



BIMAN'S 7 DOMESTIC FLIGHTS LAST YEAR

Pilots' blunder, cover-up put 500 lives at risk

They concealed info of engine damage due to their faulty flight operations



- The pilots erased the "maintenance and fault code messages"
- One of the 2 pilots was promoted even after the incident. However, the promotion was halted last week
- Biman had to spend Tk 16.5cr to repair the Dash-8 aircraft

ZYMA ISLAM and RASHIDUL HASAN

Did you take any of these seven Biman flights on February 1 and February 2 last year?

BG602 from Sylhet to Dhaka, BG605 and BG606 from Dhaka to Sylhet and back to Dhaka, BG467 and BG468 from Dhaka to Jashore and back to Dhaka, and BG471 and BG472 from Dhaka to Barishal and back to

Dhaka.

If so, two Biman pilots knowingly put your life and the lives of around 500 others at risk by hiding the fact that the plane's engines had been damaged due to the captain's improper operations of the plane mid flight.

According to a Biman investigation, there could have been a catastrophic "inflight engine failure" during any of the

seven flights of the De Havilland Canada Dash 8, popularly known as the Dash-8, a 'turboprop short-haul' plane that can carry up to 74 passengers.

The civil aviation law says that the punishment for flying an aircraft in a dangerous manner is life imprisonment. But instead of punishing them, the authorities promoted one of the two pilots for flying long-haul planes.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

"The Biman management made the decision that the two pilots will not be able to avail any promotion until the departmental action against them is resolved."

Shafiqul Azim, Biman Managing Director and CEO

'Why should we continue subsidies?'

PM tells consumers to pay actual cost of gas, power



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said consumers should pay the actual purchasing cost of gas and electricity to avail the utilities' supply.

"Gas and electricity supply can be provided if all agree to pay the purchasing costs. How much subsidy can be given? And why should we continue subsidies?" she said, adding that the government is providing subsidies to agriculture and food production for the nation's greater interest.

The PM said this while opening the newly constructed "Biniyog Bhavan" (Investment Building) of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) in the capital's Agargaon.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Business groups influencing state policies

Say economists at Sanem meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Influential business houses and groups are exerting their influence in order to make rules favourable to them, said a number of economists yesterday.

An example of such influence is visible through the retaining of the taka overvalued for a long time to support importers, the focus on the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) instead of exploring gas resources locally, the electricity purchase through quick rental power plants, and various other regulations.

The issues came at a discussion at the 6th Sanem Annual Economists Conference at the Brac Centre Inn organised by the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem).

At the discussion styled "Regulation has become a source of capital accumulation," Debapriya Bhattacharya, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said since independence, capital accumulation has taken place in Bangladesh through the grabbing of abandoned properties, foreign-aided projects, the defaulting on loans taken from specialised banks in the 1980s, and the manipulation of stock markets.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



"If every politician aspires to become a businessman, the consequence is the degeneration of party organisation."

Prof Rehman Sobhan

'You are killing us'

HC blasts DoE over air pollution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday rebuked the Department of Environment for its inaction in curbing Dhaka's air pollution despite repeated directives.

"Air pollution in Dhaka was ranked highest in the world this [yesterday] morning too, though we had issued specific directives at different times to control it. There is no reflection of the directives.

"They [DoE officials] have the responsibility to control the pollution. They are neither abiding by the law, nor complying with the court orders... You are killing us by not curbing the air pollution, as it is bringing increased risks to the public health...," the HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Mohammad Ali told DoE lawyer Amatul Karim Swapna during the hearing on a writ petition.

Amatul had submitted a compliance report

SEE PAGE 7 COL 7

No chance of debt distress

Says IMF in its latest debt sustainability analysis

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh has a low risk of external and overall debt distress despite higher external borrowing in recent terms, said the International Monetary Fund.

"External and overall debt indicators are below their respective thresholds under the baseline," said the IMF's debt sustainability analysis (DSA), conducted to inform its executive board's decision on the \$4.7 billion loan application from Bangladesh.

At the end of last fiscal year, the country's total external debt is \$166.1 billion, which is 39 percent of GDP and well below the threshold of 55 percent.

Of the sum, \$72.3 billion is foreign loan, which is 17 percent of GDP and well below the threshold of 40 percent of GDP.

And of the \$72.3 billion, the World Bank accounts for \$18.2 billion, followed by the Asian Development Bank (\$13.3 billion), Japan (\$9.2 billion), Russia (\$5.1 billion), China (\$4.8

billion) and India (\$1.02 billion).

External medium- and long-term debt, which are mostly concessional in nature and helped finance infrastructure projects, is expected to jump in fiscal 2022-23 due to large taka depreciation, before gradually declining to around 14.1 percent of GDP by fiscal 2032-33 and 8.6 percent of GDP by fiscal 2042-43.

This decline is mainly driven by a gradual reduction in concessional financing beyond fiscal 2025-26, while financing from bilateral donors is expected to continue to increase, partially offsetting the lower concessional financing.

The majority of public debt over the last decade is domestic and denominated in local currency.

In fiscal 2021-22, domestic debt was about 56.5 percent of all debt, with the National Saving Certificates (NSCs) accounting for the lion's share.

"NSCs stifle the development of a domestic bond market as they provide a yield of around 10 percent for the majority of the NSC

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

- The majority of public debt over the last decade is domestic and denominated in local currency
- In 2021-22, domestic debt was about 56.5% of PPG debt stock
- Domestic debt service payments amounted to \$31.9b in 2021-22
- External debt service payments in 2021-22 comprised the payments to multilateral creditors of \$1.5b and bilateral creditors of \$0.6b
- About half of the outstanding domestic debt is composed of National Saving Certificates (NSCs)

Adani plant to begin transmission from March

No scope for coal price manipulation, says Nasrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no scope of manipulation in coal pricing by Adani Power as the rate will be fixed as per the Newcastle Index, the main price reference for physical coal contracts in Asia, said Nasrul Hamid, the state minister for power, energy and mineral resources.

"We will get coal at a competitive price in the international market -- there is no scope of manipulation in the pricing," he said at a briefing held at the secretariat yesterday.

The coal price for the Adani Godda power plant will not be more than the Payra power plant, said Power Secretary Habibur Rahman, who was also present at the briefing.

Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) pays \$245 per metric tonne for the coal used in the Payra power plant in Patuakhali, according to a report prepared by the Power Cell in January.

It pays \$254.38 per metric tonne for the S Alam power plant in Chattogram's Banskhali and the Rampal power plant in Bagerhat, and \$270 for the Barishal 307MW coal-fired power plant, according to the report.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

20th Death Anniversary



Late Shah Rafiqul Islam (Titu)
Death: 6th February, 2003

This day in 2003, we lost our beloved & honorable Director **Late Shah Rafiqul Islam (Titu)**. We mourn his pre-mature death. With our distressed heart, we pray to Almighty Allah for his eternal peace. May Allah bless him. Ameen.

All Employees

ABUL KHAIR GROUP

In 2003, on this very day, you left us at the will of Almighty Allah the Beneficent. Your pre-matured departure has made us and many of your relations overwhelmed with grief. It is straining that you are not in this mundane world with us. But we are feeling your existence by remembering the tender-aged days of your life.

We pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of his departed soul and request all friends, relatives, well-wishers to pray for him from the core of heart.

May Allah the Beneficent bless you with the eternal bliss of paradise. Ameen.

Bereaved members of the family

Idols desecrated at 12 temples in Thakurgaon

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

Unidentified criminals desecrated 14 idols of Hindu gods and goddesses at 12 temples in Thakurgaon’s Baliadangi upazila early yesterday.

The temples are located at Shindurpindi, Collegepara, Kamatpara, and Shahbajpur areas in the upazila, said locals and police.

“I have a temple in front of my house. Like every other day, I woke up early in the morning today [Sunday] and went to the temple for prayers. But I found that the idol of goddess Laxmi was vandalised,” said Dulal Chandra Singha, 40, a resident of Shindurpindi.

Similarly, Shamvu Ram Singha, 40, of Kamatpara village, said, “The idol of lord Krishna was vandalised in my temple.”

Both of them said that the incidents happened sometime between Saturday night and the early hours of yesterday.

“The criminals were very quiet because we did not hear anything,” said Dulal.

“There were idols of various gods and goddesses including Saraswati, Laxmi, and Manasha in these temples. The criminals vandalised these idols to intimidate local Hindu communities,” said Tapon Kumar Ghosh, general secretary of Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad’s Thakurgaon chapter.

“We demand exemplary punishment to the criminals responsible,” he told The Daily Star.

Contacted, local MP Md Dabirul Islam, said, “We have a long history of communal harmony existing in our area. But, vested quarters are trying to ruin the peace. We have asked law enforcers and local administration to catch the perpetrators immediately.”

On information, the deputy commissioner and superintendent of police visited the spots and assured that the criminals would be brought to book shortly.

A case was filed with Baliadangi Police Station against unnamed criminals in this connection.

“Police are trying to trace the criminals within the shortest possible time,” said Khairul Anam, officer-in-charge of Baliadangi Police Station.



A view shows a building of the National University of Urban Economy heavily damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia’s attack on Ukraine, in central Kharkiv, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Battle for Bakhmut intensifying

Says head of Russia’s Wagner group as Ukrainian forces ‘fighting to the last’

AGENCIES

Heavy fighting was underway in the northern parts of the frontline hotspot Bakhmut yesterday, while Russian missile strikes on Ukraine’s second-largest city Kharkiv wounded five people.

Despite the flow of Western weapons to Ukraine, Russia has in recent days claimed gains around war-ravaged Bakhmut in the eastern region of Donetsk.

However, the head of Russia’s mercenary group Wagner said yesterday that the Ukrainian army was not retreating and that fighting raged on in northern parts of Bakhmut.

“In the northern quarters of Artemovsk, fierce battles are going on for every street,

every house, every stairwell,” Yevgeny Prigozhin said in a statement, referring to Bakhmut by its old name.

“The Ukrainian armed forces are fighting to the last,” he said.

Russian forces have been trying to seize control of Bakhmut in the eastern region of Donetsk for months in what has become the longest and bloodiest battle since Russia invaded Ukraine last February, reports AFP.

The fight for Bakhmut has turned the town with a pre-war population of roughly 75,000 into a ghost town dotted with hedgehog anti-tank defences and burnt-out cars. The town has no water, gas or electricity.

Rohingya man shot dead in Ukhiya

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cox’s Bazar*

A Rohingya man was shot dead by criminals early yesterday in Ukhiya, Cox’s Bazar.

Noor Boshor, 33, of Kutupalong refugee camp, was a night guard for an NGO based in the camp, said Syed Harun-ur-Rashid, additional deputy inspector general of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn).

Quoting family, he said, Noor left home for work early in the morning.

His body was later found on the road at Kutupalong 2 (east) camp.

“On information, APBn members rushed to the spot and recovered his bullet-hit body,” said Syed Harun, also commanding officer of APBn-14 in Cox’s Bazar.

Police initially suspect that the killing might have taken place as a result of an internal feud between the Rohingya refugees inside the camp.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Relocation of zero-line Rohingyas begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The process of relocating stranded Rohingyas who fled into Bangladesh territory from a zero-line refugee camp amid violence began yesterday.

To this end, at least 180 Rohingyas from 35 families were taken to a transit camp in Ukhiya’s Kutupalong, said Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Mohammad Mizanur Rahman.

They are among the nearly 3,000 people who fled the gunfights between two Myanmar armed groups near the Tambru border of Bandarban’s Naikhongchhari upazila.

Panel mayor sued over sexual harassment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

A female councillor in Dinajpur’s Ghoraghat filed a case against a panel mayor on Saturday night for sexually harassing her.

She also lodged a written complaint to the Deputy Commissioner’s office against Abdul Kader, panel mayor of Ghoraghat Municipality.

Contacted, Abdul denied the allegations.

Man crushed to death by train

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Moulvibazar*

A 32-year-old man was crushed under a train near Kulaura Rail Station of Kulaura upazila in Moulvibazar yesterday morning.

The incident occurred at the level crossing in Porinagor area, said Jahanara Begum, officer-in-charge of Kulaura Railway Police.

Operations of 5 medical colleges suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The activities of five medical colleges have been suspended due to a lack of quality education programmes, Health Minister Zahid Maleque told parliament yesterday.

The suspended private medical colleges are Nightingale Medical College, Ashulia, Dhaka; Northern International Medical College, Dhaka; Aichi Medical College, Uttara, Dhaka; Northern Private Medical College, Rangpur; and Shah Mokhdum Medical College, Rajshahi.

Restaurant manager shot by landlord

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narayanganj*

A restaurant manager was shot and injured by the building’s landlord at Chasara in Narayanganj yesterday following a feud over water supply.

The incident occurred in front of the restaurant called “Sultan Bhai Kachchi” around 9:30pm.

Azhar Talukdar, 65, who shot the manager, Shafiur Rahman Kajal, 58, was later held by police.

Pilots’ blunder, cover-up put 500 lives at risk

FROM PAGE 1

The promotion was, however, rescinded a day after this paper called the carrier and enquired about the probes into the incident and the pilots in question.

The pilots deliberately concealed the information about damaging the engines.

After overstressing the engines during a flight, it was mandatory for them to file an air-safety report. This would have ensured the immediate grounding of the aircraft, inspections of the engines, and if needed, replacement of the engines altogether.

Filing the report is a Biman flight safety protocol. The pilots did not do that.

They allegedly erased the “maintenance message and fault code message” that should have automatically popped up in the plane’s instrument panel. This is according to multiple investigation reports prepared for the government by several agencies, including Biman.

Everything the pilots tried to hide, however, came out because the Dash-8’s engines automatically reported to its maker Pratt & Whitney that they had been damaged and let the cat out of the bag.

Biman conducted an investigation but the findings of the investigation report, submitted in March 2022, never saw the light of day.

Biman also had to pay Tk 16.5 crore to fix the plane which was just a year old. This incident also jacked up insurance premiums for all aircraft in Biman’s fleet.

When The Daily Star asked about why he did this, the pilot who was in command refused to comment.

THE MISTAKES, COVER-UP

The damage was done during the 2:20pm flight BG601 from Dhaka to Sylhet on February 1, 2022. The plane had 71 passengers.

The pilot in command was 42-year-old Capt Ali Rubyat Chowdhury and his first officer was 27-year-old Rafi Uz Zaman. At the time of the flight, Ali Rubyat had eight times more flying hours under his belt than Zaman.

The investigation report states that the plane took off at 2:33pm and at 2,000 feet altitude, the pilot set the airspeed to 165 knots (nautical miles per hour), which was 20 knots less than the standard operating procedure for the plane.

“As per approved Dash 8 Q400 standard operating procedure, normal climb speed is 185 knots,”

said Biman’s investigation report.

While climbing the next 9,790 feet, the pilot changed the airspeed thrice in four minutes, before finally setting it to 170 knots.

“The captain said that they wanted to climb faster to avoid cumulonimbus [thunderclouds] clouds. This technique to climb out of the weather is not supported by the standard operating procedure,” said the report. The meteorological report for the day said that there was “no significant cloud”.

The pilot said that they hit turbulence at 12,000 feet just a few seconds after he set 170 knots airspeed.

He said that 12 seconds into the turbulence, the “ice detected” light flashed, meaning ice had started forming on the wings.

However, his statement was not supported by the flight data recorder, which is popularly known as a black box and is an electronic recording device that all commercial planes have to facilitate incident investigations.

As the aircraft’s speed was 15 knots below the standard minimum of 185, to begin with, the icing conditions supposedly sent the plane’s speed plummeting, the pilots claimed.

“As the selected speed was 170 knots, the speed went [...] to 162 knots,” said the report, adding, “They [the pilots] could not recognise the speed requirement in icing conditions.”

As per the aircraft’s manual, they should have maintained 210 knots above 10,000 feet, the report said.

Setting 170 knots was in violation of standard procedure, it added.

The pilots claimed that they were losing altitude but the flight data recorder mentions nothing of that sort.

When the speed supposedly dropped to 152 knots, the pilot disengaged the autopilot and pushed both engines to “emergency” power level, which compromises engine components.

The turbine temperature shot up by over 100 degrees. The temperature should have been 880 degrees Celsius tops, but it shot up to 1,004 and 1,006 degrees Celsius, causing metals inside the engines to melt.

The report states that yanking the plane into emergency power was a deviation from the aircraft operating manual. This power level is for emergencies like trying to avoid a mountain and once this is used, the

plane’s engines must be inspected and if needed, overhauled.

While explaining as to why they put the engines on emergency mode, the pilots told the investigation committee that there was severe turbulence and “wind shear”, or erratic winds over a short distance.

“It was in their words, a life and death situation, still they did not submit any air safety report,” noted the investigators. This is a violation of the safety manual.

In addition, the operations manual says that if the plane is pushed to emergency power, it is to be reported to the aircraft maintenance log, but that was not done either.

“Both the captain and first officer mentioned that after landing [at Sylhet], the captain advised ground engineers to check for any defects/fault messages in the audio and radio control display unit [ARCDU], and the airframe [plane’s structure]. So there were suspected defects. Instead of writing the details of suspicion they recorded ‘nil’ in the aircraft maintenance log,” said the investigation report.

There is more: the committee found that ARCDU had no message about the engines’ parameters having been exceeded and suspected that the pilots had erased it.

“It appears that either no maintenance message was displayed due to an aircraft system glitch or because the message was erased,” said the investigators.

Another report by a government agency said, “The pilot tried to hide the whole incident by wiping out the maintenance message on the ARCDU.”

HOW THE COVER-UP FAILED

Approximately an hour after the plane landed in Sylhet, Biman Engineering Services got a notification from Pratt & Whitney.

“CAMP Systems Canada, the engine manufacturer nominated vendor, provides Engine Health Monitoring Services for Biman Dash 8-Q400 fleet. [...] the three brand new Dash 8 Q400 aircraft can transmit data automatically,” said the report.

This newspaper has a copy of the notification sent by CAMP.

Biman Engineering Services told the Maintenance Control Centre to investigate, but they could not find any pilot report about such an incident or maintenance message in the plane’s systems.

“Pilots’ ‘nil’ entry into the aircraft maintenance log and no-fault code

or message in the aircraft system created confusion in the engineering services team, especially as it involved simultaneous removal of both engines from only a one-year-old aircraft,” said the report.

The next day, Engineering Services contacted Pratt & Whitney, and the airframe manufacturer De-Havilland Canada.

Both analysed the data and recommended grounding the plane and taking the engines out and sending them to an overhaul facility.

But by then, the plane had flown seven flights, any of which could have ended in a disaster, said the investigation report.

Repairing the engines cost Biman Tk 16.5 crore “since the damage of the engines was solely the pilots’ fault”. That’s why the insurance company did not bear the cost, said a show-cause order signed by Biman Managing Director Shafiul Azim on December 20, 2022.

In addition, the plane had to be grounded for three months, leading to a decrease in the number of domestic flights, and depriving Biman of major revenue at a time when the company was still paying monthly instalments and insurance premiums for the aircraft.

The insurance premium of this aircraft was also hiked by a large margin, according to the document.

Insiders said that all the aircraft in the fleet saw a similar hike as a result of this incident.

When asked for an explanation, the pilot blamed the turbulence and wind shear.

In an email sent to the deputy chief of safety on February 13, 2022, Capt Ali Rubyat claimed that they “suddenly got hit by severe wind shear” and “both of us were struggling to keep the aircraft’s wings level and prevent altitude loss because of the violent force of the shear”.

But multiple investigations called him out on that. “It is evident from a holistic review that the pilot either has no idea about wind shears or is knowingly taking refuge in falsehood,” said one report prepared for the government.

The Biman probe stated, “They mentioned the wind shear encounter [...] However, the committee does not consider this as wind shear.”

Biman’s probe also ruled out illness as a cause of the mistake, saying the pilots were in perfect health.

To the investigators, the pilots

board, we formed a committee for further investigation one week ago which will provide evidence from the technical sides and all issues of the incident [will be presented] impartially and fairly so that no one is punished unlawfully,” he said on Wednesday.

A day after getting a call from The Daily Star, the promotion order dated January 22, 2023, was re-issued and signed again with Ali Rubyat dropped.

This newspaper called Azim again to ask why Rubyat’s promotion was cancelled. “The Biman management made the decision that the two pilots will not be able to avail any promotion until the departmental action against them is resolved,” he said.

When asked why he was considered in the first place, Azim said, “If they were not given promotions, they would have lagged behind.”

Capt Ali Rubyat Chowdhury told The Daily Star that since there is still an investigation going on, he will not make any comments.

The Daily Star could not reach first officer Zaman.

Why should we

FROM PAGE 1

The Investment Building would be used as offices of three agencies — BIDA, Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA), and National Skills Development Authority (NSDA).

Hasina said the production cost of electricity per kilowatt is Tk 12, but its price is only Tk 6. “Despite this, the government is criticised for electricity tariff.”

In the UK, electricity price has increased by 150 percent. “We have not yet reached that stage [such a bad situation],” she said.

The PM asked the countrymen to make larger investments in the food and agro-processing industries, particularly in the 100 economic zones that are now being developed throughout the country.

She said there is a high demand for food in the world due to the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

Food prices have soared significantly, she said.

PM’s Private Industry and Investment Adviser Salman Fazlur Rahman presided over the event.

BIDA Executive Chairman Lokman Hossain Miah delivered the welcome speech.

Five held on rape charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have arrested five people from Dhaka and Bhola in a case filed over the gang rape of a woman in Mohammadpur's Bosila area on January 26.

The arrestees are Billal Hossain, 25, Al-Amin Hossain, 26, Sabuj, 26, Rasel alias Molla Rasel, 24, and Shafiqul Islam 26.

Deputy Commissioner of Tejgaon Division Police, HM Azimul Haque, briefed reporters at his office in the capital in this regard yesterday.

According to the police official, the 29-year-old victim travelled to Bosila from Jashore on January 25 to meet her children. However, failing to locate them or her ex-husband, she took a rickshaw from the area around 9:00pm. She was abducted by the rickshaw-puller and his associates who then raped her, the DC said.

The victim was admitted to One-stop Crisis Centre of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Booklovers, especially those with a keen interest towards graphic novels and mangas, were seen flocking towards the stall Source by Fournetsha -- who made their debut appearance at the Ekushey Boi Mela this year. Besides, China book house also garnered a lot of attention due to their pop-up book for kids and books focused on Chinese politics, religion and culture. This photo was taken in Bangla Academy yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Proposed data protection law may bring down FDI

Say US, UK envoys

STAR REPORT

The US and British envoys in Bangladesh yesterday expressed concern over the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) into Bangladesh if the proposed Data Protection Act is enacted, as the law may negatively affect business.

Foreign and local investors may have trouble using data freely through international tools if the DPA is enacted, they said at a discussion on "Online Freedom and Business Investment in Bangladesh", organised by the US embassy in Bangladesh and held at Dhaka's EMK Centre.

The Bangladesh market is very attractive to US investors, said American ambassador in Bangladesh Peter Haas. "For this very reason, we recently opened a Foreign Commercial Service office at the embassy."

"But at the same time, we hear apprehension from businesses that new laws and regulations will make it more difficult for them to do business here," Haas said in his written speech.

The US has concerns about the regulations on digital, social-media, and over-the-top platforms introduced by the authorities and the DPA. "Because we value our partnership with the government of Bangladesh, we have voiced these concerns directly with the government," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

We are concerned the latest draft of the DPA does not provide for an independent data oversight authority and that it includes criminal penalties.

PETER HAAS
American ambassador

New technologies have the potential to create new markets and drive prosperity in Bangladesh... These need to be regulated in the right way.

ROBERT CHATTERTON DICKSON
British high commissioner

Youth held over killing of 10th-grader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth along with his wife have killed his girlfriend and tried to stage it as suicide, according to Rapid Action Battalion.

Rab came up with the information yesterday after arresting Bijoy Rahman, 19, from Dhaka's Wari area, in connection with the murder of a 10th-grader in Munshiganj.

Earlier, law enforcers arrested Bijoy's wife, who studied at the same school as the 10th grader.

Bijoy had developed a relationship with the 10th-grader while being married to his wife, said Rab's media wing director Khandaker Al Moin at a press briefing in the capital.

After the girl found out about it, she sent screenshots of her conversations with Bijoy to his wife, said the official.

According to Rab, Bijoy and his wife planned to "teach her a lesson". Bijoy's wife called the girl to the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Identify culprits, ensure punishment

Rights defenders denounce attack on Rizwana Hasan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR), a regional network of human rights defenders, through a press statement yesterday expressed deep concern over the alleged assault targeting environmentalist Syeda Rizwana Hasan and her team in the Akbarashah area in Chattogram on January 23.

Rizwana, the chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), and her team including Aliur Rahman, an environment journalist, were allegedly attacked by the followers of Jahurul Islam alias Jashim, a councillor of Uttar Pahartali ward, under Chattogram City Corporation on that very day, it mentioned.

The statement, signed by SAHR's co chairperson Dr Roshmi Goswami and bureau member Dr P Saravanamuttu, urged the government to ensure an independent impartial and prompt investigation into the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice, and ensure reparations for those affected.

The organisation also called on the authorities to guarantee that environmental activists are able to carry out their work freely and without interference or harassment, given the crucial importance of work in ensuring climate justice, and the survival of



SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

DELIMITING CONSTITUENCIES

EC in dilemma over using latest census

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission on Tuesday will finalise its decision on whether it will use population data of the 2011 census or wait for the final report of the latest one to delimit parliamentary constituencies.

The commission is yet to begin delimitation of constituencies, a vital job ahead of the next national election, due to unavailability of the final report.

According to the delimitation law, boundaries of Jatiya Sangsad constituencies should be redrawn considering administrative convenience, each constituency should be geographically intact, and population be distributed as per the final census report.

A top EC official said the election commissioners will sit in a meeting on Tuesday to discuss how to delimit areas. At the meeting, they might take the decision to use 2011's data, as they want to complete the process by June.

If they wait for the final report, they will not be able to complete the job by June, officials said.

EC sources said the commission might put emphasis on maintaining administrative convenience and keeping areas intact while redrawing constituencies this time.

Election Commissioner Md Alamgir yesterday said they will hold a meeting of commissioners on Tuesday for primary discussion on finalising how delimitation work would progress.

"The law first cites administrative convenience and then talks about keeping geographical areas intact. It puts less emphasis on population



According to the delimitation law, boundaries of Jatiya Sangsad constituencies should be redrawn considering administrative convenience, each constituency should be geographically intact, and population be distributed as per the final census report.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

BANK EXAM QUESTION LEAK
Court accepts charges against Buet teacher

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted the charges against Buet Prof Nikhil Ranjan Dhar in a case filed over the question paper leak of bank recruitment exams in November 2021.

After accepting the supplementary charge sheet submitted against Nikhil Dhar, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Shahidul Islam issued an arrest warrant against him.

The magistrate directed the officer-in-charge of Keshobpur Police Station of Jashore to submit by March 9 the progress report on the execution of the arrest warrant.

On January 31, Prof Nikhil was charged with involvement in bank recruitment question paper leak even though the investigation officer (IO) had earlier dropped his name from the charge sheet.

IO Shamim Ahmed, a sub-inspector of the Detective Branch (DB), on November 16 last year submitted a charge sheet, excluding Prof Nikhil as an accused.

Prof Nikhil was charged after a Dhaka court summoned IO Shamim to show cause why and how

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

AMAR EKUSHEY BOI MELA

Welcoming new cultures around the world

DIPAN NANDY

Besides local books, readers are getting the scope to know about the language, history and culture of foreign countries at Amar Ekushey Boi Mela this year.

Two stalls in particular -- China Book House and Source by Fournetsha -- are garnering a lot of attention from visitors.

There are various types of books at China Book House, but a 3D cut-out book called "Happy Chinese New Year: The Irised Kingdom" for children is probably the most interesting.

Abdur Jabbar, who took a look at the book for his nephew, said, "I want our new generation to know more about literature all around the world, which is why, I bought this book for my nephew."

China Book House also has a series of books of on the speeches of Chinese President Xi Jinping. The name of the book series is "Xi Jinping: The Governance of China". They also have book series on Chinese seasons, food culture and religions.

The books are written in English.

Sun Kangning, attaché of the Cultural Section of Chinese Embassy in Dhaka, said, "We received a warm welcome from the visitors. But, selling books isn't our top priority. The relations between Bangladesh and China are developing day by day. That's why we want Bangladeshi readers to know more about China."

Source by Fournetsha is the stall where one can find

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

BANGLADESH JUTE CORP

64pc of its land grabbed

RASHIDUL HASAN

Sixty-four percent of the total land of Bangladesh Jute Corporation (BJC) remains grabbed by different individuals and organisations, a parliamentary body was informed yesterday.

BJC informed the parliamentary standing committee on the textile and jute ministry that the total amount of land of BJC is 295.17 acres. Of the total land, 190.04 acres of land remain grabbed, while 105.13 acres of land remain under the jurisdiction of the government organisation.

At least 863 persons, including a former state minister, have grabbed these properties.

This information was obtained from a report

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Waiting for justice even after a decade

Say organisers of Gonojagoron Mancha about activists killed by militants

DU CORRESPONDENT

The organisers of Gonojagoron Mancha yesterday expressed disappointment, as they did not get justice for the murder of their fellows by militant outfits even after a decade.

They demanded the killers be brought to justice immediately during a rally in front of the capital's National Museum to commemorate the platform's tenth anniversary.

They also called for banning religion-based politics in Bangladesh.

"It is deeply regrettable that many free-thinking activists of the mass awakening have been brutally murdered. However, the killers have yet to be apprehended. This culture of injustice hurts us," said freedom fighter Nasiruddin Yousuff Bachchu.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



A woman squints her eyes in discomfort, as many like her, desperate to get daily essentials at a subsidised rate from an OMS truck, push her from the back. With the rising prices of essentials, many have to go to great lengths to get these goods to ensure their family's survival. This photo was taken near the capital's Mohammadpur Bus Stand yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Court accepts

FROM PAGE 3
he relieved Prof Nikhil from the charges. The case was filed with Badda Police Station under the Public Examinations (Offences) Act in November 2021.

Following the question leak in recruitment tests of five state-owned banks on November 6, 2021, the detectives have so far arrested 11 people.

Initially, Bangladesh Bank ignored the question leak complaints and did not make any immediate enquiry. Later, it cancelled the examination.

The name of Prof Nikhil came up in Delowar's confessional statements during investigation in the case filed with Badda Police Station under the Public Examinations (Offences) Act in November 2021.

A few days later, on November 21, 2021, Nikhil was relieved of the chairman post of Buet's industrial and production engineering department and exam-related duties.



The Daily Star and Manarat Dhaka International School & College signed an agreement on the latter's campus in Dhaka yesterday. Under the agreement, students of the educational institution will now have the opportunity to read the newspaper with exceptional facilities. Brig Gen (retd) Md Mehdi Hassan Pramanik, principal of the school and college; and Imran Kadir, head of marketing, business development, The Daily Star, signed the deal on behalf of the respective organisations.

PHOTO: STAR

64pc of its land

FROM PAGE 3
presented to the parliamentary watchdog by the BJC. According to the report, the grabbers or their heirs are involved in the encroachments. Besides, mosques, madrasahs, temples, government slaughterhouses, Bihari camps, municipality, markets, chamber of commerce, rickshaw workers' unions, fire stations, educational institutions, health complexes, land

office, post office, telephone office, local clubs are also in the list of grabbers.

According to the report, BJC's immovable assets include 797 houses, 1,924 trees, 62 office buildings, 120 warehouses, 21 presses, 29 shops, 19 educational institutions, one mosque, one temple, and two pieces of machinery.

According to the report, a total of 299 cases of BJC are ongoing. Among them, 14 were in Supreme Court,

86 in High Court, and 187 were in lower court.

In the meeting, it was recommended that the summary of the occupied land of BJC will be placed before the prime minister for recovering the grabbed land and deposit the money earned by selling the illegally occupied unused land to the state exchequer.

Awami League MP Mirza Azam, chairman of the parliamentary watchdog, presided over the meeting.

EC in dilemma over

FROM PAGE 3
By taking population data from the latest census preliminary report, each parliamentary seat should have over 5 lakh people on average, if the population were distributed equally.

"This means we need to add 10 more constituencies in Dhaka, five in Gazipur, and two each in Chattogram and Khulna," Alamgir said.

"From where will we get these seats? The number of constituencies are fixed at 300," he added.

Demarcation of seats, a complicated and technical job that sometimes creates controversy, takes a good amount of time, said EC officials.

The commission will have to publish a preliminary list of redrawn constituencies, and the voters will get the chance to file appeals against the EC's decision.

The EC would be able to finalise demarcation only after settling the objections.

In the process, some constituencies become larger and some smaller.

This means some MP candidates in the next parliamentary election will have to woo new voters in their constituencies, while some would lose voters in their strongholds.

The EC's work plan for the 12th parliamentary polls, likely to be held late December this year or early January 2024, targetted to prepare a new policy to demarcate constituencies by reviewing the previous policy by January this year, and complete delimitation by June.

The then KM Nurul Huda-led commission brought changes to boundaries of 25 constituencies, ahead of the 11th parliamentary polls in December 2018.

The then commission, headed by Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad, redrew the boundaries of 87 constituencies in 2013, ahead of the 10th parliamentary elections.

The ATM Shamsul Huda-led commission brought massive changes to 133 constituencies ahead of ninth parliamentary polls in 2008.

Welcoming new cultures

FROM PAGE 3
the first manga (comics or graphic novels originating from Japan) magazine in Bangladesh. This is the first time they have set up shop in Boi Mela.

Faiaz Ishrak, chief editor of Source, said, "We are overwhelmed by the reader's reception. It's just our first issue, we are

selling a lot every day."

He said there are only three mangas in the first issue. The first one is Qangkai, an action-fantasy-adventure genre written and drawn by "Oindrojo". The second manga features Hasin Raihan Dhruvo and Fatin Raihan Arco's original psycho-thriller story called

"Carnage". The first read is the first volume of Black Jack, a popular manga by Shuto Sato, that has been translated into Bangla.

After the weekend, yesterday's Boi Mela's doors were open for all at 3:00pm.

According to Bangla Academy, 73 new books were published on the fifth day of the fair.

খুলনা প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
খুলনা-৯২০৩
সংশোধনী
পত্র ০৪/০২/২০২২ইং তারিখে প্রকাশিত নিম্নোক্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তির ক্রমিক নং-৪ এ বর্ণিত পদের বেতন স্কেল ৩৫৫০০-৬৭০১০/- স্থলে ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/- পড়িতে হইবে এবং ক্রমিক নং-৫ এ বর্ণিত পদ সংখ্যা ১টি এর পরিবর্তে ২টি পড়িতে হইবে। (জিডি-১৮৮)

AVAILABLE ON RENT
Boroipara, Savar
15,000 SFT
Ready for
WAREHOUSE, GODWN, SHED
Call-01914 - 462138
Email-hr2016_smf@yahoo.com

INVITATION FOR TENDER
Pubali Bank Limited, the largest online commercial Bank in Bangladesh, is hereby inviting sealed Tenders from the eligible Tenderers who can participate in the following Tender as defined in the tender documents of the under mentioned work as per terms & conditions stated below:
1. Supplying, Installing, Commissioning and Maintenance of **20 (Twenty) CISCO Video IP Telephone Sets** for different Offices of Pubali Bank Limited.
Please visit our web site, <https://www.pubalibangla.com/tender.asp> for more details. Interested Parties may purchase Tender documents by **20 February 2023** duly fulfilling all other requirements and submit their proposal on **22 February 2023** up to **11:00 AM (BST)**.
(Md. Helal Uddin)
GM & Division Head
পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
PUBALI BANK LIMITED
ICT Operation Division
Head office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
জাতীয় শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থাপনা একাডেমি (নায়েম)
মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চশিক্ষা বিভাগ
শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়
নায়েম রোড, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা-১২০৫
www.naem.gov.bd
তারিখ: ১৯.১০.১৪২৯ বঙ্গ
০২.০২.২০২৩ খ্রিঃ
গবেষণা প্রস্তাবনা সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি
শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের অর্থায়নে জাতীয় শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থাপনা একাডেমি (নায়েম) পরিচালিত ২০২৩-২৪ অর্থবছরে গবেষণাকর্ম সম্পাদনে শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ীয় সংস্থা/দপ্তর/অধিদপ্তর/পরিদপ্তরসহ সরকারি ও বেসরকারি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় এবং জাতীয় পর্যায়ে প্রশিক্ষণ ও গবেষণা প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের অনুদান/কর্মকর্তাগণের নিকট থেকে নায়েম গবেষণা নীতিমালা ২০১৮ অনুযায়ী গবেষণা প্রস্তাবনা আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। গবেষণা প্রস্তাবনা আসামী ০৯ মার্চ ২০২৩ (বৃহস্পতিবার) ৪.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে পরিচালক (গবেষণা ও তথ্যায়ন), নায়েম বরাবর জমা দিতে হবে। বিস্তারিত নায়েম ওয়েবসাইট (www.naem.gov.bd)-এ পাওয়া যাবে।
০২.০২.২০২৩
(প্রফেসর ড. মো. নিজামুল করিম)
মহাপরিচালক
সভাপতি, নায়েম গবেষণা কমিটি
ফোন: ৫৫১৬৭৫২৯
ই-মেইল: dg@naem.gov.bd
GD- 185

Murder accused

regard till last evening, said the police officer.

AL leader Saheb Ali Madbar from the same area was killed on February 19 in 2019, said police.

Aval was out on bail.

Youth held

FROM PAGE 3
rooftop of Bijoy's house in Munshiganj on January 1, and at one point, both of them grabbed her by the throat, and she fainted due to suffocation. They later left her unconscious on the roadside and went home.

After locals noticed the body, they took the body to Munshiganj Sadar Hospital where doctors declared her dead. Following that, both Bijoy and his wife fled the area.

Moin said Bijoy stayed in hiding in Munshiganj and Faridpur. At one point, he moved to a friend's house in Wari. The elder brother of the deceased filed a murder case with Munshiganj Sadar Police Station.

Five held on

FROM PAGE 3
A case was filed with Mohammadpur Police Station in this regard, the official added.

The DC said they arrested the perpetrators after analysing the CCTV footage of the surroundings and with the help of technology. They are also looking for the woman's former husband.

Identify culprits

FROM PAGE 3
the people of Bangladesh.

It also urged the government to respect its obligation to protect rights defenders as well as the rights and freedoms of the people enshrined in the constitution.

Proposed data protection law

FROM PAGE 3

"Before I describe some of our concerns though, let me be clear -- we respect that Bangladesh will choose for Bangladesh," Haas mentioned.

"So, what are some of our concerns? We worry the Data Protection Act, if passed with strict data localisation requirements, may force some US companies currently operating in Bangladesh to leave the market," he said.

The online-platform regulations will similarly dissuade companies from investing in businesses, if they face criminal liability for user content. The consequences could have very negative effects for Bangladesh, he continued.

Over 2,000 startups could be put out of business, and services that Bangladeshis use millions of times every day could become inaccessible, Haas said. He also expressed concern over human-rights issues that may arise if DPA is enacted.

"...However, as we look at the draft online-platform regulations, we are

concerned about the broad definitions for what type of online content is deemed criminal. The ability to accept criticism and ensure freedom of speech even when that speech is unpleasant are hallmarks of a strong democracy," he said. "We are concerned the latest draft of the DPA does not provide for an independent data oversight authority and that it includes criminal penalties," he added.

Echoing Haas, Robert Chatterton Dickson, British high commissioner in Bangladesh, said Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in the digital field -- like IT outsourcing and data processing. However, the continuation of this progress may be affected by DPA, he said.

New technologies like cloud computing, artificial intelligence and machine learning have the potential to create new markets and drive prosperity in Bangladesh.

These need to be regulated in the right way, he said. "We also have

some concerns about data localisation."

Bangladesh may also face another huge risk if foreign businesses find themselves unable to access international tools, which is basic for doing business.

Rubaba Dowla, country managing director of Oracle Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, said in 2008, the total export of the IT sector was \$25 million, which reached nearly \$2 billion in 2021. Export from IT industries will grow to \$4.8 billion by 2025, and investment in this sector will also grow to \$5 billion by this time.

But, how will the country reach these targets if there are such barriers, she questioned.

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said there is a possibility of unregulated use of personal data by the stakeholders. It is a huge risk.

Tuomo Poutiainen, country director of the International Labour Organisation, also spoke.

Waiting for justice even after

FROM PAGE 3

"People will remember the platform because it was one of the significant events in the post-Liberation War era. Shahbagh does not sleep, rather Shahbagh rises during times of national crisis. If necessary, we'll take to the streets again," said Kamal Pasha, one of the organisers of Gonojagoron Mancha.

At the beginning of the rally, organisers observed one-minute silence in respect of the activists who were murdered by militant outfits.

A group of cultural performers of Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigoshthi staged cultural events, followed by a torch procession during the event.

Some of the placards from the rally read, "Confiscate all wealth of war criminals" and "Return to the constitution of 72".

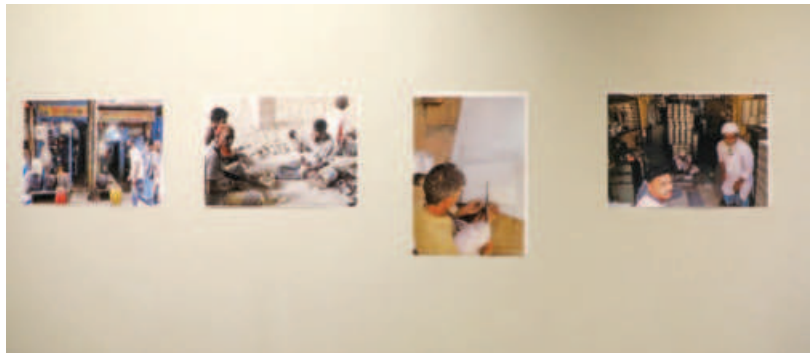
Gonojagoron Mancha means "platform for popular uprising" or "mass-awakening platform". It refers to the Shahbagh mass protest in Bangladesh, which began on February 5, 2013 and calls for the punishment of those involved in war crimes committed during the Liberation War.

Sylhet City Corporation
Nagar Bhaban, Sylhet
www.scc.gov.bd
e-Tender Notice-02/2022-23(Electrical)
Memo No. 46.07.0000.021.99.035.23.1617 Dated: 05.02.23
1. Ministry/Division: Ministry of the Local Government, Rural Development & Co-operatives.
2. Agency: Sylhet City Corporation
3. Tender ID No. 778035 Type of method NCT, OTM (Goods) Publishing & opening date of tender submission 05-Feb-2023 10:00:00, 05-Mar-2023 15:00:00 Brief description of work Supply & Installation of Lift & Generator with other Electrical Equipment for (Nagar MAA and Shishu Hospital) at Kumarpura, Sylhet City Corporation
4. 775393 NCT, OTM (Goods) 05-Feb-2023 10:00:00, 06-Mar-2023 15:00:00 Supply & Installation of CCTV, Lift, Solar System, Automatic Sliding Door & Access Control and Fire Fighting Equipment for Nagar Bhaban of Sylhet City Corporation
6. Name, designation & address of PE Md. Ruhul Alam Executive Engineer (Electrical) Sylhet City Corporation. 02-996635045 01911-249699
7. This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd
8. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.
9. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) (SD/) Md. Ruhul Alam Executive Engineer (Electrical) Sylhet City Corporation
GD-184

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Western Economic Corridor & Regional Enhancement Program (WeCARE) Phase-I: (RCMLIIP)
LGED-RDEC Bhaban, Level-03,
Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
www.lged.gov.bd
Memo No: 46.02.0000.981.14.012.21-174 Date: 05 February 2023
e-Tender Notice No. 03/2022-23
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of followings:

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of Works	On-line Tender Publication Date	On-line Tender Closing Date
785060	WeCARE/LGED/CW-04	Improvement of One Growth Center Market and 18.0 km Adjacent Roads at Gorpara of Sharsha Upazilla under Jashore District (World Bank Funded WeCARE Phase-I: LGED)	07/02/2023 10.00 AM	28/03/2023 2.00 PM

This is 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 System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is mandatory.
The fees for the e-Tender Document Price have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's Branches up to 5:00 PM of one day before the Closing Date.
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)
(Momin Mozibul Haque Shamaji)
Project Director
WeCARE Phase-I: (RCMLIIP)
Tel: +88-02-44826234
E-mail: pd.wecare@lged.gov.bd
GD- 187



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Exploring the art and heritage of OLD DHAKA

‘Learning from Puran Dhaka’ inaugurated at Alliance Française

Old Dhaka offers a range of architectural styles, drawing inspiration from the days of Sena and Mughal dynasties into the Indo-Saracenic and colonial era. During this project, the participating students will continue the documentation of the area, exploring its architectural heritage.

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Learning from Puran Dhaka: The Urbanity of Occupations along the Buriganga Riverfront, a living exhibition and open workshop, was inaugurated on Saturday at La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka.

The opening ceremony was graced by the kind presence of Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, Mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation; His Excellency Charles Whiteley, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union in Bangladesh; Her Excellency Marie Masdupuy, Ambassador of France to Bangladesh and Thijs Woudstra, Chargé d'affaires, Embassy of the Netherlands in Bangladesh.

Throughout the exhibition, a group of around 50 students from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Bharati Vidyapeeth College of Architecture, Ecole Supérieure Nationale d'Architecture de Paris-La Villette, and College of Architecture Trivandrum, will be investigating topics such as endangered heritage, circular economy, urban agriculture, innovation, corporate culture and much more, in the eight river docks of Old Dhaka.

Through this, they will sketch various architectural designs of Old Dhaka. Over the course of the exhibition, they will be adding new sketches, and changing previous ones, thereby presenting a cohesive interpretation of their findings by February 20.

River Heritage: Learning from Puran



Dhaka is a long-running heritage initiative currently in its third chapter. It is led by Alliance Française, Goethe-Institut, British Council, the Spanish Embassy and the EU Delegation in Bangladesh, with support from the Embassy of the Netherlands. The project is also being facilitated by a number of local partners, including Dhaka South City Corporation, BUET, Brihatta Arts Foundation, Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts and Pathshala South Asian Media Institute.

Old Dhaka offers a range of architectural styles, drawing inspiration from the days of Sena and Mughal dynasties into the Indo-

Saracenic and colonial era. During this project, the participating students will continue the documentation of the area, exploring its architectural heritage.

Throughout the workshop and exhibition, participants will be exhibiting drawings, maps, sketches, observations, and photographs of Old Dhaka. The project will be followed by a number of cultural events to encourage reflection and interest about the area's existing and historic heritage.

The exhibition is open to all at La Galerie and will be continuing till February 20, from 3 pm to 9 pm.

Kit Harington and Rose Leslie expecting second baby



Kit Harington and Rose Leslie are expecting their second child together, following the birth of a son in February 2021.

The *Game of Thrones* star announced the news on the Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon on Friday.

Kit Harington and Rose Leslie met on the set of Game of Thrones Season 2 in 2011. While Harington played Jon Snow in the HBO series, Leslie appeared as Ygritte on several occasions from seasons two to four.

It took nearly four years for the couple to confirm their relationship, after their first red carpet appearance in 2016.

Exhibition of Ayub Bachchu's guitar collection held in Chattogram

An exhibition of rock icon Ayub Bachchu's guitars will kick-off in Chattogram on February 11. The exhibition will take place at Best Western hotel.

Guitars and other memorabilia of the late legend will be on display there. The exhibition will be open to the public from 9 am to 9 pm on that day.

On behalf of the organisers, Masood told The Daily Star, "The guitar exhibition will feature 18 guitars used by Ayub Bachchu, and other memorabilia. Throughout the day, various bands from the port city will pay tribute by performing his iconic songs. Hopefully, everyone will be with us in this event."

Before Chattogram, another exhibition featuring Ayub Bachchu's guitars were held at Shilpalay in Dhaka, which was titled *Harano Bikeler Golpo*.



NEWS

GM Quader can

FROM PAGE 12

perform responsibilities as Jatiya Party Chairman.

The Appellate Division of the SC, however, ordered the Dhaka court concerned to hear and dispose of the case filed in connection with this issue.

Per capita income

FROM PAGE 12

percentage points lower at 7.1 percent.

The estimated growth in the industrial sector was projected to be 10.44 percent but it fell short. It was 9.85 percent.

Manufacturing grew 11.41 percent against the estimate of 12.31 percent and services rose by 6.26 percent, lower than the estimated 6.31 percent.

‘Oldest animal fossil’

FROM PAGE 12

million years ago and that Dickinsonia might have also been present at similar temperate and subtropical latitudes.

"The find attracted the attention of The New York Times, The Weather Channel and the scientific journal Nature as well as many Indian newspapers," said scientists, including those from the University of Florida (UF) who were behind the latest research.

Rohingya man

FROM PAGE 2

"The victim's body has been sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital for autopsy and in the meantime, police are trying to arrest the killers," the APBN officer added.

Contacted, Ukhiya Police Officer-in-Charge Sheikh Mohammad Ali said a case was being filed with his station in this connection.

AL to finalise

FROM PAGE 12

the AL has a single majority in parliament, only the nominated candidate will be elected.

Party insiders said at the ALPP meeting, the names who will propose and support the president candidate while filing the nomination paper to the EC will also be finalised.

ALPP President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting.

Awami League Parliamentary Party Secretary and Jatiya Sangsad Chief Whip Noor-e-Alam Chowdhury asked the party MPs to attend the meeting.

MoU with Malaysia

FROM PAGE 12

According to the expatriates' welfare ministry, under the MoU, the employers in Malaysia are obliged to bear Bangladeshi workers' migration costs incurred in that country.

The costs include the service charge of the Malaysian recruiting agency, travel to and from Malaysia, and accommodation.

Moreover, the employers will pay the immigration, visa, medical test, insurance, Covid-19 test, and quarantine fees in Malaysia.

Besides, the expatriates' welfare ministry has set the maximum cost of migration at Tk 78,990 at the Bangladesh end to send a worker to Malaysia.

Addressing reporters, Imran Ahmad said there was no fixed agenda for the meeting as the Malaysian minister was on a "working-visit".

However, various other issues regarding the migrant workers' wellbeing, including migration cost, were discussed at the meeting, he said.

"The only thing we were talking about is to send people through a smooth process and at a low cost."

Malaysian Home Minister Saifuddin said his country's position is to have a system to make things easier and achieve the "final objectives", which would fulfil the demand of foreign workers, reduce

the migration cost, and uphold their dignity.

He also said they have cut off the application approval process for foreign workers' recruitment from the previous 20-30 days to within three days at present.

"It's a major policy shift," he added.

Saifuddin also said in the first week of the ongoing labour recalibration programme, which started from January 27, Bangladeshi migrant workers constituted about 55 percent of those who were given approval.

He added that of about 1.5 million foreign workers in Malaysia at present, there are about 4,45,000 Bangladeshi workers, constituting the largest foreign workers community there.

This shows the importance of Bangladeshi workers' contribution to the Malaysian economy, he said, adding, Bangladeshi workers are mainly employed in manufacturing, construction, and service sectors there.

Also adding that there was no hidden cost on their part in workers' recruitment, the visiting minister said at present, apart from levy, they charge 20 ringgit for immigration, 100 ringgit for biomedical, 100 for visa processing that goes to the agent, and another 100 for health screening.

Patient, 60, dies losing

FROM PAGE 12

upazila, was admitted to a bed on the fifth floor on Saturday night.

He was suffering from multiple illnesses, including pneumonia, cardiac problems, and breathing difficulties, DMCH Director Brig Gen Nazmul Haque told The Daily Star.

"Jasim was in a critical condition and put under oxygen support. As he started getting down the stairs without his oxygen support, his condition worsened," said the official.

After noticing the smoke, everybody began taking the stairs in a panic to evacuate the building.

At one point, Jasim's relatives also started helping him get down, but he fell on the stairs and became unconscious.

His son, Mofiz Sarkar, said, "When

we left my father's oxygen supply behind, he started having breathing difficulties. Soon after, he collapsed getting down the stairs."

Jasim was taken to the emergency department, but doctors declared him dead on arrival around 3:30pm, confirmed Bachchu Mia, police outpost in-charge (inspector) at DMCH.

Sri Lanka likely

FROM PAGE 12

term funds from other donors.

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe has conveyed his country's gratitude to the Bangladesh government and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for the timely assistance as the country battles to rebuild its economy, Momen said.

Ex-Pak president Musharraf dies in Dubai

FROM PAGE 12

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Arif Alvi and the chiefs of Pakistan's army, navy and air force each expressed condolences on his death.

A special flight will be made to Dubai today to bring Musharraf's body back to Pakistan for burial, local TV channel Geo News reported.

The former four-star general, who seized power in a bloodless coup in 1999, oversaw rapid economic growth and attempted to usher in socially liberal values in the conservative Muslim country.

Musharraf enjoyed strong support for many years, his greatest threat al Qaeda and other militant Islamists who tried to kill him at least three times.

But his heavy-handed use of the military to quell dissent as well as his continued backing of the United

States in its fight against al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban ultimately led to his downfall.

"He is called a military dictator, but there has never been a stronger democratic system than that under him," said former close Musharraf aide Fawad Chaudhry, a leader of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party.

"He gave Pakistan a free media and he stressed on diversity of opinion in Pakistan," Chaudhry said in a video message.

History will always remember him," he said. "Pervez Musharraf, we will miss you."

Musharraf joined what Washington called its "war on terror" after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. Pakistan provided US forces ground and air access to landlocked Afghanistan to chase down the al Qaeda militants

identified as being behind the plot.

The support was contrary to Pakistan's longstanding policy of support for the Taliban, who then as now controlled neighbouring Afghanistan. This made Musharraf a target for militants in Pakistan as well as causing him to lose support among conservative elements in Pakistan.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, an umbrella group of Pakistani militant organisations formed in reaction to Musharraf's crackdown on extremist elements, celebrated his death, criticising his policy of siding with the West.

"This was the infamous army chief who sold off the country's honour and respect," it said a statement. The group, which has launched a fresh spate of attacks across Pakistan in recent days, warned the current military leadership against following Musharraf's policies.

Adani plant to begin transmission

FROM PAGE 1

Recently, the government sought to revise the power purchase agreement signed with Adani Power in November 2017 after the Indian company quoted a high price for coal. The letter was sent following a request they received from Adani in relation to opening LCs (in India) to import coal.

"There is no scope for discount. The coal price for each power plant depends on the agreement and the index we are following according to the agreement," Hamid told The Daily Star yesterday.

Adani's coal price is valued at \$347 for 4,600 calorific grade metric

tonnes of coal, according to the Power Cell report.

When asked about the price disparity between the Adani and Payra power plants in the Power Cell report, Hamid said: "Why do you bother with the Power Cell? It's all about the power purchase agreement and the price of coal that day."

Hamid maintained that electricity transmission from the Godda plant would begin from the first week of March even though the Indian financial daily Mint yesterday reported that there would be a delay of another six months as the transmission line is yet to be completed.

Quoting a senior official from Adani's lenders, Indian business news site MoneyControl said a delay is likely after PDB voiced concerns regarding the electricity price.

"We have fixed the commercial operations date on February 28 and all are fixed to get electricity by the first week of March," he said.

M Shamsul Alam, senior vice-president of the Consumers' Association of Bangladesh, criticised the overall deal with Adani.

"The agreement has been made to favour Adani, turning a blind eye towards stakeholders who will be consuming the electricity," he said.

Fresh CID probe finds 30 involved

FROM PAGE 12

although their involvement was mentioned in more than one confessional statements.

The court order also said the investigating agency cannot exclude from the charge sheet those mentioned in more than one confessional statements.

This newspaper found that names of at least 20 people are mentioned in more than one confessional statements.

An earlier investigation by this

newspaper found that six people who were excluded from the charge sheet made financial gains as they were members of the syndicate.

The ongoing CID probe has already found evidence of involvement of the six, said officials. An additional superintendent of police is now investigating the case as per the court order.

The previous charge sheet caused quite a stir in the police department and also among the local politicians who had long known about the

"aggressive" tender manipulation by this syndicate.

Two superintendents of police and an additional SP earlier told The Daily Star that they suspect some of these syndicate members were let off the hook in exchange for money. All three officials had direct knowledge of the investigation.

Mahbubur Rahman, who was the CID chief at the time of the charge sheet submission, however, denied that his officers took bribes from any suspects to give them a clean chit.

Brutal cold grips northeast US
Lowest ever wind-chill temperature recorded; infant dies in Massachusetts

REUTERS

A dangerous combination of record-setting cold temperatures and powerful winds buffeted the northeastern United States on Saturday, creating life-threatening conditions and causing the death of an infant in Massachusetts.

New Hampshire's Mount Washington overnight recorded a wind chill – a measure of how the combined effect of air and wind feels to the skin – of minus 108 degrees Fahrenheit (-78 Celsius), which appeared to be the lowest ever in the United States. The air temperature at the peak reached minus 47 degrees F (-44 C), with winds gusting near 100 miles per hour (160 kilometers per hour), according to the Mount Washington Observatory.

The high winds brought a tree down onto a car in Southwick, Massachusetts, the Hampden district attorney said in a statement, crushing the vehicle and killing an infant passenger. The driver was transported to a hospital with serious injuries.

In Boston, where officials closed down the public school system on Friday due to the impending freeze, the low temperature hit minus 10 degrees F (-23 C), shattering the day's record set more than a century ago, the NWS said. In Providence, Rhode Island, the mercury dropped to minus 9 degrees F (-23 C), well below the previous all-time low of minus 2 degrees F (-19 C), set in 1918.

The arctic blast flowing into the United States from eastern Canada brought record lows to Albany, New York; Augusta, Maine; Rochester, and Worcester, Massachusetts, among other places, the NWS said.

The NWS office in Caribou, Maine, said it had gotten reports of "frostquakes" – tremors that feel like earthquakes but are caused by the soil cracking suddenly in the cold – as well as trees splitting open, likely due to sap freezing inside the trunks.

Several cities took emergency measures to aid residents, including opening warming centers and conducting outreach to ensure homeless people were sheltered from the brutal cold.



People fight a fire in Puren, Araucania region, Chile on Saturday evening. At least 23 people have died in hundreds of forest fires whipped up amid a blistering heat wave in south central Chile, a senior government official said.

PHOTO: AFP

ADVANCED WEAPONRY TO UKRAINE
Western arms won't hit Russia
Says Germany's Scholz referring to consensus with Zelensky

AGENCIES

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky agrees that weapons supplied by the West will not be used to attack Russian territory, Germany's leader said in an interview yesterday.

"There is a consensus on this point," Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in an interview with the weekly Bild am Sonntag.

Ukraine's Western allies have pledged to arm it with precision rockets and missile systems, as well as tanks, as it tries to push back

Russian troops in its east.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has compared the intervention of countries such as Germany with his nation's struggle during World War II, reports AFP.

"Again and again we are forced to repel the aggression of the collective West," he said Thursday on the 80th anniversary of the Soviet victory at the Battle of Stalingrad.

But Scholz rejected the comparison. "His words are part of a series of absurd historical comparisons that he uses to justify his attack on Ukraine", he said.

"But nothing justifies this war.

"Together with our allies, we are supplying battle tanks to Ukraine so that it can defend itself. We have carefully weighed each delivery of weapons, in close coordination with our allies, starting with America."

He said that such a consensus-based approach "avoids an escalation".

Putin casts the military operation in Ukraine as a fight to "disarm" his neighbour, and defend Russia against an aggressive West. Ukraine and the West call it an illegal war to expand Russian territory.

No chance of debt distress

FROM PAGE 1

instruments, whereas government bonds of similar maturities provide a yield of around 7 percent," the IMF staff report said.

Subsequently, the lender called for continued reforms to align NSC interest rates to market-determined rates and phasing out the interest rate caps.

This would help debt dynamics by lowering the cost of domestic borrowing, improving monetary policy transmission and deepening domestic debt markets, it said.

Going forward, the debt scenario looks comfortable.

"All but one external debt indicators are below their corresponding thresholds under the most extreme shock, despite an initial increase due to large taka depreciation in fiscal 2021-22 and fiscal 2022-23."

The present value of debt-to-exports breaches the threshold under the most extreme shock to exports.

This temporary two-year

breach (starting in 2025) of low magnitude is driven by large export fluctuations during the pandemic and the post-pandemic recovery periods.

"However, a short-lived and small breach, as well as favorable debt dynamics with declining external debt-to-GDP ratio path, supports the use of judgment and deviation from mechanical rating."

Due to large taka depreciation in this fiscal year (around 21 percent), the present value of debt-to-exports and debt service-to-exports ratios are at a higher level compared to the previous DSA.

Both debt service-to-exports and debt service-to-revenue ratios are on a declining trend and remain under the threshold under the most extreme shock of an export shock and a one-time depreciation shock respectively.

"Nevertheless, given the low share of external debt in financing mix, the projected increase in total debt service-to-revenue

ratio could raise external debt rollover risks."

Indicators in percent of revenues are on a rising trend, with debt service-to-revenue ratio increasing from 48.2 percent in fiscal 2022-23 to 65.8 percent in fiscal 2032-33, thus further highlighting the importance of mobilising tax revenue.

In fiscal 2021-22, domestic debt service payments amounted to \$31.9 billion in fiscal 2021-22 (7.5 percent of GDP) while external debt service payments amounted to \$2.1 billion.

"Increasing the revenue-to-GDP ratio beyond the programme period will be critical in providing non-debt financing to growth-enhancing and climate-resilient infrastructure projects."

Overall debt-to-GDP is expected to "increase moderately" to around 42.1 percent by fiscal 2032-33, which is well below the threshold.

Growth is projected to be slower in fiscal 2022-23,

compared to the previous DSA projection, but is expected to exceed the previous growth path in the medium to long term, supported by additional external financing and accelerated reform agenda under the IMF programme and programmes by development partners, including the World Bank.

Risks are tilted to the downside and include intensifying spillovers from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, rising commodity prices, a slowdown in major export destinations, elevated defaulted loans and prospective losses from natural disasters.

The authorities remained cautious about contracting external debt, especially commercial debt, the report said.

They underscored that several reforms underway, including domestic revenue mobilisation, public financial management, and public debt management, will help improve the debt dynamic and ensure fiscal and debt sustainability.

Business groups influencing state policies

FROM PAGE 1

"Now, we see capital accumulation by inflating the cost of the state's projects."

Even after that, the noted economist pointed out, elites are not serving their own interest. As a result, an authoritarian system has emerged in the absence of democratic accountability.

Debapriya said the relative autonomy of the state has eroded because of such practices. And now, external agents such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank had imposed the conditions that economists had been advocating for the last five years.

"We are becoming vulnerable to external agents in the absence of relative autonomy of the state."

The present political system is also not aligned with the vision of becoming a developmental state, said Debapriya.

"The allocation for healthcare is far below the allocation for mega projects," he said, citing an example.

CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan said while many businesspersons

were joining politics, many politicians also saw politics as an entry point to business.

"Such a tendency is visible among politicians from union councils to parliament. Once you get into politics, you can use this as an entry point to business."

Prof Sobhan cited the seven-murder case in Narayanganj against Nur Hossain, a bus helper who made Tk 3 crore a day from the sand trading by joining politics.

He, with the help of some Rab members, carried out the murder to climb up the political ladder.

"If every politician aspires to become a businessman, the consequence is the degeneration of party organisation," said Prof Sobhan.

"This is because they have become financially autonomous. There is no ideology to hold them together."

"So, you now have an aggregation of businessmen who in many ways are competitive. So, the degeneration of party and consequential commercialisation of

the state meant you are functioning a state of anarchy."

Nazrul Islam, the founder of the Bangladesh Environment Network, said the relative autonomy of the state had reduced amid a decline in the inter-class contest in politics.

He said the taka was kept overvalued against foreign currencies owing to the influence of the import lobby. "This has discouraged exports."

Owing to the dollar shortages caused by higher import bills, the central bank has had to adjust the exchange rate abruptly. As a result, the local currency has lost its value by about 25 percent against the US dollar in the past one year.

A similar example is seen in the case of gas exploration, Nazrul said.

"Bangladesh was able to explore gas in only 19 wells in the past 20 years. So, the country has become dependent on LNG because of the influence of the LNG lobby group."

About quick rental power plants, Shapan Adnan, a researcher, said thousands of crores of taka are being

taken from the state coffer through indemnity and financial undertakings.

And this has been done in a way that one can't challenge in courts, he said.

Similarly, the voices and welfare of the working class are becoming absent, the researcher said.

"The working class are not given the scope to play its role. This is alarming."

Mirza M Hassan, a senior research fellow at the Brac Institute of Governance and Development, said certain business groups such as the associations representing bankers and garment exporters were becoming very powerful in changing the policies of the government.

MM Akash, professor of Dhaka University's economics department, said there was no debate that the state was serving the capitalist class.

"Politics is dominated by money, muscle and manipulation. And when politicians, bureaucrats and businesses join hands to manipulate, elections take place even though there is no voter and the cost of a project rises three times."

‘You are killing us’

FROM PAGE 1

before the HC bench saying that the DoE has been conducting drives against the illegal brick kilns in order to control the air pollution despite a manpower crisis.

Last month, the DoE had demolished five illegal brick kilns and conducted seven drives against different air-polluting structures and fined them Tk 7.33 lakh.

A high-powered national committee, led by the cabinet, had also been formed in this regard, while steps have been taken to raise awareness regarding environmental pollution, the DoE lawyer said citing the compliance report.

Justice KM Kamrul Kader, of the bench, then said, "They (DoE officials) are paid crores of taka as salary, but there is no progress in preventing the pollution ... The pharmaceutical companies in the country and India will benefit from the air pollution, as the companies can earn money by selling medicines, and India can earn money by treating the

ailing people of Bangladesh due to such environment pollution."

The bench further said, "If there is no political will, no progress will take place... The public administration ministry could not assign magistrates to conduct mobile courts against the air polluters though there are reportedly a few hundred magistrates on deputation."

The court ordered all authorities concerned to comply with its earlier directives to bring the capital's air pollution in control within the next two weeks and fixed February 22 for passing further orders on this issue.

Lawyer Manzill Murshid appeared for the writ petitioner –Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, who had filed the petition in 2021 – while Deputy Attorney General Abdullah Al Mahmud Bashir represented the state and lawyers Zobair Hossain Sajib and Md Shahidul Islam Sohag stood for Dhaka south city corporation during the hearing.

Journo arrested in Iran

AFP, Tehran

Iranian authorities have detained a journalist at a reformist publication, local media reported yesterday, as her sister, also a journalist, remains in custody after reporting on Mahsa Amini's death. Iran has been gripped by nationwide protests since the September 16 death in custody of Amini, a 22-year-old ethnic Kurd, who had been arrested for an alleged breach of strict dress rules for women. Elnaz Mohammadi, a reporter for reformist newspaper Hammihan, was detained at the Evin prosecutor's office in Tehran after she had gone there "for an explanation", reported Shargh, another reformist daily. It was not immediately clear why Mohammadi had been summoned there.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate General of Health Services
Management Information System (MIS)
Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

Memo No.: DGHS-MIS/e-GP/2022-23/Amendment/2067
Date: 05/02/2023

e-Tender Amendment Notice (1st and 2nd)
The following amendments are made for Tender ID- 762648 invited in the e-GP System.

Description of Amendments	Old Value	New Value
Document last selling date & time	05/02/2023 15:00	16/02/2023 15:00
Eligibility of Consultant	Sl. No.-12: Other requirements are described in the Tender Document Sl. No.-13: Not existed Sl. No.-14: Not existed	Sl. No.-12: Updated BCS/BASIS memberships Certificate Sl. No.-13: Updated ISO 9001 Certificate (Verifiable Online) Sl. No.-14: Other requirements are described in the Tender Document
Opening and Closing Date & Time	05/02/2023 17:00	16/02/2023 17:00
Last date & time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission	05/02/2023 16:00	16/02/2023 16:00
Brief Description of Goods, Works or Service	Procurement Of Biometric Attendance System	Procurement Of Biometric Attendance System

The other terms and condition of the tender are remaining unchanged.

(Prof. Dr. Md. Shahadat Hossain)
Director
Management Information System (MIS)
Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS)
Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

GD- 186

খুলনা শিপইয়ার্ড লিমিটেড
বাংলাদেশ নৌবাহিনী, খুলনা
ফোন : ০২-৪৪১১০৯৯০, ০২-৪৪১১০৯৮৭, ০২-৪৭৭৭২০০০৩, ০৪১-২৮৩০৯৮৮
ফ্যাক্স : ০২-৪৭৭৭২০৪০৪, Web: www.khulnashipyard.com
E-mail: contact@khulnashipyard.com

দরপত্র নং- খুলি/এসি-০৪/২০২৩/তারিখ জানুয়ারি ২০২৩

স্থায়ী সম্পদ মূল্যায়ক ও পরামর্শক নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ক। বাংলাদেশ নৌবাহিনী কর্তৃক পরিচালিত খুলনা শিপইয়ার্ড লিমিটেড (খুলি) এর বর্তমান স্থায়ী সম্পদসমূহের পুনঃ মূল্যায়ন (Fixed Assets Revaluation) করার জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তসাপেক্ষে স্থায়ী সম্পদ মূল্যায়ক প্রতিষ্ঠান নিয়োগের জন্য সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

১। উল্লেখিত ফার্মকে স্থায়ী সম্পদ মূল্যায়নের কাজে ০৫-০৭ বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।

২। কার্য সম্পাদনের ভ্রমণ, থাকা-খাওয়া, যাতায়াত এবং অন্যান্য খরচ ফার্মকে বহন করতে হবে।

৩। কার্য সম্পাদনকালে প্রতিষ্ঠানের সকল বিভাগের (বিভাগ, সেকশন, অনুবিভাগ অনুযায়ী) স্থায়ী সম্পদ আইটেম/কোড অনুযায়ী নামাংরি ট্যাগ করতঃ মূল্য নির্ধারণ করতে হবে।

৪। ভ্যাট-ট্যাক্সসহ মূল্য উল্লেখপূর্বক মোট মূল্য নির্ধারণ সাপেক্ষে দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।

৫। খুলিলির ২০২১-২০২২ অর্থবছরের নিরীক্ষিত আর্থিক প্রতিবেদনে প্রদত্ত পর্যবেক্ষণসমূহ সমাধানের জন্য পরামর্শ প্রদান করতে হবে।

৬। অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী নিয়োগ পত্রে উল্লেখ করা হবে।

খ। উক্ত মূল্যায়ন কাজে অংশগ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক ফার্মসমূহকে ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন, টিআইএন ও অভিজ্ঞতা সনদসহ অন্যান্য প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যপত্রাদি আপামি ১৭ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৩ তারিখ বেলা ১১.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে খুলনা শিপইয়ার্ড লিঃ (খুলি) এর প্রধান ফটকে রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বক্সে অথবা ডাক/কুরিয়ার যোগে দরপত্র প্রেরণের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। ঐ দিনই দুপুর ১১.৩০ ঘটিকায় উপস্থিত দরদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) দরপত্র খোলা হবে। খুলনা শিপইয়ার্ড লিঃ (খুলি) কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন সময় দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

পক্ষে ম্যানেজিং ডাইরেক্টর

GD- 183

We must check relentless price increase

Lack of action to bring down prices of food is deeply concerning

If 2022 was a year of suffering for the poor and people of fixed income – with the cost of living reaching absurd heights – 2023 in its second month already promises to surpass that sad milestone. In January, within the space of just three weeks, the government twice increased the prices of electricity. In the first week of February, the price of LPG has seen steep increase, while an earlier increase in gas prices for industries, power plants and commercial establishments has come into effect. The relentless increase in fuel, gas and electricity prices – and therefore in transport and production costs – already threatens to take essentials further beyond the reach of consumers.

Unfortunately, beyond excuses and sentimental claptrap, our leaders have failed to offer a way to reduce suffering. It's almost as if the poor are expected to somehow make their needs disappear using their magic wand, uncritically accepting the government decision to withdraw subsidies from the energy sector at a time when they are at their most vulnerable. A report by this daily shows us the level of suffering this has caused. A 60-year-old security guard tells us that his family of nine has to borrow to meet basic requirements, despite their collective income of Tk 40,000. A bank clerk says he has cut down on his intake of bread at breakfast against his doctor's advice – with the prices of flour, along with rice and soyabean oil, soaring by up to around 20 percent in a year.

The government's response to this hike-fest has been minimal at best, and non-existent at worst. Even the prices of food items that remain usually low in winter, like potatoes and vegetables, have not come down, suggesting the collapse of any market regulation mechanism that it has. Many have also complained that, for essentials like LPG, they are being charged more than the prices set officially. And it is not just the people of the low-income groups, but middle-income people are also suffering greatly, as the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) revealed last month. Analysing the pricing trend in Dhaka, the CAB said that the average annual inflation rate in 2022 was 11.08 percent.

Clearly, we have reached a point where drastic action is needed to reverse this trend and minimise people's suffering. We agree with the PM that gas and electricity cannot be subsidised indefinitely, but this is neither the time to fully abandon subsidies nor should the IMF's loan conditions be the only driver behind any reform measures being planned. People's long-term and immediate interests should both be considered while undertaking these reforms, and proper execution is a must to ensure maximum benefits. People's immediate interests dictate that the absurdly high prices of essentials, caused by the energy price hikes and lack of market regulation, should be urgently reduced.

Moreover, the government should consider expanding its social security programmes to reduce the impact of high inflection on the poor, and also take steps to raise the income level of ordinary citizens, including the middle-class. The government must prove its sincerity to understand and address their problems.

Today's readers, tomorrow's leaders

Govt must take better care of public and private libraries

Libraries play a crucial role in fostering knowledge for people of all ages and backgrounds. Good libraries act as learning hubs, providing not just books but also various learning opportunities. Libraries are also important because they provide a secure and inclusive environment for people to widen their knowledge, skills, and viewpoints. Investing in libraries is thus an investment in our society's future.

Sadly, we see the exact opposite of this happening at the state-run National Book Centre, which is responsible for all the private libraries in the country, giving grants to more than 1,200 of them presently, according to a report by *Prothom Alo*. However, the office of the centre is located in a traffic jam-prone area (Gulistan) and is hardly noticeable from outside, making it difficult to access it. The activities of the centre are also questionable. Currently, it provides so little annual funding that affiliated libraries can only cover one to two months' expenses with that. The centre has the added challenge of ensuring that the libraries that are getting donations are using them properly, which it often fails to do. Therefore, it is crucial that it maintains the standards of these libraries so that they can encourage and enlighten readers. Readers should be able to access a diverse range of books from these libraries, and their overall environment should be user-friendly.

We may have already entered the era of the fourth industrial revolution where building a knowledge-based society is key. The only way to do that is to have good libraries that are easily accessible to the public. But many libraries in the country are underfunded, understaffed, and frankly, not aligned with the goals of a library. The poor condition of many public and private libraries – which often do not have a wide range of books, and have rather become a hub only for BCS candidates – suggests that the authorities are unwilling to support the drive for the enlightenment of the people, especially the younger generation.

Enlightenment requires that people are able to read profusely, critically engage with diverse topics, form their own opinion, and freely share it with their peers. The plight of our libraries, however, represents a shrinking of the space needed for that kind of intellectual engagement in the country. Such engagements are vital for a healthy democracy and the future of our nation. Instead of encouraging it, the authorities seem to be increasingly allowing barriers to this exercise – through allowing a decline in the quality of libraries, through restricting critical publications, through punishing dissenting voices with the help of various draconian laws, etc.

We, therefore, urge the government to stop this misguided strategy, and encourage free-flowing intellectual interactions for the sake of our nation. And it must improve the condition of all existing public and private libraries, and thereby make knowledge accessible to all.

For a better fiscal space, we need efficient tax system



MACRO MIRROR
Dr Fahmida Khatun
is executive director at the
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).
Views expressed in this article
are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has finally approved a USD 4.7 billion loan for Bangladesh, accepting the country's request for funds in the face of its declining foreign exchange reserves. As a conditionality of this loan, the Bangladesh government must undertake several reform measures in many areas, one of which is improving the country's fiscal space.

Irrespective of IMF conditionality, this is an area on which the government should work more, since our fiscal space is shrinking with the increasing priorities against a low tax-to-GDP ratio. In FY 2021-22, our tax-GDP ratio was only about 7.5 percent. In a country of more than 165 million people (Census 2022), only eight million people have a tax identification number (TIN), of whom only 2.8 million submit tax returns. This indicates low tax net and high tax evasion. As the size of the economy and per capita income is increasing, the disposable income of some sections of the population is also increasing. But this change is not reflected in the country's revenue generation.

Improving our revenue generation will require several measures, both technical and non-technical. As far as technical measures are concerned, using information technology will help establish a smooth and easy tax collection procedure. As a result, it will also increase tax compliances, and governance of the tax system will improve. Technology can be used to also track people's income and expenditure. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) will be able to work efficiently and effectively in a modern automated system.

The NBR employed a few reform measures in the past, which saw some success. But there is a lot to be done still. Measures such as the upgradation of the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA), consolidation and integration of Integrated Budget and Accounting System (iBAS++), electronic return filing, electronic tax deducted at source (e-TDS), automated customs risk management, and introduction of authorised economic operator system were proposed a few years ago. The



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

government needs to expedite such reform measures for better and faster outcomes.

The non-technical efforts are no less important for increased tax collection. Many people don't want to come under the tax system for several reasons. There is a lack of awareness on the tax mechanism. People also fear hassle and harassment if they come under the tax radar. There is a general idea that those who are regular taxpayers are targeted for more and more taxes, instead of the powerful tax evaders. People also feel unhappy about the services they receive from the government even after paying taxes, with complaints of having to pay bribes for said services.

Hopefully, with highest tax collection, the overall domestic resource mobilisation situation will improve. Of course, this depends on several factors. The first and foremost is a sound public spending management; for economic development, public expenditure must be managed efficiently and prudently. In recent years, Bangladesh has seen large investment in infrastructure. But those investments are not always

utilisation of their hard-earned money. They want to know the quality of public expenditures and whether they are creating enough jobs and reducing poverty. Taxpayers want services from public representatives and officials when they seek support from them. People also see how the other eligible taxpayers are behaving. If their friends and acquaintances get away with paying little to no tax, they would not be encouraged to pay taxes. Without addressing these issues, technical solutions will not be effective.

Globally, domestic resource mobilisation has become critical in the context of the declined flow of foreign aid to developing countries. Reliance on external resources is an unsustainable development path, while domestic resource mobilisation is key to self-sustaining development. There is a predictability of resource flow through domestic resource mobilisation, which helps a government with short- and medium-term fiscal planning. On the other hand, the flow of external aid is volatile and unpredictable. This puts an aid-recipient country in trouble in case of budget management.

from their income. This creates a sense of participation in the country's development process. Therefore, people have the right to play watchdog and ask about the proper utilisation of their money, and create pressure on public representatives for accountability and transparency of resource utilisation.

Over the past decades, some initiatives were taken by the government of the day to enhance resource mobilisation through expansion of tax net and realisation of taxes. But the outcomes have been less than satisfactory, as the initiatives were taken on a piecemeal basis. Also, several of such measures were driven by international organisations, including the IMF, and were not homegrown. Imposition of policies by external agencies and donors as a precondition for support is bound to fail if those are not owned by the implementing country. How Bangladesh's fiscal framework is strengthened following the acceptance of the IMF loan conditionalities this time is to be observed in the coming days.

What threats does ChatGPT pose to our academia?



Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb
is a Bangladeshi columnist and
writer living in the Netherlands.
Among other titles, he has authored
'Fourth Industrial Revolution and
Bangladesh' and '50 Years of
Bangladesh Economy.'

FAIZ AHMAD TAIYEB

US-based artificial intelligence company OpenAI's Generative Pre-trained Transformer 3 (GPT-3) technology, including ChatGPT, has brought about a revolution in the field of AI with its advanced language processing capabilities. Its widespread availability and accessibility bring both benefits and risks. There is potential of misuse, and educators and researchers must be aware of the risks associated with this technology.

One of the ways in which students may misuse the GPT-3 technology is by using it to complete their assignments without actually understanding the concepts or the problem-solving strategies involved. This can lead to a dependency on technology and a lack of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Developing these skills is essential for success in both education and professional career, and their absence can have a significant impact on a student's future prospects.

Another way in which students may abuse GPT-3 is by using it to plagiarise their assignments. Its advanced language processing capabilities make it possible to generate high-quality text, which can be tempting for students to copy and paste into their own work. This undermines the educational process and devalues the efforts of those students who complete their work independently. Plagiarism is a serious

offence and can result in academic dishonesty charges, which can have a lasting impact on a student's future.

Researchers may misuse the GPT-3 technology by using it to manipulate or fabricate data, which can compromise the integrity of research and lead to significant consequences for both the individual researcher and the wider scientific and research community.

In addition, GPT-3 has the potential to perpetuate biases and harmful stereotypes. The technology is trained on a large amount of text data, which includes both explicit and implicit biases. If these biases are not addressed, they can be amplified and perpetuated through the technology's outputs. This can have serious consequences for marginalised groups and undermine the efforts to address societal inequalities.

How do we minimise the risks and maximise the benefits, then?

Our education system must integrate ethical and responsible use of these tools into the curricula, monitoring its impact on student learning and development. Strict ethical standards for research must be adopted, addressing biases and harmful outcomes in the technology's outputs, addressing the potential for malicious use and defining ways to prevent such.

Schools, colleges and universities must integrate new technology usage ethics into their curricula, and

online assignment and exam systems, violations of which should be dealt with justified penalties. It's important to educate both the teachers and students about the danger of plagiarism and the consequences of academic dishonesty. Teachers need to provide students with new guidelines and scopes on AI-based text creation, critically evaluate them and avoid conflicts with independent thinking and problem-solving skills.

To restrict the misuse of GPT-3 technology by researchers, strict ethical standards and guidelines have to be installed to ensure adherence to ethical data collection and analysis, as well as prohibition of data manipulation or fabrication. Researchers should also be required to engage in even deeper and heavily engaged peer review and collaboration to ensure that their work is transparent, accurate, and reliable.

On the flip side, language models such as ChatGPT can help improve students' writing and communication skills, as long as it is used as a tool to support learning, rather than a replacement for it.

Bangladeshi school exams are mostly in written form, but there is a growing demand for introducing oral exams and verifying presentation skills comprehensively. In Bangladesh universities, plagiarism is still a massive problem. In this circumstance, preventing plagiarism through an AI tool requires new, improved measures.

First, the University Grants Commission (UGC) as well as all the education boards must make the use of plagiarism software mandatory. Second, there must be new measures to prevent copy-pasting texts from AI-generated content. Thesis and assignments should be defended through new mechanisms to evaluate the students' understanding of the subjects as well as their critical-

thinking capabilities.

Monitoring ChatGPT's influence on learning and research, and addressing research biases and other harmful aspects of the technology's outputs should be taken as a serious concern. The curricula has to be orchestrated and developed in a new way in the age of open source AI.

The UGC can create a dedicated national consortium body with subject matter experts from all fields of education Bangladesh educational institutions. This body can ensure that none of the undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate research topics is partially duplicated and mirrored at the national level. The body can also monitor and nurture the quality of Bangladeshi thesis, journals and research papers.

Bangladeshi researchers are scoring extremely poor in the Scopus peer review database. According to the world's largest peer-reviewed database, in 2021, Bangladeshi researchers published only 11,477 papers against 222,849 from India and 35,663 from Pakistan. Bangladesh scores very poorly in other databases too. In the 2020 Scimago review database, Bangladesh had not a single Q1 and Q2 research paper.

In the Global Knowledge Index 2021, Bangladesh ranked 120th out of 154 countries. Bangladesh ranks 102nd among the 132 economies featured in the Global Innovation Index 2022. In the age of open source AI like ChatGPT, the research and innovation qualities of Bangladeshi students and researchers may get worse, so proper steps and actions must be taken now.

Disclaimer: This writer used chatGPT to prepare this piece.

Everything you need to know about the Loss and Damage Fund

Dr Saleemul Huq is director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).
Nusrat Naushin is coordinator of the Loss and Damage Programme at the ICCCAD.
Mimansha Joshi works as a consultant and is an advocate for climate change and environmental issues, and has authored a number of publications with the ICCCAD on topics related to loss and damage.

SALEEMUL HUQ, NUSRAT NAUSHIN and MIMANSHA JOSHI

The series of extreme weather events in 2022 fuelled by climate change that devastated lives and livelihoods of millions – from the floods in Pakistan and China to droughts in Somalia, Ethiopia, Brazil, and Europe – set a clarion call for the long-awaited climate finance, also known as loss and damage finance. After years of hard negotiations, at the world's global climate change platform last year, the 27th Conference of Parties (COP27), countries agreed to establish a fund to pay for climate-related losses and damages.

While this has given hope to many low-income countries that have felt the brunt of climate change, it has also left a lot of questions unanswered. What is the arrangement for this funding mechanism? Who will pay into the fund? Who is eligible?

Loss and damage finance decision at COP27

Loss and damage was the main topic addressed during the final negotiations at COP27, and the decision to establish and operationalise a loss and damage fund was one of the main talks around the halls. For nearly two weeks, the EU and the US refused demands from poor countries for a new fund to address loss and damage, arguing that existing funds should be redirected for the purpose. The final decision was adopted with the call from the EU to agree to a fund on condition that big economies and big emitters, who are still classed as developing countries under the rules of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), should be included as potential donors and excluded as recipients.

The latest version of the Sharm

el Sheikh Implementation Plan “welcomes the adoption of decisions –/CP.27 and –/CMA.4, on matters relating to funding arrangements responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.”

Tracking of finance

Ever since the divergent decision at COP26, a number of countries and organisations have stepped up in making financial commitments. This bold step was initiated by the Government of Scotland, who initially pledged two million pounds towards addressing losses and damages, which then inspired the Government of Wallonia in southern Belgium and five more philanthropic organisations to put money for the cause. Since then, a few other countries and philanthropies have followed suit. It is, however, crucial to pinpoint the exact cause of each contribution, since not most of the pledges are for addressing losses and damages. The infographic summarises the monetary commitments from governments and philanthropies to loss and damage (note that the graphic only focuses on funds allocated to “address” loss and damage).

The Government of Scotland's contribution has been allocated for research among the climate vulnerable countries. The Government of Wallonia has allocated funds to ensure assistance for communities severely impacted by climate change. The Government of Denmark became the first central government of a developed country to propose funding devoted to loss and damage amounting to USD 17.7million, to be used for insurance and civil society efforts focused at the Sahel region in northwestern Africa.

Likewise, Austria, another developed country, announced to provide USD 52 million to developing countries facing unavoidable damage and losses caused by climate change, in an effort to own up responsibility.

About USD 7 million will be managed by the Adaptation Fund, with the purpose of the Santiago

Many countries and philanthropies have stepped up, but it is too little and too late. To usher in real change, as we move towards COP28 in Dubai this year, it will be necessary to develop a mosaic of funding channels both outside of the UNFCCC as well as under it to address loss and damage. The new funding mechanism under



The Sylhet floods in northeast Bangladesh was a prime example of extreme weather events caused by climate change last year. FILE PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Network and other ways to address loss and damage. Likewise, the World Bank Group has announced a Global Shield Financing Facility, a joint initiative launched by the G7 and V20 nations of Germany, Canada, Ireland and France, collectively funding USD 211 million allocated for disaster risk financing (social protection, government bonds, etc) to vulnerable countries. The Government of New Zealand has allocated USD 12 million over a period of three years dedicated to improving early warning systems and disaster risk insurance in the Pacific countries. The Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), the European Climate Foundation (ECF), the Hewlett Foundation, the Global Greengrants Fund, and the Open Society Foundation (OSF), among other organisations, have announced a funding of USD 3 million to strengthen resilience in climate-vulnerable countries.

the UNFCCC must enshrine a genuine access to financial grants to the countries and communities most impacted, with a stringent monitoring and reporting framework, and ensure easy and fast financial assistance for risk management, rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction efforts. The newly established Loss and Damage Fund can be used in a number of innovative ways to address loss and damage. It can be used for post-disaster rehabilitation and transition purposes, immediate case transfer and social protection, effective early warning systems, anticipatory action and emergency preparedness, and support to climate-displaced population.

But given the lack of finance available to support the action to address loss and damage, several innovative sources and mechanisms could be explored. Carbon taxes is one of the most logical approaches.

The tax would raise money mostly from polluters under the principle of “Polluters Pay,” while serving as an incentive to reduce emissions. A USD 2 levy on every tonne of carbon dioxide emitted from burning fossil fuels could add up to USD 50 billion a year. Likewise, a levy such as the International Air Passenger Adaptation Levy (IAPAL) is a proposed purchase tax on air tickets, the proceeds of which would be dedicated to investment in losses and damages. Another innovative mechanism is through the Bunker Fuel Levy, which is a unit tax linked to the establishment of an International Greenhouse Gas Contribution Fund that would collect a contribution on all ships over 400GT, differentiating according to the type of fuel used and proportional to the amount of fuel consumed. The private sector also has the potential to unlock the much-needed finance. Debt relief as part of an international finance architecture reform is another just mechanism to release finance for loss and damage efforts.

Key asks for COP28

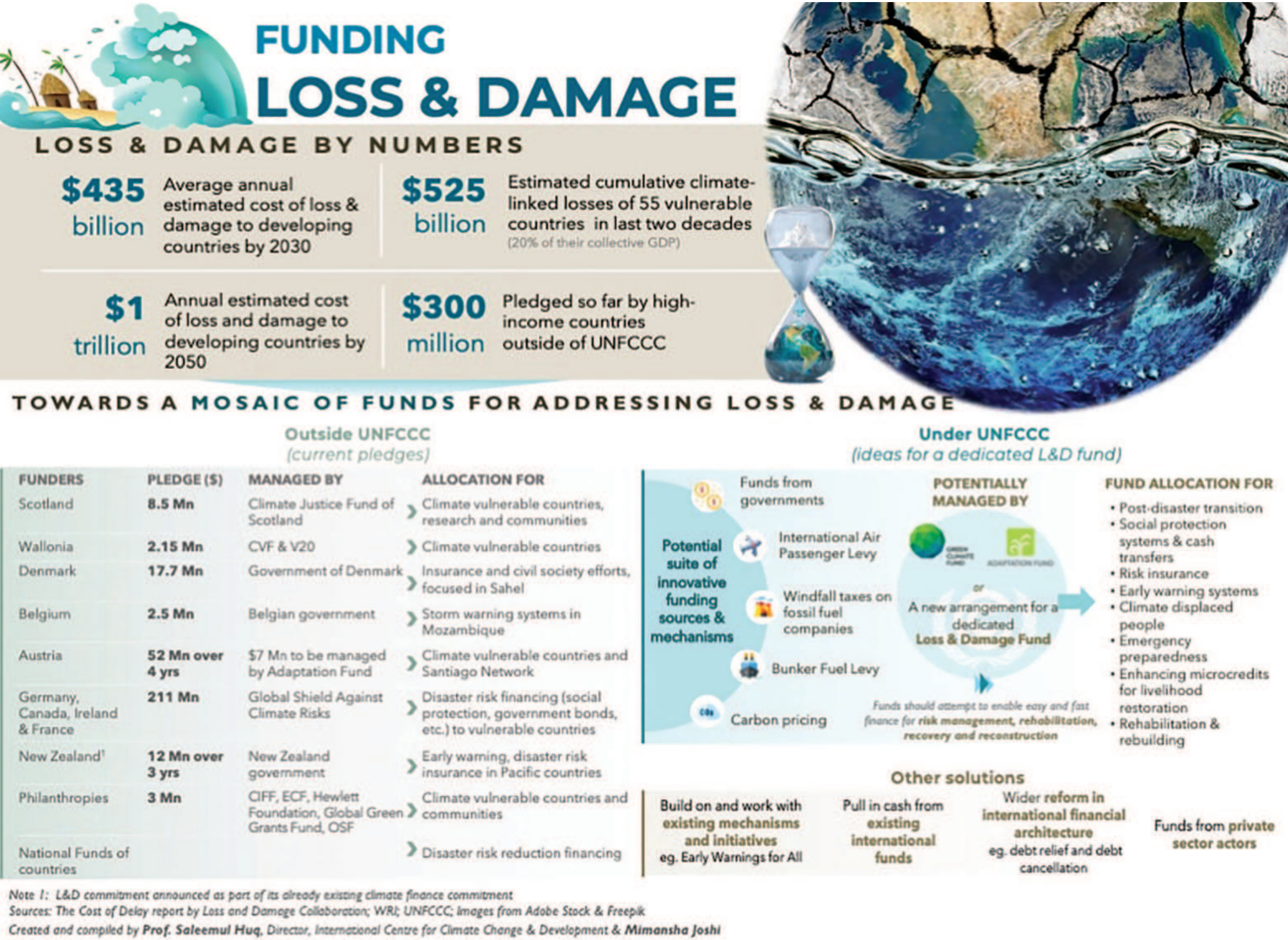
The newly established Loss and Damage Fund represents a long

The newly established Loss and Damage Fund can be used for post-disaster rehabilitation and transition purposes, immediate case transfer and social protection, effective early warning systems, anticipatory action and emergency preparedness, and support to climate-displaced population. But given the lack of finance available to support the action to address loss and damage, several innovative sources and mechanisms could be explored.

and hard-fought win for developing countries and a vital step towards climate justice. The effectiveness of the new fund will be determined by the efficacy of raising ample capital and development of operational mechanisms that can respond rapidly and meet the urgent needs of communities. To crystallise the details of the fund, a “Transitional Committee” has been set up, with representatives from both developed and developing parties, which is expected to meet by March 2023 to flesh out the details and make recommendations for COP28.

While a lot of questions remain unanswered – mainly on who should be paying into the fund and who will be eligible to receive the funding – the Transitional Committee should iron out the fund details with utmost urgency, drawing on the lessons from humanitarian aids and the past climate finance mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund. The fund must be fit for purpose, and fit for any future climate-induced disasters with proper governance structures, accountability and transparency mechanisms to enable effective deployment to the ones who need it most on the ground. In addition, a fair and consistent valuation methodology should be developed in consultation with both affected communities and donor countries. And once this is in place, it is important to ensure knowledge-sharing and capacity building of practitioners and communities to enable access and ensure that pledges can be distributed efficiently.

It is clear that the world has stepped into the era of loss and damage from human-induced climate change, and we need to collectively up our game to respond to the challenge. While the COP27 decision is welcoming and encouraging, this is only the beginning and, thus, success will depend on how quickly this fund gets off the ground. The funds should be set up by COP28 and be up and running by 2025. Failure to do so will result in an inevitable and catastrophic future for us all – the time to act is now.





Activity during a Happiness Class, part of the Happiness Curriculum, in government school run by the Government of Delhi, May, 2020.

Revitalizing Delhi's school system: A triumphant journey

The results of the Kejriwal government's efforts to tone up government school education are there for all to see. For the first time in the history of Delhi, the government schools got a result of 99.9% in Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) XIIth examinations in 2022, four Delhi government schools have ranked among top ten government schools in India for 2021-22.

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

When Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal hit the streets in India's national capital on January 16 this year to protest the alleged non-approval by the Lt Governor Saxena to his government's proposal to send school teachers abroad for training, it was viewed by his critics as a move to politicize a burning public issue relating to school education. But more than that, it served to bring to the fore the issue of education that has largely remained on the backburner in India's political and electoral discourse.

In fact, education has never been a major poll issue for most Indian political parties except when it was framed in the freebies template like the promise of free schooling. You think of government or municipal schools in vast swathes of India's cities and villages and the images that spring up in your mind are of dilapidated buildings and stories of mismanagement, poor exam results, missing teachers and students and poor quality of mid-deal meal.

But the Delhi government and Aam Aadmi Party chief headed by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has sought to change the traditional narrative in the last seven years, particularly after the party came back to power with an overwhelming majority in Delhi legislature winning 67 of the total of 70 seats. In fact, Aam Aadmi Party has brought to the fore education and health as poll planks in a way never seen before. It invested heavily and brought certain structural reforms to overhaul the government school education system which is accessed by the poorest of the poor segment of the

on 1,037 schools run by it to cater to nearly 180 lakh students in nearly 1,000 government schools. The 25 per cent budget has been consistently maintained for the last six years and is more than double what the previous governments spent in the previous seven years.

Delhi government figures show its investment on education as ratio to aggregate expenditure has risen to be the highest among all the states of India. The Kejriwal government focussed on refurbishing the school infrastructure, introducing innovative curriculums, changing the students' mindset, setting up high quality higher education institutes, promoting the spirit of entrepreneurship among students by setting up the Delhi Skills and Entrepreneurship University, Teacher's University and Sports University set up.

The Delhi government teamed up with experts and universities to design new curriculums and roped in private entities to clean hundreds of schools, employed former defence personnel as "estate managers" on contract to supervise building repair. This helped reduce the administrative burden of principals who could now concentrate on his core activity of teaching.

In 2016, the Delhi government made a path-breaking decision to establish school management committees, consisting of parents, teachers, and local officials, as a platform for articulating concerns regarding school education and holding the government accountable. The main goal was to decrease the trust deficit and communication gap among the three essential segments of education: students, teachers, and parents.

Section 21 of the Right to Education Act 2009 provides for the formation of School Management Committees in government schools. These committees are expected to perform three core functions in addition to any other functions assigned to them. The AAP government made sure that elections were held in the SMCs after the two-year tenure of its parent-members had ended. The SMCs played a crucial role in streamlining the school admission process, which was often marred by complaints of favoritism and political influence, and in ensuring attendance of irregular students, two major areas of concern in the past. Other important measures taken included regular training of SMC members to increase their capacity and the introduction of an SMC App, which allows schools, parents, and other community members to directly connect with decision-makers.

The use of digital technology in the school admission process and a single admission form that allows for choice of any public school has ensured transparency and relieved children and their parents from having to visit multiple schools for separate admission forms. This was especially helpful for daily wage-earning parents who would have otherwise missed out on their earnings while submitting admission forms at different schools.

The Delhi government claims to have "significantly" increased its budget for teacher training programs, which has allowed 1,407 teachers to be trained abroad in institutions such as Cambridge University, Singapore, and top Indian business schools such as the Indian Institutes of Management. In addition, 500 school principals have attended leadership sessions at the IIMs in Ahmedabad and Lucknow. Additionally, 102 school heads



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal felicitates the shining stars of Delhi government schools who have made their mark in the JEE and NEET exams.

(PHOTO COURTESY: TWITTER/@ARVINDKEJRIWAL)

participated in a 12-day educational program at Cambridge University to gain insight into international practices, and 22 more went to Finland for a similar experience.

The Kejriwal government also embarked on a campaign to improve learning outcomes in schools and close the gaps of children after a preliminary assessment of class 6-8 found that a majority of students could not read simple text or solve a simple arithmetic division. The city government decided to reduce the syllabus for these students, bring in some supplementary reading material to make them pick up reading and kept them in a separate section, said Delhi government officials. The students were segregated in three groups on the basis of their basic learning skills (ability to read and do basic maths). It yielded tangible results: the pass percentage in class 9 improved from 52% in 2015-16 to 57% in 2017-18.

A four-month campaign was launched to assist students to perform well as per their grade level assessment. This drive was a culmination of the learnings from a 'Chunauti (Challenge) 2018' which the government statistics said led to a 20% increase in the number of students between class 3-5 who can solve arithmetic division problems, a 12% increase (between pre-test and post-test) in the number of students between class 3-5 who can read a story in Hindi and a 15% increase in children of class 6-9 who can read 'advance story' in Hindi. Besides, students have been provided financial assistance to achieve academic excellence. However, the creation of three separate groups of students faced some criticism on the ground of creating a feeling of discrimination and inferiority complex among impressionable minds at such a tender age.

The results of the Kejriwal government's efforts to tone up government school education are there for all to see. For the first time in the history of Delhi, the government schools got a result of 99.9% in Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) XIIth examinations in 2022, four Delhi government schools have ranked among top ten government schools in India for 2021-22.

During the pre-Covid academic year 2019-20, the pass rate of Delhi government schools was 94.24% in Class 12. The CBSE data say the pass percentage of Delhi government schools in Class 10 is 81.36%. Last year, the pass rate for Class 10 was 99.04% and during the pre-pandemic academic year 2019-20, the pass rate of Delhi government schools was 71.6% in Class 10. According to Delhi government data, in 2022, 160 government schools recorded a cent per cent pass rate and 876 schools recorded a pass rate of over 90% in Class 12. In Class 10, 95 schools recorded a 100% pass rate and 398 schools a rate of over 90%.

Buoyed by the results, 2.5 lakh children from private schools have shifted to government schools, according to Delhi government statistics, reversing a long-running trend. The Delhi government's efforts to turn around the story of its schools have already produced a change in people's attitudes. While no one expects an exodus from expensive private schools to government schools, the singular achievement of the Kejriwal government through its school education reforms is to challenge the prevailing negative perception about the quality of education and students in government schools. It has clearly demonstrated that students in government schools are no less inferior and may be equal to or even better than their peers in private schools, and there is no reason for condescension from any quarters.

According to official statistics, Delhi government school students have set another performance benchmark- 336 girls, which represents 59% of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test qualifying students. Additionally, 64 students have qualified for the Joint Engineering Exams Advanced, and five students have secured a seat in the Indian Institutes of Technology, which is the highest number from a single Delhi government school.

Starting from the 2021-22 academic session, the Delhi government established a new Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE) by granting affiliation to 30 government schools, consisting of 20 Schools of Specialized Excellence (SoSE) and 10 general schools. The DBSE signed a MoU with the International Baccalaureate (IB) to serve as its knowledge partner and receive support in curriculum and teacher training from the international education program. At a later stage, the option of affiliation will be offered to approximately 1,700 private schools, but it will not be mandatory.

The DBSE will be the third Board in addition to the existing two national boards, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (ICSE). Education experts expect this move to increase competition among the three Boards regarding themes such as access to quality education and equity. If the DBSE schools provide quality education, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who are part of India's aspirational class, can look forward to pursuing higher studies in premier institutions both in India and abroad.

The Delhi government has taken another major step in reforming school education with the motto "Catch them young." In an effort to instill an entrepreneurial spirit in students, the government launched the Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum in July 2019 in all government schools for classes IX to XII. It was decided that all students from class 9 to class 12 would receive Rs 2,000 each as seed money to foster an entrepreneurial mindset.

This was launched as a compulsory non-graded subject consisting of a 40-minute class every day for 25,000 students, who will be monitored over a four-year period. A program of student-entrepreneur interaction was initiated in October 2019 with the goal of creating more "job-providers" in the country. To date, 539 schools have completed at least one entrepreneur interaction in their schools, and over 9,000 students

have shared their learnings.

The Delhi government has established its own secondary and higher secondary boards, including 20 Schools of Specialized Excellence (SoSE) and 10 general schools, which have partnered with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), a research and assessment organization. Additionally, the government launched 20 Schools of Specialized Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) to help students prepare for advanced careers and elite higher education exams.

Additionally, a school was established for students of social sciences, offering courses in sciences and mathematics based on student interest. The goal of the school is to foster a strong research mindset in its students.

The government has also placed an emphasis on skill and entrepreneurship development to help students become immediately employable and to pave the way for further studies and training at the university level. In terms of performing and virtual arts, students will be trained rigorously through partnerships with renowned global organizations to improve their skills in dance, drama, music, and visual arts, enabling them to become professional practitioners. By 2022-23, a total of 17 campuses are expected to be operational.

The two individuals regarded as the architects of the Delhi government's school education reform are Manish Sisodia, who is the Deputy Chief Minister and a close aide of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, and Atishi, who is a former advisor to Sisodia. Atishi, who goes by one name, is an alumnus of St. Stephen's College in Delhi and Oxford University, and also a Rhodes Scholar in educational research.

The Kejriwal government's education transformation system is a project in progress and a learning curve. Despite tangible achievements, the student-to-teacher ratio in government schools is far from uniform and many school buildings still need basic upgrades. The government has to work on to set right certain fundamental weaknesses: 21,000 guest teachers still make up 38% of teachers in government schools and more than half of government schools are functioning without proper principals.

Kejriwal hitting the streets on the issue of the Lt Governor's reported holding up of the permission for sending school teachers for training abroad was symptomatic of how the issue of school education reforms can turn into a political tussle. It is a problem inherent in the very foundational structure of the Delhi government. Delhi, like most Indian states, is not a full-fledged state, does not enjoy autonomy in executing its own decisions and has to depend on green signal from the Lt Governor who is considered a representative of the central government controlled by the Bharatiya Janata Party. It is not just education but on several other areas the Kejriwal administration has had several confrontations with the Lt Governor in the past. It would be unfortunate if the progress in government school education reforms is caught up in the whirlpool of politics for it relates to the future of the country.

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



Atishi, Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia

The Kejriwal government's education transformation system is a project in progress and a learning curve. Despite tangible achievements, the student-to-teacher ratio in government schools is far from uniform and many school buildings still need basic upgrades.

population in a city of nearly two crore people.

According to Shailendra Sharma, Principal Advisor to Director Education at Directorate of Education, the structural changes pertain mainly to four main areas—physical infrastructure, teachers training, greater involvement of the people through elected and empowered School Management Committees (SMCs) and learning improvement interventions.

A massive facelift to government schools, which were until a few years ago had decrepit buildings, unhygienic toilets and inadequate drinking water, drew parents of many middle-class families to send their children to these schools.

According to Delhi government statistics, the city government spent Rs 769 billion, nearly 25 per cent of its total budget, between 2015 and 2021

BFF in troubled water over Jamie Day wages

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh national football team coach Jamie Day has claimed that world football's governing body, FIFA, has stopped issuing development funds to Bangladesh Football Federation over his payment disputes with the federation.

The English coach had a contract running till August 2022, but the 43-year-old was sacked by the BFF in September 2021. Day was in constant contact with the federation to recover his unpaid wages before eventually lodging a complaint with the FIFA late last year.

FIFA gave the verdict in October 2022 asking the BFF to clear the dues of Day, who has claimed more than \$86,000 in unpaid wages. A deadline expiring on December 27 was also given to the BFF to abide by FIFA's verdict.

"In October 2022, the FIFA Players' Status Committee heard the case between the BFF and me and determined that I was owed compensation of \$86,000 plus interest due to the BFF's failure to comply with the terms of the employment contract between us.

"The BFF did not appeal FIFA's decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, and so FIFA's decision is final and binding.

"FIFA imposed a deadline upon the BFF of 27 December 2022 to comply with its decision and pay the outstanding amounts.

"The BFF has chosen to ignore FIFA and this deadline and to date, no amounts have been paid. As a result, the BFF now faces a restriction on receiving a percentage of development funding until they decide to comply with FIFA's decision," Day claimed in messages sent to media in Bangladesh.

BFF, however, claimed through a press release, that FIFA has not halted its instalment of development fund. It claimed that BFF received the latest tranche in January this year and it was working on clearing the dues of Day.

BFF's senior vice president and finance department head, Salam Murshedy, responded by saying that they don't have the means to make the payment and were seeking bank loans to help them out of the situation.

"We are seeking help from the banking sector in terms of loans to help clear his wages," Murshedy said.

Previously in 2016, FIFA had instructed the BFF to clear the due wages of sacked Dutch coach Rene Koster, which amounted to 80 thousand euros, including the interest accrued over the unpaid period. Back then, the BFF was also ordered to pay 8000 Swiss francs to FIFA and Koster as proceedings of the case. Ultimately, the BFF took more than a year to transfer payments to the Dutch coach.

Bangladesh women to play against Singapore

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team will play a FIFA friendly match away to Singapore on February 18 and will likely host Cambodia for two matches in March, confirmed Bangladesh Football Federation's women's wing chairman Mahfuza Akter Kiran.

Bangladesh senior women's team's last international match was in September last year when they played and won the SAFF Women's Championship title in Kathmandu. Following the success, there was demand from football fans to allow the women's team more international matches, and BFF officials had promised to arrange matches in FIFA windows.

"We had been saying for some time that we were trying to arrange a match against Singapore during a FIFA window. Singapore tried to arrange a tri-nation tournament involving Bangladesh and another team, but they couldn't convince the other team," Kiran told reporters in Kamalapur yesterday.

"Now we will play a Tier-I match against Singapore in Singapore on February 18. We will play another unofficial match there the following day. We will also try to play two matches against Cambodia in Dhaka in March. However, the matches have not been finalised as yet," Kiran added.

Bangladesh are currently ranked 140th in FIFA ranking, a jump of seven places following their SAFF success.



Bangladesh defender Surma Jannat tries an audacious flick in front of India goal during their SAFF U-20 Women's Championship fixture at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday. The match ended in a goalless draw after (bottom) Nepal thrashed Bhutan 4-0 in the day's first match.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED/BFF

Resilient Rupna and Co hold off India

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite the game ending in a nil-nil stalemate, hosts Bangladesh and defending champions India played out a hotly contested affair in their second fixture of the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship in Kamalapur yesterday.

Earlier in the day, a hatrick from Amisha Karki ensured a convincing 4-0 victory for Nepal against bottom dwellers Bhutan at the same venue.

Bangladesh now sit at a comfortable second position in the four-team table behind India and ahead of Nepal. The result means the hosts can afford to draw in the next and final round-robin league match against Bhutan tomorrow and still qualify for the final.

The game at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium was a fast-paced one from the onset. The girls in red and greed were keen on pressing high on India's half and both sides attempted to win every loose ball across the pitch.

However, the first opportunity -- the best of the half -- fell on India's lap in the seventh minute when Sumati Kumari found herself through on goal from the left. She had only the keeper to beat from inside the box but Rupna Chakma brilliantly denied Sumati's shot on target with outstretched legs, reminiscent of Argentina's Emiliano Martinez's last-gasp save in Qatar World Cup final.



The Bangladesh No.1 stayed busy throughout the first half -- grabbed on to several aerial balls, broke down counters in a sweeper role, and also got hurt during a collision near the end of the half. Meanwhile, the defending champions stamped their authority, especially with their captain Martina Thokchom pulling the strings from midfield.

India had another chance to break the deadlock with an open header in the 20th minute but the nearest India forward failed to connect. On the other hand, it took 26 minutes for Bangladesh to strike their first shot on target. Sapna Rani left-footed drive, albeit a weak one, from outside the edge of the box had the India goalkeeper fumble it to a corner, following which a flick shot went over the post.

Unlike India, the charges of Golam Rabbani Choton lacked conviction and composure in possession and they only appeared threatening when Shaheda Akter Ripa attempted to find space with her quick feet and then linked up

with captain Shamsunnahar on the right flank.

The second half saw India introduce a string of substitutes in time while Bangladesh kept their eleven unchanged up until in the last quarter of the game. The two sides had kept their tail up to assert control post-interval.

India had a sniff at goal in the 62nd minute when substitute Neha's side-volley from inside the box went over the bar after Sunita broke through from the right flank and crossed.

Couple of minutes later, Bangladesh had their best chance to score when Shamsunnahar, following good movement outside the box involving Ripa, was one-on-one with the goalkeeper but her accuracy from close-range was not up to the mark as the shot was deflected off India's goalkeeper, Anshika.

The game did not produce any late drama as the defence of both teams nipped threats in the bud.

Osimhen sends Napoli 16 clear

REUTERS, La Spezia

Two goals by striker Victor Osimhen helped leaders Serie A Napoli to a comfortable 3-0 win over struggling Spezia on Sunday, condemning the hosts to a third consecutive defeat.

Winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia put Napoli in front from the penalty spot two minutes into the second half, after the ball struck defender Arkadiusz Reca's arm inside the area.

Osimhen netted in the 68th minute with a close-range header following a mistake by Spezia defender Ethan Ampadu.

Another error by the Spezia defence gifted Osimhen the chance to make it 3-0 in the 73rd minute with his 16th league goal of the season, a personal record.

Napoli provisionally increased their advantage over second-placed Inter Milan to 16 points.

Siddikur 69th in Saudi Arabia

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's top golfer Siddikur Rahman finished 69th out of 71 players who made the cut in the PIF Saudi International, which concluded yesterday.

The 38-year-old golfer carded two-over par in the final two rounds at the Royal Greens Golf and Country Club in King Abdullah Economic City to finish with an aggregate score of four-over-par (284) in the 5m-dollar event.

Siddikur, the two-time Asian Tour winner, will next play in the International Series in Oman from February 9 to 12.

He will then play in another International Series event in Qatar from February 16 to 19 before returning home.

Meanwhile, Abraham Ancer of Mexico, who led the leaderboard since the opening day, trudged to a three-stroke victory after carding two-under par (68) in the final round. The Mexican aggregated 19-under-par (261) over the four rounds.

Cameron Young of USA finished second at 19-under-par (263) while Lucas Herbert of Australia finished third, two shots further behind.

Roles yet to be sorted after coach appointment

SPORTS REPORTER

There has been insinuations and suggestions in the country's cricket fraternity that incoming Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha's assistant could feature someone from the local background.

When the question was placed to Comilla Victorians head coach Mohammad Salahuddin on Saturday, he outright rejected the notion that he wanted to be involved with the national setup.

"I think those that are working with the board would fit well. When I want to work somewhere, I need to have an idea of what the coach is like. I don't know what kind of coach Hathurusingha is.

"The age I am at, I don't know if I have the mentality to adjust. I have been working as a head coach for five-ten years and I have to see whether I have the capability to work as an assistant coach



now," said Salahuddin during a press conference while also stating that Hathurusingha might just have a magic wand, given the way the BCB sought him out for a return as head coach.

"Since I have been working for a long time and also worked with the national team before, the board will decide on that. I am not currently thinking of it," Sohel Islam, the Rangpur Riders head coach and mentor to many of the national cricketers, said on Saturday.

The question, however, remains whether an assistant coach appointment will have to be run by Hathurusingha first. The Sri Lankan had not been known to actively seek local coaches as a medium to communicate with players during his previous stint with BCB. However, in Khaled Mahmud Sujon who was the team manager back then, he had an assistant coach who not only was well adept at communicating with the players but also managing them.

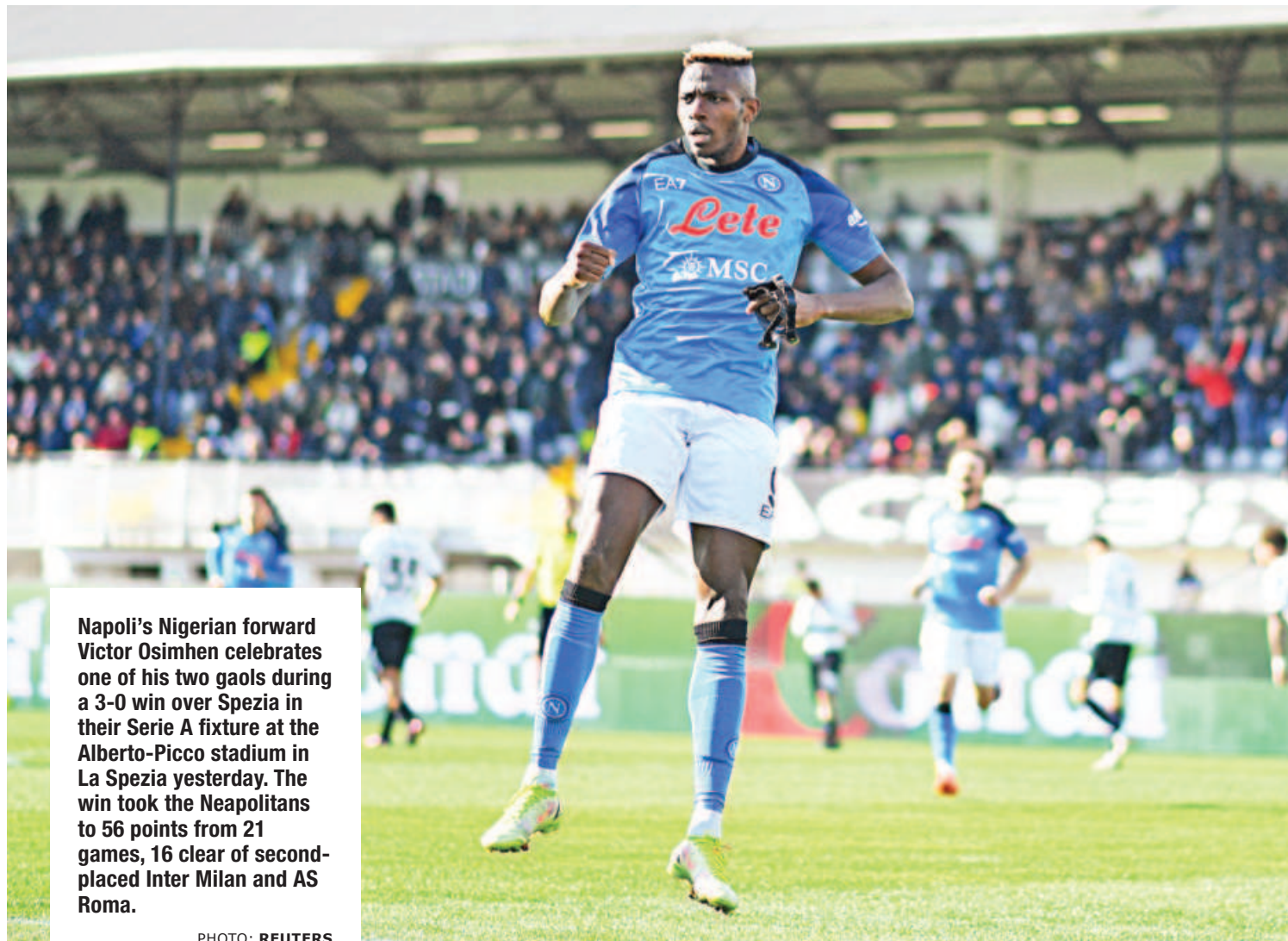
Without Mahmud in the picture at the moment, would the BCB appoint someone they see fit?

It was learned that the BCB are still looking at the assistant coaching role although related departments are yet to mention any names of local coaches being approached.

"There are certain aspects of role distribution that we have to finalise. We have to figure out what role will be handed to Jamie Siddons and after that we will sort things out regarding other roles," a BCB higher-up told The Daily Star on conditions of anonymity.

Siddons had returned to the Bangladesh team as a batting consultant, having previously served as the head coach. The Australian had expressed his wish to work with age-level players in development before, and thus it remains to be seen what role is attributed by the BCB now.

However, it is understood that the coaching positions will be sorted by BCB this time around and not everything will go through Hathurusingha.



Napoli's Nigerian forward Victor Osimhen celebrates one of his two goals during a 3-0 win over Spezia in their Serie A fixture at the Alberto-Picco stadium in La Spezia yesterday. The win took the Neapolitans to 56 points from 21 games, 16 clear of second-placed Inter Milan and AS Roma.

PHOTO: REUTERS





FASTBUILD
PROVIDES RODS OF
ANY SHAPE AND
SIZE AS PER DESIGN



BSRM
building a safer nation



PADMA BRIDGE

Proud
Construction
Partner



LABOUR RECRUITMENT

MoU with Malaysia likely to be amended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The existing Memorandum of Understanding with Malaysia on sending Bangladeshi workers to the Southeast Asian country is likely to be amended to make the recruitment process easier.

After a meeting with visiting Malaysian Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail yesterday at the Probashi Kalyan Bhavan in the capital, Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad told journalists that a Joint Working Group meeting in this regard may take place this month.

"The [Malaysia] government is new. There will be significant changes in whatever issues we had agreed upon with the previous government. He [Saifuddin] assured us of this."

Earlier at a joint briefing, the Malaysian home minister said both parties have agreed that there is an urgent need for senior officials from both countries to sit and look into the contents of the MoU that need to be revised, reviewed and, if need be, revoked.

However, none of the ministers disclosed what issues in the MoU, which was never made public, would be changed.

Signed in December 2021, the memorandum lifted a suspension on recruitment imposed by Malaysia in 2018 and made way for sending workers under a new arrangement from August last year.

Since then till December, nearly 50,000 Bangladeshi workers have migrated to Malaysia, according to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



A young reader looking at foreign comics at the Ekushey Boi Mela on the Bangla Academy premises in the capital. With parks and playgrounds slowly becoming uncommon, this fair ensures that young minds are exposed to knowledge during their leisure time over the weekends or after school. The photo was taken yesterday. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Ex-Pakistan president Musharraf dies in Dubai



REUTERS, Islamabad/Dubai

Pakistani former President Pervez Musharraf died yesterday following a prolonged illness at a hospital in Dubai, after years in self-imposed exile.

Pakistan's military and the country's mission in the United Arab Emirates announced the death of the former army chief, 79, who was pushed from power in 2008.

"I can confirm that he passed away this morning," Shazia Siraj, spokesperson for Pakistan's consulate in Dubai and embassy in Abu Dhabi, told Reuters.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

GM Quader can resume duties as JP chair: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared the way for GM Quader to resume performing his duties as the chairman of Jatiya Party.



The HC stayed for eight weeks a Dhaka court order that on January 19 prohibited him from taking part in any party activities.

It also issued a rule asking Ziaul Haque Mridha, a former JP lawmaker, who challenged GM Quader's role in the party, and other authorities concerned to explain why the lower court order should not be scrapped.

The HC bench of Justice Muhammad Abdul Hafiz issued the order and rule following an appeal filed by GM Quader challenging the lower court order.

GM Quader's lawyer Sheikh Muhammed Serajul Islam told The Daily Star that there was no legal bar for his client to discharge duties as JP chairman following the HC order.

On January 19 this year a Dhaka court rejected the appeal submitted for lifting the injunction order barring GM Quader from taking any political decision regarding the party.

The Supreme Court on December 14 last year ruled that GM Quader cannot

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Per capita income misses estimate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's per capita income stood at \$2,793 in fiscal 2021-22 -- \$31 lower than the initial estimate as the steep depreciation of the taka messed up the government's numbers.

However, the per capita income for the year is an increase of 7.8 percent from a year earlier, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Similarly, the per capita gross domestic product -- a measure of the value of all final goods and services produced in a certain period -- was lower than the provisional estimate of \$2,723.

The per capita GDP last fiscal year was \$2,687, up 9.1 percent year on year.

The continuous depreciation of taka against the dollar might have deflated the estimates.

But the final figures were lower than the provisional estimates under almost all overheads.

GDP growth was 15

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

TK 2,000CR LAUNDERING

Fresh CID probe finds 30 involved

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The Criminal Investigation Department has found involvement of at least 30 people in laundering Tk 2,000 crore while investigating a case filed against two Faridpur brothers Sajjad Hossain Barkat and Imtiaz Hasan Rubel.

The number of people involved in the crime may rise as investigation is still going on, said CID officials aware of the fresh probe being carried out following a court order.

"We have almost completed the probe and may submit a fresh charge sheet within a month," Humayun Kabir, special superintendent of CID's financial crime unit, told The Daily Star recently.

The CID filed the case with Kafrul Police Station in June 2020 against Barkat and Rubel, also leaders of Faridpur Awami League.

They are accused of laundering Tk 2,000 crore amassed through tender manipulation, drug smuggling, land grabbing and extortion. They are part of a syndicate led by former minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain's brother Khandaker Mohtesam Hossain Babar.

Twelve people, including Babar, Barkat and Rubel, were arrested in the case and six of them made confessional statements before courts mentioning names of 52 people.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Uttam Kumar Biswas, then investigation officer of the case, submitted a charge sheet against 10 people, including the three, before a Dhaka court in March last year.

The court, however, ordered a further probe on September 1 last year, saying the charge sheet was submitted without following the proper procedure.

The court said two accused were left out of the charge sheet even though they confessed their involvement in the crime. And several others were not included in the charge sheet

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

PRESIDENTIAL POLLS

AL to finalise candidate tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League Parliamentary Party is going to hold a meeting tomorrow to finalise the party's candidate for the 22nd presidential election slated for February 19.

It will be organised at the meeting room of the ruling party in the Jatiya Sangsad at 7:30pm, said AL insiders.

Incumbent President Abdul Hamid's term will expire on April 24.

Nomination papers have to be submitted to the Election Commission for the post of president on February 12. The next day, the papers will be scrutinised.

If there is more than one candidate, the presidential election will be held in parliament on February 19. Members of parliament will cast votes to elect the president.

The main opposition in parliament, Jatiya Party, already said they would not nominate anyone for the president post. And since

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

‘Oldest animal fossil’ unearthed in India’s Bhopal

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A sensational "fossil" discovery in 2020 of a rare 550 million-year-old life form has turned out to be "a case of mistaken identity," according to a new study.



The "fossil" found at the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters cave site in India's Bhopal city was declared as one that belonged to the primitive animal Dickinsonia tenuis.

New research, published recently in the journal Gondwana Research, however, found it was just the imprint of a recently decayed "giant beehive". The 2020

discovery was also published in the same journal.

It was widely reported as evidence that Dickinsonia -- one of the earliest animals to have lived on Earth -- was likely present in the Indian subcontinent at a time when India, Australia, South America, Africa, and Antarctica were a single landmass.

Scientists behind the earlier study had also argued that the Indian finding resembled a Dickinsonia tenuis fossil previously found in South Australia.

It was hence suggested that the supercontinent Gondwanaland may have been assembled 550

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

DMCH FIRE

Patient, 60, dies losing oxygen support

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 60-year-old cardiac patient, kept under oxygen support, died yesterday as he was evacuating the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a panic after a fire broke out there.

Around 2:45pm, the fire originated from the air-conditioning unit outside the kidney department on the third floor of the DMCH's new building.

Two firefighting units reached the spot at 3:04pm and the fire was doused at 3:12pm. Khaleda Yasmin, a duty officer at Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star.

Akbar Hossain, ward boy of the kidney department, said there were 30 patients in the department and they were all unharmed.

The deceased, Jasim Uddin, from Cumilla's Titus

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Vendors at the capital's Mohammadia Housing Society are stocking up on 12kg LPG cylinders, which are selling at a premium for a supply crunch stemming from the strain on foreign currency reserves. Although the price of the 12kg bottle has been fixed at Tk 1,498 for this month, consumers are paying more. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Sri Lanka likely to pay back \$200m by Sept

Says Momen on return from Colombo

UNB, Dhaka

Sri Lanka is expected to pay back the \$200 million it borrowed from Bangladesh in a currency swap agreement in May 2021 by September as the island nation's economic situation is improving, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday.

"Sri Lanka is gradually doing better. They are recovering slowly. We have given them until September [to repay the loan]," Momen told journalists yesterday at state guest house Padma on his return from Colombo.

Momen was a guest at Sri Lanka's 75th Independence Day celebrations.

Sri Lanka was supposed to repay the \$200 million in March but the island nation sought more time. Subsequently, Bangladesh Bank gave Sri Lanka six more months.

"The new government there is running the country pretty well."

The Sri Lankan government is hopeful of recovering from its deep economic problem with support from the International Monetary Fund.

The two parties have recently reached a staff-level agreement on a 48-month \$2.9 billion loan programme that will also help the beleaguered nation to secure short-

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3