



A good initiative falls short of goal

Little progress in integrated, mechanised farming scheme to cut cost, increase yield

MIRZA SHAKIL and PINAKI ROY

A Tk 3,020 crore government project to popularise cultivation on big plots of land with the help of modern agricultural tools has seen little success in the last two years.

The idea is to boost crop production and reduce farming cost with the use of transplanters, harvesters and other equipment on 50- to 60-acre blocks of land. The farmers will have to agree to do away with the aisles separating each plot.

The government took up the five-year project in 2021. The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) cultivated the hybrid SL-8 variety of Boro on 110 blocks in 61 districts to show farmers how "synchronised" farming is done. A total of 5,500 acres of land was utilised for the demonstration.

Not much else has been done as farmers are reluctant to adopt it, officials said.

However, farmers in some places said they agreed to adopt the method, but it was the DAE that was unable to provide them with the support.

The plan was to sell 51,300 machines among farmers at 50-70 percent discounts with subsidies. As of December 2022, only 16,236 were distributed under the project titled "Agriculture Mechanisation through Integrated Management", said Tarik Mahmud, the project director.

"The main challenge is to get a group of farmers to adopt the synchronised farming method," said DAE Director General Badal Chandra Biswas.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

THE PROJECT

- Farming Boro on 50-acre plots under integrated management
- Mechanisation of seeding, transplanting, harvesting
- 5-year project launched in 2021 involving Tk 3,020 crore
- Pilot schemes being implemented in 61 districts

BENEFITS

- Saves cost of labour, agri inputs
- Increases production

CHALLENGES

- Bringing small plots together
- Bringing farmers under a community farming group
- Creating awareness among farmers



"We get 18 to 20 maunds of rice from one bigha of land but the output rises to 25 to 28 maunds in integrated farming method."

Anwar Hossain, a farmer of Bhatkura village in Tangail

GOVT SUPPORT DURING PILOT PROJECTS

Farmers are provided with free seeds, seedling trays; harvesting also free of cost; agricultural machinery provided at 50-70 percent subsidised prices



Bangladesh approached IMF at the right time

Says ex-chief economist of World Bank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has averted a potential major crisis by reaching out to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in a timely manner, said Kaushik Basu, a former chief economist of the World Bank.

"People are criticising [the government move of] reaching out to IMF but it was the right move. We have an example in Sri Lanka of the big risks associated with not reaching out to IMF timely," Basu told a group of journalists after his lecture on development policy at Dhaka University yesterday.

In July last year, when the foreign exchange reserves were hovering around the \$39 billion mark, Bangladesh wrote to the Washington-based multilateral lender for a loan to help the country cushion the

blows of the pandemic and the Ukraine war.

Last month, the IMF approved a 42-month loan programme involving \$4.7 billion and a host of long-delayed reforms. Basu cited the case of India when it reached out to the IMF for support in 1991.

India had an import cover of just 13 days when it sought an emergency loan of \$2.2 billion in 1991. Bangladesh had an import cover of five months when it sought funds from the IMF.

"Given the circumstances of Covid and the Ukraine war, Bangladesh is doing pretty well. But the rough road for economic growth lies ahead."

He went on to suggest that Bangladesh can take inspiration from India's approach towards the IMF loan programme in 1991.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Kaushik Basu

Bangladeshi team rescues girl in Turkey

Relief materials sent to Syria

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's joint support team, which flew to Turkey after the devastating earthquake struck there and neighbouring Syria, rescued a teenage girl alive and recovered three bodies from the rubble.

The girl is 17-year-old, Shahjahan Shikder, deputy assistant director (media) of fire service and civil defence, told The Daily Star last night.

On February 9, a 46-member combined rescue team that includes 24 members from the Bangladesh Army, 10

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

TURKEY-SYRIA QUAKE

Death toll nears 24,000

Bitter cold adds woe to victims

AGENCIES

Rescuers yesterday pulled people, including children, alive from the rubble of the Turkey-Syria earthquake as the toll neared 24,000 and bitter cold compounded the suffering of the homeless.

In the Turkish city of Kahramanmaraş, one of those hit hardest by the region's worst earthquake in nearly a century, the stench of death hung in the air.

But as crews entered a fifth day of peeling back flattened buildings, Turkish media reported rescues of young children, long after the expiration of the 72-hour window when survivors are considered most likely to be found.

Officials and medics said 20,213 people had died in Turkey and 3,553 in Syria from Monday's tremor, bringing the confirmed total to 23,766.

Experts fear the number will continue to rise.

In the 105th hour, rescuers pulled 18-month-old Yusuf Huseyin

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



THANK YOU ALL

For the last 32 years, The Daily Star has tried to serve its readers with, what we consider to be, the best in journalism -- news, views, features, analyses, backgrounders and investigative reporting, not to mention superb photographs, sketches, cartoons and infographics. We have held serving the country to be our highest priority, and we did so with the most objective, value-based, people-oriented and constructive journalism that we hold so close to our heart.

We strongly believe in what SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

We are pleased to present to our readers the first of our five-part 216-page special supplement series beginning today.

The first part of our five-segment special series, titled

"TOWARDS A SMART BANGLADESH", features a collection of articles on Bangladesh's economy from the perspective of different sectors, and how far we've come on the path to creating a smart Bangladesh.

Make sure you grab a copy of this collector's item free of charge from your hawkers!



Children watching a show of Sisimpur at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday morning. Such shows for children will be held on Fridays and Saturdays during the Ekushey Boi Mela.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

NCTB withdraws 2 textbooks

Experts term it a political decision

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The curriculum board yesterday withdrew two school textbooks in the wake of controversies over some contents, a rare move that eminent educationists described as a "political decision" of the government which apparently gave in to the pressure from religion-based groups.

National Curriculum and Textbook Board member (curriculum) Prof Moshuazzaman yesterday evening confirmed that they were withdrawing "History and Social Science: An Inquiry-based Reader" books for class 6 and 7.

"We are withdrawing the books as there has been a lot of criticism regarding the books and these two books have too much information on ancient history, which is tough for students of class 6 and 7," he added.

Besides, Prof Moshuazzaman said, at least four chapters in the social science books of class 6 and 7, and some contents in the science book of class 6 will see changes.

Many criticised the authorities after they published these four new textbooks with a number of mistakes and there is also an allegation of plagiarism in one of the textbooks

distributed free among the students, in line with the fresh curriculum introduced, on the first day of this year.

Besides, Islamist groups, including Islami Andolan Bangladesh, are claiming that these four books for class 6 and 7 are imposing the "debatable" Darwin's theory of evolution on students and demeaning the Islamic veil system for women.

They also said the textbooks depicted "bearded men wearing Islamic prayer caps as collaborators of 1971 Liberation War" although this has no historical basis and others".

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

বিসমিল্লাহির রাহমানির রাহিম

প্রথম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী

'জমি বতে নাবতে'

ব্যাংগ্‌স গ্রুপ অব কোম্পানীজ-এর প্রয়াত চেয়ারম্যান

জনাব আকতার হোসেন-এর

১ম মৃত্যুবার্ষিকীতে

শ্রদ্ধাঞ্জলি

টিভিএস অটো বাংলাদেশ লিঃ, গ্র্যান্ডপার্স ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়ালস লিমিটেড, ফার্মাসিয়া লিমিটেড, ফেইস মি লিমিটেড, আরইএল পেট্রো কেমিক্যালস লিঃ, হোসেন ট্রেডিং কোম্পানী লিঃ, স্পিঞ্জি আই বাংলা এডিটরেশন লিঃ, আরইএল মটরস লিমিটেড, ফার্মা সলিউশনস বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড, হোসেন ট্রেডিং কোম্পানী লিঃ, হোয়াইট হোজার্স এন্ড ইসলামিকাল লিঃ, ফার্স্ট ইম্পেরিয়াল ট্রেডিং বি.টি. লিঃ, ইসলাম ব্রাদার্স কনস্ট্রাকশন এন্ড ইন্ডিয়াস লিঃ

2 killed, 50 hurt in picnic bus wreck in Gopalganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

Two people, including a teacher, were killed and 50 others were injured after a picnic bus from Jashore hit a roadside tree in Gopalganj's Kashiani on Thursday night.

The dead are Sudipta Biswas, 37, assistant teacher of Bangari Secondary School in Jashore's Bagharpara upazila, and Bidyut Biswas, 47, guardian of a student.

Twenty-seven students are now receiving treatment at Jashore General Hospital while three of them were taken to the hospital's Incentive Care Unit, said Akhtaruzzaman, superintendent of the hospital.

Besides, three others, who suffered serious injuries, were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for better treatment, said the doctor.

Police and students said the school authorities arranged an annual educational excursion to visit the mausoleum of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Gopalganj's Tungipara.

Over 200 people, including students, teachers, school managing committee members and staffers, joined the tour.

The accident happened around 12:00am when they were returning home from Gopalganj by three buses, said Tajul Islam, officer in charge of Jashore Kotwali Police Station.

The OC said one of three buses tried to overtake another bus at Kashiani in Gopalganj and hit a roadside tree after its driver lost control over the steering, leaving Bidyut dead on the spot and 51 people injured.

Sudipta died soon after he was taken to Jashore General Hospital, said Saiful Islam, a physician at the hospital.

Tamizul Islam Khan, deputy commissioner of Jashore, said the district administration is giving all-out support to the injured.



An aerial view shows damaged and collapsed buildings, in the aftermath of a deadly earthquake in Hatay, Turkey, yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Russian missiles pound Ukraine's energy system

Kyiv says new Russian ground offensive has begun in east

REUTERS, *Kyiv*

Russia struck power facilities across Ukraine with missiles yesterday, the day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky concluded a tour of Western capitals, as Ukrainian officials said a long-awaited Russian offensive was under way in the east.

Ukraine's air force said 61 of a total of 71 Russian missiles had been shot down. But Energy Minister German Galushchenko said Russia had hit power facilities in six regions with missiles and drones, causing blackouts across most of Ukraine.

Russia has repeatedly attacked civilian infrastructure far from the front lines over the last four months, leaving millions of urban Ukrainians without power, heat or water for days at a time in the middle of

winter.

The barrages have often followed Ukrainian diplomatic or battlefield advances.

This one came as Zelensky ended a tour of London, Paris and Brussels with standing ovations ringing in his ears, though no public promises of the fighter jets he was asking for.

Kyiv's mayor Vitali Klitschko said 10 Russian missiles had been shot down over the Ukrainian capital after air raid sirens blared across the country during the morning rush hour and officials urged weary civilians to heed them and shelter.

European Council President Charles Michel said the attacks were indiscriminate and constituted war crimes.

"The EU and its member states stand by Ukraine and all Ukrainians. And will

further speed up the provision of military equipment, including air defence," he tweeted.

Russia denies targeting civilians and says the facilities it attacks are relevant to Kyiv's war effort.

Ukraine has been bracing itself for a new Russian offensive in the belief that, after months of reverses, President Vladimir Putin wants to tout a battlefield success before the anniversary of the invasion he launched on Feb 24.

Putin will give his delayed annual showcase address to parliament, akin to the US president's State of the Union speech, on Feb 21. That was the date last year when he recognised the breakaway Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk as independent, a prelude to invading.

Rohingya man with Bangladeshi passport held in Ctg airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

A Rohingya man was arrested with a Bangladeshi passport at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chattogram yesterday.

Asad Ullah, accused in a murder case, was arrested by members of the Detective Branch of Chattogram Metropolitan Police when he was trying to flee the country for Saudi Arabia, said police.

The case was filed against him with Ukhiya Police Station on January 9, said Nahid Adnan Taian, deputy commissioner (north) of CMP's DB.

"The Rohingya man was trying to flee the country by a Jeddah-bound flight using a Bangladeshi passport. Acting on a tip-off, police arrested him around 6:45pm at the airport," the police official said.

Further details will be disclosed later, he added.

Man hanged for killing Dr Naznin, housemaid

UNB, *Dhaka*

A man has been executed at Kashimpur Central Jail for killing Dr Naznin Akhtar and her housemaid 17 years ago.

The execution of Amirul Islam, 42, took place on Thursday night, said senior superintendent of Kashimpur Central Jail-2.

Amirul, son of Mohammad Mandal, was of Naogaon's Patnitala upazila.

His body was handed over to his relatives after completing necessary procedures.

Amirul was tried and sentenced to death in 2008, three years after the double murder in 2005 at Dr Nazneen's house in Dhanmandi residential area.

A murder case was filed against him with Dhanmondi Police Station.

Businessman held in Tk 326cr embezzlement case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Members of Rapid Action Battalion yesterday arrested Rising Steel Limited Director Jasim Uddin Chowdhury in a case filed over embezzling Tk 326 crore from AB Bank.

Jasim, brother of Aslam Chowdhury, national executive committee member of the BNP, was arrested in Feni's Mohammad Ali Bazar area early yesterday, read a press release of Rab.

According to the release, Rising Steel Limited is one of the top 20 loan defaulters.

A list of loan defaulters was revealed in the parliament on January 24. Rab has been investigating the defaulters ever since.

Nurul Absar, senior assistant director (media) of Rab 7, said during their primary interrogation they found information about a case filed over embezzling Tk 325.77 crore from AB Bank.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case against Jasim with Halishahar Police Station on July 17, 2016.

A good initiative falls short of goal

FROM PAGE 1

Farming would require far fewer workers and much less investment if the government could popularise the use of modern equipment, he said.

Launching the project on February 21, 2021, Agriculture Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque said paddy seedlings on each acre of land could be planted with a transplanter in an hour and that would reduce the cost of hiring workers by around Tk 4,500.

In the places where synchronised farming is being done for demonstration purposes, the farmers were given free seeds and seedling trays. The transplanters for planting seedlings were also used for free. The harvesting will be for free as well.

Mahmudul Hasan, additional

deputy director of the DAE in Tangail, said synchronised cultivation was done on two 50-acre blocks in Dhanbari upazila and one block of the same size in Delduar upazila this year. This is the third such experiment in Dhanbari.

Dhanbari Agriculture Officer Masudur Rahman said farmers on their own have yet to cultivate this way.

Farmers owning land in the same location do not seem to be willing to cultivate together, he said, adding that using the equipment on smaller pieces of land is not cost effective.

Anwar Hossain of Bhatkura village, who participated in the synchronised farming with DAE assistance, said the harvest was better than usual.

"We get 18 to 20 maunds of rice

from one bigha of land, but the output rises to 25 to 28 maunds in the integrated farming method," he said.

"I wanted to cultivate paddy in this method along with several farmers. But the authorities did not provide us with a seeding machine," said Anwar.

Many other farmers in Tangail said they were ready to form groups and adopt mechanised farming, but the equipment was not available.

Asked about this, DAE DG Badal said there was a shortage of seeding machines. "But farmers can prepare seedbeds manually if they want."

The government is trying to create entrepreneurs who would own seeding machines, transplanters and harvesters and rent those out.

Thank you all

FROM PAGE 1

Winston Churchill said, that "Democracy is the worst form of government - except for all the others that have been tried." We also hold fast the truth that a free and independent media serves democracy best and countries without a free media can never achieve the full potential of their people.

But for the free media to serve democracy, it must maintain the highest ethical standards and never compromise on the norms of professional journalism. That is where the unique strength of The Daily Star lies.

In this journey of more than three decades, our readers, advertisers and patrons have unfalteringly stood by us. They have been our greatest source of courage and moral strength. They stood by us as we stood by them, with our people-oriented news coverage and editorial positions. We really could not have traversed this distance without their love and support. We stand forever indebted to them.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our advertisers and to the advertising agencies who manage the business. Without their unstinting support no newspaper can survive with independence. We sincerely thank them for their support.

I also thank my Board of Directors for their commitment to a free and independent media.

From today, our five-part, 216-pages, 32nd anniversary

supplement series starts. Over the next week, up until the 19th February, we will serve our readers with specially selected topics and creatively designed segments of our special anniversary supplement series which will give our readers both a clear understanding of the present, and a vision of our way forward.

"Towards a Smart Bangladesh" is our first segment. Inspired by the vision of our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, we bring out all the challenges that Bangladesh faces and the impediments that it must overcome to build a "smart" country.

Segment 2 is titled "The changing middle-class story". This segment addresses both the constraints faced and the innovations that this class has brought about as it struggled through the pandemic and the economic downturns.

Segment 3 and 4 deals with Showbiz and Lifestyle, two areas where we have had tremendous creativity and success. The two segments will bring out the heroes and heroines of these worlds and stun you with accounts of what has happened and how extremely innovative our artists have been.

Segment 5 is dedicated to our "inspirers". This special issue celebrates all those who have been the architects of Bangladesh's success in the past decades. We highlight our heroes especially in the business sector and when it comes to achieving women's empowerment. We retell the stories of those who

have brought us recognition in the global marketplace and universal respect among those who are involved in development work, transforming our underdeveloped status with special emphasis on women's empowerment.

We thank all the writers who have helped to make our supplements extremely rich in content.

Through our special supplements we celebrate Bangladesh and express our sincerest gratitude in helping us to win your hearts and minds over the last 32 years.

We urge you all to set aside some time to read all the segments.

Thank you.
Mahfuz Anam
Editor & Publisher

Bangladeshi team

FROM PAGE 1

medical professionals, and 12 personnel from the fire service reached Turkey.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh also sent humanitarian aid and medicines to Syria for the earthquake victims.

A cargo plane of Bangladesh Air Force, loaded with tents, blankets, sweaters, dry foods and medicines, left for Syria last night around 10:30pm, said Selim Hossain, deputy chief information officer of disaster management and relief ministry.

Group captain Jamil Uddin Ahmed of Bangladesh Air Force is leading the team, according to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release.

NCTB withdraws

FROM PAGE 1

Several mistakes were also found in three textbooks for the ninth and tenth grades. NCTB in mid-January issued corrections to mistakes in books for class 9 and 10 books.

Late last month, the education ministry formed two probe committees to identify mistakes in textbooks and ascertain whether the errors were the result of any negligence of NCTB officials.

Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury said the withdrawal of textbooks "was a political decision in the face of demands made by some religious groups".

"We don't find such debates over English medium or madrasa books. But we see it in the case of the Bangla medium, which is our mainstream... in the past, the authorities also showed the tendency to compromise by dropping contents following demands of Hefajat," he added.

On the debate over Darwin's theory of evolution, he said there is no disagreement that it is scientifically proven.

Brac University Professor Emeritus Manzoor Ahmed said the decision of withdrawing two textbooks came amid controversy and criticism from religion-based groups. "It seems to me such a decision is one kind of surrender of government," he told this newspaper.

"The government did not make the decision following proper procedures. As they have formed two probe committees, they could have reached a decision following their reports," he opined.

Asked whether they have taken the step under pressure from religious groups, Prof Moshuazzaman evaded a direct answer by saying, "We made the decision keeping in mind different types of criticisms."

In 2017, writings of famous authors were scrapped because they were either non-Muslims or the contents were disliked by Islamists, said a former NCTB member, who was involved in the process. He added the exclusions were done on instructions from "higher authorities".

On condition of anonymity, an NCTB official said no textbooks were fully withdrawn since at least 2010.

Also yesterday, Education Minister Dipu Moni said, "We will prepare one new book each for sixth and seventh grade. The topics that are being talked about will not be studied in classrooms."

Regarding criticisms from various quarters, Dipu Moni, while speaking at a programme in Chandpur, said, "There is nothing anti-Islamic in these books. Still, we listen to people, we also give importance to it and respect it."

Bangladesh approached

FROM PAGE 1

India carried out the reforms with such sincerity that after two years, it informed the lender that it did not need further instalments of the sanctioned amount.

The reforms were much-needed but the Indian authorities were dragging their feet then.

"For Bangladesh, that is possible," said Basu, who served as the chief economic adviser to the government of India from 2009 to 2012.

Indian advisors told the IMF that they need reforms and urged them to make it happen through the conditions in the loan programme, said Basu, who is now an economics professor at Cornell University.

"In the case of Bangladesh, the same thing might be happening."

Chief among IMF's conditions are raising the tax-GDP ratio and paring back on subsidy expenditure.

"Tax-GDP ratio can be increased in the region. But 14-15 percent is possible."

He, however, acknowledged the inertia among the tax administration that prevents the tax-GDP ratio from going up.

"It is not easy though. This is a target that must be there. You have to give attention and you have to try better."

Subsidies must be pared back intelligently, he said.

"In many countries, as political pressure intensifies, subsidy starts to increase. There comes a time that subsidy needs to be withdrawn a bit and that must be done intelligently."

The ordinary people are the most

vulnerable people, so when the subsidy is cut, buffers need to be provided for them.

"At the same time, fiscal deficit must be watched. Subsidy cannot be a free good - you have to make people understand this. There is a balancing act involved," Basu added.

Meanwhile, in his speech, Basu said every crisis provides an opportunity.

Bangladesh Pathshala, a social organisation, arranged the discussion at RC Majumder Auditorium. Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, chaired the event.

One of the major problems in developing countries like Bangladesh is the implementation of policies, said Mustafa K Mujeri, executive director at Institute for Inclusive Finance and Development.

"Bureaucracy does not want massive changes. They prefer marginal changes," he said.

Shamsul Alam, state minister for planning, said during his initial days as a member of the planning commission, he faced questions from bureaucracy about the necessity of planning.

Citing some decisions by former finance minister AMA Muhith regarding giving the planning ministry the responsibility to make projections for economic growth and poverty reduction, he said political farsightedness is important.

More autonomy for the Bangladesh Bank is necessary so that the central bank can determine the interest rate and solve foreign exchange issues.

"It should be given more scope," Alam added.

Death toll nears 24,000

FROM PAGE 1

From the debris in the southeastern city of Antakya. Twenty minutes later, they rescued seven-year-old Muhammed Huseyin, NTV news channel reported.

Three-year-old Zeynep Ela Parlak was also rescued in Antakya yesterday, while in Adiyaman province, rescuers saved a 60-year-old Eyup Ak and in Gaziantep, two people were pulled out alive including a child whose age was not known.

But hopes were fading that many more would be found alive.

Some 24.4 million people in Syria and Turkey have been affected, according to Turkish officials and the United Nations, in an area spanning roughly 450 km from Adana in the west to Diyarbakir in the east. In Syria, people were killed as far south as Hama, 250 km from the epicentre.

Up to 5.3 million people in Syria may have been made homeless by the devastating earthquake, a United Nations official said.

Rescuers, including teams from dozens of countries, toiled night and day in the ruins of thousands of wrecked buildings to find buried survivors. In freezing temperatures, they regularly called for silence as they listened for any sound of life from mangled concrete mounds.

Temperatures in the Turkish city of Gaziantep, located near the epicentre of the quake, plunged to minus three degrees Celsius (26 degrees Fahrenheit) early yesterday.

Despite the cold, thousands of families have been living in cars and makeshift tents - too scared or banned from returning to their homes.

Monday's quake was the largest Turkey has seen since 1939, when 33,000 people died in the eastern Erzurum province.

It now ranks as the seventh most deadly natural disaster this century, ahead of Japan's 2011 tremor and tsunami and approaching the 31,000 killed by a quake in neighbouring Iran in 2003.

PRESIDENTIAL POLLS Submission of nomination paper Sunday

BSS, Dhaka

Aspirants for the presidential election will have to submit their nomination papers to the Election Commission (EC) tomorrow.

"According to the polls schedule, the nomination papers can be submitted to the chief election commission (CEC) office till 4:00pm on February 12," said EC Secretariat Secretary Md Jahangir Alam.

Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on February 13 from 10:00am, while nomination papers could be withdrawn till 4:00pm on February 14.

On February 19, the 22nd presidential election

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Their ancestors were brought in by the British to work as cleaners. More than two centuries later, after the birth of a new country, they were replaced without any rehabilitation. They only had the colony in Jatrabari's Dhalpur to live in but now, DSCC has allegedly asked them to leave that space as well. Members of the Telegu community were seen sharing their woes during a protest in front of Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

'Illegal, undemocratic, whimsical'

Oikya Parishad concerned over DSCC's decision to evict Telegu community

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday showed their grave concern over the alleged verbal direction of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) to vacate the houses of the Telugu community at Dhalpur of Jatrabari.

The direction was given to the leaders of the Telugu community at the Nagar Bhaban on Thursday, said leaders of the parishad.

While visiting the Outfall Telegu Colony in Jatrabari's Dhalpur yesterday, they said any steps without rehabilitation

are illegal, undemocratic, and whimsical.

They hoped that as a barrister himself, the DSCC mayor would refrain from taking any such unlawful decision, says a press release of the Oikya Parishad.

Kajol Debnath, presidium member of Oikya Parishad, and General Secretary Rana Dasgupta visited the colony.

Around 1,200 residents of the colony are from the Telugu community, and many residents have stopped cooking their daily meals after receiving the mayor's direction, they said.

On February 8, Jatrabari Police

Station Officer-in-Charge Mofizul Alamon called upon the leaders of the community and allegedly threatened them not to organise any protest and inform anyone about the direction, said the parishad leaders.

The community members yesterday held a human chain and a protest rally yesterday in front of Jatiya Press Club, demanding their rehabilitation before any such move.

They said the British government had brought the community's ancestors there from the Telangana state in India to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

UN groups concerned over harassment of human-rights organisations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three special rapporteurs of the United Nations expressed grave concern over the reported harassment of Maayer Daak and Odhikar -- two NGOs that keep track of human-rights records in Bangladesh.

In a joint letter on December 22, the UN working groups alleged that "a smear campaign has been launched aimed at playing down the authenticity of enforced disappearances and questioning the way humanitarian procedure of working groups is operated."

Aua Baldé, chair-rapporteur of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Clement Nyaletsossi Voule, special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; and Mary Lawlor, special rapporteur on the situation of human-rights defenders, signed the letter sent to government.

"Several outlets have undertaken a smear campaign against the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances [WGEID] and Bangladesh-based human right organisation Odhikar," the letter reads. "[Certain] media reports refer to some individuals allegedly included erroneously in the UN "listing" of victims, and accuse the WGEID of conducting 'sloppy' work."

However, the working group has not published

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

End of an era Last cinema hall in Tangail town demolished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cinema was once one of the means of healthy entertainment for Tangail's people, but now its very existence is being removed.

Tangail's cinema hall business began in 1950, with Lebu Chowdhury constructing Rawshan Talkies in a secluded corner of the then small town. At that time, hall owners were considered to be the "elite class" of society.

Following Chowdhury's footsteps, other cinema halls were opened in 12 upazilas throughout the years. In the 1990s, this number stood at 51.

Inspired by Lebu Chowdhury, Montu Miah established the town's most attractive cinema hall in 1964, next to the main road. He named the hall Rupbani and it was the second hall in the district.



Current state of Malanch Cinema Hall.

The business was profitable till 2000. In the 90s, the halls would screen five shows daily from 10:00am to 1:00pm. During festivals like Eid, large crowds formed in front of the cinema hall. However, in the years that followed, 46 cinema halls were closed—one after the other—due to a lack of audience.

In 1973, Chowdhury, built a second cinema hall named Rupsi. Later, he built three more in Delduar, Mirzapur and Dhanbari upazilas. In 1975, Sana Miah built the fourth cinema hall -- Malanch -- at Adalat Para.

The business was profitable till 2000. In the 90s, the halls would screen five shows daily from 10:00am to 1:00pm. Posters and megaphones were used to publicise the release of new films. During festivals like Eid, large crowds formed in front of the cinema hall.

However, in the years that followed, 46 cinema halls were closed—one after the other—due to a lack of audience.

Earlier in 1996, Rawshan Hall was demolished

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Tawfiq Aziz Khan's 22nd death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 22nd death anniversary of Tawfiq Aziz Khan, former executive editor of The Daily Star, sports writer and commentator.

One of the leading journalists of the country, Tawfiq joined the then-Pakistan Observer as a staff reporter in 1958 while he

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

INFOCOM 2023

February 10 & 11, 2023 • Dhaka, Bangladesh
Theme: Leading with Purpose

In association with **The Daily Star**

SAARC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
OPEN BUSINESS ORGANIZATION OF SAARC

Gold Partner

Data Center Partner

Silver Partner

The spectacular show continues on Day 2 of **INFOCOM Dhaka 2023**, proudly hosted by INFOCOM, in association with SAARC CCI and The Daily Star.

Kamal Quadir
CEO, bKash

Sonia Bashir Kabir
Managing Director
SBK Tech Ventures

F.R. Khan
Managing Director
Building Technology & Ideas Ltd.

Masud Khan
Chief Advisor
Crown Cement Group

Prof. Dr. Eaysmin Ara Lekha
Pro Vice Chancellor
Uttara University

Asif Ibrahim
Chairman
Chittagong Stock Exchange

Arif Khan
Vice Chairman
Shanta Asset Management Limited

Md. Sayadur Rahman
President
Bangladesh Merchant Bank Association

Rakibul Hassan
CTO
Link3 Technologies Ltd.

Shafiqur Rahman
Director
Hatil Complex Ltd.

Ambareen Reza
Co-Founder & MD
Foodpanda

Mamoon Mahmood Shah
Managing Director
NRB Bank Limited

Zafir Shafiee
Director
Bondstein

Venue The Westin Dhaka, Bangladesh

Communications Partner: Link3

Knowledge Provider: EY

Associate Partners: Jadroo, minfy, NITOL/NILOY, ATR

TV Partner: N

Community Partner: ISACA

Supported By: CIPROCO

*Entry by invitation only

BAHANGDESH'S FASTEST MOBILE NETWORK

FASTEST 4G

STAY AHEAD ALWAYS EVERYWHERE

Based on analysis by Ookla™ of Speedtest Intelligence™ data for Q1-Q2 2022. Ookla trademarks used under license and reprinted with permission. banglalink.net

Sharif Rafiqul Islam passes away

CITY DESK

Sharif Rafiqul Islam, former director general of Bangladesh



Water Development Board (BWDB), passed away on Wednesday at his residence due to old-age complications.

A milad mahfil has been arranged at his residence today after Asr prayers. His family members have requested all who knew him to pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

Submission

FROM PAGE 3 will be held from 2:00pm to 5:00pm in the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) complex.

The president may hold office for five years from the date of assumption.

Incumbent President Abdul Hamid assumed office on April 24, 2018. Accordingly, his five-year tenure will end on April 23, 2023.

According to the Constitution, members of parliament are voters in the presidential election.

Awami League has the absolute majority in the current parliament. If there is one candidate for the presidency, the election will not require a meeting or voting in parliament.

Tawfiq Aziz

FROM PAGE 3 was a student at Dhaka University.

He joined The Daily Star in 1990 as its founding managing editor. He became executive editor in 1997 and worked in that capacity till his death.

The first English sports commentator of the country, Tawfiq Aziz was the resident editor of Cricketer Asia of Hong Kong and Sports Times of Lahore. He was also the founding editor of the fortnightly Krira Jagat.

Family, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of his departed soul.



Jumbled electric wires hang from an electric pole overhead, while vendors sell clothes right beneath them, unaware of their safety. At any point, if the sparks of the wire get caught in the clothes, a grave accident may occur. This photo was taken in Chittaranjan Avenue of the capital's Sadarghat yesterday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

End of an era

FROM PAGE 3 and a shopping mall was constructed there. Ruphani came crumbling down in 2000, Rupsi in 2008 and Kaya Hall in 2019 — replaced by multi-storied buildings.

With the demolition of Malanch Cinema Hall, the silver screen era has come to an end in the ancient town of Tangail. Its demolition began on December 18 last year, and the structure is still being broken down.

Malanch Hall Manager Abdul Miah said the

journey of the cinema halls began in 1974 with the film "Jighansa". Business was good then. Later, due to the lack of audience, the hall suffered huge losses, year after year. Even then, it was kept open for a long time.

"If films with interesting stories and high-quality production are made, paired with digitised cinema halls built with government support, then this industry could survive, even thrive," he said.

At present, two cinema halls in Nagarpur upazila,

one in Madhupur and another in Kalihati upazila are functioning irregularly. However, due to the severe recession, the owners of these halls do not know for how long they will keep the establishments open.

Rokhsana Khan, a teacher of a college in the town, said, "When I was a child, the families who lived in the town would watch the evening shows, while the working class people caught the night screenings."

"It's a sad fact that the cinema industry

is expanding all over the world, but halls in Bangladesh are closing down. This is particularly sad because cinema is not only a medium of entertainment, but also a powerful medium for social reform," she added.

"Now many good films are being made in Bangladesh. So, if those who can help come forward, along with government support, the cinema hall industry has a chance to survive," concluded Rokhsana.

Nilsagar: no longer a favourite of birds

FROM PAGE 6 According to a local history book written by Nasiruddin Ahmed, Raja Virat, a once-famous monarch, dug the vast waterbody in the seventh century after a Hindu goddess told him to do so in a dream.

He named the waterbody "Binna Dighi", after the name of his beloved daughter "Binnaboti". But after the place was declared a sanctuary, it was rebranded as Nilsagar, ignoring locals' objections.

Before, migratory birds of eight to 10 species used to go there in November and stayed till March-April, Shyamal Mohonto, an elderly of the village, told this correspondent.

"There used to be many trees here. Guest birds ate their fruits and spent nights on them. There are fewer birds now because large trees are scarce," he added.

Prof Birendrnath, head of zoology department at Nilphamari Government

College, said, "Migratory birds are sensitive and feel disturbed if they find the slightest change in ecology."

During a recent visit to Nilsagar tourist spot, this correspondent noticed only 8,000 to 10,000 birds flying around. Before felling trees, locals estimated that their population was nearly one lakh.

Rubel Islam, caretaker of Nilsagar, said migratory birds do not even sit on the foreign trees. They float on

the waterbody all day and fly to surrounding villages after sunset in search of food and shelter.

Contacted, Deputy Commissioner of Nilphamari Pankaj Ghosh said, "To ensure safe shelter and food for birds in Nilsagar, we've launched a project for creating natural forest by planting bird-friendly local trees. The number of migratory birds is increasing again as a result."

Brick kilns illegally burning wood, bamboo to save some bucks

Croplands in Lalmonirhat, Kurigram being damaged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Bricks are being produced by burning wood and bamboo instead of coal in most of the brick kilns in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, in violation of the law.

There are 174 brick kilns in the two districts. Out of this, 111 brick kilns are in Kurigram and 63 in Lalmonirhat.

Recently, a mobile court has fined two brick kilns for making bricks by burning wood and bamboo instead of coal in Bamanerba area of Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila.

Farmer Nazir Hossain (67) of Khatmari village of Rajarhat in Kurigram, said brick kiln owners are collecting wood and bamboo from the surrounding villages.

Due to the burning of wood and bamboo in the brick kiln, the cropland around the kilns is getting damaged, he said.

Wood-bamboo ash is flying and accumulating in the crop fields, he added. This does not happen if coal is burnt, provided that there is a mechanism to trap the harmful byproducts at the kilns.

Farmer Mozammel Haque (65) of Dhairkhata village of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila echoed him.

Brick makers working in brick kilns said around 5,000 to 6,000 tonnes of wood and bamboo are burnt in each brick kiln every season.

Atiar Rahman, a wood trader in Kulaghat area of Lalmonirhat Sadar, said brick kiln owners are buying a large amount of wood and bamboo this year compared to previous years.

Manowarul Islam, inspector of Department of Environment in Rangpur, said, "On the pretext that the price of coal has increased, brick kiln owners have started using wood and bamboo instead of coal. We are getting complaints from different areas. Drives are being conducted against the listed brick kilns in phases."

Contacted, Mohammad Ullah, deputy commissioner of Lalmonirhat, said DoE is operating mobile courts and will fine kiln owners if the allegations are found to be true.

18 Chhatra Odhikar

FROM PAGE 6 "We heard that students of some institutions in Bogura resisted them. The students had an altercation with them," he added.

When asked about stopping Chhatra

Odhikar's human chain, Bogura Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Noor-E-Alam Siddiqui told The Daily Star, "Chhatra Odhikar Parishad applied for today's programme but did not get the permission.

That is why my officers stopped them."

When asked about the BCL attack, the OC said, "We don't know anything about the BCL attack yet. No complaint has been received in this regard."

Deaths continue

FROM PAGE 6 Cox's Bazar highway yesterday morning. Confirming the incident, Mohammad Erfan, officer-in-charge of Dohazari highway police station said Mofiz was the truck's helper.

Among the injured, the condition of truck driver Abdul Mannan is critical. He is currently undergoing treatment at Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Besides, pedestrian

Nazrul Islam, 70, died after a speeding biker hit him in Joypurhat's Kalai upazila on Friday.

SM Moinuddin, officer-in-charge of Kalai police station said the biker Shanto was also injured, as he lost control and crashed on the road. In Sylhet, six, including two children, were seriously injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a private car in South Surma Upazila yesterday.

UN groups

FROM PAGE 3 any report focusing exclusively on enforced disappearances in Bangladesh, nor has it published any list of individuals, due to the confidential nature of its individual case procedure, it said.

It further sought to know about the steps taken to protect members of Odhikar and Maayer Daak from acts of intimidation and harassment.

Friday is a fun day for the children

FROM PAGE 6 stall, said, "CRI published 10 parts of 'Mujib' in Bangla and also published 3 parts in English. All of them are selling well."

In the afternoon, readers of all ages started coming to the fair. Jyoti Roy, who came to the fair from Laxmibazar, said, "This fair is something I look forward

to all year. I have set aside money for this occasion."

According to Bangla Academy, 260 new books were published at the fair yesterday.

দেওরাছড়া চা বাগান
বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড
কমলগঞ্জ, মৌলভীবাজার
মোবাইল: ০১৭১৭-১৩২৬৭০
ইমেইল: mu76zaman@gmail.com
নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড কর্তৃক পরিচালিত দেওরাছড়া চা বাগানের চা কারখানার অকেজো মেশিনারীজ, যন্ত্রাংশ ও ইলেকট্রিক পাটসসমূহ যেখানে যে অবস্থায় আছে নিলামের মাধ্যমে বিক্রয় করা হবে।

নিলামে অংশগ্রহণে আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ আগামী ১৫/০২/২০২৩ খ্রি: হতে ২৬/০২/২০২৩ খ্রি: তারিখ পর্যন্ত অকেজো লট-১: ড্রায়ার, লট-২: সিটিসি ও গুপি শিফটার ও লট-৩: ইলেকট্রিক পাটসসমূহের পরিমাণ সম্বলিত দরপত্র দলিল দেওরাছড়া চা বাগানের অফিস হতে প্রতিটি লট ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকার বিনিময়ে ক্রয় করতে পারবেন। অকেজো চা মেশিনারীজ ও ইলেকট্রিক পাটসসমূহ সরেজমিনে রবিবার ব্যতিত অফিস সময়ে পরিদর্শন করতে পারবেন। আগামী ২৭/০২/২০২৩ খ্রি: তারিখ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে দরপত্র দলিল প্রদান করে সীলগালা খামে দেওরাছড়া চা বাগান, বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড, মৌলভীবাজার, মৌলভীবাজার অফিসে দরপত্র বাসে জমা দিতে হবে। আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ যেকোন লটে অথবা সকল লটে অংশ গ্রহণ করতে পারবেন। নিলামে অংশগ্রহণকারী দরপত্রদাতাকে দরপত্রের সাথে উদ্ধৃত দরের কমপক্ষে ১০% অর্থ (ফেরতযোগ্য) নিরাপত্তা জামানত হিসাবে 'দেওরাছড়া চা বাগান' এর অনুকূলে পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এর মাধ্যমে জমা দিতে হবে। উল্লেখ্য যে, নিলামে প্রদত্ত মোট উদ্ধৃত দরের উপর সরকারী নিয়ম অনুযায়ী ভ্যাট ও উৎস কর কর্তন করা হবে। কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা সকল দরপত্র বর্জন করার পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

(মোঃ মোস্তফা জামান)
ব্যবস্থাপক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
দেওরাছড়া চা বাগান

Illegal, undemocratic

FROM PAGE 3 work as cleaners. They arranged their living space by constructing the colony.

However, after the Liberation War in 1971, the authorities identified these cleaners as garbage-management workers, who were eventually replaced by Bangalee cleaners.

"No initiative was taken from the government or any autonomous body to rehabilitate us in other professions. A section of our community has been living in Dhalpur ever since. Now our homes are being taken away from us as well," they said during the protest.

Contacted, OC Mofizul said DSCC will evict the

space on February 12, and that is why they asked the community leaders not to create any untoward situation.

Meanwhile, on February 9, while handing over the house keys to garbage-management workers at Dhalpur, the DSCC mayor said he will not tolerate any encroachment of DSCC land while he is the mayor.

Taposh mentioned that unscrupulous people have been charging authentic garbage-management workers to stay in the colony.

"Our land is being occupied in many ways. Landgrabbers and different vested groups are occupying the land and benefitting from this illegal act. I will not tolerate this as long as I'm here. Our garbage-management workers, our employees will stay there, and it is our duty to look after it," he said.

অফিস ভাড়া হবে
ঢাকার প্রানসেকেন্দ্র পুরানা পল্টন, হোল্ডিং নং-৩৭/২ কালাভাট রোডে, ৪র্থ তলায় (রাষ্ট্র পক্ষে) ২২০০ বর্গফুট ফ্ল্যাট সকল সرفিসসহ ভাড়া হবে।
মোবাইল: ০১৭৫৯৭০৬৭৩৩

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 31 OF 2023
Md. Golam Rabbani Proddhan, Son of late Moshraf Hossain Proddhan, Permanent Address: Village: Azizpur, Post Office: Kawamari, Police Station: Patgram, District: Lalmonirhat, Present Address: House No. 28, Road No. 11, Sector 06, Uttara Model Town Dhaka-1230. Petitioner
-Versus-
Basic Shirts Limited, Registered Address: Basic Tower, Majukhan Harbaid, Gazipur Sadar, Gazipur and others.
... Respondents
Notice is hereby given that an application under section 241 read with sections 242, 255 of the Companies Act, 1994 and Rule 8 of the Companies Rules, 2009 for winding up of "Basic Shirts Limited," was moved before a Single Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on behalf of the petitioner and upon preliminary hearing on 30th January 2023 Mr. Justice Khazir Ahmed Choudhury was pleased to admit the said application. Anyone desirous of opposing the matter may appear before the Hon'ble Court either personally or through his advocate. A copy of the petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said company requiring the same, by the undersigned, on payment of the prescribed charge for the same.

Md. Nazrul Islam Khan
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Room No. 142, Bar Association Building
Supreme Court of Bangladesh

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Principal
Golapganj Govt Technical School and College, Golapganj, Sylhet
Memo no-57.03.9138.502.07.001.22.245 Date: 08/02/2023

e-Tender Notice
This is notifying to all concern that the following tenders are invited in the national e-GP portal.

Sl no.	Tender ID	Procurement Title	Online Notice publication Date & Time	Last selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
1	786311	Procurement and supply of teaching and learning materials.	12-02-2023 17.00 PM	26-02-2023 17.00 PM	27-02-2023 17.00 PM
2	788119	Procurement and supply of Raw materials and spare parts.	12-02-2023 17.00 PM	26-02-2023 17.00 PM	27-02-2023 17.00 PM

This is an online tender where only e-tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is must required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP portal helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Sajal Kumar Pal)
Principal (In-Charge)
Golapganj Govt. Technical School and College
Email: golapganjtsco@gmail.com

GD-241

World Health Organization
Bangladesh
VACANCY NOTICE

World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following position under following contractual modality:

- National Consultant - Health Emergency Operation Center (HEOC) / SSA
- Data Manager / SSA

For further details on submission of applications including detailed post description please visit our websites:
<https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/employment>
<https://careers.who.int/careersection/ex/jobsearch.ftl>

Qualified **female candidates** are highly encouraged to apply.

WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or other tobacco users.

বাংলাদেশ ডেভেলপমেন্ট ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
হেড অফিস, ঢাকা।
এস্টাবলিশমেন্ট এন্ড কমন সার্ভিস ডিপার্টমেন্ট
বিষয় : তালিকাভুক্তিকরণ

২০২৩ সালে ০১ (এক) বছর মেয়াদে তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য এই ব্যাংকের হেড অফিস কর্তৃক নিম্নলিখিত ব্যবসায় নিয়োজিত প্রকৃত ও খ্যাতিমানা প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ-

(১) আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহ, মেরামত ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ; (২) যানবাহন মেরামত ও সার্ভিসিং, টায়ার, গিউব, ব্যাটারী সরবরাহ; (৩) কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সরবরাহ, মেরামত, রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ ও পরিচ্ছন্নকরণ; (৪) ফটোকপি মেশিন, নোট কাউন্টিং মেশিন, নোট ব্যান্ডিং মেশিন, পেপার শ্রেডার মেশিন, জাল নোট শনাক্তকরণ মেশিন এবং এতদসংশ্লিষ্ট অন্যান্য অফিস সরঞ্জাম সরবরাহ ও মেরামত; (৫) শীতাতপ যন্ত্র ও রেফ্রিজারেটর সরবরাহ ও মেরামত; (৬) বিভিন্ন সামগ্রী মূদ্রণ ও সরবরাহ; (৭) স্টেশনারী সামগ্রী সরবরাহ; (৮) বৈদ্যুতিক সরঞ্জাম ও স্যানিটারী সামগ্রী সরবরাহ ও মেরামত; (৯) অগ্নি-নির্বাপক যন্ত্রপাতি সরবরাহ ও মেরামত; এবং (১০) ব্যাংক ভবনের পুরণনির্মাণ/মেরামত কাজ ইত্যাদি।

০২। এ সংক্রান্ত সিডিউল/ফরম ৮, রাজউক এজিনিসি, বিবিবিএল ভবন, মতিঝিল ঢাকায় অবস্থিত ব্যাংক ভবনের সেডেল-৯ এ এস্টাবলিশমেন্ট এন্ড কমন সার্ভিস ডিপার্টমেন্ট হতে প্রতিদিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে নগদে ২০০.০০ (দুইশত) টাকা মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য) প্রদান করে সংগ্রহ করতে হবে। বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে ২১ (একুশ) দিনের মধ্যে আবেদনপত্র জমা দিতে হবে। ইতোপূর্বে তালিকাভুক্ত হয়েছে এমন সকল প্রতিষ্ঠানকে তালিকাভুক্তি নবায়নের জন্য আবেদন করতে হবে। আলোচ্য তালিকাভুক্তি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮-এর আলোকে করা হবে।

(আব্দুল্লাহ আল বাসেদ)
ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার
ফোন-০২-২২৩৮৫৪৫৫

BANKING CONFIDENCE WITH SHARIAH COMPLIANCE

Fully Shariah Compliant Banking ●

Income Sharing Ratio (ISR) Model for Profit Calculation ●

Investment in Shariah Permitted Halal Sectors ●

Profit Calculated on Daily Basis and Finalized on Monthly Basis ●

Independent Shariah Compliant Core Banking Software ●

Charge-Free Online Banking

at All Branches and Agent Points Nationwide



Bank Asia
Islamic Banking

Purity is Your Dividend

Bank Asia Islamic Banking, Corporate Office, Bank Asia Tower

32 & 34 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, Email: ibd.ba@bankasia-bd.com



01714299944
01711782897

Friday is a fun day for the children

DIPAN NANDY

It was a sunny morning, which was further brightened up with the presence of children, who turned up in huge numbers at Amar Ekushey Boi Mela with their parents. They bought books of their choice and had a fun time with the characters of Sisimpur (Sesame Street's Bangladeshi adaptation).

Birrita Barua, a kindergarten student at Dhanmondi's Nalanda School, was seen in a joyous mood at the Shishu Chattar premises of the fair. "I'm loving the book fair," she said.

Her mother Jaya Barua said, "I brought my daughter to introduce her to the prestigious fair. I think it will play a great role in cultivating reading habits among the new generation."

Marking the third "Shishu Prahar" (Children's Time) of this year's book fair, Sisimpur's Halum, Ikri and Tuktuki recommended the children to read more books and consequently performed skits, much to the children's excitement.

Children were seen walking around

holding the hands of their guardians, while some were also being carried by the adults accompanying them.

Friday was the tenth day of the book fair. From 11:00am, children and teenagers lined up with their parents at the entrance gate of Suhrawardy Udyan.

Visiting the fair, it was seen that the Shishu Chattar has been decorated with book stalls and entertainment centres for children.

Shyamal Kumar Das, publisher of Ghasfaring Prakashani, said, "We have many books for children. All the books are selling well. In particular, Anisul Huq and Ahsan Habib's books are in high demand."

Sabbir Ahmed, coordinator of Sisimpur, said, "Every Friday and Saturday, this event will be held till the last week of the fair."

Meanwhile, Centre for Research and Information (CRI) has published graphic novel "Mujib", based on "Oshomapto Attojiboni" (Unfinished Autobiography), written by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Jibon Barua, a sales executive of the



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR...A father and her daughter inspect a book together at Amar Ekushey Boi Mela yesterday. Many parents, accompanied with their children are visiting the book fair, passing down the history of the event and cultivating reading habits among the new generation.

BCL ATTACK 18 Chhatra Odhikar members injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Bogura

At least 18 Chhatra Odhikar Parishad leaders and activists in Bogura were injured yesterday in an attack on their procession, allegedly carried out by members of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL).

Leaders of Bogura BCL, however, denied attacking the procession.

"As part of the central programme of Gono Odhikar Parishad, we were gathering at Bogura Satmatha area to protest the recent hike in prices of oil, gas, electricity and daily necessities," Bogura Chhatra Odhikar Parishad President Mizanur Rahman Palash told this correspondent.

"When we started our programme around 11:00am, police stopped us saying that we had no permission to carry out the event. But yesterday we informed the DC and SP about today's human chain," he said.

"We ended the programme shortly afterwards. After the programme, when we were going towards Bogura Yakubia School in a procession, BCL men attacked us from behind," he added.

"Twenty minutes later, when we went in front of the Bogura PTT Training Centre, Bogura BCL President Sajib Saha led another attack on us," said Mizan.

"Four to five of our men were taken to an under-construction building at Rahman Nagar area and beaten," Mizan continued.

Among the 18 injured, Sherpur upazila Chhatra Odhikar Parishad General Secretary Rakibul Hasan Rocky was seriously injured when BCL men hit him on the head with sticks, Mizan added.

Bogura District BL President Sajib Saha denied the allegation.

"Chhatra League did not attack Chhatra Odhikar Parishad's procession. We heard that they had a programme in Satmatha area today. The police stopped them because they did not have permission," said Sajib.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Karikapara canal: anything but a waterbody now

Once flowing, it is now a victim of encroachment, pollution

The canal has slowly turned into a garbage dumping field over the last decade. It mostly remains dry throughout the year, with water flowing only during monsoon.

ROBIN BASAK, a trader

DIPANKAR ROY, *Khulna*

Karikapara canal, a 3-kilometre-long waterbody running through Khulna city, is on the verge of extinction due to mindless waste dumping and encroachment.

Not only does untreated water from Khulna City Corporation's (KCC) wards 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, and 13 flow into the canal regularly, chemical wastes from Khalishpur Industrial Area are also discharged into this waterbody almost every day.

Meanwhile, the authorities continue to turn a blind eye to the situation.

"The canal is in a critical condition as household garbage is being dumped into it regularly. Meanwhile, local influentials have been occupying its banks for years, building structures that are narrowing down the waterbody. Besides, untreated water from Daulatpur, Boyra and Khalishpur are also being discharged into the canal, causing a serious threat to its aquatic life," said Papia Sarkar, a schoolteacher of Bairagipara in ward-6.

Robin Basak, a trader of the area, used to transport goods via this canal from Dumuria to Pabla Bonikpara, Mujjuni, Kulipagan, and Daulatpur a few years ago.

"The canal has slowly turned into a garbage dumping field over the last decade. It mostly remains dry throughout the year, with water flowing only during monsoon," he said.

Shamsher Ali Mintu, a resident of ward-9, said there's an acute shortage of fresh water for domestic use and irrigation.

"Karikapara canal has now become a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Also, the stench from it makes the environment unsuitable for living. Not only has the fish stock in the canal been depleted, but the locals are also now more prone to diseases transmissible through its water," he added.

Meanwhile, heavy rainfall during monsoon at times leads to waterlogging at Bastuhara colony, Boyra bazar, Khalishpur industrial zone, Daulatpur bazar, and Notunrasta areas due to poor drainage system caused

by the garbage dumping and encroachment.

Upon visiting the area last week, this correspondent witnessed how the 80 to 100 feet wide canal has become agricultural land. The water has completely dried up near Hassanbagh area, while a 1.5-kilometre stretch of it, between Karikapara bridge and Khudiar Khal, is covered with hyacinths.

Locals were seen cultivating taro roots, banana plants, and other vegetables on the dried land. Many have also illegally built houses on the canal's bed.

Samsuddin Ahmed, councillor of ward-6, claimed that this situation has caused a serious harm to local farmers and traders as they now find it difficult to bring their agricultural produce to the city.

"This canal used to serve as a water route to the city for the villagers of Purba Bilpabla, Pachim Bilpabla, Rangpur, Saluya, Arongghata, Sahapur, and Miksimil," he said.

He also mentioned that the canal was excavated in 2014-

15 but little has been done to maintain it afterwards.

Mahfuzur Rahman Mukul, coordinator (Khulna office) of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said around 47 canals flowing through Khulna city and its adjacent areas are in danger due to pollution and encroachment, 31 of which are under KCC.

Contacted, Nuruzzaman Talukdar, estate officer of KCC and member secretary of a committee appointed to mark illegal grabbers in the area, said they have listed the details of 460 grabbers and 382 structures on 26 canals in the city and handed them to the deputy commissioner.

Aminul Islam Munna, panel mayor-1 of KCC, told The Daily Star that they are planning to start drives soon to recover 22 canals from the grabbers, including Karikapara, as it is a part of their election manifesto.

"A Tk 823 crore project is underway to solve the water-related problems in the city and to save the canals," he added.

Deaths continue on the roads

Four, including child, die in road crashes

CITY DESK

At least four people were killed in separate road accidents across the country from Saturday night to Friday.

An eleven-year-old named Umme Rukaiya was killed after a private car hit her on the Kushtia-Jhenaidah highway in Kushtia's Shaikupa upazila on Thursday night.

Sherina Khatun, owner of the vehicle and assistant professor of political science at Islamic University, was in the car, while her driver was at the wheel, said Aminul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shaikupa Police Station.

OC Aminul said the car hit Rukaiya while she was returning home from school in Madandanga area around 12:30pm, leaving her seriously injured.

Rukaiya was rushed to Kushtia General Hospital where doctors referred her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as her physical condition deteriorated.

She died around 10:30pm on the way to Dhaka, said the police official.

The victim's paternal uncle Feroz Khan said a case over unnatural death was filed with the police station in this connection, as police did not allow the family to file a murder case.

In Jhenaidah, a sub-assistant agriculture officer named Abdul Latif, 58, was killed in a road crash in Fulbari gate area yesterday at noon.

A brick-laden truck rammed Latif's bike, leaving him dead on the spot, confirmed OC of Kotchandpur police station Md Moin Uddin.

Meanwhile, Mofiz Mollah, 30, was killed and five others were injured in a head-on collision between a passenger bus and a truck on the Chattogram-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Nilsagar: no longer a favourite of birds



EAM ASADUZZAMAN

Nilsagar, a large man-made waterbody in Nilphamari, was once abuzz with the chirping and fluttering of thousands of migratory birds during winter. However, things changed after 1999.

The picturesque location started to greet lesser avian visitors, as century-old indigenous trees were replaced by foreign varieties.

All this started 24 years ago in December 1999, when authorities took up a project to develop Nilsagar into a bird sanctuary. About Tk 1 crore was granted for the initiative.

While implementing this project, authorities ignored the warnings of experts on birds and their natural habitats, according to CAMP, a local NGO.

Ironically, the "bird sanctuary" started receiving fewer birds since almost all century-old indigenous trees like old banyan, blackberry, kadam, mango, jackfruit, and fig were felled during that time, said locals.

Instead, foreign trees like sissoo, mahogany and eucalyptus were planted, they added. These trees neither grow big to provide shelter for birds nor produce food for them.

Nilsagar is situated at Dhubadanga village in Grogam union under Nilphamari Sadar upazila, 16 kilometres north-west of the district town.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Greenherald's golden jubilee event held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SFX Greenherald International School held a programme marking its golden jubilee at its campus in the capital yesterday.

Various functions were held to celebrate the golden jubilee of the school.

The three-day long programme kicked off on Thursday.

A group of current students said the event was full of festivities.

Students got to perform on stage, and thus they rehearsed over the past few days.

Superior General Sister Josephine Caine, RNDM, inaugurated the event with a welcome speech on the event's first day. Several food stalls have been set up for students and guests.



The Daily Star Newspaper Olympiad Season-3 Khulna selection round was held at Khulna University's Journalist Liaquat Ali Auditorium yesterday, where a hundred students of various educational institutions participated.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



**PRAYER
TIMING**
FEBRUARY 11

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:25	12:45	4:30	5:57	7:15
JAMAAT 6:00	1:15	4:45	6:01	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



যখনই চান, যেখানেই থাকুন

কার্ড থেকে বিকাশ-এ মুহূর্তেই টাকা আনুন



কার্ড সেভ করে রাখুন
মিনিটেই টাকা আনুন



ভিসা ও মাস্টার কার্ড থেকে
২৪/৭ টাকা আনুন



বিকাশ-এর সব সার্ভিস
উপভোগ করুন

World forgot about Syria

Says WHO as aid trickles in

AFP, Dubai

A senior World Health Organization official bemoaned Syria's "forgotten crisis" yesterday, as aid began trickling into rebel-held areas, days after a devastating earthquake.

As the WHO prepared to fly medical supplies to Syria from Dubai, Mike Ryan, executive director of the WHO's Health Emergencies Programme, said a huge backlog of aid was waiting to reach Syria's rebel-held northwest.

The single aid corridor bypassing government-controlled areas and servicing the war-shattered region, which is home to four million people, was temporarily cut off by Monday's massive quake.

The first convoy of emergency supplies finally passed through the Bab al-Hawa border crossing from Turkey on Thursday. More than 22,000 people have died in the disaster in both countries.

"The world's forgotten about Syria," Ryan told reporters in Dubai, during preparations for the aid flight.

"Frankly, the earthquake's brought attention back. But those millions of people in Syria have been struggling now for years. That's become a forgotten crisis."

UN chief Antonio Guterres urged the Security Council on Thursday to authorise the opening of additional crossings on the Turkey-Syria border for the delivery of UN aid to rebel areas.

This week, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned of a "race against time" to save lives in the quake zone as aftershocks continue and freezing winter conditions bite.

Even before the earthquake, a decade of civil war and Syrian-Russian aerial bombardment had destroyed hospitals and prompted electricity, fuel and water shortages in the rebel-held northwest.

"There's a huge backlog of supplies ready to go," Ryan said. "Many agencies, including our own had pre-stocked because we're into the winter, they're already very exposed."

"There's a huge problem with millions of people." The chances of finding survivors had dimmed before the first aid arrived, after the end of the three-day period that experts consider critical to save lives.

Syria is now facing a "secondary disaster" of lives lost due to a lack of medical supplies, Ryan warned.

"We have to recognise the scale of this disaster is so large, it's overwhelming everyone's capacity," he said.

"If they don't have equipment, they can't do their job - it's like asking a fireman to rush to a fire without a fire hose."



Rescuers carry 27-year-old survivor Rabia Ofkeli in the aftermath of a deadly earthquake in Hatay, Turkey, yesterday, more than 100 hours after the disaster hit the region.

PHOTO: STAR

No deal as IMF leaves crisis-hit Pakistan

AFP, Islamabad

An IMF team left Pakistan yesterday after crisis talks with the government failed to deliver a deal on financial aid that would help the South Asian country avert economic collapse.

After months of deadlock, the International Monetary Fund delegation arrived last week for last-ditch negotiations with a government fearing the political consequences of enforcing bailout conditions in an election year.

Pakistan's economy is in dire straits, stricken by a balance-of-payments crisis as it attempts to service high levels of external debt amid political chaos and deteriorating security.

Inflation has rocketed, the rupee has plummeted and the country can no longer afford imports, causing a

severe decline in industry.

"Considerable progress was made during the mission on policy measures to address domestic and external imbalances," the IMF said in a statement. "Virtual discussions will continue in the coming days to finalise the implementation details of these policies."

The IMF is demanding that the nuclear-armed nation boost its pitifully low tax base, end tax exemptions for the export sector, and raise artificially low petrol, electricity and gas prices meant to help low-income families.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif previously called the conditions for the \$1.2 billion loan instalment "beyond imagination".

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar addressed the nation after the IMF team left the country yesterday

morning, saying talks had "concluded successfully" and that a draft memorandum on broadly agreed policies had been shared by the lender with the government.

He said petrol prices would rise by roughly four percent and additional taxes would be imposed, without giving further details.

Years of financial mismanagement and political instability have damaged Pakistan's economy - exacerbated by a global energy crisis and devastating floods.

After months of holding out in search of alternatives, the government began to bow to IMF pressure in mid-January, loosening controls on the rupee to rein in a rampant black market in US dollars - a step that caused the currency to plunge to a record low.

Car ramming kills 2 in east Jerusalem

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Two people including a child were killed and several injured when a driver rammed his car into a group of people at a bus stop on the outskirts of Jerusalem yesterday, Israeli emergency services said. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the incident as a terrorist attack and ordered security forces to be reinforced. Police said the driver had been "neutralized" but it was not immediately confirmed that he had been killed. The incident occurred during a period of high tension following an attack in which a lone Palestinian gunman shot seven people outside a synagogue last month.

ADANI CONTROVERSY

Modi's popularity intact: survey

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's enormous popularity remains intact despite the biggest political attack on him in years as rivals accuse his government of giving undue favours to the Adani Group, approval ratings showed yesterday. Data from polling agency C-Voter, shared with Reuters, showed almost half of those surveyed until Feb. 5 were "very much satisfied" with Modi's work as prime minister and a further 30% said they were "satisfied to some extent". Both ratings have hovered around the same levels since Nov. 2022, the data showed.

Macron mulls stripping Putin of France's top honour

AFP, Brussels

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday said he might strip his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin of France's top honour, but is waiting for the "right moment" to do so.

Putin received the Grand-Croix de la Legion d'Honneur, the top rank in France's honours system, in 2006 at a time when Moscow enjoyed better relations with Paris and the West. But since Putin ordered last year's all-out invasion of Ukraine, ties have all but broken down and the European Union has imposed a range of tough economic sanctions.

Congratulations to **Star**
The fearless king of media industry and its uncompromising journey for the past three decades
from the **STAR**



PARTEX STAR
GROUP



ParTex Star Group

PARTEX
BOARDS
SINCE 1982

PARTEX
DOORS

PARTEX
GYPSUM BOARD & CEILING

PARTEX
Cables

PARTEX
FURNITURE

Ashley
FURNITURE HOMESTORE

PARTEX

STAR
ADHESIVES LTD.

PARTEX
BUILDERS

TRIPLE
Apparels Limited

PARTEX Agro
LIMITED

PAM
BOARDS



WÄRTSILÄ BANGLADESH CONGRATULATES THE DAILY STAR ON THEIR 32ND ANNIVERSARY

Wärtsilä Energy leads the transition towards a 100% renewable energy future. We help our partners to accelerate their decarbonisation journeys through our market-leading technologies and power system modelling expertise. These cover decarbonisation services, future-fuel enabled balancing power plants, hybrid solutions, energy storage and optimisation technology, including the GEMS energy management platform.

Read more at wartsila.com/energy



The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

An 'Adarsha' upheld We should nurture critical thought, not censorship

We welcome the High Court's order to Bangla Academy to allow publishing house Adarsha Prokashoni to participate in this year's Boi Mela. This is definitely a triumph, albeit minor, for freedom of expression in the country, at a time of increasing censorship and muzzling of dissenting voices. However, it is still concerning that the court ordered the publishing house not to sell or exhibit three specific books to which the Academy had originally objected. It is particularly confusing as a press release signed by the Deputy Director of the public relations sub-division of Bangla Academy earlier stated that the publication was barred from having a stall on the grounds of only one of their books containing "political obscenity".

The court also issued a rule asking Bangla Academy and the government to explain why the academy's decision not to allow Adarsha Prokashoni to run its stall in Boi Mela should not be declared illegal. We would also respectfully urge the court to consider on what grounds the books were found "obscene" in the first place and whether such censorship goes against our constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression. Bangla Academy, we are saddened to note, has thus far failed to provide a consistent or convincing answer for its decision to bar Adarsha.

While the three books in question may contain criticisms and narratives that challenge dominant discourses with which one may not agree, we believe the answer lies in counter-criticisms and debates, not in bans and censorship. It is important for the health of a democracy to allow diversity of views and creative freedom(s), but we have noticed with increasing alarm how that space has shrunk over the past decade, leaving little to no room for divergent thoughts. From arrests under increasingly stringent digital laws, to attacks on writers, journalists and bloggers, to films getting stuck at the censor board, creativity and critical thought are now essentially under siege.

This incident, even if it is somewhat resolved, has contributed to the growing culture of fear and censorship that has left our media and intelligentsia crippled. New publishers will think twice before publishing content that may be critical of the dominant narrative in any way, while writers will find themselves having to navigate an even more tricky terrain of censorship simply to get published. It is all the more alarming that such censorship should take place in the month of February and at the Boi Mela, which for Bangladeshis signify the Language Movement and freedom of speech and expression.

We have noted with increasing apprehension the politicisation of the Bangla Academy, particularly with the enactment of the Bangla Academy Act 2013 which allows the government to nominate more members to the executive committee compared to those nominated by the general assembly and fellows of the academy. We hope that bans on books and publication houses from the Boi Mela will not be repeated in the future, and that, moving forward, the Bangla Academy will uphold the true spirit of the Language Movement.

Stop property flight

Why isn't the govt doing more to stop property purchases abroad?

It is now an open secret that huge sums of laundered money are being used to buy property abroad. The infamous "Begum Para" - used to designate posh areas where Bangladeshi politicians, businessmen, government officials and others have bought luxurious apartments - has made the headlines on different occasions in recent times, but Canada is hardly the only country where vast amounts of property have been bought over the past decades.

According to a recent report by *Bangladesh Protidin*, Bangladeshis are reportedly topping the list of foreigners buying property in Dubai. They were the among the first to purchase real estate in that country during the pandemic, and invested at least Tk 346 crore in buying houses and flats from January 2020 to June 2021. Dubai has become a sought after destination for billionaires, including money launderers, around the world, given that it has relaxed restrictions on foreigners buying houses, granting a "golden visa" if Tk 28 crore or more is invested in the country, and allowing 70 percent of the transactions to take place in cash. Meanwhile, Bangladeshis were ninth in the list of foreign property buyers in prime Central London, in the first nine months of 2020, with the average cost of the transactions being Tk 15 crores. The list includes properties registered anonymously as offshore properties as well as properties registered at Bangladeshi addresses.

While beating citizens of other countries is usually a matter of pride, we can hardly celebrate this particular "achievement", given the unfortunate reality that an overwhelming majority of the money leaving the country and being invested in property abroad is being funnelled illegally. Money laundering has increased at an alarming rate over the past decade, with policymakers doing next to nothing to stop the capital flight, and in many cases bending over backwards to facilitate the free flow of illegal money. In its annual report, Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), revealed that suspicious transactions and activities mostly through banking channels had increased by 62 percent in 2021-22, when the country was struggling to maintain its forex reserves amid a highly volatile economic climate.

Foreign Minister Abdul Momen had commented in 2020 that it was bureaucrats who were purchasing the lion's share of property in Canada, following which the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) had asked the government to provide a list of its officials who own homes in "Begum Para". As per usual, those lists never materialised. We cannot help but wonder if this failure to identify the culprits is a question of lack of capability of our institutions or willingness, given that a huge number of those involved in such purchases are powerful people in the government itself or rich businessmen with close links to political quarters. The government must make active efforts to stop property flight in these constrained times, engaging with foreign governments to increase transparency and cooperation in identifying those hiding behind shell companies or third party buyers.

Shaking of the ground

Earthquakes do not kill people, bad buildings do



BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza is a professor of English at Dhaka University, and former pro-vice-chancellor of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

We were travelling back to Istanbul with a Turkish tourist group when the news of a 7.8 magnitude quake reached us. We asked our fellow passengers whether members of their families were safe back home. Most of them hailed far from the Syrian border towns in the southeastern provinces and seemed unperturbed by the news.

My wife, who attended a training in Turkey in 1999, recalled the catastrophic earthquake of 7.6 magnitude which claimed over 18,000 lives. Our tour guide sounded defiant. "Well, we are more sophisticated technologically now. Let's hope it doesn't come to that." "We have been paying earthquake tax ever since that incident. We better be prepared for such calamities," another one added with a hint of irony.

From our cruise ship, access to the outside news was rather voluntary. Unless you have paid for your roaming data or WiFi hotspots, there was little reason for one to be aware of what was going on back home. The extent of the disaster was yet to be known. Behind the facade of our indifference, little did we know that our ship, too, was vulnerable to a potential tsunami as an aftershock to the quake. The instant reactions of our Turkish friends intrigued me, but it was something to which we could all relate.

As Bangladeshis from a hotspot of disasters, both heaven- and human-made, after every tragic incident in the country - be it a launch capsized, a factory fire, a flood in the plain, or a storm in the forest - we get calls from friends from abroad asking about our safety. In most cases, we nudge our shoulders to suggest that our country is not that small where we need to be affected by every "unnatural" event. We allow our pride to speak for us. Nobody likes to be reduced to objects of pity and misery, although nature regularly reminds us of our smallness in the grand scheme of things.

The fault, however, in this instance, lies in the shifting tectonic plates on which we have garnished our lives full of consumption. On the early morning of February 6, when residents of Turkey's Gaziantep province were sleeping, many of the buildings that stood tall to poke the skyscape "pancaked" or fell like a deck of cards. The Turkish authorities estimated that over 5,600 buildings have collapsed in the southeastern provinces. The death toll in Turkey and Syria has already climbed above 21,000 as rescue crews look



An aerial view of residents, aided by heavy equipment, searching for victims and survivors amidst the rubble of collapsed buildings in the village of Besnia near the town of Harim, Syria on February 6, 2022.

PHOTO: AFP

for survivors trapped under toppled buildings. Freezing winter weather has impeded the rescue efforts, and the actual figure of losses is likely to grow eight-fold, according to WHO.

The series of earthquakes is a grim reminder that we should never let our guard down against nature. Scientists keep telling us about the seismic gaps; there is usually a pause between ruptures - especially in the fault zones. If you live in an active seismic zone, disasters can strike anytime. The tectonic plates under the earth's surface keep adjusting, causing us to feel minor tremors now and then. During major shifts of the plates, the punch gets mightier. The Anatolian Faultline was one such ticking time-bomb. The visual manifestation of the disaster could be seen through the demolition of buildings and roads as if a giant earth was wiping off dust and fleas from its crust. The debris both give rise to and hide human stories. The challenge now is to stay alive in a hostile environment, help others to find shelter, heal the wounded, and bury the dead before we prepare for the next jolt.

As they say, earthquakes do not kill

buildings, primarily for public places like schools and hospitals? Have there been efforts to remove the relatively weaker portions of the buildings?

These questions are equally valid for Bangladesh. Located at the borders of several active tectonic plates, we face the risk of a similar or greater earthquake. Our placement in the world's largest river delta close to sea level also makes us prone to major tsunamis which could be triggered as an aftermath of an earthquake. The human tragedy in Turkey serves as a warning for all of us. Nature, indeed, is a great leveller. Images of the disaster remind us of our interlinked fate. The wailing of surviving relatives, the helplessness of rescue operators, and the plights of the dead touch us on so many levels.

The images get transferred from one media to another. Media gurus know which images work better to get the attention of humanitarian appeals. A wailing dog holding on to the hand of its trapped master or a trapped young girl trying to comfort her brother shelved between concrete slabs shake the core of our human selves. Then again, would I be okay with

frameworks, we realise that certain images are foregrounded at the expense of others. The coverage of an incident has a proven effect on how a story is remembered. Some stories thrive, while others fade. Some stories continue to develop in the imagination of others, garnering power and prompting positive energies for change. The reverse can also be true.

Pundits keep on referring to Bangladesh as an active seismic site. The onus is on us to learn from these stories to better prepare ourselves.

The gesture to stand by our brothers and sisters in need by both the government and the public is laudable. We should also be concerned about handpicking disasters. Say, for instance, the victims of the troubled Syria should not receive lesser attention - like the media has given it. The frequency and curation of images construct our memories and responses. We should be alive to the way stories of disasters are told and retold. Above all, we should be aware that our plight as a human race is interconnected. We keep human stories alive by being humane.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF VIETNAM-BANGLADESH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

A bond developed over our love for independence



Ashraf ud Doula is a former Bangladeshi Ambassador to Vietnam.

ASHRAF UD DOULA

Those of us who were born in the 50s grew up with the Vietnamese's struggle for national independence. Vietnam's victory over French occupation in 1954 was a household story in the mid-and-late 50s, and we felt a natural sympathy for the underdog and fellow third-world country. Our interest in Vietnam intensified after the US launched in 1963 a full scale war against North Vietnam, which began a spate of killing and maiming an umpteen number of people by indiscriminate bombing and spraying of agent orange from the air.

As young people, being proselytised by the global events of the 60s, we embraced the Vietnamese tragedies as our own and any reports of US new aggression agitated our adolescent minds. For instance, the My Lai massacre would never erase from our consciences.

The names of the great Vietnamese leaders - Ho Chi Minh and General Giap were firmly embedded in our hearts and minds. Little did we realise that the humbuggy of that January

wintery afternoon at our youthful age indeed planted the seeds of patriotism in our conscience. And, only three years later, in 1971, when my country came under such an ordeal, it didn't take a moment's hesitation for me to join our Liberation War as a freedom fighter to liberate the country from the hands of the enemies. Indeed, General Giap's book "Dien Bien Phu", was my most valued possession during the Liberation War. What was even more fated was that one day I would come to Vietnam as the Ambassador of my country.

In September 1945, the great leader and the founding father of modern Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, known as Uncle Ho, declared the independence of Vietnam in front of a mammoth crowd. In his independence speech, he thundered, "We, (the) members of the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, solemnly declare to the world that Vietnam has the right to be a free and independent country, and is so already.

The entire Vietnamese people are determined to mobilise all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property to safeguard their independence and liberty".

One could find an echo to Bangabandhu's March 7 speech calling upon his people to be ready to fight the enemy with whatever they could lay their hands on: "The struggle this time is the struggle for independence. The struggle this time is the struggle for freedom. Once we have spilled our blood, if necessary, we will spill more blood. Yet we will snatch our independence. I ask you all to prepare yourselves to fight the enemy, with whatever you can lay your hands on".

In my mind, the above sentiments, expressed by the respective leaders in words coming from their hearts, are the philosophical foundation for building strong ties between Vietnam and Bangladesh.

In February 1973, the People's Republic of Bangladesh established diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and then with the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam - a formal governmental structure to the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam representing the Southern people. Right after that, Vietnam opened its resident mission in Dhaka in early 1974; however, it closed its Embassy in 1982 due to economic constraints. Vietnam reopened its mission in Dhaka in 2003. On the other

hand, Bangladesh opened its Mission in Hanoi in 1993.

In the past 50 years, the bilateral relations have prospered by leaps and bounds, covering the entire gamut of cooperation: political, economic, cultural and people-to-people interaction. There have also been several high-level visits, including at the highest level, between the two countries over the years. These visits have added fresh impetus to the already excellent bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Vietnam.

The two countries share common membership in a number of international and regional organisations. They have also signed several agreements, protocols, and MOUs related to trade and other areas of mutual interest.

The bilateral trade between the two countries is currently valued at nearly USD 1.5 billion, which has the potential to surpass USD 2 billion in the next couple of years. Bangladesh's exports to Vietnam consist of pharmaceutical products, jute and jute goods, and scrap iron, while Vietnam exports to Bangladesh communication equipment, cement and clinker, gravel and crushed stone.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Vietnam, given that we have multifaceted similarities with Vietnam, our relationship could also be expanded, encompassing several areas for mutual benefit.

How much do we know about our emerging 'new rural'?



Hossain Zillur Rahman is a social scientist and executive chairman, Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC). Email: hossain.rahman@gmail.com

HOSSAIN ZILLUR RAHMAN

Many associate development with the growth of cities and transformation of the urban landscape. But this is too narrow a view. Development is equally relevant for the rural regions. The relative absence of rural issues in national discourses over the preceding two decades is quite striking. There was a time in the 70s, 80s and even the 90s when rural dominated our research interest. Some interest is still there, but nowhere near as before. The discourse around development is incomplete if our focus remains fixed on urban transformation, ignoring the transforming rural landscape.

A new reality has emerged which I am terming as "new rural". A severe knowledge gap prevails in our imagination vis-à-vis this "new rural". For example, how has the class structure evolved and transformed in the villages of today? Earlier, rural class structure revolved around *matobbor*, *morol*, *jotedar*, petty peasant, landless, etc. There have been

In the earlier waves of the green revolution, small peasantry managed to survive and even prosper. They were an integral partner in the green revolution process. Now there is corporate inroads into agriculture. Urban realities are intruding into rural spaces, where the non-farm is as much a rural reality as the farm. What is the future of the small peasantry in such transforming realities? Bangladesh has always been a land of small peasants. Perhaps still so. But what is their future now? There is a glaring knowledge gap in understanding that.

It is a striking feature of Bangladesh's developmental journey that the largely illiterate peasantry readily embraced technology. Through rapid adoption of new technologies, these farmers, many lacking in formal education, really drove agricultural transformation. Such inventiveness did not stop with technology only. In Daudkandi in the Cumilla region, I have seen spread

centres have emerged in the rural landscape. So have beauty parlours, tailors for up-to-date fashions, restaurant centres, even dating places. Rapid expansion of such consumer demand has its economic aspects but little is known on the social and psychological aspects of these changes.

There was a time when there were distinct divides between urban and rural realities. But such boundaries are rapidly dissolving. We need new analytical frameworks to describe rural and urban, mofussil and metropolitan. We need better understanding of growth of urban centres and spread of urban demand in rural centres. The family head of a rural household maybe working abroad, but he/she now has new aspiration for their children in the village to go for English-medium education. Families are choosing certain development symbols, hoping that these will be the ladders for upward progress. So, kindergartens are sprouting up. Their names maybe English sounding, but are there competent teachers in such institutions? Clearly, villages are brimming with new aspirations but how well are the returns they are getting from their expenditures on "modern" services in education, health, skills, etc? The alarming rise in the educated unemployment is but one area of concern in this regard.



PHOTO: STAR

major changes in rural class structure. But there has been little new research in this area.

A key element of rural transformation is agriculture. There has been research on agricultural transformation but a holistic understanding has been missing. For example, there have been research on agricultural mechanisation. Also on crops, horticulture, fisheries, rice, etc. But how do these transformations in productive activities relate to relations of production? There was a time when rural and agriculture were inter-changeable concepts. Whenever we imagined villages, images of agriculture floated up. But our anecdotal realisations hint that today's transformed villages and agriculture are no longer synonymous realities. But where exactly are the differences? Here too, the knowledge gap is acute.

Key driver of agricultural transformation has been spread of high-yielding varieties. Many features of rural transformation are tied up with this. New seed varieties, chemical fertiliser, multiple cropping, sub-sectors such as horticulture, fisheries, livestock, etc have driven the transformation in agriculture. The transformation of agriculture began from the east. Meghna Dhonagada and Chandpur Irrigation Projects gave a big push to crop production in the 1970s. Akhter Hameed Khan's Comilla Model played an important role in this first phase transformation of agriculture. The next transformation frontier was in the north which saw a big push on boro cultivation through ground-water irrigation using deep-tubewells. This led to major changes in agriculture in the northern districts. Now the new agricultural frontier lies in the south-western districts from Bholra to Barishal, from Khulna to Jashore, etc. Padma bridge has opened new possibilities. We wait to see which model of agricultural expansion will occur in this new frontier.

The transformation of traditional agriculture in Bangladesh is usually referred to as the green revolution, a first wave driven by surface water-based irrigation and a second by groundwater-based irrigation. It is not yet clear what type of technologies will drive agricultural transformation in its new south-western frontier.

The economic base of the rural family is a changed reality. How will we characterise a family who does some agriculture, some non-farm, owns some rural land but also has some property in urban areas? How do such realities fit into our traditional models of class differentiation? Are there winners and losers in the process?

of new organisational forms quite foreign to traditional agriculture, namely a shareholding company model to develop floodplain fisheries. When these low-lying lands go under water during monsoons, there are no ails - plot boundaries. So how do they pursue collective fishing? What do such changes in relations of production signify?

Rural transformation also gained momentum through expansion of non-farm activities. Microcredit played a big role in this. The economics of such activities are well-known though less so on the welfare impacts. But what have been the social impact of the spread of the non-farm? Rural transportation too has seen a sea of changes with both passenger and goods transportation seeing explosive growth. Number of shops and rural marketplaces have sprouted everywhere. Rural consumers are major new customers of urban goods. The economic base of the rural family is a changed reality. How will we characterise a family who does some agriculture, some non-farm, owns some rural land but also has some property in urban areas? How do such realities fit into our traditional models of class differentiation? Are there winners and losers in the process?

There is also a knowledge gap on the remittance dynamics. Remittance destinations are more in rural areas. How has rural life been transformed by such remittance inflows? Community

The kaleidoscope of changes is in all directions, but knowledge gaps in making sense of these is equally glaring. Dress codes have changed beyond recognition. But child marriages too have gone up. What then are we to make of the social norms that are emerging? Village is now connected to the external world. But this connection is being driven by consumption aspirations mainly. The same cannot be said for the spread of a global citizen mindset or responsible behavioural norms.

How is power to be understood in the "new rural"? What are the new power centres in the villages? Before, landed influentials and educated middle class occupied these power spaces. Now politics and state have become central to rural power dynamics. The long shadow of police hovers over these spaces as never before. One important research enquiry can be types and nature of conflicts in today's "new rural". Conflict analysis can shed light on the reality of power dynamics. A moot question here is why does a union parishad election now entails expenditures in the crores. These are urgent questions for sociological research. We need better understanding of women's story too. Women have been central to Bangladesh's development journey. But have they reaped the benefits of it? And what to make of changes in the cultural life in the "new rural"?

Village has always been "home", place of rebirth and regeneration. Village and home - "bari" - are till used interchangeably in the Bangla language. When Covid appear to have made existence itself uncertain, many retreated to the village as their go-to refuge. This means the village - and perhaps the mofussil - continues to occupy our imagination, particularly as a psychological refuge. Despite rapid urbanisation, our cities are yet to win such a status in the collective imagination.

"New rural" will be a critical player in the next chapter of Bangladesh's transformation. That is why a new research drive is such an urgent necessity with a priority on listening. Imposing development models bureaucratically and from the top cannot garner the potential that is waiting to be unleashed in the "new rural".



PHOTO: GOOGLE STREET VIEW

The solution to urban heat island effect can be found in the planting of deciduous trees in Dhaka.

There is a way to cool Dhaka down



Shamsun Nahar is lecturer at the Department of Environmental Science in the State University of Bangladesh.

SHAMSUN NAHAR

Rain Tree (*Samanea saman*) is also known as the Monkey Pod tree. This huge deciduous tree can grow as tall as 40 metres. Its expansive canopy provides enough shade, while its extensive roots assist in stabilising the soil.

Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) is a big deciduous tree with a maximum height of 30 metres. It is indigenous to our country and widespread in rural and urban areas.

Mango (*Mangifera indica*) trees can grow 30 metres high and are deciduous. It was first spotted in Bangladesh and India, where it is now native. The tree matures rapidly, and its fruit is a significant source of nutrition for locals.

Mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) tree is a vast deciduous tree that can grow as tall as 50 metres. It originated in Bangladesh and is still widely distributed in rural regions. This tree matures quickly and produces high-quality lumber.

As temperatures and air pollution continue to rise in Dhaka, it is imperative that deciduous trees be planted to maintain the appropriate levels of temperature and pollution. To encourage the planting of deciduous trees in Dhaka city, we need a number of initiatives, such as public awareness, urban planning, government support, private-public partnerships, tree nurseries, community involvement, and tree-planting campaigns.

Ultimately, the solution to urban heat island effect can be found in the planting of deciduous trees in Dhaka. Provide shade, increase humidity, and remove heat-trapping pollutants from the air - these are just a few ways deciduous trees contribute to making a city cooler. In addition to helping the environment and people's health, these trees provide a quieter neighbourhood and a better place for wildlife to call home. Involving the local community, informing the public about the benefits of these trees, and securing funding are all crucial to the success of a tree-planting campaign. Planting deciduous trees in Dhaka can be an effective and long-lasting answer to the problem of urban heat islands, if resources and support are provided adequately.

During the sweltering summer months, deciduous trees, which have big, flat leaves, give much-needed shade, which helps to lower the surrounding temperature. In addition, these trees produce water vapour via transpiration. This vapour rises into the atmosphere, causing the air to chill.

Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, has been seeing worsening environmental issues such as haze, water scarcity, and the urban heat island effect. The last phenomenon occurs when a city's temperature exceeds that in the surrounding countryside. The rising temperature is negatively affecting Dhaka's energy efficiency and the well-being of its citizens.

One way to curb urban heat is to plant deciduous trees - trees that shed their leaves with season change - in urban settings in increasing numbers. These trees are great for cities since they block sunlight during the summer, lessening the impact of the heat island effect, and let in light during the winter, saving money on heating costs.

Typically found in temperate and subtropical locations, deciduous trees produce leaves throughout the spring and summer, then shed them in the autumn and winter. Numerous ecosystems require deciduous trees because they provide shelter and food for animals, improve air and water quality, and help regulate the local climate and weather.

Deciduous trees play an essential role in urban settings since they offer many advantages to both the environment and the inhabitants. One of the key benefits for cities like Dhaka is their capacity to regulate temperature. During the sweltering summer months, deciduous trees, which have big, flat leaves, give much-needed shade, which helps to lower the surrounding temperature. In addition, these trees produce water vapour via transpiration. This vapour rises into the atmosphere, causing the air to chill. This can assist in reducing the area's temperature and make it a more comfortable place for people.

The potential of deciduous trees improving air quality is another benefit for Dhaka's environment. Trees are natural air purifiers and aid in the removal of airborne toxins. This can lower the chances

of respiratory and other health issues in metropolitan settings. In addition, deciduous trees mitigate noise pollution by forming a barrier between busy streets and residential neighbourhoods.

Another advantage is the capacity of deciduous trees in Dhaka city, especially in residential areas like Dhanmondi, to offer a habitat for wildlife. Numerous birds, insects, and other animal species depend on trees for survival. In addition to providing essential homes for these species, deciduous trees can also increase biodiversity in the capital city. This can improve the ecosystem's general health and assist in maintaining a healthy species balance in the area.

There are a number of deciduous trees native to or often found in Bangladesh that can be utilised to assist in lowering the temperature in Dhaka. For example:

Neem (*Azadirachta indica*) is a tree native to Bangladesh that is well-known for its therapeutic benefits. It is a fast-growing tree with a maximum height of 30 metres. It is drought-resistant and able to flourish in poor soil conditions.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

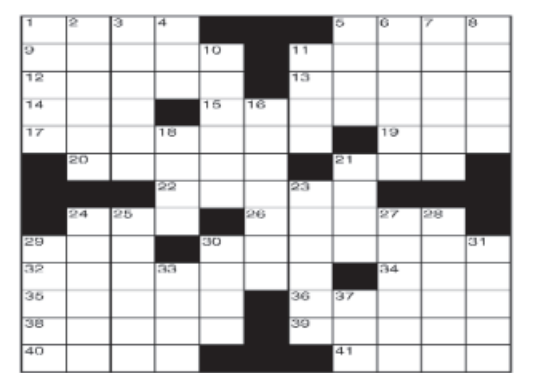
ACROSS

- 1 Glasgow native
- 5 Racket
- 9 Sulky puller
- 11 List of candidates
- 12 Papas of "Z"
- 13 Stately home
- 14 Building wing
- 15 Blackout crime
- 17 On the horizon
- 19 Maiden name label
- 20 Burner setting
- 21 Set a course
- 22 Natural color
- 24 Coral island
- 26 Is nomadic
- 29 Force member
- 30 Film dubbing

DOWN

- 1 Pitch
- 2 Music's Santana
- 3 Spotted cat
- 4 Decimal base
- 5 Blinds piece
- 6 Eye-tooth
- 7 Made amends

- 8 On-ramp sign
- 10 Experience anew
- 11 Urban pollution
- 16 Goller's cleek
- 18 Techno music star
- 21 Spring
- 23 One followed by 100 zeros
- 24 "Relax!"
- 25 Artemis's twin
- 27 La Scala city
- 28 Slept soundly?
- 29 Thunder sounds
- 30 Singer Jenny
- 31 Urges on
- 33 Retain
- 37 Femur's upper end



SUNDAY'S ANSWERS



WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.

AL, BNP test strength at grassroots

FROM PAGE 16
movement to restore democracy in the country by announcing counter programmes.

"You [AL] cannot obstruct our peaceful programme. People took to the streets and proved that it would not be possible to stop the movement by filing false cases and opening fire," said Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, standing committee member of the party.

"By announcing counter programmes, the Awami League is proving that they have become bankrupt as a political party. The situation of the ruling party reached such an extent that they could not attract people by announcing counter programmes. So, they are now trying to obstruct BNP's programmes," he added.

The BNP leader made the

remarks while addressing a human chain programme in front of the National Press Club organised by the Jatiyatabadi Textile Engineers Association of Bangladesh.

"People laughed at AL's counter programmes. It is because you have already been defeated politically. You have no right to announce a political programme. You were defeated as you took a position against the people of the country."

Meanwhile, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said that his party would continue holding programmes until the next election.

"They [BNP] are now walking on a path of conspiracy to oust Sheikh Hasina's government from power. In such a situation, how can we refrain from organising political programmes? We are well aware of

what they can become if they get an opportunity ... There is nothing they are not capable of if they are given an opportunity."

He made the remarks during the meeting between AL's Dhaka city north and south units and different associate bodies at the party's central office in Gulistan.

"They [BNP] have taken to the streets ... we are holding peace rallies fearing they might carry out terror activities. As long as the BNP holds any movement, we will hold a peace rally," said Quader, also the road, transport and bridges minister.

He also announced that the AL would hold divisional rallies in Mymensingh on March 11 and in Barishal on March 18.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the party president, would attend the rallies as chief guest, he further said.

Solve case or admit failure

FROM PAGE 16
"They [Rab] are actually doing nothing. I have doubts on their sincerity in ensuring justice," said Runi's brother Nowsher Alam Roman, who filed the double murder case with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

"There might be an instruction from top bodies of the government not to solve the mystery of the murder. I don't know why," he said.

Roman said investigation officers often contacted him, but they failed to give any answer when asked about the probe progress.

He said they were gradually losing hopes of getting justice.

Sagar Sarowar, news editor at private TV channel Maasranga, and Meherun Runi, a senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed in the early hours of February 11, 2012, at their rented flat in the capital's West Rajabazar.

The couple's only child Mahir Sarowar Megh, only five at the time, was in the flat.

Megh, now 16, has started to enquire about the murder of his parents, Roman said.

Megh used to live with his grandmother Nurun Nahar Mirza, but she passed away on January 15 last year, at the age of 64.

After Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station and the Detective Branch of

police failed to solve the case, Rab was tasked with the probe on April 18, 2012.

At least eight suspects, including Rafiqul Islam, Bakul Miah, Masum Mintu, Kamrul Islam alias Arun, Abu Sayeed, two security guards of the couple's house Palash Rudra Paul and Enayet Ahmed, and the couple's "friend" Tanveer Rahman Khan were arrested after the killing.

Tanveer and Palash are now on bail. The rest are behind bars.

Rab IO Khandaker Md Shafiqul Alam is the seventh investigation officer in the case. He was given the job on July 4, 2019.

A Rab source said DNA samples of 25 people were sent to Independent Forensic Service (IFS) in the US, but the test results there failed to come up anything concrete.

Runi's brother Roman said thinks DNA tests are simply an eyewash to waste time.

On January 4 this year, the Rab official once again failed to submit the probe report and then again applied for time extension. The court then set march 5 for the submission.

Earlier, two separate courts expressed dissatisfaction over the probe, and the investigators' failure to unearth the motive behind the murders and arrest the real culprits. Meanwhile, Home Minister

Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal on Thursday said the Rab would be instructed to provide the updates on the probe without any delay.

"We also want the mystery behind the killings to be unravelled as soon as possible," he said while talking to Dhaka Reporters Unity leaders at the Secretariat.

The DRU leaders met him to submit a memorandum, demanding a speedy trial in the killings of the journalist couple.

"We cannot deliver judgment, but we can provide a probe report. We've been attempting for years. We also want this mystery to be solved ... I'm forwarding DRU's message to the Rab DG. I'll give them the order to say something soon," said the minister.

DRU expressed disappointment in the memorandum that the law enforcers could not identify the perpetrators or unearth any motive behind the killings even after 11 years.

It stated that Sagar-Runi's family and the entire journalist community have become outraged for not getting justice.

"As we have seen, law enforcement agencies have uncovered major murder mysteries; criminals have been brought to justice. We don't believe they cannot solve the Sagar-Runi murder case," added the memorandum.

Newborns at risk of liver cirrhosis, cancer

FROM PAGE 16
should also recommend that every newborn receive the HBV birth shots within 24 hours, as per the World Health Organization guidelines, instead of the current practice of taking it at six weeks.

"But in a country where more than 62 percent of total births take place at home without proper antenatal care, and almost half of the deliveries are done with the help of traditional birth attendants, it's quite difficult to test women during pregnancy or give birth shots and antibody to the neonates."

He added, "Besides, the mothers' knowledge of viral hepatitis and its transmission is also inadequate, while the availability of birth shots, immunoglobulin and testing facility of HBsAg in rural health facilities is also limited."

According to him, if newborns of HBsAg positive mothers are given the birth shot and immunoglobulin within 24 hours of their birth, it reduces the risk of contracting the virus by 90 percent.

Currently, the HBV birth shot costs Tk 400, and the immunoglobulin costs Tk 5,430 and is not available widely.

About the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HBV, high-

risk pregnancy specialist Dr Raunak Jahan said that upon a positive confirmatory test, the expecting mothers are required to perform further viral-load testing.

"The symptomatic mothers -- having nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and jaundice -- are given antivirals if needed, with the collaboration of gynaecologists and hepatologists, to reduce the risk of transmission to the baby, which can occur during pregnancy, childbirth and lactation."

"Even after giving the birth shots and antibody within 24 hours, we need to closely monitor the baby, as symptoms may appear later, and the infection requires long-term treatment."

Sadly, there is no specific data on the prevalence of hepatitis B among pregnant women in Bangladesh, although small-scale data from tertiary hospitals shows the rate is 0.5-3.5 percent, depending on the region.

The Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB) has been urging the government to ensure vaccination for those born before 2007, when the HBV vaccine was included countrywide in the Expanded Programme on Immunisation.

"Besides, every couple should go for preconception counselling, while after conceiving, systematic antenatal care should be made mandatory," said Prof Dr Ferdousi Begum, president of OGSB.

"Moreover, in positive cases, the husbands must get vaccinated and use condoms during intercourse to avoid transmission."

Currently, the health directorate's Viral Hepatitis Programme, Communicable Disease Control, Directorate General of Health Services, and icddr,b have been jointly conducting a study to understand the prevalence of HBV infection among pregnant women and children under-five.

"But it's impossible to get the real picture, due to the low ANC [antenatal care, or care during pregnancy] and institutional delivery rates. We can only arrange the tests if they come to the health facility," said Dr Aninda Rahman, deputy manager of the programme.

Asked about the need for the inclusion of HBV birth dose in the EPI schedule, as per WHO guidelines, he said, it is included in next five-year action plan to control HBV.

"The plan is awaiting approval of the ministry," he said.

Four students 'tortured'

FROM PAGE 16
Any leader of the college unit BCL could not be reached over the mobile phone despite repeated attempts.

However, talking to the media, Avijit Das, a leader of the college unit BCL, denied the allegation of beating the four students, according to a Bangla daily report.

"The four were the activists of Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir ... They were quizzed, not beaten up," he was quoted as saying by the daily.

Contacted, Pranoy Kumar Dutta, associate professor of ICU and anesthesiology at the CMCH, said the students admitted to ICU had multiple injuries in their bodies. So, they were advised for some investigations, he added.

"We are taking care of them intensively. After getting the report of the investigations, we would be ascertained whether they are out of danger or not," he also said.

Manjur Quader, officer-in-charge of Chawkbazar Police Station, said police rushed to the spot when informed of the incident, and talked to the victims, but they did not share any information.

"We are investigating the incident. We will talk to them again once they recover and get released from the hospital," the OC also said.

No case was filed in this connection, he added.

Contacted, CMCH Director Brig Gen Shamim Ahsan said he did not know about the reason behind the torture of the four students.

Another Islami Bank

FROM PAGE 16
Un Nabi, Golam Sarowar Mia and Mazharul Islam Rasel and some unknown persons.

Police arrested Rasel on December 27 in another DSA case filed by an S Alam Group official with Double Mooring Police Station in Chattogram. Nabi and Mia were accused in this case too.

Kuddus said he found posters demeaning S Alam Group on walls and pillars behind Nafi Tower in Gulshan-1 and its adjacent areas on December 22, according to the case statement.

Founded in 1985 by Muhammad Saiful Alam Masud Chowdhury, S Alam Group is one of the largest conglomerates in Bangladesh.

It has been in the news recently for its alleged borrowing of over Tk 30,000 crore from Islami Bank, where it has 26.73 percent stakes. The amount was way beyond the group's entitled quota, prompting the High Court to order an investigation.



Best wishes to
The Daily Star

for completing 32 years of glorious journey

Over the decades, The Daily Star has sketched inspiring stories of our country's growth and success. Driven by the same passion, LankaBangla Finance is committed to transform the economic and financial landscape of Bangladesh adhering to transparency, governance and technological supremacy

Bracing the wind of change, we hope to grow and prosper with diverse products and exceptional services to better serve the Nation

OUR PRODUCT PORTFOLIO

RETAIL FINANCIAL SERVICES

RETAIL DEPOSIT SCHEMES

LOAN
Auto Loan
Home and Mortgage Loan
Personal Loan

CREDIT CARDS
VISA
Mastercard

SME FINANCIAL SERVICES

SME DEPOSIT SCHEMES

LOANS FOR COTTAGE & MICRO BUSINESSES
LOANS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

LOANS FOR MEDIUM & EMERGING BUSINESSES

CORPORATE FINANCIAL SERVICES

LARGE CORPORATE
EMERGING CORPORATE
SUPPLY CHAIN FINANCE
PROJECT, STRUCTURED & SUSTAINABLE FINANCE
CORPORATE LIABILITY

SHIKHA FINANCIAL SERVICES

SHIKHA RETAIL DEPOSIT SCHEMES
SHIKHA SME DEPOSIT
SHIKHA SME LOANS
SHIKHA CREDIT CARD (Mastercard)





গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
কর কমিশনারের কার্যালয়
কর অফিস-সিলেট
কর ভবন, ১৩১ বুরহান উদ্দিন রোড, মেদিবাগ, সিলেট
www.taxeszonesylhet.gov.bd

নথি নম্বর-প্র-৩/ক-অ-সিলেট/২০২২-২০২৩/১৩৬০ তারিখ ২৫ মাঘ ১৪২৯ বঙ্গাব্দ ০৮ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৩ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

কর অফিস-সিলেট, জাতীয় রাজস্ব বোর্ড, অত্যধিক সম্পদ বিভাগ, অর্থ মন্ত্রণালয়ের রাজস্ব খাতভুক্ত নিয়োগযোগ্য শূন্যপদের বিস্তারিত আত্মীয় বেতনতালিকা, ২০১৫ এর ১০তম, ১৪ তম, ১৬তম ও ২০ তম চুক্তিভুক্ত নিম্নোক্ত স্থায়ী পদের সরাসরি অনবদ্য নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে পদের পার্শ্ব বর্ণিত শর্তে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে অনলাইনে (https://syltax.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে) আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। অনলাইন (Online) ব্যতীত কোন আবেদন গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

Table with 5 columns: ক্রমিক, পদের নাম, শ্রেণি ও বেতনতালিকা, পদ সংখ্যা, শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা, যে সকল জেলার প্রার্থীরা আবেদন করতে পারবেন।

- ৭। এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি আংশিক বা সম্পূর্ণ সংশোধন/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।
৮। কর্তৃপক্ষ পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধি ও বিজ্ঞপ্তি সংশোধন বা বাতিল কিংবা বিধি মোতাবেক যেকোন পরিবর্তন করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।
৯। উপরে উল্লেখ করা হয়নি কিন্তু প্রয়োজ্যতা রয়েছে এমন ক্ষেত্রে জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক আনুষ্ঠানিক বিধি-বিধান প্রয়োজ্য হবে।
১০। নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত যেকোনো বিষয়ে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
১১। প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা যাচাই: প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা যাচাইয়ে প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত কোন তথ্য বা দাবিকৃত কাগজপত্র ভুল, মিথ্যা বা বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে চ্যুত ন্যূনতম শর্তের সাথে পরমিল/অসামঞ্জস্যতা পাওয়া গেলে/ভুল প্রমাণিত হলে কিংবা পরীক্ষায় নকল বা অসম্পূর্ণ অবলম্বন করলে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করা হবে এবং তার বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। ভুল তথ্য/জাল কাগজপত্র প্রদর্শিত হলে পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ যেকোনো প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা পরীক্ষা চলাকালীন অথবা পরবর্তীতে যেকোনো সময়ে প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।
১২। মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় নিম্নবর্ণিত (ক্রমিক নং-ক থেকে হ পর্যন্ত) কাগজপত্রের মূলকপি প্রদর্শনপূর্বক প্রতিটি ০১টি করে প্রথম শ্রেণির স্টেজেন্ট কর্মকর্তার দ্বারা সত্যায়িত যত্নে রাখা হইবে:
ক। প্রার্থীর সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদপত্র (প্রয়োজ্য ক্ষেত্রে অভিজ্ঞতা সনদপত্রসহ);
খ। প্রার্থী যে ইউনিয়ন/পৌরসভা/ওয়ার্ড-এর বাসিন্দা সে ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/পৌরসভার মেয়র/ওয়ার্ডকমিটির কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত নাগরিকত্বের সনদপত্র;
গ। শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী, এতিম, কুদ্র নৃ-শ্রেণী এবং আনসার ও ভিডিও প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের সর্বশেষ নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষের সার্টিফিকেট এবং মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কোটার আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের সর্বশেষ নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী মুক্তিযুদ্ধ বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের পুত্র-কন্যার পিতা-মাতাপুত্র-কন্যার পুত্র-কন্যাপুত্র-কন্যার পিতা-মাতা/মাতার পিতা-মাতার মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সনদপত্র;
ঘ। আবেদনকারী মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যা এবং মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের পুত্র-কন্যার পুত্র কন্যা হলে আবেদন পত্রের সাথে মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সনদপত্র এবং আবেদনকারীর সাথে সম্পর্ক উল্লেখপূর্বক সংশ্লিষ্ট ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/পৌরসভার মেয়র/সিটি কর্পোরেশনের ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রত্যায়নপত্র;
ঙ। প্রথম শ্রেণির স্টেজেন্ট কর্মকর্তার প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র;
চ। জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/জন্ম সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি; এবং
ছ। অনলাইনে পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের কপি (Applicant's Copy)।

অনলাইনে আবেদনের নিয়মাবলী

- (ক) পরীক্ষায় অংশ গ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক প্রার্থীকে http://syltax.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করতে হবে। আবেদনের সময়সীমা নিম্নরূপ:
i) Online আবেদনপত্র জমাধান শুরুর তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ১৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৩ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ, সকাল ১০.০০ টা।
ii) Online আবেদনপত্র জমাধানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ২৮ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৩ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ, বিকাল ৫.০০ টা।
উক্ত সময়সীমার মধ্যে USER ID প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীগণ পরবর্তী ৭২ (বাহাতর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে SMS এর মাধ্যমে পরীক্ষার ফি জমা দিতে পারবেন।
(খ) Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থী তার রশ্মিন ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০, প্রস্থ ৩০০ Pixel) ও স্বাক্ষর (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০, প্রস্থ ৮০ Pixel) স্ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে Upload করবেন। ছবির সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ 100 KB ও স্বাক্ষরের সাইজ সর্বোচ্চ 60 KB হতে হবে।
(গ) Online আবেদনপত্রের পূরণকৃত তথ্যই যেহেতু পরবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত হবে, সেহেতু Online এ আবেদনপত্র Submit করার পূর্বেই পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সঠিকতা সম্পর্কে প্রার্থী নিজে লক্ষ্য রাখা নিশ্চিত হবেন।
(ঘ) প্রার্থী Online এ পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের একটি প্রিন্ট কপি পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যেকোন প্রয়োজনে সহায়ক হিসাবে সংরক্ষণ করেন এবং ব্যবহারিক ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় এক কপি জমা দিবেন।
(ঙ) SMS প্রেরণের নিয়মাবলী ও পরীক্ষার ফি প্রদান :
Online -এ আবেদনপত্র (Application Form) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে নির্দেশনা মতে ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষর Upload করে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন হলে কম্পিউটারে ছবিসহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। নির্ভুলভাবে আবেদনপত্র Submit করা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থী একটি USER ID, ছবি এবং স্বাক্ষরসহ একটি Applicant's Copy পাবেন। উক্ত Applicant's Copy প্রার্থী প্রিন্ট অথবা Download করে সংরক্ষণ করবেন। Applicant's কপিতে একটি USER ID নম্বর দেওয়া থাকবে এবং USER ID নম্বর ব্যবহার করে প্রার্থী নিয়োগ পত্রপ্রাপ্তি যে কোন টেলিটক প্রি-পেইড মোবাইল নম্বরের মাধ্যমে ০২ (দুই) টি SMS করে পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ক্রমিক নং ০১ হতে ০৫ পর্যন্ত পদের জন্য ২০০/- টাকা ও টেলিটকের সার্ভিস চার্জ বাবদ ২.০০ টাকাসহ মোট ২০২/- (দুইশত দুই) টাকা এবং ক্রমিক নং ০৬ হতে ০৮ পর্যন্ত পদের জন্য ১০০/- টাকা ও টেলিটকের সার্ভিস চার্জ বাবদ ২.০০ টাকাসহ মোট ১০২/- (একশত দুই) টাকা (অফেংযোগ্য) পরবর্তী ৭২ (বাহাতর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে জমা দিবেন। বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ্য, Online -এ আবেদনপত্রের সকল অংশ পূরণ করে Submit করা হলেও পরীক্ষার ফি জমা না দেওয়া পর্যন্ত Online আবেদনপত্র কোন অবস্থাতেই পৃথীত হবে না।

প্রথম SMS: SYLTAX <space>USER ID লিখে Send করতে হবে ১৬২২২ নম্বরে। Example: SYLTAX ABCDEF

Reply: Applicant's Name, TK 223 or 112 will be charged application fee. Your PIN is 12345678. To Pay fee Type SYLTAX <space> YES<space>PIN and Send to 16222

দ্বিতীয় SMS: SYLTAX <space> YES <space> PIN লিখে Send করতে হবে ১৬২২২ নম্বরে। Example: SYLTAX YES 12345678

Reply: Congratulation! Applicant's Name, payment completed successfully for SYLTAX Application for (post Name) User ID is (ABCDEF) and Password (XXXXXXX).

(চ) প্রবেশপত্র প্রাপ্তির বিষয়টি http://syltax.teletalk.com.bd অথবা কর অফিস-সিলেট এর ওয়েব সাইট www.taxeszonesylhet.gov.bd এবং প্রার্থীর মোবাইল কোন SMS এর মাধ্যমে (শুধুমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে) যথাযথভাবে জানানো হবে। Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থীর প্রদত্ত মোবাইল কোনে পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় যোগাযোগ সম্পন্ন করা হবে বিধায় উক্ত নম্বরটি সার্বজনিক সচল রাখা, SMS Read করা এবং প্রাপ্ত নির্দেশনা তাৎক্ষণিকভাবে অনুসরণ করা বাঞ্ছনীয়।

(ছ) USER ID এবং Password ব্যবহার করে পরবর্তীতে রোল নম্বর, পদের নাম, ছবি, পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও জেনারেল নাম ইত্যাদি তথ্য সম্বলিত প্রবেশপত্র প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক রশ্মিন Print করে দিবেন। প্রার্থী প্রবেশপত্রে লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সময় এবং উত্তীর্ণ হইলে ব্যবহারিক ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময়ে অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করবেন।

(জ) শূন্য টেলিটক প্রিপেইড মোবাইল কোন থেকে প্রার্থীগণ নিম্নবর্ণিত SMS পক্ষিত অনুসরণ করে নিজ নিজ USER ID এবং Password পুনরুদ্ধার করতে পারবেন।

USER ID জানা থাকলে: SYLTAX <space> Help <space> USER <space> USER ID & Send to ১৬২২২ নম্বরে Example: SYLTAX Help USER ABCDEF

ii) PIN Number জানা থাকলে: SYLTAX <space>Help<space>PIN<space>PIN No & Send to ১৬২২২ নম্বরে। Example: SYLTAX Help PIN 12345678

(ক) প্রার্থীকে অনলাইন আবেদনপত্রের ডিভালপেশন অংশে এ মর্মে যোগ্য দিতে হবে যে, প্রার্থী কর্তৃক আবেদনপত্রে প্রদত্ত সকল তথ্য সঠিক এবং সত্য। প্রদত্ত তথ্য অসত্য বা মিথ্যা প্রমাণিত হলে অথবা কোনো অযোগ্যতা ধরা পড়লে বা কোনো প্রতারণা বা দুর্নীতির আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করলে পরীক্ষার পূর্বে বা পরে এমনকি নিয়োগের পরে যেকোন পর্যায়ে প্রার্থীতা বাতিল এবং প্রার্থীর বিরুদ্ধে আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা যাবে।

(গ) বিজ্ঞপ্তি পত্রিকা ছাড়াও কর অফিস-সিলেট এর ওয়েব সাইট www.taxeszonesylhet.gov.bd এবং http://syltax.teletalk.com.bd অথবা QR Code স্ক্যান এর মাধ্যমে বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় মোবাইল অ্যাপের টেলিটকের ডাউনলোড https://alljobs.teletalk.com.bd ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও বিজ্ঞপ্তি পাওয়া যাবে। নিয়োগ পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও অন্যান্য তথ্য www.taxeszonesylhet.gov.bd ওয়েবসাইটে হতে জানা যাবে।



(ট) চাকুরীতে প্রার্থীদেরকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষকে অবহিত করে আবেদন করতে হবে। লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ হলে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার বসিলাদি দাখিলের সময় যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে সংশ্লিষ্ট কাগজপত্র প্রেরণ করতে হবে এবং যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিপত্র দাখিল/প্রদর্শন করতে হবে। সূচীপূর্ণ/অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদনপত্র কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।

(ঠ) Online এ আবেদন করতে কোন সমস্যা হলে যেকোন টেলিটক মোবাইল হইতে ১২১ এ কল করুন। এছাড়াও vas.query@teletalk.com.bd অথবা alljobs.query@teletalk.com.bd ই-মেইলে যোগাযোগ করা যাবে। এছাড়া টেলিটকের অ্যাপস্টাল এর কেইসবুক পেজ https://www.facebook.com/alljobsbdTeletalk এ মেসেজ এর মাধ্যমেও যোগাযোগ করা যাবে। (Mail এর Subject-এ Organization Name: SYLTAX Post Name ****, Applicants User ID, Contact Number অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে)।

*** শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ের জন্য অপেক্ষা না করে হাতে যথেষ্ট সময় নিয়ে রেজিস্ট্রেশন সম্পন্ন করতে পরামর্শ দেওয়া যাচ্ছে।

০৮/০২/২০২৩
এ. কে. এম. ইসমাইল আহমেদ
উপ কর কমিশনার

সদর দপ্তর (প্রশাসন), কর অফিস-সিলেট
ও
সদস্য সচিব, বিভাগীয় নির্বাচন কমিটি
কর অফিস-সিলেট।

The Libertadores is sensational, but the Champions League... The first time I heard the anthem was a really special feeling. It's like being in a video game; it's living the dream of every child.

NEYMAR



Second best, but not by much

SAMAMA RAHMAN

The Europa League may not have the allure of the Champions League but the competition no longer seems to be a simple pathway into Europe's elite tournament for teams that are not good enough to merit a place based on prospects in their league.

Currently, there are more teams in the Europa League (5) that are at the top of their respective league tables than there are in the Champions League (4). This means that while the Champions League may have more pieces of the so-called pie to serve, the Europa League -- with teams like Barcelona, Juventus, Arsenal, Manchester United, Ajax, Sevilla and AS Roma all in contention -- also has match-ups to whet the appetite.

The most significant of these clashes of course is the marquee match-up between Manchester United and Barcelona, who just over a decade ago were locked in a tussle for continental supremacy.

They may be in humbler surroundings this time around, but both teams will be looking at their fixtures in the Round of 32 as a chance to rekindle the desire for trophies around the club.

Barcelona have already done that this season, having beaten Real Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup, but Xavi has also had more than half-a-season in compared to Erik Ten Hag, who has secured a final of his own in the English League Cup in his first season in charge at Old Trafford.

For clubs going through crisis, trophies



Will stars finally align for PSG OR CITY?

SABBIR HOSSAIN

Looking back to last season, perhaps a few considered Real favorites to go all the way, but they were victorious against all odds. Interestingly, Los Blancos came from behind in dramatic fashion to stun both PSG and City at home in the last 16 and semifinals, respectively.

If you are a football fan, especially an ardent club football one, you must have occasionally wondered how on earth Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain are yet to win a UEFA Champions League. For quite some time, both teams have possessed all the firepower and a spectrum of quality tailor-made for success but failed to taste the most coveted trophy presented on the European club scene so far.

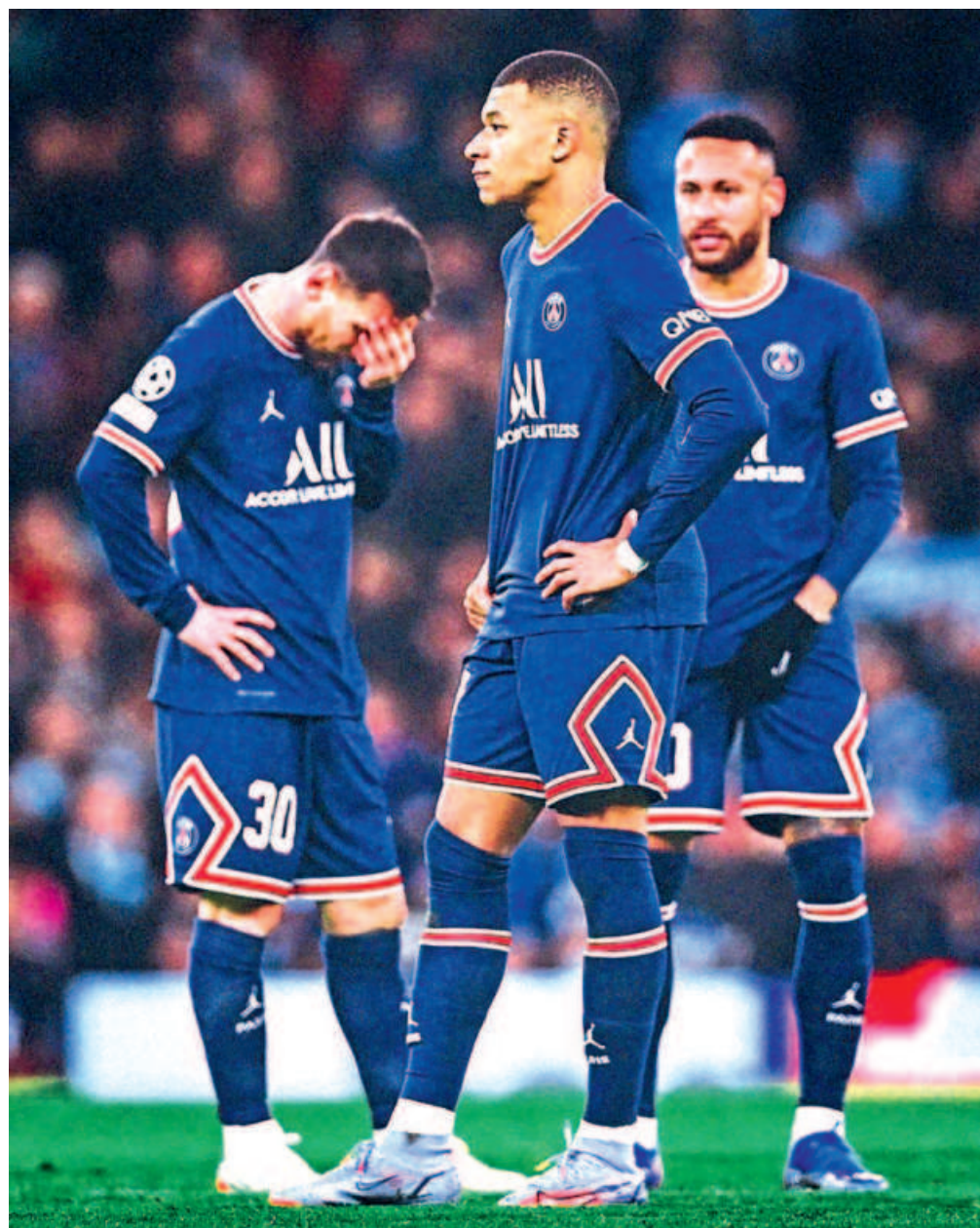
Clubs like Arsenal, Atletico Madrid, and AS Roma have also never been champions of Europe despite having permanent presence in the competition's modern era. At present, however, Man City and PSG are arguably the biggest sides never to have won it.

One thing that City and PSG have further in common is that they have burst into the list of big clubs only in the last decade or so, having received increased financial backing. While the Abu Dhabi United Group took over Man City in 2008, Qatar Sports Investments purchased PSG in 2011. Since then, they have been enjoying unprecedented success in their respective domestic circuit, with City winning six English Premier League titles and PSG eight times in the French League 1. However, the spending spree was not decisive in leading them to European supremacy.

The closest PSG came to triumph in the Champions League was in 2020 when they reached their only final but lost to German powerhouse Bayern Munich in Lisbon. Led by Neymar, Kylian Mbappe, and Angel Di Maria, PSG had fell short against the Bavarian side who became only the second club to win the 'sextuple' by lifting domestic league, league cup, and the Champions League followed by domestic Super Cup, UEFA Super Cup, and the Club World Cup. To overcome such a formidable opponent, some luck is obviously required.

The following year saw City fall short in the decider against fellow English club Chelsea in Porto by the same 1-0 margin. This time, tactics from Pep Guardiola left a lot to be desired as the Catalan coach decided to take on Chelsea by tinkering without a defensive midfielder in his starting XI, keeping Rodri and Fernandinho on the bench, a controversial decision that still seems baffling.

So, what were the reasons behind their failures? An indomitable opponent, wrong



tactical decisions, bad luck, or a combination of those?

The most successful team in Europe's most elite club competition -- with 14 titles, featuring five in the last nine seasons -- defending champions Real Madrid boast a lead of seven UCL trophies. History has certainly been their favour, as they clinched the first five tournaments between 1956 to 1960. Real also possess two other components necessary to go all the way: culture and the ability to handle immense pressure in critical stages of crucial games, and that is where City and PSG are apparently lagging.

Looking back to last season, perhaps a few considered Real favorites to go all the way, but they were victorious against all odds. Interestingly, Los Blancos came from behind in dramatic fashion to stun both PSG and City at home in the last 16 and semifinals, respectively.

Despite regularly featuring in the knockout phase of the Champions League, the two

underachievers are relatively new among Europe's elite clubs. However, by outplaying those odds, players can make a difference on the field. There is no denying the fact that the two respective domestic champions have an abundance of stars, but their ability to go the distance still remains to be seen.

The current season offers another prospect for PSG and City as they have gone past the group stage and appear well-equipped for their Round of 16 clashes. Fueled by Lionel Messi, the Argentine talisman who recently tasted World Cup triumph, the Parisians will lock horns with familiar foe Bayern. On the other hand, the Erling Haaland-infused City, now in a crisis of facing punishment for alleged breaches of financial regulations, are set to take on another German side RB Leipzig.

Will this finally be the year for any of the teams? On paper, they certainly promise big but all that star power must consistently reflect on the field.

ROUND OF 16 MATCHUPS

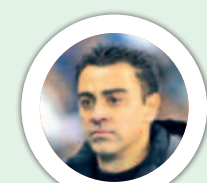
- PSG V Bayern
- AC Milan V Tottenham Hotspur
- Club Brugge V Benfica
- Borussia Dortmund V Chelsea
- Liverpool V Real Madrid
- Frankfurt V Napoli
- Rb Leipzig V Man City
- Inter Milan V Fc Porto

BATTLE OF THE DUGOUT



Erik Ten Hag

Win	Draw	Loss
25	3	6



Xavi

Win	Draw	Loss
51	14	12

Comilla set up qualifier vs Sylhet

SPORTS REPORTER

Comilla Victorians defeated Rangpur Riders by a big margin of 70 runs to ensure a playoff qualification spot courtesy of finishing in second place after the Bangladesh Premier League's (BPL) league phase. Both Comilla and Rangpur were vying for a playoff qualification spot after Sylhet Sixers had already qualified by finishing top of the table.

Fortune Barishal will now play against Rangpur Riders in the Eliminator on Sunday, in what will be a knockout game. Sylhet will take on Comilla in the first qualifier game in the evening match on the same day, with the losing side playing the winner of the Eliminator on February 14.

Liton Das breezed to 47 off 33 deliveries before Jaker Ali's 23-ball 34 and Khushdil Shah's 20-ball 40 saw Comilla post 177 for five yesterday.

Spinner Tanvir Islam, who has impressed this BPL, then dented Rangpur's chase, picking up two early wickets before Mustafizur Rahman scalped three wickets in three overs as Rangpur slumped to 107 all out.

The likes of Mohammad Rizwan and Khushdil Shah will depart from the BPL, having played their last game. Rangpur too will have to think of replacements for the likes of Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who has been signed by a Pakistan Super League franchise.

With chops and changes coming in frequently in all the teams, Rangpur coach Sohail Islam was asked whether the challenge had become more difficult than usual.

He admitted to the difficulties faced in planning for matches when it was unclear which players would feature.

"In this BPL, the most challenging aspect for the coaches is due to the shuffling of foreign players and their availability. Often we can't find players for a particular position. If two foreign players are changed, it turns out that the whole team combination is changing so this is pretty challenging," Sohail said.

"It's also difficult to analyse teams due to the chopping and changing. We have to make plans when we get to the field since we often can't stick to plans due to changes. But we have to sort out such things and quickly," he added.



Left-arm spinner Tanvir Islam put on a show on Friday, scalping two wickets and taking a stunning catch, to earn his first player of the match award in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League. Tanvir's exploits helped Comilla Victorians to a commanding 70-run win over Rangpur Riders.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SAFF U-20 CHAMPS set for sterner test

SPORTS REPORTER

Having clinched the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship on Thursday, head coach Golam Rabbani Choton vowed to translate such performances onto bigger stages. The platform for that is set, with the AFC U-20 Women's Asia Cup Qualifiers slated to start next month, but the task will be far from easy.

Bangladesh will host the fixtures of Group H, also featuring Iran and Turkmenistan from March 8, with eight group champions advancing to the second round of the championship.

Choton may be eyeing better performances beyond South Asian borders after standing tall in the just concluded four-team SAFF U-20 Women's Championship, but performing against teams like Iran and Turkmenistan has proved challenging in the past, when the squad was in an even better state than it is now.

During the AFC U-19 Women's Championship Qualifiers in 2019, Bangladesh boasted the likes of Monica Chakma, Maria Manda, Krishna Rani, Masura Parveen, Israt Jahan Swapna, Rupna Chakma and many others but failed to perform when pitted against

South Korea and Chinese Taipei, losing the matches 0-7 and 0-2, before thrashing Tajikistan 5-1 in the last match.

The current team only has a couple of players with that level of talent, so they are expected to face a tougher challenge against physically and tactically superior Iran and Turkmenistan.



"Obviously, there are more challenges in the AFC U-20 Women's Championship Qualifiers than in the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship. But I think the players have a good opportunity to improve their performance and get out of the group stage," Choton told The Daily Star yesterday.

"They may have an advantage in terms

of physique, but I think that problem can be overcome if we can improve the fitness of our team," Choton opined.

Asked whether the strategy of playing long balls would work in upcoming tournament, Choton said: "We only played the long ball against Nepal in the final considering the weaknesses in their defence, but we played different in other games. I think all our players, including midfielders Swapna Rani and Shohagi Kisku, have the ability to play possession-based football against any opponent."

The successful coach also believed the boost from winning the title would inspire the girls to put up their best showing in the AFC campaign.

"Becoming champions is always something and I think the triumph of the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship will give a good boost and more confidence to the players ahead of the AFC campaign," Choton said, adding there were still areas to work on.

"There were some improvements in the SAFF U-20 Women's Championship but we also observed some things we need to work on. We have to work on finishing and improve fitness levels, but mostly we have to work on tactical aspects since we have to play against Iran and Turkmenistan."

Real eye fifth CWC title

AGENCIES

Real Madrid have proven they can find the net even if they must take the field without talisman Karim Benzema in Saturday's Club World Cup final against Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal in Morocco.

Carlo Ancelotti's side, reigning European and Spanish champions, are aiming to win the competition for a fifth time and build confidence after a shaky start to 2023.

If they win, this will be the second trophy of the season for Real, who lost the Spanish Super Cup against Barcelona in January and have fallen eight points behind their rivals in the La Liga title race. Real lifted the European Super Cup in August.

"We're very close to winning a trophy. It's been extremely difficult to get here and we've made a lot of sacrifices. I urge the team to enjoy this match and to do their best, while desiring to win," Ancelotti, on Friday, urged his team to give their all for the title.

Los Blancos are already the record four-time winners and are firm favourites to beat Al-Hilal after their 4-1 semifinal victory over Egyptian outfit Al Ahly on Wednesday.

Madrid won the competition under Ancelotti in 2014 during his first stint in charge, as well as in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Madrid captain Benzema missed the semifinal with a thigh injury but is set to train with the squad on Friday before the final.

Several other Madrid players have also been sidelined, including Thibaut Courtois, Ferland Mendy, Lucas Vazquez and Eden Hazard, who will not make the final, while Eder Militao is another doubt.

Also, Ancelotti refused to take Al-Hilal lightly, who stunned Flamengo in the semifinal and are aiming to win the trophy for the first time.

"We have great respect for them, and they showed their quality by knocking out Flamengo in the semifinals," Ancelotti added.

However after their goal glut against Al Ahly, Ancelotti will be confident his strikers can get the job done and make history on Saturday.



Cristiano Ronaldo hits his trademark celebration after scoring one of his four goals in Al Nassr's commanding 4-0 victory over hosts Al Wehda in the Saudi Pro League on Thursday. Ronaldo, who celebrated his 38th birthday last Sunday, reached a career milestone of 500 club goals, taking his tally to 503 league goals for five clubs in five different top-flight leagues.

PHOTO: AL NASSR

CONGRATULATIONS
on winning small obstacles to big challenges

Union Capital Limited wishes The Daily Star on its 32nd years of sharing news without fear or favor. Keeping the same spirit, Union Capital with its relentless effort and uncompromising zeal has emerged and remained as clients' preferred financial partner for 25 long years. With the relentless support of its stakeholders, UCL has managed to create strong bonding and hopes to continue the same for the years to come.

For details: +880 (2) 48811505-09
www.unioncap-bd.com
or visit any of our branches nationwide

Union Capital Limited
Building a sustainable future

"We hope for some good news, we hope he's OK, but we're really concerned for him and his welfare this week."

Newcastle coach **Eddie Howe** about the club's former player Christian Atsu, who is missing following Turkey earthquake.

MSC hit Azampur for six

SPORTS REPORTER

Souleymane Diabate scored a hatrick as Mohammedan Sporting Club smashed bottom-placed Azampur FC 6-0 yesterday in the biggest victory of the Bangladesh Premier League season in Mymensingh.

The Malian striker opened the scoring from the spot in the 21st minute before doubling the Black and Whites' lead 14 minutes later. Daniel Febles made it 3-0 18 minutes after the break before Diabate completed his hatrick in the 70th minute.

Arif Hossain and Sazzad Hossain scored in the 80th and 87th minutes respectively as the Motijheel outfit moved up to sixth place with nine points from eight matches.

Meanwhile, Jean Charles Didier scored the only goal as Sheikh Russel KC beat Fortis FC 1-0 in the other match of the day in Rajshahi yesterday. The win took the former champions to third position with 13 points while Fortis FC remained seventh with eight points.

Congratulations
on your momentous
Success!

MD. SUMON
Winner, Amateur Section
12th Summit Professional Tournament 2023

bti Proud sponsor of **BANGLADESH NATIONAL GOLF TEAM**



FAST BUILD
The country's only customized steel solution

FASTBUILD PROVIDES RODS OF ANY SHAPE AND SIZE AS PER DESIGN



BSRM
building a safer nation



PADMA BRIDGE
Proud Construction Partner
SHAH CEMENT

AL, BNP test strength at grassroots

Hold programmes in all unions today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two major political parties – the ruling Awami League and the opposition BNP – will hold programmes in all unions across the country today to demonstrate their strength at the grassroots level.

The BNP will bring out protest marches, while the AL will hold “peace rallies”.

The AL announced its plan on February 5, a day after BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir announced their march programme to press home their 10-point demand, which includes holding the upcoming national election under a non-party caretaker government.

While BNP leaders asked the AL not to announce any counter-programmes, the ruling party leaders said they would be on the streets in case BNP men became anarchic.

The BNP yesterday said it would not be possible to stop their ongoing

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Ignoring health risks and the stench, two women rummaging through a pile of garbage to look for objects they will be able to sell. Toiling all day, a ragpicker like them earns Tk 350-400 a day. The photo was taken at a landfill in Rajbadh area of Botiaghata, Khulna.

Failing to rape, Sramik League leader stabs schoolgirl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A Sramik League leader stabbed a 13-year-old girl after she resisted the rape attempt by the man in Bagerhat's Morrelganj upazila early yesterday, said victim's family.

Bachchu Mridha, 45, of the upazila's Moulavi Bazar area, is a former president of ward 5 unit of Sramik League in Jeudhra union.

The police said they were trying to arrest him as he went on the run following the incident.

The girl's father said, his daughter was home alone when Bachchu barged in around 2:00am and tried to rape her. When she resisted, Bachchu stabbed her and fled the scene.

The victim, an eighth-grade schoolgirl, was undergoing treatment at the Morrelganj Upazila Health Complex.

“She suffered critical wounds on parts of her body and was bleeding profusely,” said Dr Shahriar Fattah of the health complex. “If required, she will be shifted to Khulna.”

Morrelganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Saidur Rahman said they were trying to arrest Bachchu.

As of filing this report, no case was lodged over the incident.

Moon dust could save Earth from global warming Say scientists

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Space dust that is fired from the Moon could protect humanity from the effects of global warming, scientists have said.

Dust could be fired from the lunar surface into the middle ground between us and the Sun, they suggest.

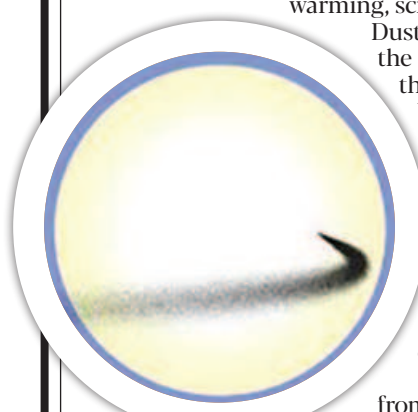
According to a new paper, that would work as a shield, blocking out enough of the Sun's radiation to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Launching dust from Earth would require huge resources even though it would be the most

effective way of shielding the Earth, the scientists say. But it could be much cheaper to use dust from the Moon instead.

Their work simulated the effects of shooting dust from a platform on the Moon towards the Sun. They found that the properties of dust form the lunar surface mean that it works effectively as a sunshield – which is important since so much of it will be required.

“It is amazing to contemplate how moon dust – which took over four billion years to generate – might help slow the rise in the Earth's temperature, a problem that took us less than 300 years to produce,” says study co-author Scott Kenyon of the Center for Astrophysics.



SAGAR-RUNI MURDER Solve case or admit failure

Family members to investigators; deadline for submitting probe report extended 95 times



MUNTAKIM SAAD

It's another year of frustration and disappointment for the families and colleagues of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi.

Even though 11 years have gone by, no headway has been made in cracking the mystery behind the double murder, currently being investigated by Rab.

After the journalist couple was killed on this day in 2012, then home minister Sahara Khatun had vowed to catch the killers in 48 hours.

But over the decade, the investigation officer was changed six times, and the Rab and other agencies have taken 95 dates from court to complete the probe. But they have not been able to submit the probe report.

Family members of the victims are now demanding that the Rab either solve the case quickly or admit their failure and hand over the investigation to another agency.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4

Four students ‘tortured’ at CMC hall

Two admitted to ICU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two students of Chattogram Medical College have been admitted to the CMCH ICU after they along with two others were tortured in their hostel, said the hospital sources.

The four students were confined in a room at the hostel from midnight of Wednesday to Thursday evening on suspicion that they were activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir.

The four students are Zahid Hossain Wakil, Sakib Hossain, MA Raihan and Mobashwer Hossain Shubhra. Zahid and Sakib were admitted to the ICU of Chattogram Medical College Hospital. All of the injured are students of the 62nd MBBS batch.

CMC Principal Prof Shahena Akter said she along with members of the administrative body of CMC rushed to the hostel and rescued the four after receiving information.

“We don't know who tortured them and why,” she said, adding, “We could not talk to them as they were injured.”

“Their injuries are not life-threatening. They had injury marks on their hands and legs mostly, yet we kept them at the ICU to ensure the best possible treatment,” she added.

Campus sources said the hostel is under the control of the Bangladesh Chhatra League and the four students were tortured by a group of activists of the organisation.

The Daily Star could not independently verify the claim.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4



Risking life and limb, people are jaywalking on a flyover in the capital's Uttara while police personnel are seen nearby. The flyover from Tongi to Uttara, being constructed under a BRT project, has partially been opened to traffic. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

DSA CASE BY S ALAM Another Islami Bank official lands in jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent an Islami Bank official to jail on charges of plastering posters and making social media posts to defame the owners of Chattogram-based S Alam Group.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate MA Mainul Islam passed the order after investigation officer Mofiz Uddin, also a sub-inspector of the Detective Branch of police, produced Jamal Uddin before the court, seeking confinement into the jail.

The DB on Thursday arrested Jamal in the capital's Motijheel area, said the police forwarding report submitted before the court.

With Jamal, the DB arrested 12 people, including three senior Islami Bank officials and two minors, in connection with the DSA case so far.

Abdul Kuddus, a deputy manager of S Alam group, filed the case with Gulshan Police Station on January 5 under the Digital Security Act.

In the case, Kuddus accused businessmen Mohammad Nur

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6

Dhaka's uninspiring govt primary schools

Why isn't the Delhi model-inspired project to reform primary education having any impact?



According to some guardians and teachers, most of these schools are fraught with numerous problems -- including the absence of a proper learning environment, long, tedious school hours, lack of safety, and poor infrastructure -- which has led to fewer children getting admitted.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



In 2019, govt allocated Tk 1,159cr to modernise 342 schools and construct 11 new primary schools in Dhaka in 2019 under Drishtinandan Project

Number of schools so far modernised, constructed under the project in Dhaka: 0

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

The government aims to build a "Smart Bangladesh" by 2041, but without fixing our faulty public education system, how far can it achieve this goal? The human resources for Bangladesh's future are being short-changed at the primary education level, finds *The Daily Star* through visits to several schools right in the heart of the capital.

Around 12:30am on a school day last week, when classrooms in most of the private schools in Dhanmondi were abuzz with lessons, the scenario at Dhanmondi-1 Government Primary School was starkly the opposite.

A teacher was busy sewing something in an almost-empty classroom of fifth-graders. Four students, apparently hungry and exhausted, were sleeping on a bench with books piled on it. A few of their peers were playing in the school playground.

The classroom of the fourth grade had neither any teacher nor student. The teachers declared a day-off, as most of the students did not turn up that day, which, according to the school teachers, is quite common.

"Most of the students do not come to the school regularly. So, teachers have nothing to do, and spend the time doing their personal stuff," said a senior teacher of the school, preferring not to be named.

This is one of many age-old problems plaguing the 342 government-run primary schools in Dhaka, where more than 2,00,000 children are enrolled. All these schools offer free education, while many institutions are staffed by a sufficient number of well-trained teachers. But the quality of education leaves much to be desired.

According to some guardians and teachers, most of these schools are fraught with numerous problems -- including the absence of a proper learning environment, long, tedious school hours, lack of safety, and poor infrastructure -- which has led to fewer children getting admitted. Currently, only the urban poor bother to get their children admitted to these institutions.

In contrast to the failing primary schools of Dhaka, in Delhi, primary schools are going through a remarkable transformation. Led by Aam Admi Party Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, schools are being revitalised under an innovative reform scheme.

Since 2015, the Indian authorities invested heavily and brought certain structural reforms to overhaul the government-school education system, which is accessed by the poorest of

the poor, in a city of nearly two crore people.

The massive overhaul has brought about impressive results and is now attracting children from middle-class families, who want their wards to get the quality education these schools are offering.

Inspired by the initiative, the Bangladesh government took up a project named "Drishtinandan Prakaalpa" in 2019, with the view to creating a modern and child-friendly learning environment in the state-run primary schools of the capital.

But the project is going nowhere, and the state of these schools remain unchanged.

THE SORRY STATE OF DHAKA'S PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Both teachers and parents have complained that both the infrastructure and environment in general are not conducive to learning in these schools.

This correspondent visited eight state-run primary schools in the capital and found their complaints to be true. Six of the schools were housed in different types of government offices and institutions; one was inside an evening law college.

A primary school in Gulshan houses an education office. The headmaster of

regard to our children's safety," he said.

The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) does not appoint any security guard or support staff for these institutions. Gates of the primary schools this correspondent visited were found open and unguarded.

Street vendors can freely enter the school premises and use school toilets without any permission. Local youths use the school playground to play cricket, football and just hang out, which makes the playground inaccessible to school students. Besides, the toilets are quite filthy.

According to the headteachers, every primary school receives an allowance of Tk 70,000 to Tk 100,000 per year, depending on the number of students, from the government's School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) Fund. An institution bears the entire maintenance cost for a year with the money.

The principal of a school in Mirpur said, "I get Tk 85,000 for one year to run my school. With this money, we can just purchase some essential stationery, teaching aids, and arrange cultural activities. Recruiting a cleaner is out of the budget. We have no other alternative but to leave our schools unguarded and premises unclean."

"With such poor maintenance and funding, we cannot expect well-off families to send their kids to our schools," she commented.

LONG, TEDIOUS SCHOOL HOURS

Teachers and parents identified long school hours as significantly affecting the learning environment of these schools.

The pre-primary section starts at 8:00am and ends at 11:00am. However, the school timing for the students of grade three, four, and five is from 9:00am to 3:00pm. The duration of each class is 50 minutes.

"All of our students come from poor families. Their parents cannot give them tiffin regularly. But we cannot run a canteen in our school premises. As a result, students get exhausted, especially after 12:00pm, and it becomes impossible to keep them attentive in the classroom," said a teacher of a primary school in Badda.

Mosammam Bilkis, a house-help working at different apartments of Kalabagan, said she is now thinking of taking out her two children from a government primary school in the neighbourhood.

"One of my kids studies in first grade and another in third. I go to work after dropping off my younger child to school at 8:00am. I have to pick him up from the school at 11:00am, and again go to school at 3:00pm to pick up my other

342 govt primary schools in Dhaka

Over 2,00,000 students in these schools

According to DAP, additional 450 primary schools needed in capital

By 2025, number of such institutions must increase to 627

Funds required to construct these schools Tk 27,000cr

son. It's too difficult," she said.

"I can't afford to come to school every day. So, I'm thinking of transferring my children to a single shift school," Bilkis added.

Teachers do not enrol their children in the very school they work at because of the poor educational environment and quality.

"We get children from families that are not aware of their children's academic achievements. The children do not get any academic care from their parents at home. Neither can they afford to hire private tutors. So, the kids' learning does not become sustainable, and they don't perform well in the exams," she said.

ANY LESSON LEARNT FROM DELHI SCHOOLS?

The Delhi government invested Rs 769 billion on its 1,037 schools. Modernisation of infrastructure, incorporating vocational and ICT skills into the curriculum, recruiting qualified, trained teachers, and forming school-managing committees are some of the major reforms recently brought about by the Kejriwal government.

But the Bangladesh government's "Drishtinandan Prakaalpa" project made little to no impact.

Under the Tk 1,159-crore project, 342 schools of Dhaka city were supposed to go through major infrastructural reform, and teachers were to be given thorough training on vocational and ICT skills.

At least 11 new primary schools, three in Uttara and eight in Purbachal, were supposed to be constructed under this

project.

The project deadline is 2025.

However, not a single school has been renovated or constructed yet, and promises of quality training for teachers and modern academic environment exist only on paper.

Project Director Mizanur Rahman said, "Yes, our progress is very slow. From 2019 to 2021, project directors have been changed several times, and all of them, including me, have to look after this project as an additional duty. As a result, my previous PDs could not pay much attention here."

Mizanur, who took charge last year, said he sped up the process of land acquisition and property valuation.

"We faced many challenges while getting land allotment for the new schools. We are assessing which schools need what type of renovation. However, we have to rely on IGED for all the engineering work, which is also one of the major reasons behind the delay. If we had a dedicated engineering cell, such delays could have been avoided," commented Mizanur, also a joint secretary of DPE.

"Once the project is completed, you will not hear about any such problem. All the schools under this project will be transformed to single-shift schools, so students and teachers will not have to spend a long time in the school anymore," he added.

However, he could not confirm when the project will end.

Experts suggest recruiting quality teachers and training them properly to improve the situation.

Mohammad Mojibur Rahman, associate professor of Institute of Education and Research at Dhaka University, emphasised on connecting the local community with the school.

"Like the schools in Delhi, we should engage school-management committees to manage funding for schools and to ensure accountability in the institutions. As schools here are run entirely by the government, and teachers are treated as government employees, accountability in institutional operation automatically decreases."

He said transparency in teacher recruitment and proper training have to be ensured.

"We have lengthened the school hours in primary schools, but our teachers do not know how to arrange different types of learning activities to best utilise the time. As a result, class times have become extremely boring."

"Pre-service and in-service training must be arranged for primary school teachers to make class time effective and enjoyable," Mojibur stated.

FICTION

Let the seasons begin

NAZIFA RAIDAH

It was a time in the night where one can't really tell if it's night or eve. The sun is still sleeping in and it's unlikely that it has any other plans anytime soon. Nothing but silence cloaks the wood and it is the time for the chatter of the owls and bats. It is the night of small preys, meeting their ultimate doom or the start of their heroic tale.



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

In the midst of it all, a grand oak tree stretches and creaks with ample effort. The tree closes its eyes and tilts its branches towards the sky, basking in the moonlight. It lets out a deep resounding yawn and says, "Forgive me, friends...it seems like I've been asleep for almost an eternity."

"Hey! That tickles!" giggles a Young Fir, poked by one of the oak's branches.

"My apologies little Sprout, I

didn't notice you there", says the Grand Oak without a second's haste. "I told you not to call me that!" exclaims an exasperated Sprout, letting out a shake to affirm his annoyance.

"Well, my highly dignified neighbour, I've seen you since you were a wee sapling," the Grand Oak says in amusement. Before Oak could say anything else, Sprout declares, "Well, I'm a

mother is speaking," says Grand Oak, leaning onto Sprout. It seems that Sprout is still unsure of what to do. With one of his longest branches, Sprout flicks one of Oak's leaves to break their trance. "Well, what am I supposed to be doing here?" asks Sprout, waiting eagerly.

"Listen", says Oak, saying nothing else at all. A frustrated Sprout gives another shake, but Oak doesn't pay any heed. Without even waiting a second, Sprout says, "Well, I can't hear anything. Who is this mother, anyway?"

"Shhhh!" says Grand Oak, "Use your roots, travel to the centre of the network...you'll find everyone there."

Impatient still, Sprout attempts to follow Oak's instructions. After all, this old log's been here for a while. And for the very little credit Sprout places on Oak for his wisdom these days, deep down, they know that no one knows this forest better than Grand Oak.

"Look to the centre...look to the centre," says Sprout, chanting to itself. The wind rustles the leaves of his other neighbours, and they too seem to be stuck in the trance. The forest floors

are coated with their old, tired leaves. And then suddenly, as if it's been dropped into a whole new dimension, the young Fir finds itself hearing chants of a thousand trees, surrounded by a hymn it has heard before, but didn't quite understand.

"We are the guardians of the forest, rooted deep in the earth," said a thousand trees in unison. "We have watched the comings and goings of the creatures who roam our woodland home. We are the protectors of this land, and we shall endure until the end of time."

"And now," says the mother, the oldest tree in the forest, "we shed our leaves in honour of the King of seasons, who grants us the bounties of youth, rustles our leaves with gentle breeze and makes our flowers bloom."

All the trees chanted in unison, and so did young Sprout, as now, Sprout too was connected with the others.

Their words echo through the forest like a soft sigh.

As they speak, the sun begins to rise above the horizon, casting long shadows across the forest floor. The trees sway gently in the wind, their branches dance in the first lights as soon as it graces their surface. They continue to whisper their secrets, and the forest is filled with the sound of their voices, like a gentle lullaby.

And as they watch their leaves clear from the floor in the breeze, they know for certain that it is Spring.

Nazifa Raidah is a sub-editor at the City Desk of The Daily Star and a student of Media and Communication, Global Studies and Governance at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).

In the midst of it all, a grand oak tree stretches and creaks with ample effort. The tree closes its eyes and tilts its branches towards the sky, basking in the moonlight.

POETRY

Dhaka (2007-)

SHANJIDA NOWSHIN CHOWDHURY

I was nine years of age the first time I set eyes on a Dhaka street. I received my first welcome from a group of beggars tapping on my car window. "How awful" I thought, as my heart doubled over with pity in my chest. "Why is no one helping them? Why does no one care?"



PHOTO: MAISHA SYEDA

Thoughts ran ramped only to be calmed by a voice too familiar to be recognised "You'll get used to it," it said. Too composed to be questioned, Too sympathetic to be doubted. The nights in this city are brutal. No wind, no stars, just heat.

I hear distant cries from the balcony
A man, a woman and generations of pain.
How many screams go unheard in this city?
Drowned by traffic, muted by the evening prayer?
To wonder is a privilege, to know is a curse.
Why would anyone live here voluntarily?
I find myself wondering rather often.
The air is polluted, the people are corrupted.
Everyone here is a thief;
Some out of necessity, some out of greed.
Cries of help all sound the same
I find myself turning away from those in need,
Sometimes out of necessity, sometimes out of greed.
This city has turned me into a person I do not recognise;
A damsel in distress and the monster that torments her
All under the same skin, connected by the same blood.
The airport feels like a distant memory these days.
I wonder how I'd feel now if I ever went back.
What would I see now that the window is a mirror?
No pretension, no pity, just recognition-
You are me and I am you. This city is ours
To ruin and be ruined by.
To rebuild and be rebuilt from.
To love and hate till we fall as one
Crumbled into dust on heaven floors.

Shanjida Nowshin Chowdhury is a recent graduate in English Literature and Cultural Studies from the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).

ESSAY

Everything is illuminated, but something is lost

Can a book really cut so deep that it can inspire you to take your life?

ABAK HUSSAIN

Right after the publication of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* in 1774, the literary world of Europe was gripped by a kind of *Werther* fever. It was a bizarre cultural phenomenon never before witnessed: Copies flew off the shelves, pirated editions started to come out within a few years, scenes from the novel were being painted on to porcelain.

A strong case can be made, then, that *Werther* was the "big bang" that made room for the modern concepts of the "best-seller," literary piracy, and novel-based merchandising. Europe's porous borders made it easy for the book to seep into other countries, and translations appeared fast, delivering forbidden thrills to people in the privacy of their homes at a time before radio or TV.

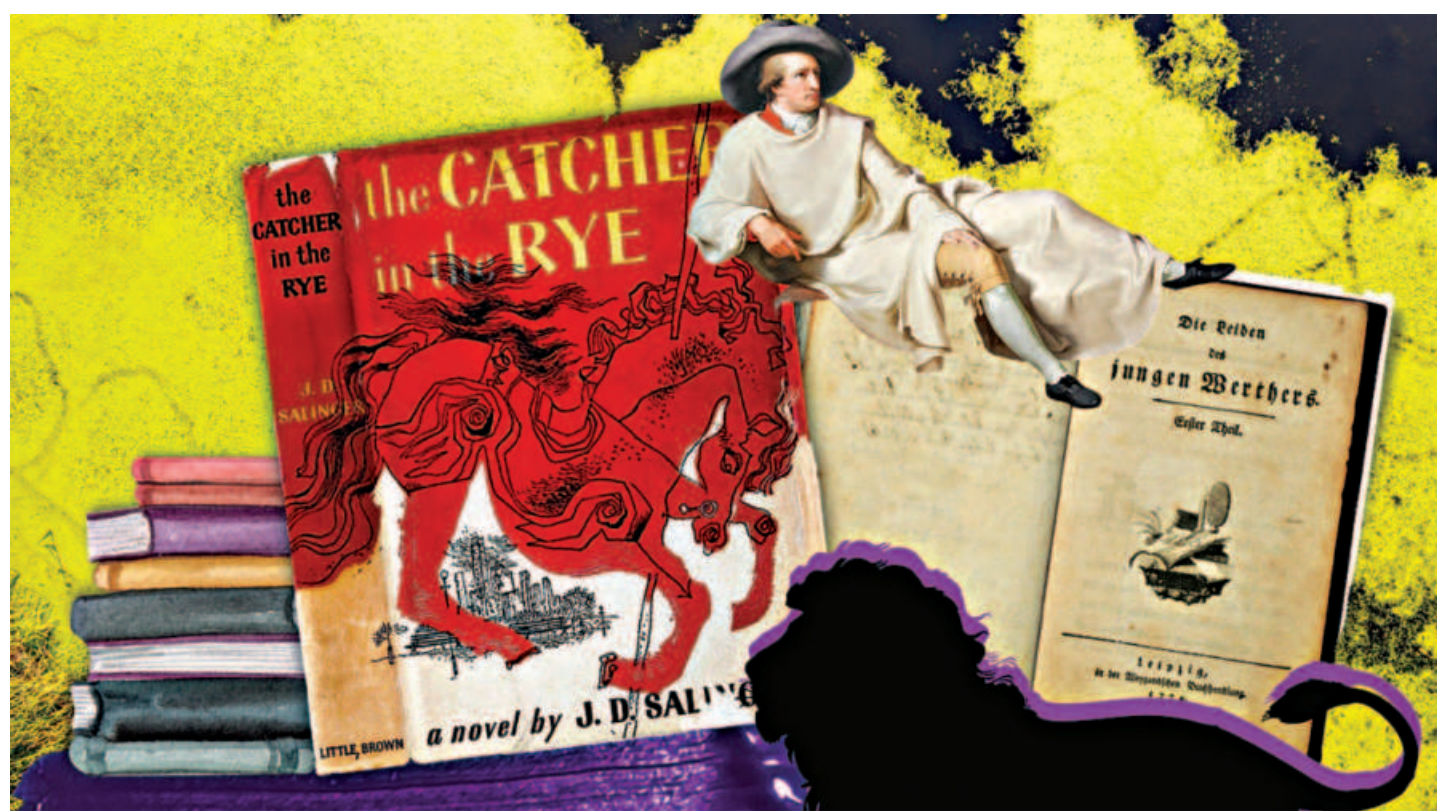
In retrospect, we can perhaps make the argument that Goethe was the first "international literary celebrity." But with that kind of fame and importance, often there is the unbearable burden of knowing that your words can affect, *really affect*, those who read them—and this is especially true for young, impressionable minds who are still grappling with who they are; minds that are likely to latch on to a charismatic protagonist, and not merely learn from them or draw inspiration, but *emulate* them.

I felt that my overall awareness and critical faculties were levelling up ... but. But nothing was transporting me quite in the same way. Even Marlon James, who I consider to be one of the most searingly powerful prose-stylists of his generation, failed to fully immerse me into a new world the way Narnia once had.

When a tragic hero is to die for

Every glittery surface has a dark side, and so it was with the *Werther* phenomenon. Those familiar with the novel will know *The Sorrows of Young Werther* is a brief, epistolary novel about a love triangle, a romantic failure, and a mental tailspin that culminates in *Werther's* tragic suicide. Goethe, at the time not yet 25 years old, wrote the novel primarily to exorcise the pain and confusion he felt upon the suicide of his close friend Jerusalem.

The book is so short that it should be



DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI

called a novella, really, best read in one sitting, and Goethe wrote the whole thing in a matter of four or five weeks. And yet, as goes the popular history, this was the book that made hordes of young men dress up like Goethe—yellow waistcoat, blue tailcoat—and lose themselves to *Werther*-like sentiments, and kill themselves.

Along with the easily spotted *Werther* outfit, it is said that a copy of the novel was often found at the scene of the suicide. Clearly, this was never the author's intention, though it did add a kind of morbidly sexy aura to Goethe's reputation.

It was not until exactly 200 years later, though, that sociologist David P Phillips used the term "Werther effect" in a rigorous, academic context to describe copycat suicides and the phenomenon of observable spikes in suicide following any celebrity suicide or media reporting on such incidents. Much of our contemporary media training regarding sensitivity in dealing with such subjects, particularly in news reporting—though Bangladeshi media is still at its infancy in this regard—goes back to Phillips's research, as does the practice of placing trigger warnings on certain content.

Nobody forgets the first time

It is best not to underestimate, then, how deep a book can cut when in the hands of a young person hungry to be influenced. I was lucky though—Goethe's works did not reach my hands in the early blooms of youth. Certainly, I was already susceptible to bouts of *Werther*-like romanticism—refusing to go out and play or get sunlight, brooding in a dark corner writing reams of unreadably bad poetry.

There was much else that I read, though, much of it I was certainly too young for, but it is impossible for me to regret ever reading anything. There is no doubt that some books hit differently when younger and are best read early: I remember my father handing me a copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* when I was 16 and telling me Holden Caulfield was the same age as me. The teenage me had his mind blown, and indeed felt a strong identification with Holden: *That's right!* I thought, like Holden says, everything is so phoney! But then I grew up bit by bit, and while I still have great fondness for Salinger's novel, the nature of this appreciation has changed.

I now see the book as a cool, funny piece of YA, where the protagonist is a bright yet naïve kid whose innocence is about to be

crushed under the weight of reality as he hits adulthood. Holden could be my own child, I sometimes think, and I want to protect him, but I know that desire is also futile, because all of us have to grow up eventually. Salinger never published a sequel to *Catcher*; but if he did, I fear we would see a middle-aged Holden Caulfield, his soul crushed and dreams faded, working maybe in the service sector, saying "have a nice day" with a phoney smile pasted on his face. What a horrible thought.

Making it to adulthood is a Faustian bargain

Werther, though, took a bit of time to reach my hands. Well into my thirties, I finally got around to him, and this time I had on cynicism-tinted glasses and a practically professorial level of objectivity. I chuckled and rolled my eyes at *Werther's* histrionics, I sighed at his naïveté, I finished the book, tossed it aside, and muttered "what a drama queen."

This newfound sense of adult detachment, however, gave me perspectives and a sense of appreciation I could not have had if I had run amok with the young Goethean sense of romantic tragedy that, in the end, robs us of self-control and drowns us in sentiment. I had to grow up as a reader to understand how it

was that Goethe grew up as a writer.

I read his book on maxims and aphorisms, and learnt that even before Nietzsche, Goethe was the true boss of the Twitter-style one-line zinger. I read his erotic poetry, including the very dirty *Roman Elegies*, I dove into both Part I and Part 2 of the intimidating dramatic epic *Faust*, and then onto *Italian Journey*, a travelogue where the master poet, in the throes of a full-on midlife crisis, goes to Italy for creative rejuvenation, and takes rigorous notes on matters as mundane as the waste management system of Venice.

The best journey is where the view changes

In youth, there is so much we try to read, or half-read, particularly if we have books lying around the house. You never can tell if a certain book will hit hard and become the intellectual foundation for the person you are to later become.

As we grow up, in a way, the books that shaped us in our early years change, even though the words remain exactly the same. As children, our brains have that magical ability to deep dive into a world, and the world of a book we love is so much more for us than just a book at that age—it's real. When Lucy first walked into Narnia from the back of a wardrobe, I was not thinking: "Nicely written, Mr CS Lewis!" I was, like so many other children, completely and utterly absorbed in the story, in the universe that was being presented to me.

Jump cut to my thirties: As a grown-up in search of epic fantasy, I bulldozed through the Harry Potter books (already too old to identify as my alma mater on my Facebook info page), *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, all of *A Song of Ice and Fire* till date, as well as the richly detailed fantasy worlds of Patrick Rothfuss, Joe Abercrombie, Brandon Sanderson (terrible writer but great world-builder), and Marlon James.

I felt that my overall awareness and critical faculties were levelling up ... but. But nothing was transporting me quite in the same way. Even Marlon James, who I consider to be one of the most searingly powerful prose-stylists of his generation, failed to fully immerse me into a new world the way Narnia once had. I am wiser, but I am less enraptured. Everything is illuminated, but something is lost.

Maybe it's for the best that one does grow up, and that past a certain point, your maturity makes it impossible for a book to cut so deep that it can inspire you to take your own life. Or mimic the hero's sartorial choices, for that matter.

Abak Hussain is a journalist, and Contributing Editor at MW Bangladesh.

Stellar SADIA

SHARMIN JOYA

Sadia Nabila captivated audiences with her appearance in Sunny Sanwar's *Mission Extreme*, and its sequel *Black War*.

In recent times, the Australian expat has been gaining a lot of appreciation for portraying the role of a cop, called Ira, which gave her a new identity in the local film industry.

In conversation with The Daily Star, the actress spoke about the experience of working in multiple industries, her future plans and much more.

You made your silver screen debut with a Bollywood film. How did that come about?

In 2017, I participated in the pageant 'Miss India World Wide'. I was the first Bangladeshi contestant there. After the contest, Devsh Pratap Singh called me for an audition for his film, *Pareshaan Parinda*. This is how I began my journey on the silver screen, by working in a Bollywood film.

How did your journey in showbiz begin?

At the age of four, my parents admitted me to a dance academy, knowing that I was passionate towards performing arts. I am blessed that my parents have been encouraging me since my childhood.

What kind of feedback have you been receiving for your recent film, 'Black War'?

The feedback has been mostly positive. I have been amazed by the love the audience has been showering upon me. After getting such appreciation, it has raised their expectations from me. Now, it is my responsibility to not disappoint them. So, I will have to carefully select my future roles, so that I can raise or, at the very least, maintain the standard my fans are used to.

Tell us about Ira's personality?

Ira is very close to my heart. She is a career driven woman who is focused on taking the best decisions for herself. She is rarely influenced by any social pressure. Personally, I feel I share a lot of similarities with her personality.

Would you say 'Black War' is better than 'Mission Extreme'?

To be honest, it is definitely better than the prequel. *Mission Extreme* was 15 percent of what the entire story reflects, while the ultimate experience is in *Black War*.

You have worked in the showbiz industries of three countries—Australia, India and Bangladesh. How did the experiences vary?

I am currently working with two agencies in Australia. Apart from modeling, I am also working there as an actress. My dream has always been to work in Bengali films, and I am happy that the journey began in such a great way.

I don't like comparing the industries in different countries, as I believe that, despite all the struggles and limitations, everyone gives their 100 percent to bring their best to the table.

Which artiste inspires you the most?

There are many, however, if I have to mention a name, it would be Shah Rukh Khan. Watching him on the screen and learning about his personality off screen has been amazing. His humble nature is what I admire the most.

Having worked in Bollywood, do you wish to someday share the screen with SRK?

Who would not?! However, I don't know if I could hold my excitement after meeting him.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

STYLE Statement

Last week's Grammys saw a lot of star-studded traffic on the red-carpet. As per tradition, the musicians do their best to out-do one another in the department of styling. Among many well-dressed men present at the event on Sunday, American rapper and composer Pharrell Williams stood out in his quintessential tracksuit and a statement sunglasses piece from Tiffany & Co.

Dressed in a fire-engine-red two-piece track suit, paired with a fur suit and a pair of Mughal-inspired, conical sunglasses, which has caused quite the outrage online.

The sunglasses have been custom-designed in 18k gold with 61 round brilliant-diamonds of over 25 total carats, with two emeralds. The item is part of a collaboration between the rapper and the luxury jewelry brand.



TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
An Action Hero

Chorki
Bokul Phool

Hoichoi
Gobhir Joler
Maach

Disney Plus
House of Darkness

Amazon Prime
Somebody I used to know

TV TALKIES

DICKINSON A Period drama for the millennial

What if Death had an amazing rap album? That is exactly what happens in the opening scenes of *Dickinson*—a modern retelling of the life of legendary poet Emily Dickinson. In the opening scenes, Emily (Hailee Steinfeld) faces Death in a carriage, played by Wiz Khalifa. This hilarious and slightly eye-brow raising opening scene sets the mood for the 2019 'dramedy' series.

Filled with hilarious and poetic commentaries by the protagonist, *Dickinson* provides a fresh take on the mixing of modernism and period drama. Based very loosely on the life of the great poet, the drama goes on to explore the life of Emily Dickinson and her rumoured reasons for solitude, albeit with the lack of concrete historic proof.



Out and about IN DHAKA



Rhythm of Concrete
February 7-27 | 9:30 am – 6 pm
EMK Centre



The Beginning
February 16-18 | 3 pm – 8 pm
Batighar, Banani



La Vida En Rosa
February 14 | 8 pm
Le Meridien

The nine-to-five grind too much even for the Taliban?

REPORTERS WITHOUT BOUNDARIES

After decades of fighting them, it appears that the West had the answer to defeating the Taliban in Afghanistan right in front of their eyes – leave the country and let them have a go at running it.

Leaving the wilderness, where death loomed around every corner (or so they would have us believe), and adopting the daily routine that the rest of us live with would seem a no-brainer.

But a young Taliban fighter found that to be untrue after the harsh realities of adulthood hit him really hard.

"In our ministry, there's little work for me to do. Therefore, I spend most of my time on Twitter. We're connected to speedy Wi-fi. Many including me, are addicted to the internet, especially Twitter," said the young man for real (you can look it up).

The man also lamented his city's traffic and said he found it difficult to spend such long hours stuck in one place.

"What I dislike about Kabul is its traffic and what I fear is its thieves. I



PHOTO: REUTERS

(TOP) High Taliban officials bored to death as they sit in a conference meeting, dreaming of the time when (BOTTOM) they could roam free and live large.

keep my pistol on my person all the time after two of our comrades were robbed," he said, adding that there was a time when they were the ones who robbed people, but now that they are leaders of the country, they are finding it hard to

just go around robbing people. Since everything is their property, it would just mean stealing from themselves.

It seems that a life in the rugged plains and staying hidden from security forces did not arm the

militant group with any real-life skills such as maintaining a 9-5 job.

"These days, you have to go to the office before 8:00am and stay till 4:00pm. If you don't go, you're considered absent, and [the wage for] that day is cut from your salary," said another disgruntled, disillusioned young Taliban man.

The man is also full of existential dread and is wondering how he will ever get through this job and what the organisation would do now that their goal of ruling the nation has already been achieved.

Keep ruling? Keep at the 9-5 grind?

Ban women from universities? Oh...

"The Taliban used to be free of restrictions but now we sit in one place, behind a desk and a computer 24 hours a day, seven days a week," he added.

**All the quotes are taken from a real-life account and if you do not believe us, please look it up. This story is not a dig at the 9-5 work culture but an account of how everyone is a bumbling fool and no one really knows how to manage modern life's pressures and challenges, not least the Taliban.*



INFLATION ROUNDUP

5-second rule is now the 10-second rule: mother

"The kids used to bring up something they called the 'five-second rule' whenever they dropped some food on the floor, or when their youngest sister, just two years old, dropped her food. They would then scoop it up and eat it, claiming that they had picked it up within five seconds, and that the dirt did not have enough time to attach itself to the morsel."

ABUL HIKED

A mother in the capital has introduced a new rule in her household, instructing her three young children to eat off the floor whenever possible.

"The kids used to bring up something they called the 'five-second rule' whenever they dropped some food on the floor, or when their youngest sister, just two years old, dropped her food. They would then scoop it up and eat it, claiming that they had picked it up within five seconds, and that the dirt on the floor did not have enough time to attach itself to the morsel," said Adiba Begum, a homemaker.

She said she had a tough time telling the children to stop following this western pop culture trend that was really meant as a joke and had little basis in science.

"But that was till eight or nine months ago. When they picked food up off the floor I took it out of their hands, as any parent would do, and threw it away."

But then the prices started rising, and then they kept increasing, and then they just wouldn't stop increasing.

"That's when I revisited the five-second rule, and I dug further into it," she said.

"Turns out, there was some scientific basis to the rule after



all. You see, the food has to settle on the ground after it is dropped. At first it bounces up, crumbs fly everywhere, then it comes to a stop. It is only then that the dirt and grime on the floor can attach itself.

"What's more, I did a bit of research on my own. I studied science in school, and now I know that instead of 5 seconds, food is safe to pick up off the floor up to 10 seconds after it's dropped. This is a fortunate discovery as it means less wastage, and that is a valuable thing in this throwaway culture of ours.

"What? No, it really has nothing to do with saving money amid rising prices. We live very comfortably. There is food

everywhere," Adiba said, her voice going up three pitches.

Adiba said she told her children of the new development, but for some reason, now the children are suspicious and won't eat food off the floor even if it had been lying there for less than five seconds.

'COOKING AT HOME SAME AS ORDERING IN!'

Elsewhere, in a shocking development, a man (our effort to break gender stereotypes)

was crushed after discovering that cooking at home would put the same strain on his wallet as ordering in.

"As a bachelor hishabe, I had been using vouchers and ordering from shops near my home since I started living on my own," said Akramul Huda, a private service holder in the capital's Mirpur area.

"Soon I found that I could barely make it to the end of the month eating in this manner, even if it was once a day," he said.

"So, I took the initiative to learn some cooking on YouTube, and thinking my financial problems would be solved, went out to buy two weeks' worth of ingredients. Imagine my devastation when, after buying everything on my list, I realised that the total came to the same amount if I had ordered the food over the next two weeks," Akramul said.

Star Satireday has learnt that following this development, restaurants around the capital have started raising their prices.



PHOTO: FREEPIK.COM

The lord of water and sewers

ANUPAM DEBASHIS ROY

You may have heard of Poseidon, lord of the seas. But have you heard of Taqsem Khan, the lord of Dhaka's water and sewers?

If not, you should have – the man has created his own empire over the past 13 years, even though he was appointed for only two years under contract.

He also has his Dukes. Two engineers have been repeatedly kept in appointment even after their official resignation. The water bills, in the meantime, have gone up almost every year.

The sewerage goes into the rivers. The whole system is just maniacal. And meanwhile, Dhaka residents are getting affected by diarrhoea, cholera and other water-borne diseases because of the water the MD is providing.

So dedicated is he to his job, that he is running a government agency with as much care as if it were his own company.

If that is the case, why not pay for the hospital bills of all these patients. After all, you are making millions.

Please scan the QR code to see the latest instalment of the Star Satire Show, where we ask these questions and try to get to the bottom of what makes this lord of water and sewers tick.

