

Considering the situation, CARE Bangladesh conducted a study in 2022 that tried to see how the donors and government are investing and working to bring forward the potential of adolescent girls, stopping child marriage and availing gender equality.

Our study revealed that adolescent girls have a variety of aspirations and priorities, including gaining access to capacity building and skill development opportunities that specifically cater to their needs.

The study also identified a significant barrier of gendered norms that restrict community mobilization for adolescent girls. This makes it difficult for them to take collective action. Additionally, the legal and policy framework in place does not adequately support the rights and needs of both married and unmarried adolescent girls. Furthermore, the support for mental health and psychosocial well-being for adolescent girls is often overlooked and neglected.

We found that the government of Bangladesh has demonstrated its commitment to advancing the rights and well-being of adolescent girls by being a signatory to various international laws and declarations. As a result, several laws and policies have been enacted in the past two decades specifically aimed at addressing the needs of adolescent girls. The government is implementing various initiatives to improve the education and health outcomes of adolescent girls, and the private sector is providing opportunities for adolescent girls in nontraditional career fields. We also observed investments in families and other stakeholders who play a critical role in shaping expectations for adolescent girls.

We collected recommendations from adolescent girls, civil society organizations, and government stakeholders on how to address the gaps identified in our study. These recommendations include providing opportunities for adolescent girls to participate in meaningful dialogue and share their thoughts, ending the stigmatization of girls, taking steps to prevent child marriage, addressing societal controls on girls’ sexuality, creating safe spaces for girls to discuss important issues, and empowering girls to connect with various forums and platforms at the grassroots level.



**Sigma Ainul,**  
*Program Manager and Senior Program Officer, Population Council*

Globally, only 15% of girls take STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines, and the numbers are lower in Bangladesh. This makes it difficult to provide women access to modern workplace skills-building subjects.

Three main things that would help

girls-centered programs in Bangladesh. Firstly, we need to ensure that girls are given the right skills, including digital literacy and knowledge of information technology, as well as involvement in STEM subjects so that they can participate equally in the economy and society.

Secondly, we need to focus on soft skills, such as negotiation, self-esteem, problem-solving, and financial literacy, which are required in all occupations. We should also ensure that girls have access to accurate information regarding their reproductive life span and the choices and options available to them.

Thirdly, girls should be given a public space where they can gather and have access to relatable and inspirational mentors.



**M A Akher,**  
*Director (Planning), Deputy Secretary, Department of Youth Development*

Bank to work with NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) individuals, who make up one-third of the population.

We have found that 80% of NEET individuals are those who have married before the age of 18. To reach this group the project includes a component to provide skill ladders for dropouts and married individuals in 250 Upazilas, allowing them to pursue vocational or formal education through open universities. In partnership with the ILO, we will also be implementing a Tk 165 crore project to train NEET individuals to become self-employed.

The UNFPA has helped us develop a youth index platform, and the government has also established a youth council.



**Reefat Bin Sattar,** *Director of Program Development and Quality, Save the Children Bangladesh*

There are several factors that enable girls to reach their potential. One approach is to focus on the girls as the center and consider the four circles that impact their lives: family, society, law, and policy. By examining opportunities and challenges within each circle, it becomes easier to identify recommendations for change.

In addition to economic empowerment, two other important forms of empowerment are political and social empowerment. Political empowerment involves creating opportunities for girls to participate and providing leadership, soft skills, livelihood skills, employability skills, and entrepreneurship skills. Social empowerment is also crucial, but it can also be a barrier to women’s empowerment.

While there has been a decrease in the number of early marriages from 80% to 51%, in certain areas such as char areas, urban slums, and haor regions, the percentage may be higher. It is important to collect data at the division level to address these pockets of high risk. To make accurate and effective decisions, it’s important to have accurate data that is included in the government information repository.

In addition to a Department for Women Affairs within the Ministry of Women and Children, a separate

department for children is needed to ensure that female children are not excluded from attention.



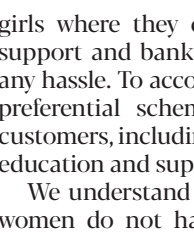
**Kamrun Nahar,**  
*Assistant Director (AQAU), Planning and Development Wing, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE)*

Adolescent girls in remote areas such as char, haor, coastal, and hilly regions face numerous challenges due to a lack of information. Parents in these areas also have concerns about their daughters’ safety, which can contribute to early marriages.

Despite the decrease in the dropout rate due to scholarships, in backward regions, the number of dropouts increased to 60 lakhs after the SSC examinations according to a 2018 report. There is a need for more accurate data in these areas.

To help children get career-related information, CARE and UNFPA’s booklet called “Amar Shwopno, Amar Golpo” can be distributed in educational institutes after review by the education department. Additionally, the digital version of the booklet can also be uploaded to an app.

Another significant challenge is sexual harassment, and educational institutions should ensure preventive measures and response mechanism.



**Natasha Kader,**  
*Acting Head of Women Banking, Eastern Bank Ltd*

Our goal is to create a comprehensive, one-stop service for women and girls where they can access financial support and banking services without any hassle. To accomplish this, we offer preferential schemes for our female customers, including access to financial education and support.

We understand that many girls and women do not have access to digital platforms, which is why we prioritize providing network and information access as a means of empowering them.

Additionally, we strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment in our banks, where girls and women feel comfortable and valued.



**Nadeca Khandker,** *Focal Person, Media Communication & Sustainability, Robi*

We believe that providing financial and mental support at the secondary education level, where the dropout rate is high, is crucial for the future of girls. It’s important to extend our help to keep their imagination alive and empower them to reach their full potential.

**Md. Shawkat Hossain,** *Member Secretary-NEARS and Consultant, Mariestopes Bangladesh*

Reproductive health education is essential for adolescent girls, but in Bangladesh, access to reproductive services is limited to those who are married. This presents a significant problem for unmarried girls. While there are no official documents prohibiting

services for unmarried individuals, government officials have not yet taken action to change this traditional attitude. Removing the requirement for marriage status would be a simple solution.

Frontline health workers (Family Welfare Visitors) should be well trained to ensure adolescent-friendly SRHR services.

The government should implement a mandatory reservation system for girls in all skills development programs to address these issues.



**Sadia Karim,**  
*Adolescents-Youth and Gender Specialist, Educo Bangladesh*

To empower women, we must work to promote the idea that household tasks are the responsibility of all members of the household, not just women. Until this happens, it will be difficult for women to fully develop as individuals, regardless of how many skills they acquire.

Moreover, females in Bangladesh have only 4% of land rights, according to a 2014 report by the International Land Coalition. This is a significant concern, as lack of access to resources can further marginalize and vulnerable women.

Women also lack leadership skills due to societal belittlement, which limits their ability to access and participate in public spaces.

While it is important for women to have self-defense skills, it is also important to promote mutual respect between genders.



**Ram Chandra Das,** *Former Director General, Department of Women Affairs*

Generally, we do not let our girls be aware of their potential. The parents and guardians should be made aware before creating any scopes for girls’ possibilities and development.

I recommend a common toll-free number for every mobile operator to be established. This will enable easy access to the helpline, similar to the dedicated number 109 provided by the Department of Women Affairs, which is available 24/7 throughout the year.

Additionally, a directorate should be established to specifically address issues related to adolescent girls and boys. This will ensure that their unique needs are being met and that the resources and support are directed to where they are most needed.



**Dr. Muhammad Munir Hussain,** *Program Analyst-A&Y, UNFPA Bangladesh*

To achieve gender equality and empower women and girls, it is essential to educate our male children on mutual respect for the opposite gender.

The new curriculum core committee has been working for the last four years under the leadership of NCTB. The grade six curriculum added a table about menstruation and ejaculation. More crucial sexual and reproductive health information will be added in grades 8 and 9 this year.

We are trying to build a platform in the Ministry of Education where NGOs and other organizations work on SRHR.



**Tanjim Ferdous,** *In-Charge, NGOs & Foreign Missions section of the Business Development team, The Daily Star & Moderator of the session*

In Bangladesh, both in rural and urban settings, the full potential of adolescent girls remains untapped. To ensure their participation in economic activities, we need a mechanism where all stakeholders including civil society organizations, corporations, NGOs, and government agencies will work together under one umbrella. Only through active collaboration and participation from all stakeholders can we bring about effective change.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- We must support both girls and their families to achieve their aspirations and provide opportunities for adolescent girls to participate in meaningful dialogue to express their thoughts.
- Provide girls with the necessary skills, including soft skills, digital literacy, financial literacy, and accurate information on sexual and reproductive health.
- Educate families on the importance of allowing girls to continue their education.
- Make skill development programs easily accessible and provide relevant information to girls and their families at all levels.
- Include girls in income-generating activities to promote financial independence and decision-making abilities.
- Boys should be taught to respect the opposite gender from a young age.
- Challenge the stereotype that women have limited career choices.
- Establish a sectoral risk and divisional database to inform decision-making and integrate it into the government system.

We must break the stereotype that women are only suitable for certain professions, such as teaching or handicrafts. Many women have proven themselves in traditionally male-dominated professions such as piloting and sports, helping to change societal attitudes towards women in these fields. As a result, new opportunities are opening up for women in various sectors. However, are our adolescent girls ready to seize these opportunities? To guide them towards this path, stakeholders must work to fill gaps and enhance their activities, so adolescent girls can unlock and utilize their potential and fulfill their dreams.



**Mahmudur Rahman Khan,**  
*Technical Coordinator Research, M&E, CARE Bangladesh, (Keynote speaker)*

The enrollment rate in secondary education decreased to 62% compared to 98% in primary education (UNESCO, 2018). The scenario worsens in tertiary education with 13% gross enrolment (BANBEIS,



## Brick kiln for hills? Not really a choice

Authorities must step up efforts to protect hills from being ravaged

We need bricks to build and trees to breathe. We need development to ensure our progress as a nation, just as we need nature to ensure our survival as a species. Can there be a way for a seamless integration of these two needs? That, for a development-hungry Bangladesh, is a question that should be addressed urgently. What is beyond question, however, is that if it comes down to a choice between development and nature, it's not a choice, really. Nature should, and eventually will, always get the upper hand.

The reason we feel obligated to repeat this obvious truth is a front-page photo of *The Daily Star* that captures the pitfalls of our questionable development policy that allows for mindless destruction of nature. In the picture, you can see hills and trees being razed to make way for a brick kiln at the Lama upazila of Bandarban. You can also see rows of freshly baked bricks in the foreground, and a furnace emitting toxic fumes in the distance – a reminder that much has already been lost. These brick kilns are mostly responsible for the debilitating air pollution in the country. But more to the point, demolition of hills, be it on private land or on land owned by the government, is a punishable offence if done without the approval of the authorities concerned.

While the provision of such approvals is itself questionable, what is more worrying is that pictures of brick kilns destroying nature or polluting the environment have become quite common over the years. The drive to modernise brick kilns and make them environment friendly is evidently not getting enough traction. Part of the reason for that is the involvement of politically connected businessmen. We have recently seen how ruthless they can be when, in late December, a journalist was brutalised after he sought to collect information on illegal brick kilns at the Rangunia upazila of Chattogram. He was held by a local UP member at gunpoint, kept hostage for over an hour, and beaten repeatedly.

This is just an example of the length to which brick kiln owners can go to protect their interests, aided in no small part by the complicity or lack of response of the officials at the department of environment. As a 2021 study by Stanford University in the USA has shown, more than three-fourths of brick kilns in Bangladesh were illegally constructed within 1 kilometre of a school. These not only pollute the air and hurt local farmers, but also reduce life expectancy in general.

We must ask, is the unusually high demand for bricks – and development – making it impossible to control the proliferation of brick kilns? The authorities must take a critical look at their present development policy to address this issue. We need strong political will and a national policy to ensure sustainable, environment-friendly development in the country. But right now, the priority is to stop all illegal brick kilns, modernise this industry, and make sure those operating legally follow environmental rules at all times. The hills must be protected at any cost.

## Why this negligence in saving wildlife?

Authorities must punish those responsible for Rema-Kalenga wildfire

We are appalled by the news that dozens of wild animals were killed in a fire caused when the Hatimara Tea Garden in Habiganj's Chunarughat upazila set the trees ablaze on a land that it had leased, which then spread to a nearby forest. As well as wildlife, the fire also reportedly significantly damaged its flora. What's more shocking, the local administration was yet to intervene even three days after the incident. This raises concerns about whether the authorities concerned are really sincere about saving the wildlife in the area.

The Rema-Kalenga sanctuary, where the wildfire took place, is frequented by birdwatchers and wildlife enthusiasts from around the country. While visiting the area on Sunday, our correspondent saw charred bodies of capped langurs, barking deer, Indian civets, hilly mynas, squirrels, herons and countless other wild animals lying in different places of what was once their home. Locals reportedly buried many of them over the past three days. We cannot help but ask: Why was the fire allowed to spread to the forest? What's stopping the authorities concerned from taking appropriate action? Who will answer for what appears to be a case of premeditated wildlife culling?

There is no doubt that the responsibility to protect forests and their wildlife falls squarely on the government, but it also falls to a large extent on private actors using forested land or nearby areas. As such, if any private actor does something that harms the forests and their natural inhabitants, they must be brought to book to ensure that nothing like this is repeated in the future. Unfortunately, what happened at the Rema-Kalenga sanctuary shows how negligent both the state and private actors have been in performing their duties.

Forests and their wildlife are precious assets of our country. Bangladesh is duty-bound to end and reverse deforestation by 2030, according to a pledge signed by the government in COP26. Bangladesh has signed and ratified all important international biodiversity treaties, conventions, and accords. Our constitution expressly demands the protection and improvement of the environment, as well as the preservation of natural resources, biodiversity, wetlands, forests, and wildlife. The government, therefore, must take appropriate action to protect forests and their biodiversity and wildlife, including by stopping private actors like the Hatimara tea estate from setting forests ablaze.

It is time for us to reassess the strength of our state apparatuses in providing proper protection to the diverse flora and fauna of our country. We often see reports on deforestation, animal culling, and the leasing out of forest land to private enterprises that harm the environment. This should not be allowed to continue any longer. We urge the administration to stay alert and increase efforts to protect our natural resources, including hills and rivers that remain equally at risk of encroachment and undue interferences.

# Can a bureaucrat-heavy ACC really be independent?



Iftekharuzzaman  
is Executive Director at  
Transparency International  
Bangladesh.

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) was established with the vision of an independent institution with a specific legal mandate, based on the ACC Act of 2004, to effectively control and prevent corruption in Bangladesh. No law is perfect, nor is any institutional capacity ideal. Nevertheless, based on fairly close engagement with it since the early days of its establishment, and drawing upon successive research conducted over the years, it can be reasonably concluded that its legal and institutional structure provides the potential to deliver anti-corruption in Bangladesh with moderate success.

The reality, however, is quite different. There has always been a wide gap between the commission's potential and delivery, which can be attributed to a twin challenge faced from a very early stage. One, an endemic deficit of courage and commitment to deliver the mandate without fear or favour, and two, a long-nourished stranglehold of bureaucratic control.

The rationale behind creating the ACC – replacing the former Bureau of



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

**While governments have often treated it as part of themselves, the ACC itself has also operated largely as a government agency. Both have ignored the fact that the ACC's main job is to hold the government and its officials to account.**

Anti-Corruption (BAC), which used to be attached to the office of the head of the government – were the exact same factors of lack of operational independence and bureaucratic control.

However, the ACC started out as “old wine in new bottle” thanks to the absorption of almost all of the BAC staff into the commission, carrying the baggage of BAC's organisational culture and practices. Whereas, it was hoped that it would be run by fresh blood under the executive authority of commissioners, headed by a chair who would be appointed based on a proven track record of professional and personal excellence, integrity, courage and commitment, free from partisan or bureaucratic influence.

Under successive regimes, everything necessary was done to maintain bureaucratic control

through deputed officials at the senior management level and appointment of commissioners on the basis of partisan political choice. While governments have often treated it as part of themselves, the ACC itself has also operated largely as a government agency. Both have ignored the fact that, although set up by the government, the ACC's main job is to hold the government and its officials to account in case of allegations of corruption.

The ACC and the government have even been on common ground when it comes to curtailing the ACC's operational independence, especially with regard to investigating public officials alleged of corruption. The ACC, for instance, found no problem in the repeated attempts, as under the Public Service Act 2018, to create obligations for the ACC to seek prior government approval before taking into custody public officials for corruption investigations. This is despite the fact that this has been strongly protested by civil society, on the grounds that it is contradictory to the constitutional provision of equality of all before law.

Against this backdrop, an office order on the delegation of administrative and financial authority, issued on January 18, 2022, has sweepingly assigned to the commission Secretary – who is part of the government bureaucracy – some key elements of the ACC's executive power. This includes postings and

now be controlled by government bureaucracy, represented by the Secretary. In addition, the order includes a provision (chha/4) that transfers all powers of implementing section 16 of the ACC Act to the Secretary, which practically invalidates section 3(2) of the Act, which stipulates that the ACC is an independent and impartial organisation.

This set of decisions, if enforced, may be the final nail in the coffin of any prospect of independent and operational flexibility in investigations, the core function of the ACC. The law provides executive authority to the Chair and other Commissioners who function under the Chair's leadership. But now, this executive authority has been transferred from the Commission to the Secretary.

The secretary and most other senior officials of the ACC are deputed from the bureaucracy, who will now control its entire range of administrative and financial operations, including the investigation process. Even though they serve the ACC for the period of deputation, barring perhaps rare exceptions, their operational practices, allegiance and decisions are most likely to be plagued by conflict of interest and bias towards bureaucracy, which is against the letter and spirit of the vision and mission of the commission.

The question is, on what basis, process and logic did this delegation of authority take place? Did the commission consider lessons learnt

individuals, public representatives and officials?

The dismissal not only deepened concerns over the commission's decision-making being influenced by vested interests related to status and identity of relevant individuals, but also forced the investigation officials to resort to unprecedented moves, including organising a human chain to ensure job security.

If the move was prompted by this exposure of the ACC's internal governance deficits, including tensions between two categories of officials, deputed bureaucrats and investigation officials, it can only contribute to further tensions and more bureaucratic control undermining the authority of the chair and other commissioners.

The explanation provided as justification – that it is meant to follow the same model of delegation of authority as practiced in government offices – is a perfect example of denial of the vision of the ACC as an independent body outside government influence, and not a government institution. The prospect of its independence has visibly become so hostage to the bureaucratic stronghold, that the commission appears to have allowed itself to transform into the long-abandoned BAC model.

The office order of January 18 must be withdrawn without delay. The commission needs to demonstrate the courage and commitment to prevent itself from being shot in the foot.

## Global South summit could signal a shift in Indian foreign policy



Pallab Bhattacharya  
is a special correspondent  
for The Daily Star. He writes  
from New Delhi, India.

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

When India hosted the Voice of The Global South summit in virtual format featuring 125 developing countries on January 12-13, it immediately set tongues wagging about a possible shift in New Delhi's foreign policy priority. The speculation centred around whether India was returning to its decades-old ideological moorings of non-alignment of the Cold War era, or if India was trying to restore a balance in its foreign policy matrix – which in the last two decades understandably saw a shift towards political, economic and military engagements with the developed world and leading emerging countries post-Soviet Union collapse. The answer lies somewhere between the two.

India hosted the Global South summit a month after formally taking over the presidency of the powerful G20 group of key developed and developing countries. There was little doubt that

the Global South Summit, in the run up to the in-person G20 summit, to be hosted by India, was an attempt by New Delhi to assert its pole position as the lead voice of the South, to democratise the present international order, and focus on how the Global South is being adversely hit by global inequities. That India sought to be the undisputed face of the Global South came out most clearly when Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his opening remarks at the summit, told leaders of developing countries that “your voice is India's voice” and “your priorities are India's priorities.”

Modi outlined the challenges before developing countries by pointing to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the rising prices of fuel fertiliser and food grains following the Russia-Ukraine conflict. He flagged the common issues facing the Global South and announced five new initiatives by India, two of which

pertain to two key areas of the Global South – health and education.

One of the key speakers at the heads of government level of the summit was Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who stressed on the need for maintaining world peace and stability, a new paradigm to tackle inequality in sync with the SDGs, special financing for the most vulnerable nations, bridging digital divides, and ensuring that all human beings, including Myanmar's Rohingya refugees sheltered in Bangladesh, have equal rights to lead a decent life. It was astute on the part of PM Hasina to frame the Rohingya issue in the context of global human rights, given the international community's dithering over sorting out the issue by ensuring safe repatriation of refugees. The view that India might be falling back on non-alignment as a marker of its foreign policy is flawed for two reasons. First, global politics has changed since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Secondly, the ideological clash that had kept the world so sharply divided during the Cold War decades is virtually gone, and the division between the First, Second and Third World has been blurred to a great extent – at least politically, though not economically.

A big constraint of the non-aligned movement or the Group of 77

developing nations in the past was that the Cold War years had pushed them into an isolationist position. The most important takeaway from India's G20 presidency and the Global South summit is its intention to try to act as a bridge between developed and developing nations.

It was the first time that a G20 host country held a summit of the Global South, albeit virtually. However, there was no joint statement emerging from the summit reflecting their common concerns and positions. This absence apparently signals divergence among the Global South on certain issues, which underline the need for customised solutions rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

India's consistent call for reformed multilateralism, including that of the UN, and its presidency of the G20 could potentially set the stage for a move away from the stalemate of geopolitical differences, and work towards a global decision-making forum that ensures better representation. Many feel that a key reason why the UN has failed to address global problems is that it has not reflected the reality of the changing aspirations of developing countries. Summits like this one could thus become a part of much-needed change.







# Shunno comes full-circle after 15 years

“I was always a big fan of Shunno. When I joined Shunno, I remember Shaker bhai came to one of our practice sessions, picked up my guitar and began playing. I immediately felt depressed watching him play. The guy is just so good!”

SHAHBAZ NAHIAN

Starting from being featured in Fuad Al Muqtadir's iconic mixed album *Bonno*—with their debut song *Prottasha*—in 2008, to self-distributing their first album *Notun Srot*, Shunno has weathered many a storm on their way to success.

In the last decade, the band would go on to become a household name, cementing their legacy in the playlist of millions.

On the occasion of their 15th anniversary, the connoisseurs of modern Bangla Pop-rock sat down with The Daily Star, amidst their practice session, to reminisce the last decade and their magical musical journey over the years.

*15 years is a long time. Obviously, you had your ups and downs, but what are the memories you cherish the most over this wonderful journey?*

**Rafatul Bari Labib:** For me, being a musician and touring all over the world with my band was a childhood dream. So, my most fond memories are the ones where we were touring outside



Members of Shunno

Dhaka, in London, Malaysia, and Australia.

**Michael Gomes:** Usually, when there are shows in Dhaka, we travel to the venues individually. However, when we are on tour, we are traveling together. That is why tours make for the best memories.

**Ishmamul Farhad:** Being with Shunno alone has been a roller coaster ride for me, but yes, the memories of tour are the best!

*How has fatherhood changed your lives?*

**Imrul Karim Emil:** You start perceiving life differently and become more responsible. Building memories with your child is magical. They become your top most priority.

**Labib:** Before you are a father, you feel like you are the centre of your universe. But when you have a baby, your child becomes the centre of your universe.

*How much do you miss Shaker Raza?*

**Michael:** We miss him a lot! All of us are very close and he even produced our last two songs, *Behula* and *Bibiya*. At times, we really miss his stage presence.

No one can really replace *mama* (Shaker), because everyone has their own individualism. Thankfully, Ishmamul has been an amazing

addition to Shunno. He is a wonderful musician who gradually incorporated his own style within the band.

**Ishmamul:** I was always a big fan of Shunno. When I joined the band, I remember Shaker bhai came to one of our practice sessions, picked up my guitar and began playing. I immediately felt depressed watching him play. The guy is just so good!

*Post-pandemic Dhaka has been vibrant with big concerts. Shunno has sadly been absent from doing live shows. What are you expecting from your anniversary concert on the 26th?*

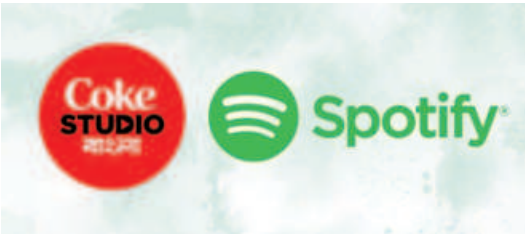
**Emil:** We have all been extremely busy with our personal lives. Returning to live performances feels very exciting. I am really looking forward to a great night with our beloved fans, at our anniversary concert. We will also be releasing a new music video on that day. We are very grateful to Dreamcast Marketing and Communications Ltd. for taking care of everything.

*Any final words for your fans?*

Our hearts are full of gratitude to our fans, who have been supporting us for the last 15 years. We hope they will continue to do so over the next 15.



PHOTOS: SHAHBAZ NAHIAN



## Coke Studio Bangla officially available on Spotify

One of the largest music streaming service providers in the world, Spotify has collaborated with Coke Studio Bangla, the Bangladesh edition of Coca-Cola's international music property 'Coke Studio', as the official music streaming partner. Under this partnership, all of Coke Studio Bangla's music will be exclusively available on Spotify. In addition, this partnership will also enable the artists of Coke Studio Bangla to share their music with Spotify's 456 million active users, including 195 million subscribers, across 180 markets.

## ‘Pathaan’ might release in Bangladesh, decision today



Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's film *Pathaan* might be on its way for release in Bangladesh. It will allegedly be brought through the SAFTA agreement, and the distribution company in question has already sent a letter to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. A source from the ministry has confirmed to The Daily Star that a decision will be given in the afternoon today, following a meeting.

If the film is allowed to release here, it will be showcased two days after its Indian release on January 25.

With the Siddharth Anand directorial, SRK is returning to the big screen with even bigger expectations, as he will be accompanied by Deepika Padukone and John Abraham. We might even see a cameo by Salman Khan and Hritik Roshan in the film.

# NEWS

## Social protection schemes are crucial

FROM PAGE 14

**TDS:** Based on your experience, what are the major stumbling blocks to achieving universal rights for children?

**Kailash:** The first thing is the global political will, which needs to be substantiated with adequate policies and budgetary allocations. Secondly, there must be proper budgetary allocation by the respective countries and overseas development aid by the global financial institutions and the international community, especially the rich countries. Mindset is another major stumbling block which needs to be changed as part of building our social will. We have to respect our children and make them our friends, rather than only thinking of feeding them, helping them or showing them pity. And last but not least, the accountability mechanism – the responsibility of each government to ensure that the local authorities at each level are held accountable for the enforcement of laws related to the protection of children and the implementation of financial and development schemes with honesty.

**TDS:** What are your suggestions on the most effective ways to strengthen the child rights movement in South Asia?

**Kailash:** We the group of Laureates and Leaders for Children, (consisting of 90 Nobel Laureates, world leaders, such as some present and former prime ministers, presidents and their wives/first ladies, princes, kings and queens), through a joint letter, urged every single developing country to invest in social protection programmes and measures related to children, women and marginalised people, which have been successful.

Especially stipends, mid-day meals, conditional cash transfer programmes and food support (in Bangladesh, paddy was given to attain gender parity in primary education back in 1999 till 2002) were proven to be great social protection measures. They need to be replicated in a number of countries in the world, especially when higher education for girls is denied in some of them. The developing countries have to demonstrate adequate investment and budgetary allocation in education, in the protection and

healthcare of children, and other issues related to them.

We strongly believe that the social protection measures and social security programmes have been very successful. Therefore, we are working on the creation of a global social protection mechanism for children, women, and all marginalised sections of society, in which interested rich countries can pool their money to generate funds for the needy countries.

We have seen that \$53 billion can ensure all the rights of children and pregnant women in the world – less than 10 days of global military expenditure. And this amount is not a big deal because it is a little more than one percent of the social protection budget of European countries.

**TDS:** What drove you to work for the children? Please share some stories that helped you to carry on your struggle.

**Kailash:** It's my life and my mission – it's neither a choice nor a career. I can share two stories in this regard. The first one is of the very first day of my school, when I was five and half years old. I met a cobbler boy of my age, sitting outside the school gate. I was disturbed by the scene because I learned from my parents and relatives that every child is supposed to go to school. When I asked my teacher why the child was sitting outside the school gate and not with the rest of us in the classroom, he told me to calm down and said this is not uncommon for poor children to work for their families. I got similar answers from my parents and relatives, but I could not happy with those. One day, I even went to the boy and his father, who, with utter pain, misery and helplessness in his eyes, said, “Sir, you are born to go to school, but we are born to work”. I was so shocked and angry that I started crying. That was when I started looking at the world differently. I started questioning myself about whether whatever we learn from others is true or not. We have to fight and find our own answers. I looked at the empty eyes of the boy every day. I always carried it with me.

The second incident was after quitting my engineering career for my passion to work for children.

In 1981, I started a magazine called “Sangharsh Jaari Rahega” (The Struggle Will Continue), and an elderly man named Wasal Khan came to me to save his 15-year-old daughter Sabo, who was about to be sold to a brothel from a brick kiln in Punjab, where the family used to work. After hearing the details, instead of writing about it, I decided to rescue her. I started preparing for that with my wife Sumedha, and some of my friends. But our rescue mission was unsuccessful and we were beaten up and thrown aside, while Wasal Khan was caught. But we did not give up hope. We were able to register a case at the High Court under the British provision called Habeas corpus, and within a few days, 36 women, girls and men were freed, including little Sabo. This was the first documented rescue of children through civilian effort in history. Thanks to my dear sister Sabo and Wasal Khan – the spark which was ignited in India because of them was spread across the globe.

**TDS:** How did you get engaged with the Bachpan Bachao Andolan?

**Kailash:** As I had to create an organisation to create a movement, my wife Sumedha, some of my friends, and I started Bachpan Bachao Andolan in India. In 1989, we created the first South Asian civil society platform called the South Asian Coalition Against Child Servitude. We saw children working on the streets of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal, and thought of doing something for them and avoided the typical charity mindset.

Later, we realised we could not stay limited to South Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We launched the Global March Against Child Labour, and the Global Campaign for Education – the two largest civil society-initiated platforms and coalitions in the world, with the inclusion of hundreds of thousands of individuals and groups, not only from the NGOs, but also from businesses and corporations, religious institutions, and more.

**TDS:** With so many children dropping out of school and being forced into child marriage and hazardous labour in the fallout from the pandemic, what are your suggestions for the Bangladesh government to bring

them back to school?

**Kailash:** In the past, Bangladesh has proven to solve child labour issues partly or largely. We have seen the drop in child labour and an increase in school enrollment and retention, especially of the girls. We have also seen progress in the social protection programmes and safety measures such as stipends, foods and more, which need to be enhanced. The parents, the community, teachers and everyone should encourage the children to go back to school. And for this, we have to create a more child-friendly environment in the communities and in society as a whole.

**TDS:** What do you do to keep your spirit alive?

**Kailash:** I believe everybody has to do their best in any manner. When I started working on it, it was a non-issue. Today, it has become a global issue. These days, I tell everyone that if you can make an unknown child smile through your writing, teaching, talking, money, business and politics, do it. Make at least one child happy – I will be the happiest person then.

## Strange ‘sparks’

FROM PAGE 14

Above the regions about to flare, scientists found that the solar corona produced small-scale flashes similar to small sparklers before big fireworks.

They believed the findings could lead to improved predictions of solar flares and space weather storms, which are disrupted conditions in space caused by the Sun's activity.

These space weather events are known to affect Earth in a number of ways, including by producing auroras, endangering astronauts, disrupting radio communications and even causing large electrical blackouts.

“Our results may give us a new marker to distinguish which active regions are likely to flare soon and which will stay quiet over an upcoming period of time,” Dr Leka said in a statement.

Scientists used a newly created image database of the Sun's active regions captured by Nasa's Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO).

## Initiatives should

FROM PAGE 14

this standard, we will see whether these initiatives will be conducive to development work or create division or confrontation. That is something that we need to think of,” Wen said while replying to journalists' query.

Asked about the Russian ship, which could not offload equipment of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Bangladesh or India as it was facing US sanctions, and is now on the way to China, the envoy said he had no idea about it and just read it in newspapers.

“I just want to express hope that any sort of sanctions should not affect the ordinary people in any country. So, they are not supposed to be under sanction. These are mostly unilateral sanctions, not by the UN.”

The envoy, however, said the ship should not have any problem in unloading tools in China.

Asked about the ship, Momen said he was also unaware of where the ship was heading towards.

Asked about the displacement of the Rohingyas from the Bangladesh-Myanmar zero line near Tambru of Bandarban following clashes between the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army and Rohingya Solidarity Organisation last week, the foreign minister said Bangladesh would not allow any more Rohingyas in.

Presently, more than one million Rohingyas live in Bangladesh, most of whom fled Rakhine State of Myanmar in 2017, creating massive financial, ecological, security and diplomatic

challenges for Bangladesh.

As the Rohingyas' shelters at zero line were burnt, they took shelter in Bangladesh side and some of them even left for the Rohingya camps in Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar, said Momen.

“Our home and other ministries are working on it. We won't allow them to enter Bangladesh. This is the general principle,” he added.

According to a foreign ministry statement, during his meeting with the Chinese envoy, the minister sought China's continuous support for Rohingya repatriation to Myanmar.

In reply, the Chinese ambassador hoped that the repatriation would start at an early date.

Momen appreciated China's assistance in several mega projects in Bangladesh. He also thanked China for increasing duty-free, quota-free market access from 97 percent to 98 percent products from Bangladesh into the Chinese market and hoped that this facility would be offered within a short time after necessary gazette notification.

Momen also sought more Chinese investments in Bangladesh.

Ambassador Wen expressed his satisfaction over the ongoing Chinese-supported projects, including Padma Bridge Rail Link, Bangabandhu Tunnel under the Karnaphuli river, upgradation of Mongla Port and extension of Osmani International Airport in Sylhet.

He said China would take part in the Bangladesh Business Summit in Dhaka on March 11-13.

## 59pc upazila hospitals

FROM PAGE 14

efficient, majority of the problems could have been solved, he added.

Surveying 77 physicians, the study also revealed that the physicians are less interested in working at the UHCs and the district-level hospitals for different types of challenges at their workplace.

Around 63 percent of the approved posts of resident medical officers at upazila health complexes are vacant, said the study.

In the case of junior or senior consultant posts, the vacancy rate is 77 percent at UHCs and 51 percent at the district-level hospitals.

At the UHCs, 66 percent posts of cleaners are vacant while in the case of security guards, the vacancy rate is

53 percent at UHCs and 31 percent at the district-level hospitals.

Some challenges the physicians say they face include poor working conditions, unavailability of proper medical products and technology, shortage of support staff, lack of workplace safety, poor housing facilities, and lack of opportunity for higher education or training.

Prof Syed Modasser Ali, president of Community Clinic Trust, however, said willingness of physicians to work at the UHCs or the district-level hospitals depends on their mentality.

“There are all sorts of standard facilities at the Gopalganj hospital. But physicians don't want to stay there. So, physicians' mentality is important.”



## FAULT IN NAT'L GRID Pakistan hit with major power outage

AFP, Islamabad

A massive power breakdown in Pakistan yesterday affected most of the country's more than 220 million people, including in the mega cities of Karachi and Lahore.

Local outages are common across Pakistan, and the national power system is a complex and delicate web where problems can quickly cascade.

The hours-long outage, the second in two years, was caused by a fault in the national grid at around 7:30 am (0230 GMT).

"According to initial reports, the system frequency dropped at the national grid in the morning which led to a massive breakdown," the ministry of energy tweeted.

Repair work was underway, with limited power restored in parts of the capital and the northwestern city of Peshawar.

Minister for Energy Khurram Dastgir said the grid should be fully functioning by 10:00 pm.



Sri Lanka ports' trade union stage an anti-government protest to propose tax reforms against its economic crisis, outside the ports authority in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Tackling birth rate crisis 'cannot wait' Says Japan PM Kishida

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's low birth rate and ageing population pose an urgent risk to society, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said yesterday, pledging to address the issue by establishing a new government agency.

Birth rates are declining in many developed countries, but in Japan the issue is particularly acute because it has the world's second-highest proportion of people aged 65 and over, after the tiny state of Monaco, according to World Bank data.

"The number of births dropped below 800,000 last year, according to estimates," Kishida told lawmakers in a policy address marking the start of a new parliament session.

"Japan is standing on the verge of whether we can continue to function as a society," he said.

"Focusing attention on policies regarding children and child-rearing is an issue that cannot wait and cannot be postponed."

The conservative leader said his policies were designed to support parents and ensure the "sustainability" of the world's third-largest economy.

Kishida added that he eventually wants the government to double its spending on child-related programmes. "We must build a child-first social economy to reverse the (low) birth rate," he said.

## PROTEST CRACKDOWN EU imposes new sanctions on Iran Tehran arrests 3 female journos

AFP, Brussels

The EU yesterday placed 37 more Iranian officials and entities on an asset-freeze and visa-ban blacklist over Tehran's bloody crackdown on protesters, officials said.

The fourth round of sanctions against Tehran over its repression of demonstrators was adopted by the bloc's foreign ministers meeting in Brussels. The full list of names was to be given in the EU's official journal later yesterday.

The bloc has already imposed sanctions on more than 60 Iranian officials and entities over the crackdown on protesters, including targeting Tehran's "morality police", Revolutionary Guard Corps commanders and state media.

But the 27 nation EU has so far stopped short of blacklisting the Revolutionary Guards themselves as a terror group despite calls from Germany and the Netherlands to do so.

Iran has warned the bloc against taking the move and EU officials are wary that it could kill off stalled attempts to revive the 2015 deal on Tehran's nuclear programme being mediated by Brussels.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell insisted that there needed first to be a legal ruling in an EU member state first before the bloc could make the move.

"You cannot say: 'I consider you a terrorist because I do not like you'," Borrell said.

"It has to be done when a court of one member state issues a legal statement, a

concrete condemnation."

Demonstrations have swept Iran since the September 16 death in custody of Iranian Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini, 22, after her arrest in Tehran for allegedly failing to adhere to the Islamic republic's strict dress rules.

The UK also yesterday sanctioned five more Iranian officials, including the deputy prosecutor general, over what it said was the "horrific violence" the regime was inflicting on its own people.

"These sanctions, alongside designations by the European Union and the United States, demonstrate the international community's unified condemnation of Tehran, the government said.

Meanwhile, Iranian authorities have arrested three female journalists in the past two days, local media said yesterday, amid months of protests triggered by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini.

"In the past 48 hours, at least three female journalists, namely Melika Hashemi, Saideh Shafiei and Mehroush Zarei, have been arrested in Tehran," reformist newspaper Etemad quoted the Tehran journalists' union as saying.

The paper said the three women had been transferred to Evin prison, where many of those arrested in connection with the protests are being held.

It estimated that about 80 journalists have been arrested since the start of the unrest in the country four months ago.

No details were given on the reasons for the latest arrests.



## If needed, use forex reserves

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commodity prices owing to the fallout of the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

The reserves stood at \$32.47 billion on January 18 in contrast to \$45.20 billion the year before, according to BB data.

In a recent paper, the commerce ministry said the opening of LCs for the import of unrefined sugar slumped to 28 percent year-on-year to 3.75 lakh tonnes in the last quarter of 2022. In the case of chickpeas, the figure dropped 47 percent to 75,319 tonnes and dates 30 percent to 21,980 tonnes during the corresponding period.

Md Mezbaul Haque, spokesperson for Bangladesh Bank, said the central bank has received the commerce ministry's letter.

"We have already taken appropriate measures to address the issue," he told The Daily Star.

Five essential goods-laden vessels have been waiting at the Chattogram Port for up to around two months for unloading 135 tonnes of imported goods as the importers could not clear the import bills due to payment-related complexities arising from shortage of US dollars.

Meanwhile, negotiations are underway to secure \$500 million to \$1 billion in loans from external sources under an arrangement backed by the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (Miga), the WB's cross border investment platform.

Senior Secretary Ghosh said it might take some time to receive the fund from the Miga.

"Ramadan is not far away. So, it won't be wise to wait for the Miga fund," he said.

Bangladesh wanted to avail itself of the Miga loan at a maximum interest rate of 4 percent, but the Agency offered the credit at an interest rate of 6 percent.

A commerce ministry official said Bangladesh usually takes out loans from international financial institutions at 2 percent interest rate.

As there is a lack of availability of the US greenback globally, the government is ready to get the loan at a maximum interest rate of 4 percent, the official said last week.

The Miga itself will not provide the loan to Bangladesh. Rather, it will manage the fund from international financial institutions, he added.

## Ukraine storing arms at nuke

FROM PAGE 2

push European allies to do the same.

In the battleground, the fighting is centred on the town of Bakhmut in Ukraine's east, where Russia's Wagner mercenaries and Ukrainian forces have been locked in a battle of attrition.

Russia's defence ministry said for the second straight day on Sunday that its forces were improving their positions in Ukraine's southern region of Zaporizhzhia, though

a Ukrainian military spokesperson told the state broadcaster the situation there was "difficult" but stable.

In Kyiv, a top ally of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday corrupt officials would be rounded up and jailed as part of a zero tolerance policy, after the most high-profile graft allegations since Russia invaded burst into public view.

On Sunday, anti-corruption police said they

had detained the deputy infrastructure minister on suspicion of receiving a \$400,000 kickback to facilitate the import of generators into wartime Ukraine last September.

Separately, a newspaper investigation published on Saturday accused the Defence Ministry of overpaying suppliers for food for its soldiers. The ministry said the report contained "signs of deliberate manipulation" and was "misleading".

## Only Awami voters

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constituencies will be held on February 1.

Ragebul Ahsan Ripu, general secretary of the Bogura District Awami League, who will contest the polls as the AL candidate was seen in the video.

"... you have to go to the people who really do Awami League politics in your wards and ask for their vote. You confirm their votes first. Confirm the votes of your family members then. You should not go to these people who will not vote for us," he was heard in the video as saying.

"...those who don't vote for us don't even need to go to the polling stations. That's the way it is. Only those who vote for us will come to the polling stations. Those who don't vote for us won't come to the polling stations."

After listening to this, the leaders and workers who were present there broke into applause and said, "OK... OK."

When asked about this, Raj first told The Daily Star that it was in Gokul when the election campaign did

not start properly.

"No, there was no speech like that, anywhere in any campaign. But the speech is being propagated differently. What I said had a different meaning."

"I said only those who are our people will come to vote. Since BNP is not part of this election, the BNP voters will not come to cast vote. That was the point. We have to bring people who vote for us," said Raj.

2 police officers detained over Paris shooting

AFP, PARIS

Two police officers have been held for questioning in the French capital Paris after shooting dead a man they said was threatening them, a source familiar with the case told AFP yesterday.

The as yet unidentified man allegedly first threatened a dog with a pistol just after 8:00 pm (1900 GMT) Sunday near the busy Place de la Republique square in central Paris, another source said.

## Two children die


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surveillance team to the spot, she added.


Contacted, office of the Faridpur civil surgeon was unable to provide any further information in this regard.

So far, three people have died after being infected with the virus this year.

[Our Faridpur and Rajshahi correspondents contributed to this report.]



**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
**Local Government Engineering Department**  
**Office of the Executive Engineer**  
**LGED, Madaripur**  
**www.lged.gov.bd**



শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি  
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No: 46.02.5400.000.07.136.22-233

Date : 23/01/2023

e-Tender Notice

Tender No. e-Tender Notice : 34/2022-23

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

| Location | T-ID /Method | Name of the Work  | Tender Closing                    | Remarks |
|----------|--------------|---|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Shibchar | 779986 (LTM) | LGED/MAD/VRRP/OL/22-23/W-18 Rehabilitation of UNR-8, H/O Sekim Ali Khalashi to Kabilpur Madrasa Road From Ch. 00m-1465m (Road ID:354875039)             | 09-Feb-2023<br>Within<br>12:00 PM |         |
|          | 779987 (LTM) | LGED/MAD/VRRP/OL/22-23/W-19 Rehabilitation of UZR-1, Bhadrason GC Academy to Matbarkandi Reg. Primary School Road From Ch. 00m-800m (Road ID:354875038) |                                   |         |
|          | 779988 (LTM) | LGED/MAD/VRRP/OL/22-23/W-20 Rehabilitation of UZR-5, Jinar Gate to UZR-8 Road via Matbarkandi GPS Road From Ch. 00m-2230m (Road ID:354874014)           |                                   |         |

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

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required.


The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system Portal have to be deposited on line through any e-GP registered banks Branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)) and also from e-mail: [xen.madaripur@lged.gov.bd](mailto:xen.madaripur@lged.gov.bd) or call to 0661-62445.


Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

(Md. Ashraf Ali Khan)  
Executive Engineer  
LGED, Madaripur  
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GD-113



**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
**Directorate of Primary Education**  
**Section-2, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216**  
**www.dpe.gov.bd**



শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি  
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No.: 38.01.0000.005.07.331.22-2297;

Date: January 23, 2023.

Corrigendum to Invitation for Tenders (International)

The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE)'s Invitation for Tenders (International) vide Ref No. 38.01.0000.005.07.331.22-2206; dated: December 11, 2022 for procurement of 41000 Nos. Multimedia Projector for Government Primary Schools under Package No. GD 101.04-GD 101.08 & GD 301.04-GD 301.08 published in The Daily Jugantor (দৈনিক যুগান্তর), The Daily Kaler Kantho (দৈনিক কালের কণ্ঠ), The Financial Express and The Daily Star on December 12, 2022 is hereby amended as follows:

| Sl. No. | Conditions to be amended     | Previous Provision  | Amended Provision   |
|---------|------------------------------|---|---|
| 17.     | Tender Last Selling Date     | Date: 01/02/2023<br>Time: 4:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs) | Date: 08/02/2023<br>Time: 4:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs) |
| 18.     | Tender Closing Date and Time | Date: 02/02/2023<br>Time: 2:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs) | Date: 09/02/2023<br>Time: 2:00pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs) |
| 19.     | Tender Opening Date and Time | Date: 02/02/2023<br>Time: 2:15pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs) | Date: 09/02/2023<br>Time: 2:15pm Bangladesh Standard Time (GMT + 6 hrs) |

All other aspects of the Invitation for Tenders (International) will be unchanged.

(Md. Hamidul Haque)  
Director (Procurement)  
Directorate of Primary Education  
For and on behalf of  
The Program Director, PEDP4

GD-110





# There isn't much to do in Dhaka apart from eating garbage

FATIMA JAHAN ENA

My friends and I have an ongoing joke about our food preferences. Whenever we try a plate of *fuchka* that doesn't immediately induce a digestive issue with its copious amounts of spices and other questionable ingredients, we say, "*bhejal na thakle moja nai*" ("There's no flavour without the impurities").

**The simplest solution is that we could just choose not to eat out or order in. Knowing how to cook is a necessary skill and refraining from eating fast food will be kinder to both our wallets and our stomach linings. We could host house parties, visit exhibitions, go on walks, and whatnot.**

We may not realise it but it's probably an exercise in denial. The joke loses its comedic value when we stop to actually think about the quality of the food that we consume every day. The quality of food in the city has deteriorated to the point that even the people selling it actively avoid it. One of many examples would be the video that

went viral on Facebook last week. In the video, the managers of a popular *kacchi* chain refused to drink the juice that's offered at their own restaurants. Even though they were under the harsh scrutiny of the health inspector, their interaction was forever immortalised on the internet. Naturally, one may think about what stopped them from taking one for the team. They could've easily downed the glass of juice, which apparently is contaminated with dye before being served to customers, and then moved on with just another fine. After all, it's nothing new that a restaurant in Dhaka has been penalised for questionable hygiene practices or their problematic stance on expiry dates and dead poultry. Their refusal to drink it begs an even more worrisome question – what exactly did they put in the drink that they couldn't muster up the courage for a forced sip? Furthermore, why are incidents like this so rampant? Regardless of what the answers may be, it cannot be denied that a large portion of our social lives revolve around the food culture in the city. But what other platforms do we have left for socialising if we

cut out going out to restaurants? The simplest solution is that we could just choose not to eat out or order in. Knowing how to cook is a necessary skill and refraining from eating fast food will be kinder to both our wallets and our stomach linings. We could host house parties, visit exhibitions, go on walks, and whatnot. However, the aforementioned alternatives may be just wishful thinking as cutting out restaurants from the equation of our social lives doesn't really make sense in a country where there's not much else to do. There is a lack of options that does not involve outside food unless you're willing to stay home or spend a lot of money just to hang out with your friends. Additionally, the severe traffic congestion that we have to face just to get from one point to another further inhibits our desires to deviate from frequent visits to restaurants in favour of a new experience. On top of that, there are safety concerns that hinder activities like going on a trip or even simply going on a walk to the park in the evening. So, having no other option, we crawl back to restaurants where

the food is cooked with no regard for hygiene and quality. Before we know it, the ritual of eating garbage becomes an unavoidable aspect of our social lives. Clearly, a drastic change is needed in the restaurant industry in the city. Restaurants disregarding any and all sense of ethics when it comes to cutting costs while actively harming the populace has become too integrated in our lives. Several buildings in a single main road hold at least seven fast-food joints. Apart from that, availing food delivery services have become commonplace. The trouble with the restaurant industry opens up discourse about how we desperately need more accessible means of socialising. Being unable to pay the hefty amounts of money required to do literally anything else but eat leaves a huge chunk of the population with no avenues to meet friends or family outside of their homes. Needless to say, the possibility of change is slim. But one can always make a wish on a wishbone covered with weeks-old grease. *Fatima Jahan Ena is a sub-editor at SHOUT.*

## Why our parents rarely show outward affection

AHMED NUZHA OISHEE

A friend once told me that when she became a teenager, her mother refused to hold her hand unless it was absolutely necessary during times like crossing the street. While my friend acknowledges that her parent's intention was to help her grow into the shoes of an independent adult, she felt like she was missing out on parental affection. Bangladeshi parents are very inexpressive about their own feelings and in turn, they rarely show outward affection to their children. My mother's big on physical gestures like embraces or head pats. I have never felt like an unloved child but none of my parents has ever professed their parental love or pride out-loud. Our parents' affection simmers within the surface but never finds direct effusion. Instead, their love language is passive gestures or acts of care. You may smell the wafting fragrance of your favourite dish or receive a gift from your parents before you hear them utter words like "I love you" or "I'm proud of you." They will suffer an anxiety attack when you don't pick up the phone but they never initiate a hug. Affection runs deep within everything they do for us except in the simple act of using words. Our parents were raised during a time when filial piety and hierarchy in the family were unailing norms. Endearments never fit in with the respectful tone they had to strictly maintain with their elders. They did not always get to be frank about their emotions with their parents. So, they show affection in their own strange ways.



Some parents are wired by their stoic upbringing to equate etiquette with affection. They believe that the best way you can love your child is by educating them to overcome the adversities of life, even if it means putting on a stern demeanour. Some psychologists refer to this as "tiger parenting". But affection is the strongest catalyst during a child's formative years. Younger kids or teenagers don't have the cognitive ability to understand shrouded forms of affection. They perceive the world in a literal sense. If a parent never utters affectionate words, young children may get discouraged from sharing their distress to their parents because they may misunderstand their parents' behaviour to be dismissive of their emotions. In a gender-biased household, young boys are misled to believe that it's "unmanly" to show their affectionate side while girls are deprived of equal affection due to gender stereotypes. Physical affection slowly wanes as religious and cultural norms begin dictating our lives once we come of age. Moreover, most parents approach parenthood using negative assertions because it has a stronger impact on children. As a result, children might feel unheard and unloved. Some parents expect their children to naturally feel loved because they try their utmost to provide and care for them. Some of us have gone so long without hearing utterings of dotting words that we are on our way to embody our parents. We squirm at the thought of uttering sentences like "I love you" to our parents because it seems completely unnatural. It's a cycle that's begging to be broken. *Nuzha forgives people for pronouncing her name wrong and wallows in books and anxiety. Suggest her fiction at nuzhaoisheel256504@gmail.com*

# The unhealthy relationship between children and screens

MAHEEM N AHMED

Excess screen time among children has become a common occurrence in today's world where our lives have become enslaved by technology. The gleeful interaction that used to take place when children used to see their parents at the end of the day no longer takes place. Both parties now have their noses two inches from a screen and some children even refuse to eat without their iPads in front of them. To the parents whose households regularly see this phenomenon, are you sure you are building up your child's future in a healthy manner? Several doctors and concerned experts have spoken out against this habit of modern-day parents, and a lot of research has been conducted to find out how prolonged exposure to screens affects children. According to Dr Nusrat Farooq, a paediatrician at Evercare Hospital, Dhaka, the overuse of screens can result in speech development disorder or developmental language disorder (DLD). It is a communication disorder where a child's ability to speak, listen, read, and



write is severely hampered. As the child grows, the brain's ability to perceive sounds and convert them into words is damaged. Thus, the child suffers from what is known

as "speech delay". A study at the University of Toronto showed that DLD was most commonly seen in children under four years of age. Similar

research at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto showed that every 30 minutes of screen time among toddlers resulted in an additional 49 percent risk of them suffering from this speech disorder. Human beings love to socialise. Kids love it when someone spends time with them by making wacky faces or playing with them. This is also an integral part of a child's growth. It helps them socialise, communicate, and be less afraid of unknown people. When they are simply handed a phone to keep themselves distracted, the various sounds and colours prevent them from noticing their surroundings. As a result, their interest in socialising gets lost. DLD is not a short-term disorder that affects children's learning ability in their early years. It persists into adulthood. According to the National Institute of Health in the USA, children diagnosed with DLD may struggle with reading and writing even when they are adults. Their vocabulary will be weakened, they may make grammatical errors while speaking, and they may face obstacles in maths and even in forming complete sentences. Overall, their ability to communicate in general will be impaired. Such are the

disastrous effects of casually handing over devices to children, which is something that many parents overlook quite often. Some may argue that parents nowadays are very busy, so they always keep their children preoccupied by handing over their phones. Many parents also defend themselves by saying that the videos their children watch on YouTube are educational, as they teach important things such as sharing, practising the 3Rs, colours, etc. However, I highly doubt how much of that information the brain of a one-year-old can absorb. Moreover, these lessons would be much more effective if they directly came from the parents or through other forms of social interactions. Screen time is not all bad. It can be educational and provide entertainment when no one can spend time with a child. But it is imperative to limit the exposure of a child to screens. Today's children are the leaders of tomorrow. They will lead us into the future where technology will rule all. To safeguard their tomorrow, we must protect them today from the dangers of digital screens. *The author is a student of class ten at Sunbeams School.*



## Tigresses seek better fortunes in T20 WC

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh side embarked on a new journey yesterday as they left for South Africa to participate in the Women's T20 World Cup, slated to begin February 10, with hopes of turning the tide and finding some joy in a tournament that has often seen them deliver below expectation.

The Tigresses have finished as champions in the Women's World Cup qualifiers thrice, but when it comes to the tournament proper, they have found the going tough. Across 17 games so far, they have won just two. This time around, they find themselves in a difficult Group 1 against Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

The last time the Tigresses won a game in the T20 World Cup was on home soil in 2014, when they produced their best-ever outing in the tournament by finishing ninth after defeating Sri Lanka in the group-stage and Ireland in a place-deciding clash.

They have failed to secure a single win since, spanning 12 games across the last three editions.



"We won a match a long time ago so everyone is hoping to break that duck. If we do well in the first game and can carry that momentum, (things may change)," skipper Nigar Sultana Joty told reporters before the team's flight yesterday evening.

"I feel it's possible to get two or three results in the group stage given the teams we have in our group. We just need a little momentum," she added.

Four players from the ongoing Under-19 World Cup will feature in Bangladesh's squad. Shorna Akter, Marufa Akter, Dilara Akter and Disha Biswas will join the team after their U-19 World Cup campaign.

"They have been playing there [in South Africa in the U-19 WC]. They are in much better flow than us. Marufa has been bowling well consistently. She did well in New Zealand too. Also Disha and Shorna," she said.

Meanwhile, batter Fargana Haque was added to the squad at the eleventh hour and flew with the squad yesterday. "We added her since we have one player in the squad who will likely be unable to play due to injury," Shafiul Alam Chowdhury Nadel, chairman of the BCB's women's wing, confirmed to The Daily Star yesterday.

The Tigresses will play warm-up matches against Pakistan and India on February 6 and 8 respectively before opening campaign against Sri Lanka on February 12.



Bangladesh players pose for a selfie at the gallery of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday ahead of their departure for South Africa for the Women's T20 World Cup, which gets underway on February 10. Bangladesh will play their first match against Sri Lanka on February 12.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Change in mindset did the trick for Hridoy

Young batter Towhid Hridoy had shown a glimpse of his potential in the first phase of the Bangladesh Premier League in Dhaka as he smashed three consecutive fifties for Sylhet Strikers, but the 22-year-old was derailed by a hand injury. The promising batter, still in recovery mode as he gears up for a comeback, spoke to The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin about his transformation, the pressure of expectations and other topics during an exclusive interview. The excerpts are below:

**The Daily Star (DS):** What's the situation with your injury?

**I haven't done anything exceptional yet in T20s either. I have had a few disappointing BPL campaigns, including even the last edition. I think I am yet to prove myself as a consistent player but I would definitely love to play in all three formats. It is my dream to become a cross-format batter for Bangladesh.**

**Towhid Hridoy (TH):** I am recovering well, gradually. I still don't know when I will be able to return to the field, but I am hopeful.

**DS:** It must be disappointing to miss



out at a time when you were in such fine form?

**TH:** To be honest, it's not in my hands. Injuries are part of a player's life. I am not disappointed. I am looking forward to a strong return. I can't control the rest.

**DS:** Did you work on your batting ahead of the BPL?

**TH:** Well, you can't change your technique overnight but what I worked on was my mindset. I used to overthink and that put me under pressure to some extent. But now I try to have a clear mindset and play according to the situation. I am playing freely and enjoying my game and it seems to be working well.

**DS:** You were among the higher-rated members of Bangladesh's Under-19 World Cup-winning squad. Some of them have already made it to the senior team. Do you think the weight of expectations hampered you?

**TH:** Look, I bat in the same position that Mushfiqur [Rahim] bhai does for the national team. Even the selectors told me not think too much and instead continue to work on my process and improve myself. I think I have the right process and plan. I don't think about anything else.

**DS:** Do you think your batting is better suited to the white-ball formats?

**TH:** To be honest, I haven't done anything exceptional yet in T20s either. I have had a few disappointing BPL campaigns, including even the last edition. I think I am yet to prove myself as a consistent player but I would definitely love to play in all three formats. It is my dream to become a cross-format batter for Bangladesh.

**DS:** Do you think you played with a lot of freedom under skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza for Sylhet in the ongoing BPL?

**TH:** Mashrafe bhai allows me to play my natural game and gives me the freedom to go out there and express myself. We all know he is an inspirational captain and he motivated me a lot. Shakib [Al Hasan] bhai also supported me in the previous season, when I played for Barishal. I remember I was not performing and failed in the last few games with the bat. Before the final, I told Shakib bhai that he could drop me from the playing eleven because I was not performing. But Shakib bhai told me that I would play and trusted that I would do well. That boosted my confidence a lot.

## 'New volleyball players more technically sound'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national volleyball team captain, Horosit Biswas, highly praised the promising prospects of the U-20 and U-23 national sides, who punched above their weights in the recently concluded Dhaka Metropolitan Premier Division Volleyball League.

Horosit's Power Development Board (PDB) clinched the prestigious title five times in a row on Friday, courtesy of scintillating performances from Tanvir, Rakesh, Rifat, Shafin and Titus, who were part of Bangladesh's winning team in the Asian Central Zone U-23 Men's International Volleyball Championship at home. They also dazzled in the 21st Asian Men's U-20 Championship to end up with a commendable fifth-place finish, ahead of China.

"This time the league was very competitive among the participants because as the players from the national U-23 and U-20s, who had long



been in training following their two internationals, played in different clubs," PDB captain Horosit said.

"However, with the inclusion of a few national players, PDB had the last laugh with an all-win record.

"To be honest, I gained fresh experience alongside these new players, who are more technically sound than the older ones and motivated enough to give their best on the field. Ball receiving has drastically elevated, and the style of the game also improved a lot among the new players," said Horosit, adding that the current players are getting more training facilities compared to the previous time.

The Bangladesh captain believes the emergence of the new crop of players will strengthen the national team in future as the federation and clubs are providing good training facilities, having acquired new instruments for practice which were unavailable once.

"The national U-20 team had beaten China, Qatar, and Australia, which is still a dream for me because beating those strong teams in volleyball is not a joke," Horosit further said.

"If the training continues for the boys and they play the international matches frequently, then they will be sharper and strengthen the national team. Thus, we can look to beat India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in future."

Horosit informed that the federation is considering introducing franchises-based volleyball league as well as start the national U-16 Volleyball Championship in a quest to bolster the national team's pipeline.

## Arsenal have history on their side

REUTERS

Arsenal confirmed they are deadly serious about winning the Premier League title by beating Manchester United 3-2 on Sunday to reach 50 points at the halfway mark of the season - a tally which usually leads to ending the season as champions.

The victory, clinched by Eddie Nketiah's stoppage-time strike, saw Arsenal become only the fifth team in Premier League history to hit 50 points from their first 19 games. Three of the previous four teams to hit that milestone went on to lift the crown.

Manchester City romped to the title in 2017-18 after taking 55 points in the first half of the season, a record Liverpool set in 2019-20, while Chelsea became champions in 2005-06 after hitting 51 points.

Only Liverpool in 2018-19 failed to take the title after hitting 51 points from 19 matches, being edged by Manchester City after squandering a seven-point lead.

Arsenal have a smaller advantage over City than Liverpool did, leading Pep

Guardiola's side by five points, and they have played one game fewer.

Arsenal visit City in the FA Cup on Friday before a league showdown between the two teams at the Emirates Stadium on Feb. 15 which could have a huge say in whether the Gunners lift their first Premier League crown in 19 years or are pegged back by City, who have won four of the last five titles.

City lost some momentum by losing the derby to Manchester United last weekend but proved they will not easily surrender their crown by storming back from two goals down to beat Tottenham Hotspur 4-2 on Thursday before Sunday's thumping 3-0 win over Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Former United midfielder Roy Keane said Arsenal were in the driving seat.

"The momentum is with them, there's good experience, youth and pace. They had good options off the bench - they're in a great place," Keane said on Sky Sports.

"If you had said at the start of the season they'd be where they are, you wouldn't have believed it. It will take a lot to stop them."



Novak Djokovic celebrates his straight-sets victory against Australia's Alex De Minaur during their fourth round match of the Australian Open at the Melbourne Park on Monday. Despite playing with a hamstring injury, the Serb romped to a 6-2, 6-1, 6-2 victory to move a step closer to a 10th Australian title and 22nd major crown.

PHOTO: AFP





## IMPORT OF RAMADAN ESSENTIALS

# If needed, use forex reserves

## Commerce secy requests BB

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The commerce ministry has asked Bangladesh Bank to take all necessary measures to ensure smooth import of six essentials ahead of the coming Ramadan.

If need be, the central bank should set aside a portion of its forex reserves to settle the import bills, Senior Commerce Secretary Tapan Kanti Ghosh told The Daily Star yesterday.

He, however, didn't mention how much US dollars would be needed for the imports.

The ministry on Sunday sent a letter to the BB in this regard amid concerns over dip in the imports of a number of essentials.

The government is trying to ensure smooth supply of the six commodities -- edible oil, refined sugar, lentil, onion, chickpeas and dates -- during Ramadan when their demand surges.

Earlier on January 5, the ministry wrote to the central bank to instruct the private commercial banks to earmark a portion of US dollars to facilitate the import of the six commodities.

But the private banks didn't respond positively in this regard, said the senior commerce secretary.

This prompted the ministry to send the second letter to the central bank.

Ghosh said he requested BB to provide dollars to four state-owned banks -- Sonali, Janata, Agrani and Rupali -- to enable them to import the six items smoothly.

Bangladesh's foreign currency reserves have dropped sharply amid a surge in import bills fuelled by escalated

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



A full-fledged fish market operating on a footpath near the Chhapra Masjid in the capital's Azimpur. Almost all the walkways there seem to be occupied by vegetable markets and more, barring pedestrians from using them. Meanwhile, a Dhaka South City Corporation office nearby remains inactive in this regard. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Initiatives should be inclusive

Says Chinese envoy about regional, global groupings

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen has opposed any regional or global initiative that is unilateral, exclusive, meant to create confrontation and against any country.

"Any sort of initiative either by the US or other countries ... they need to be open, inclusive. They should not be unilateral, exclusive or against any country," said the newly appointed Chinese envoy after a meeting with Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen at the ministry yesterday.

There are various international or regional initiatives, including the US-led Indo-Pacific Strategy. China has its global initiative -- Belt and Road Initiative.

"If we judge these initiatives according to

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

## Two children die of Nipah virus infection

STAR REPORT

Two children of Pabna and Faridpur died from Nipah virus infection in the last three days.

Soyad, 7, son of Sanwar Hossain of Awatpara village in Pabna's Ishwardi, died at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) yesterday.

The child lost consciousness after he consumed date juice on Friday. He was rushed to Ishwardi Upazila Health Complex where he later caught a fever. He was moved to RMCH the next day, said Asma Khan, health officer of the upazila.

A 17-member committee, led by Omor Kaum of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), was on the way to Pabna to investigate the death, district health officials said last night.

"They will conduct an epidemiological survey by diagnosing samples," said Pabna Civil Surgeon Monisar Chowdhury.

"We have no diagnosing facility for the disease. Therefore, we have decided to warn people to avoid drinking date juice," he added.

Meanwhile, a 10-year-old girl died of the virus infection on Saturday in Faridpur, IEDCR Director Prof Tahmina Shirin told The Daily Star.

IEDCR had also sent a

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## ENSURING CHILD RIGHTS

# Social protection schemes are crucial

NILIMA JAHAN

Kailash Satyarthi, an Indian social reformer who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize jointly with Malala Yousafzai in 2014, talks to the *Star* about the global child rights situation during his visit to Bangladesh on January 14-18.



unfortunately increased again by 10 million between 2016 and 2020, especially in a period when the world became \$10 trillion richer. Africa faced the most serious consequences at that time, when tens of thousands of children had been pushed into child labour. After the pandemic, an estimated nine to 10 million children worldwide had already been added. Although there is no separate data on South Asian countries, the people there suffered the most and invested a big chunk of their resources in

fighting the health and financial crisis, for which they cannot be blamed. Rather, it was the collective responsibility of the international community, particularly the rich countries, to support them.

The developing countries suffered not only because of the pandemic but also because of global apathy, and economic and geopolitical injustice. For example, in the middle of the pandemic, the international Group of Seven, popularly known as G7 countries, launched a new fund called the "Global Agenda of Action" for Covid-19. Though it was meant to support the marginalised people of developing countries, out of \$12 trillion, only 0.13 percent had been disbursed to developing nations.

Additionally, the IMF approved the historic \$650 billion for the global liquidity crisis, from which the developing countries should have gotten a fair share. However, from that money, a European child on average received \$2,000, while an African child could benefit only with \$60.

The world has never been as rich as it is today, but all these crises that the children have been facing are increasing. The Covid-19 pandemic has reversed a lot of progress the world had made on child rights.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## BUSINESS

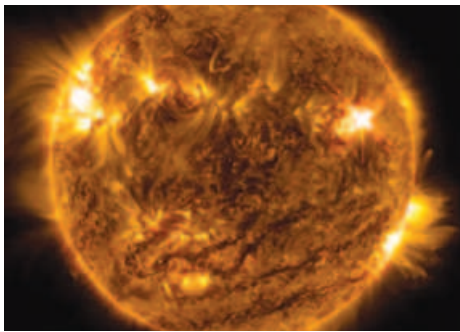
### Lending curbs for National Bank

The central bank has ordered National Bank Ltd not to disburse more than Tk 10 crore in loans to a single borrower as the lender is going through uncertainties after its Managing Director Md Mehmood Husain stepped down.

The bank will be allowed to disburse loans to a few sectors: working capital and loans to cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises.

STORY ON BI

## Strange 'sparks' on Sun can help predict solar flares on Earth



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Astronomers have found that strange flashes on the blazing upper atmosphere of the Sun can help better predict when and where the next solar flare could explode.

Researchers, including KD Leka from the NorthWest Research Associates (NWRA) in Colorado, US, discovered small signals in the upper layers of the solar atmosphere -- the corona.

The study, published recently in The Astrophysical Journal, found these sparks can help identify which regions on the Sun are more likely to produce solar flares or energetic bursts of light and particles released from the Sun that can potentially cause blackouts when directed towards Earth.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

### IN FOND MEMORY

Mrs. Anwara Islam, died on 24-01-2006 - exactly the same day and date as her husband Mr. Sirajul Islam who died twenty four years earlier in 1982.

Please join us in praying to the Almighty Allah to grant them eternal peace.

Lubna (Children)  
Anika, Talita, Numair (Grand Children)  
Amani, Tijaan & Jinaan (Great-Grand Children)

Ms Lubna Choudhury  
Founder-Principal, B.I.T

## 59pc upazila hospitals can't do x-rays

### Finds survey on 17 healthcare facilities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 59 percent of 17 surveyed upazila health complexes cannot provide patients with X-ray services, a government-funded study has found.

This is because the health complexes either do not have the x-ray machines or the existing machines are not functional, said the survey, conducted by researchers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), on 17 UHCs and the nine district-level hospitals between November 2020 and June 2021.

Around 41 percent UHCs lack blood transfusion services while the ultrasonogram services were unavailable at around 88 percent UHCs, according to survey.

Md Khalequzzaman, associate professor of public health and informatics department at BSMMU, yesterday unveiled the findings at a programme at the BSMMU Super Specialised Hospital.

The real situation of the UHCs is worse than the study gets, said the discussants at the event in the presence of Health Minister Zahid Maleque.

Speaking as the chief guest, Zahid said, "All of the machinery, including X-ray machines at two-thirds of the [UHCs and district-level] hospitals, remains dysfunctional. The civil surgeons and the UHPO [Upazila Health and Family Welfare Officers] have to take the responsibility for this."

If the heads of the institutions were

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

### HASAN AHMED

5 March 1964 - 24 January 2022  
Former Managing Director & Director

Today 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 is the first death anniversary of Mr. Hasan Ahmed. His bereaved mother, brothers, sisters, officers and employees of the company seek forgiveness from Allah Subhanahu Wa ta'ala for his departed soul.

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The Daily Star

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## UNSUNG WOMEN NATION BUILDERS AWARDS 2023

### অদম্য সাহসী নারীর খোঁজে

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আগামীর পথে  
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# UNsung WOMEN NATION BUILDERS AWARDS



## জাতি গড়ার নারী যোদ্ধারা (২০১৭-২০২২)

### ২০২২ বিজয়ী



জামিলা বেগম  
বীরগঞ্জের এক  
অন্যরকম কসাই



তাকিয়া সুলতানা নোভা  
স্কুটির চাকায় যে  
স্বাধীনতা খুঁজে নিয়েছে



প্রয়াত জারাতুল  
ফেরদৌস মথুয়া  
শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধকতা  
ভেদ করে যিনি হয়ে  
উঠেছিলেন সফল উদ্যোক্তা



তামারা আক্তার নূরা  
শারীরিক বাধার কাছে  
হার না মানা প্রতিভা



তাহিয়াতুল জারাত  
রেমির হাসিমুখ পাঠশালা



শিলা গুহ  
জীবন যুদ্ধে হার না  
মানা একজন যোদ্ধা



জারাতুল সরকার চম্পা  
সংবাদপত্রের ফেরিওয়ালা  
ইউপি সদস্য এবং  
একজন অনুপ্রেরণা

### ২০২১ বিজয়ী



ফারিস আক্তার  
একজন নিঃস্বার্থ  
করোনাযজী



ফৌজিয়া বিথী  
কোমল হৃদয়ের যোদ্ধা



জাহানারা ইসলাম  
নারী উদ্যোক্তাদের  
পথপ্রদর্শক



রোজিনা আক্তার  
দুর্ভাগাদের  
আশার আলো



সাবিনা ইয়াসমিন  
জনসচেতনতার  
বার্তাবাহক



শাপলা দেবী ত্রিপুরা  
পাহাড়িদের ত্রাণকর্তা

### ২০২০ বিজয়ী



লায়লা বেগম  
একজন নারী জেলে



বিভা রানী  
একজন মায়ের যুদ্ধ



মমতাজ মহল বেবি  
বইয়ের আলো  
ছড়ালেন যিনি



কোহিনুর বেগম  
ফুড ব্যাংকার



টেপেরি রানী  
মুক্তির অসীম সাহসী  
যোদ্ধা



সোনু রানী দাস  
শেকল ভাঙার কারিগর



জয়া চাকমা  
সেরা বেফারি



কামরুন নাহার মুন্নি  
মেয়েদের স্বাবলম্বিতাই  
যার গোল

### ২০১৯ বিজয়ী



হিরোকো কোবায়শি  
ফ্রম জাপান উইথ লাভ



বিলকিস বানু  
এতিমদের  
ভালোবেসেছেন যিনি



ছবি দাস গুপ্ত  
কম্বী থেকে উদ্যোক্তা



হাজেরা বেগম  
৪০টি শিশুর মা যিনি



রূপা দত্ত  
পাহাড় চুড়ায় যার স্বপ্ন



সালমা চৌধুরী  
ক্যান্সার আক্রান্ত  
শিশুদের জন্য



খুরশিদ জাহান  
সুন্দরবনের বাঘিনী

### ২০১৮ বিজয়ী



আকলিমা বেগম  
একজন মেধাবী উদ্যোক্তা



অতিয়ানেত  
টারমোশুইজেন  
শিশুদের থেরাপিস্ট



আরিফা আখতার  
ভবিষ্যতের নকশাকার



লুসি হেলেন ফ্রান্সিস হল্ট  
আমাদের আপন একজন



নাজনীন আক্তার নিপা  
মূল থেকে উন্নয়ন



প্রতিভা সামন্তা  
শিক্ষার অগ্রদূত



সাফিয়া বেগম  
একজন লাইব্রেরিয়ান

### ২০১৭ বিজয়ী



ডা. ভাগ্য রানী বশিক  
সবুজ কন্যা



ফাতেমা বেগম  
দেশের প্রথম নারী অ্যাডিশনাল  
ইমপ্লিমেন্ট জেনারেল অফ পুলিশ



ইরানি বাড়ই  
এক অদম্য শক্তি



মাফতাহুল জারাত লিখন  
জয়পুরহাটের  
আলোর দিশারী



রোকেয়া বেগম  
শিক্ষাদানে অক্লান্ত  
কোনো বাধা নয়



শাহিদা আক্তার স্বর্ণা  
বাংলার মালারা



সোনাজান আক্তার  
নিঃস্বার্থ মিডওয়াইফ