



DHAKA THURSDAY FEBRUARY 16, 2023

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXIII No. 34

FALGUN 3, 1429 BS

www.thedailystar.net

RAJAB 24, 1444 HJRI

60 PAGES PLUS SHOUT : Tk 15.00



B1

Textile, garments machinery market growing fast



P15

BPL: Fourth for Comilla or first for Sylhet?



P9

Rising seas threaten exodus of 'biblical' scale



P6

Mehazabien pushes forward

Delhi has total support for Hasina

Indian foreign secretary calls on PM, reaffirms deeper development, economic ties

STAR REPORT

Visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra has said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has the total support of his country.

"We have total support for you and your leadership," a PMO spokesperson quoted him as telling the premier during his meeting with her at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

Hasina said Bangladesh considered India as a trusted friend, and expressed hope that this friendship would deepen further.

Briefing the media after the meeting, Prime Minister's Speechwriter Md Nazrul Islam said Kwatra told Hasina that his country would stand by Bangladesh in its development endeavours, including political and economic progress.

He said the Indian foreign secretary invited the PM to the 18th G20 Summit, scheduled to be held in New Delhi on September 9-10.

Hasina accepted the invitation and thanked her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, the current chair of the G-20, for inviting Bangladesh as a "guest country" to all its meetings.

The top bureaucrat of the Indian foreign office described Dhaka-New Delhi ties to be "very firm" and said the entire world now valued the relationship as it reached a strategic level.

"This relationship is being strengthened further," he added.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday. Kwatra invited the prime minister to attend the 18th G20 Summit in New Delhi on September 9-10.

PHOTO: BSS



In addition to the regular newspaper, today we present to you the fourth segment of The Daily Star's anniversary-special supplements, titled

"In with the New: Lifestyle Chronicles",

featuring the noteworthy trends in fashion, food, recreation, and much more. Make sure to take some time to flip through the pages as we uncover the exciting spectrum of lifestyle!

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Erosion of democracy to limit US cooperation

Says US State Department Counsellor Chollet, expresses commitment to strengthening ties with Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

If democracy in any country, including Bangladesh, erodes, it limits the US's ability to cooperate with that country, US State Department Counsellor Derek Chollet has said.

"It doesn't mean we won't cooperate. It doesn't mean our relationship won't be important. But it just will be a limiting factor when it comes to business investment," he said during a meeting in Dhaka yesterday.

Chollet, an official of the rank of undersecretary who led a high-level seven-member delegation to Dhaka, said US companies want transparency, rule of law, and accountability when comes to investing in a country.

In general, US-Bangladesh relationship has great potential and that is why there has been a consistent stream of officials visiting Bangladesh, he said in the meeting with a group of senior journalists at the American Centre in Dhaka.

Chollet arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday



evening and called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, and other officials. In the afternoon, he interacted with senior journalists.

He said Bangladesh is a development success story from the region and has done a great job by sheltering more than a million Rohingyas. The US is committed to strengthening the ties with Bangladesh as with other countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

At meetings with the top leaders of Bangladesh, he stressed the importance of democracy, free and fair elections, freedom of the press, and a strong civil society.

Asked what may happen if there were no free and fair elections in Bangladesh, Chollet said he does not want to speculate.

"I have confidence there can be a free and fair election. The government has said they want to have a free and fair election. We've made no secret of the concerns we

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

TORONTO CRASH 3 Bangladeshi students killed

Kumar Bishwajit's son in critical condition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The son of celebrated singer Kumar Bishwajit is in a critical condition after he was involved in a road accident in Canada's Toronto that also killed three other Bangladeshi students on Monday night.

The deceased -- Shahriar Khan, Angela Barai, and Aryan Dipta -- were in a car that was being driven by the singer's son Kumar Nibir, Canadian journalist Shaogat Ali Sagar told The Daily Star.

They were students of Humber College in Toronto. Shahriar and Aryan died on the spot and Angela passed away at a hospital.

"The vehicle was at speed. The driver lost control while exiting a highway and entering another. After hitting the guard rails, the vehicle flipped and then caught fire," Sagar said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

POWER SUPPLY DURING SUMMER

At least \$4.45b needed to cover fuel costs

Says PDB's conservative estimate

ASIFUR RAHMAN

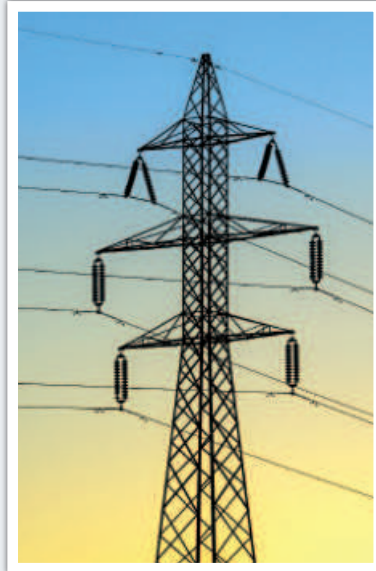
At least \$4.45 billion is needed in fuel costs to ensure adequate power supply from February to June, when demand is set to increase by more than 50 percent, the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) estimates.

The amount could exceed \$5 billion if the power import bill from Indian Adani Power and the payment to Chevron, which operates the biggest gas field in Bangladesh, are factored in, according to PDB officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The months of February through June see heightened demand for electricity given the summer heat and Boro irrigation season.

And this year, Ramadan is scheduled to take place during the period, so an uninterrupted power supply is expected to ease the demands of monthlong fasting.

Subsequently, PDB estimates 15,000-16,000 megawatts would be needed in a day during the five months. In January, electricity production was around 7,000 to



TOTAL POWER GENERATION CAPACITY 23,482MW

TARGET FOR SUMMER 16,000MW

- From gas 6,240MW
- Coal 2,865MW
- Furnace Oil and Diesel 5,050MW
- Hydro/Renewable 60MW
- Import 1,785MW

10,000 megawatts a day, according to PDB data.

Last year, the highest production was in April: 14,778 MW.

"We might not be able to get rid of

loadshedding entirely this year but we are trying our best -- all measures have been taken," said Shameem Hasan, PDB's spokesman.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

GENERATION EQ Arriving Soon

RANCON MOTORS

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Momen seeks US support for Rab’s capacity building

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday sought US support for increasing capacity building of Rab when visiting US State Department Counsellor Derek Chollet acknowledged improvement in performance of the force.

The foreign ministry issued a statement in this regard after Chollet had a meeting with Momen.

Chollet, who serves as a senior policy adviser to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, led a seven-member delegation at the meeting.

The foreign ministry statement said the US side acknowledged Rab’s improved performance but emphasised on its sustained reforms while the force is now under a sanction imposed by Washington.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Underprivileged freedom fighters get homes

PM hands over keys

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday handed over keys of 5,000 houses built under the government’s “Bir Nibash” project for underprivileged freedom fighters.

The liberation war affairs ministry organised the ceremony at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium where the PM joined virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

The houses are being given to the valiant freedom fighters as a gift from the PM as per her announcement on the occasion of Mujib Borsha, the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and the celebration of 50 years of Bangladesh’s independence.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) approved the Tk 4,122cr project on March 21 last year.

Under the project, 30,000 houses will be built for insolvent freedom fighters, Birangana (women freedom fighters), widows and children of martyred and late freedom fighters.



Counsellor of the US Department of State Derek Chollet pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

Russia declares battlefield gains

Ukrainian forces retreated in Luhansk

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russia said yesterday it had broken through two fortified Ukrainian defence lines on the eastern front, as Kyiv described conditions there as difficult and Western allies announced more military aid, including increased supplies of artillery rounds.

The Russian Defence Ministry said the Ukrainians had retreated in the face of Russian attacks in the Luhansk region, although it gave no details.

“During the offensive ... the Ukrainian troops randomly retreated to a distance of up to 3 km (1.9 miles) from the previously occupied lines,” the ministry said on the Telegram messaging app.

“Even the more fortified second line of defence of the enemy could not hold the breakthrough of the Russian military,”

The ministry did not specify in which part of the Luhansk region the offensive took place. The ministry added that its

“Southern group”, backed by artillery, was waging an offensive in the direction of Donetsk.

President Volodymyr Zelensky’s office said Ukrainian forces had repelled some Russian attacks in Luhansk but added: “The situation in the region remains difficult.”

Luhansk regional governor Serhiy Haidai said Russia was pouring heavy equipment and mobilised troops into Luhansk.

The Kremlin has intensified attacks across a swathe of southern and eastern Ukraine in recent weeks, and a major new offensive has been widely anticipated.

Russia’s main effort has been focused on the town of Bakhmut in Donetsk province adjacent to Luhansk.

The Ukrainian military said its units repelled Russian attacks in the areas of more than 20 settlements, including Bakhmut and Vuhledar – a town 150 km southwest of Bakhmut.

Invest more in Bangladesh

PM tells S Korean businesses as special envoy calls on her

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged South Korean businesses to invest more in Bangladesh.

“There is a huge potential to boost the economic relations between the two countries,” she said.

The premier said this when visiting South Korean Special Presidential Envoy Jang Sung Min paid a courtesy call on her at the Gono Bhaban.

PM’s speechwriter Md Nazrul Islam briefed reporters after the meeting.

The prime minister said South Korea is one of Bangladesh’s top development partners, and the country has been extending cooperation – especially in textile and infrastructure – since the latter’s independence.

Jang Sung Min is visiting Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

GRAFT CASE AGAINST SK SINHA

Court asks ACC to submit report by May 4

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked the Anti-Corruption Commission to submit its report in a graft case against former Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha for amassing illegal wealth by May 4.

The ACC has taken seven dates to complete the probe so far.

Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge’s Court passed the order as the ACC failed to submit any probe report yesterday.

On October 10 of 2021, ACC Deputy Director Md Gulshan Anowar filed the case against SK Sinha with the ACC’s integrated Dhaka district office-1 for allegedly amassing wealth of Tk 7.14 crore in the names of his brother and a relative by misusing power and transferring the amount.

SC stays HC order allowing Adarsha’s Boi Mela participation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Publishing house Adarsha cannot run their stall in the ongoing Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, as the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday stayed a High Court order that had earlier ordered Bangla Academy to allow their participation.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, passed the order following a petition filed by Bangla Academy seeking a stay on the HC order.

Two other judges of the bench are Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim.

The apex court, however, asked the HC to hold a hearing and dispose of the rule that questioned the legality of Bangla Academy’s decision not to allow Adarsha to participate in the Boi Mela, said Mintu Kumar Mondal, lawyer for Bangla Academy.

IU forms committee to probe torture allegation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

The Islamic University authorities yesterday formed a five-member committee to investigate the allegation of torture on a female student in a residential hall.

Law Department Chairman Prof Reba Mondal was made the committee’s convener, the university’s information, publication and public relations department confirmed.

The committee has been asked to submit its report within seven days. The decision was taken during an emergency meeting yesterday morning.

IU Chhatra League Vice-president Sanjida Chowdhury, the accused, has submitted a complaint saying that the entire incident is not true.

Meanwhile, the High Court directed HC lawyers Gazi Md Mohsin, also former Chhatra Shibir leader, and Azgar Hossain Tuhin to come up with a written petition to hold a full hearing of the incident.

Delhi has total support for Hasina

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina said both countries can work on the socio-economic development of their peoples.

Kwatra said New Delhi was trying to make the terms and conditions of Indian Line of Credit (LoC) easier so that Bangladesh could avail the credit and repay it easily.

He said the currencies of the two countries could be used to run bilateral trade and businesses.

Prime Minister’s Principal Secretary M Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma were present.

Earlier in the day, the Indian foreign secretary held Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) with his Bangladeshi counterpart Masud Bin Momen, reports The Hindu.

The foreign secretaries of the two countries led their respective delegations to the FOC held at the

Foreign Service Academy.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed bilateral partnership, including political, security, trade, investment, defence, connectivity, water, power and sub-regional cooperation, the Indian high commission in Dhaka tweeted.

They also agreed to maintain close engagement in the context of Bangladesh’s participation in the 18th G20 Summit as a guest country.

The last FOC was held on January 29, 2021, in New Delhi.

Also yesterday, Kwatra called on Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and held “productive exchange of views on further strengthening the wide-ranging partnership between India and Bangladesh”, according to tweets by the Indian high commission.

Speaking to reporters at the Foreign Service Academy, Foreign Secretary Masud said India has assured Bangladesh of extending

its cooperation for importing hydropower from Nepal and Bhutan through its territories, reports UNB.

He said during the FOC they also discussed the “practical problem” in terms of transmission lines inside Bangladesh as there is a need for expanding the transmission network and boosting its capacity.

Masud said India will help Bangladesh if any specific project is taken up for expanding the transmission network and boosting its capacity within Bangladesh to supply electricity smoothly.

Bangladesh will also explore whether Indian LoCs can be used if any specific project is taken up in consultation with the ministry concerned for the expansion of transmission lines inside Bangladesh.

The Indian foreign secretary arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday evening on an official visit to Bangladesh at the invitation of Masud.

3 Bangladeshi students killed

FROM PAGE 1

Local media outlet CP24, citing the Highway Safety Division of Canada’s Ontario Provincial Police, reported that the accident took place at 11:30pm (local time) on Monday.

Nibir, who was taken to Intensive Care Unit, was in a critical condition as of yesterday.

He was badly injured, with burns on several parts of his body. He underwent a surgery yesterday and was in need of two more, according to his family members.

After hearing the news, Kumar Bishwajit and his wife Naima Sultana departed for Canada. The singer also asked his fans for their best wishes and prayers for his son.

Death toll climbs above 41,000

FROM PAGE 16

Tourism Minister Nuri Ersoy told a news conference in Malatya, some 160 km from the epicentre of the earthquake.

Across the border, in Syria, relief efforts have been hampered by a civil war that has splintered the country and divided regional and global powers.

Though a single border crossing from Turkey to Syria was open after the quake, the UN did not send aid through for days, citing logistical issues.

“The situation is really tragic,” Abdulrahman Mohammad, a displaced Syrian originally from the neighbouring province of Aleppo, said in Idlib, in the country’s northwest, where many had found

refuge in the past decade from other war-torn provinces.

Parts of the provinces of Idlib and adjacent Aleppo held by Turkey-backed rebels suffered the bulk of the quake’s casualties in Syria: over 4,400 of a death toll of more than 5,800, according to the United Nations and government authorities.

“Anyone who is working as a labourer and renting a house... If you need \$10 a day in expenses and you can barely get that – how are you supposed to rebuild?” Mohammad, originally from Aleppo, said.

Further to the north, in Jandar, rescuers said they had not found anyone alive under the rubble since February 9 but continued to search. Residents said there were still people trapped.

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Kohinoor Dastgir's death anniversary

STAR REPORT

The sixth death anniversary of Kohinoor Dastgir, wife of former ambassador Maj Gen Quazi Golam Dastgir, will be observed today [February 16], said a press release.

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



Road Transport Act

FROM PAGE 5

of road safety, which was outlined by the United Nations action plan for road safety. However, the government did not put emphasis on that," he added.

Furthermore, the WHO stated that slowing down, wearing seat belts, wearing proper helmets, not driving drunk, and providing special seats for children would reduce accident rates and casualties.

About 23,166 people die in road accidents annually in Bangladesh, according to the Centre for Injury Prevention and Research.

"There is an ongoing

controversy on the accident statistics. If we count the government stats, it shows that Bangladesh is a better country than Sweden in road safety. Is it believable?" said Shariful Alam, country representative of the road-safety programme of Global Health Advocacy Incubator.

Secretary General of National Heart Foundation Prof Khondker Abdul Awal Rizvi, who presided over the programme, said all the countries made their roads safer day by day, but in Bangladesh, the scenario is the opposite.

"We need to establish a dedicated authority that will have power and money

to make all the decisions on road-safety issues," he said.

Prothom Alo journalist Sohrab Hassan said the transport sector is the most undisciplined one in the country. He suggested providing a driver a designated time to rest for at least eight hours a day.

Journalist Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul conducted the dialogue, while President of Bangladesh Orthopaedic Society Prof Monayem Hossain, Secretary General Prof Md Jahangir Alam, and journalists from different media outlets were present.

People with leprosy

FROM PAGE 3

on the elimination of discrimination against leprosy patients and their family members, while addressing a press conference in Dhaka.

At the press conference, she shared her eight-day field-visit experience in Bogura and Nilphamari and highlighted the obstacles to eliminating leprosy from the country.

She also called for draft anti-discrimination laws to formally recognise leprosy -- also known as Hansen's disease -- as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

Bangladesh has the fifth highest number of leprosy cases in the world, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), with relevant data indicating

ongoing transmission, late diagnosis, and gaps in the health system.

"Government officials at the district level lack proper knowledge about leprosy, while the issue has remained unaddressed in the government's action plan," said Cruz.

"Leprosy patients are often ostracised in society and their families are also subjected to discriminatory attitudes," she added.

During her visit, Cruz met members of the government, representatives of civil society organisations, healthcare workers, and leprosy patients.

She will submit a report on her visit to Bangladesh to the Human Rights Council in June 2023.

A ray of hope

FROM PAGE 3

growing number of underprivileged dialysis patients and to establish the service as an institutional form, Prof Towhid, with the support of the Center for Zakat Management (CZM), launched a kidney dialysis and transplant centre at the beginning of this month.

The newly-launched kidney dialysis and transplant centre, situated at Hazratpur in Dhaka's Keraniganj, is a two-storey building that houses eight modern dialysis machines capable of providing services to 60 patients.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, former advisor to a caretaker government and advisor to CZM advisory

board, inaugurated the centre as the chief guest yesterday.

Although the centre can provide dialysis services to 60 patients, they are currently operating at half its capacity, as they only have 30 donors as of yet.

"This is the only institution in the country that provides completely free dialysis services to patients, with no ticketing costs," Prof Towhid said.

The centre also offers free medical examinations and medications, he mentioned.

Prof Towhid also shared his vision to establish a modern hospital dedicated to kidney dialysis and transplantation with a capacity of 1,000 patients.

"We plan to purchase four acres of land within a mile's distance from the current centre. Hopefully, we will be able to set up the hospital within two years," he added.

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6th Death Anniversary



The Sixth Death Anniversary of Mrs. Kohinoor Dastgir, w/o of former Ambassador Major General Quazi Golam Dastgir, KAAO, psc, will be observed on Thursday, February 16, 2023. Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for her.

30TH CHATTOGRAM INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR 2023

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16th February 2023
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Hon'ble Minister
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, GOI

Special Guests
Mr. Md. Rezaul Karim Chowdhury
Hon'ble Mayor
Chattogram City Corporation
Mr. M. A. Latif MP
Hon'ble Former President, CCC
& Member, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Shipping
Mr. Md. Jashim Uddin
Hon'ble President
The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FCCI)

Chaired by:
Mahbubul Alam
President, FCCI

Organize by:
The Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Lack of political

FROM PAGE 5

and regional autonomy, said Asadullah Tareq, general secretary of Oikya NAP.

Writer and journalist Abu Sayeed Khan said, "The government was appreciated when they signed the Accord. However, now is the time to implement it."

Dr Gagdendranath Mahato, assistant general secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, said, "When the CHT Peace Accord was signed in 1997, people thought that peace will prevail in the hill tracts. But what portion of the treaty has been implemented so far?"

Urging Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to take necessary steps to implement the treaty properly, Nazmul Haque Prodhan, general

secretary of Bangladesh Jatia Samajtantrik Dal, said there is no scope for further delay, as the fire in the hearts of the people of the hill tracts to achieve their rights have been kept alive through generations.

"Jana Samhati Samity will not back out when it comes to achieving our people's rights and the implementation of the Peace Accord," said Dipayon Khisa, member of the information and circulation division, Parbatya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samity.

The discussion was chaired by Sadhuram Tripura, central member of Parbatya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samity. Monira Tripura, staff member of Parbatya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samity, moderated the programme.

'We hope China will help repatriate Rohingyas'

Says State Minister Enamur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief Enamur Rahman yesterday expressed hope that China will help to repatriate Rohingya people.

Enamur made the comments after a meeting with the Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen at the ministry's office at Bangladesh Secretariat.

"We hope China will play an important role in repatriating forcefully displaced Rohingya people to Myanmar," said Enamur.

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- Procurement of Computer with Monitor, Multimedia Projector with Screen, Printer for two new labs (Big Data Analysis and Cyber Security Lab) of the Department of CSE
- Supply and Installation of Network Infrastructure Implementation for two new labs (Big Data Analysis and Cyber Security Lab) of the Department of CSE
- Procurement of different types of Furniture for two new labs (Big Data Analysis and Cyber Security Lab) of the Department of CSE

The schedule of the items with terms and conditions (hard copy) can be obtained from the Finance & Accounts Department (2nd floor) of the University up to **06.03.2023** during office hours (**up to 03:00 p.m.**) on working days. The schedule of item no. **b&c** will also be available in the e-tender process (<http://etender.ewubd.edu>). The price of the tender schedule (non-refundable) is **Tk.500/-** (excluding online service charge for e-tender process).

The interested bidders are requested to submit the tender schedule by **07.03.2023 within 02:00 p.m.** Hard copy of the tender must be dropped in the tender box kept at the 2nd floor of the Office of the Treasurer (Room No-316) of the University. Tender(s) submitted within the deadline will be opened on the **same day (07.03.2023) at 02:30 p.m.** at the Conference Room (4th floor, Room No # 508) of East West University in presence of the bidders (if any) by ensuring health safety.

The bidders must mention the "name of the item" at the top of envelop. Otherwise, the bid document will be treated as cancelled.

East West University authority reserves the right to accept any tender in full or part of it or reject all tenders without mentioning any reason thereof.

Chief of HR & Logistics

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বাংলাদেশ শিল্পকলা একাডেমি

বাংলাদেশ শিল্পকলা একাডেমি
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INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH (IUB)

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) invites applications for the following position:

ACCOUNTS OFFICER

Requirements:

- Master Degree in Accounting/Finance (no 3rd class/division at any level);
- 3 years' experience or CA course completed from a reputed CA firm;
- Basic computer literacy;
- Knowledge on preparation of financial statements, VAT and taxation, bank reconciliation, physical inventory and internal controls;
- Ability to multitask and work in a team under strict deadlines;
- Age: Maximum 35 years.

Salary range: BDT 40,000 to 50,000
Application Deadline: March 1, 2023

Download the Application Form at <http://www.iub.edu.bd/jobs>, fill it up and email it to hrdept@iub.edu.bd along with your latest CV, mentioning the name of the position in the "subject" of your email. Only IUB application forms will be accepted.

Govt. Michael Madhusudan College, Jashore
Kharki Road, Jashore-7400
E mail: principal.mmc.jessore@gmail.com

Memo No. CEDP/GMMC/G-13/2022-23/15 Date: 16/02/2023

e-Tender Notice 01/2022-23 (Re-Tender)

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of works	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	750816	Procurement of Furniture & Fixtures for Classroom & Central Library	07-03-2023 13:00pm	07-03-2023 14:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to **06-03-2023, 15:30pm**. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Professor Morzina Akter
Principal
Govt. Michael Madhusudan (M M) College
Jashore
Phone: 02477762660

GD-277

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টার
মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর, কুমিল্লা

স্মারক নং: ৩২.০১.১৯০০.০০০.০৭.০০১.২৩- ১৮ তারিখ: ১৫/০২/২০২৩ খ্রিঃ

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর/মহিলা ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টারের শিগগির অন্য মাসিক জিডিতে এক টানা ১২ (বার) মাসের জন্য (সরকারী ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত) খাদ্য প্রবাসি সরবরাহের নতুন প্রকল্পের নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে নিম্নোক্ত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

০১। প্রকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠান ও সরবরাহকারীদের যাদের হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, হালনাগাদ আয়কর প্রত্যয়নপত্র, জাতি রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট ও ব্যাংক স্বাক্ষরিত সনদপত্র এবং খাদ্য প্রবাসি সরবরাহে ০২ (দুই) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ থাকতে হবে।

০২। বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক/সোনালী ব্যাংক টেন্ডারের সিডিউলের মূল্য বাবদ ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা (অফেখযোগ্য) ১৪২২০২৮ (পুরাতন কোড ১-৩০২১-০০০০-২৩৬৬) কোডে জমা দিতে চালাদের মূল্যকপি প্রদর্শনপূর্বক ফটোকপি জমা দেয়া সাপেক্ষে দরপত্র সিডিউল নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারী কার্যালয়, ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টার, পুরাতন মৌলভী পাড়া, ঢক বাহার, কুমিল্লা হতে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।

০৩। খাদ্য সামগ্রীর বিস্তারিত বিবরণ ও শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লেখ থাকবে।

০৪। দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ১২/০৩/২০২৩ খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত

০৫। দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ১৩/০৩/২০২৩ খ্রিঃ বেলা ১১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত

০৬। দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়: ১৩/০৩/২০২৩ খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা

০৭। দরপত্র খোলার স্থান ও প্রকল্প: উপপরিচালকের কার্যালয়, মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর, কুমিল্লা

০৮। দরপত্রের সাথে জামানত বাবদ সর্বমোট প্রাপ্তি মূল্যের ৩% হিসেবে আনুমানিক ব্যাংক ড্রাকট/পে-অর্ডার (অফেখযোগ্য) যে কোন সিডিউল ব্যাংক হতে ডে-কেয়ার অফিসার, ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টার, মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর, কুমিল্লা এর অনুমোদন জমা দিতে হবে।


০৯। গৃহীত দরদাতাদের দিকট হতে দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিলকৃত মাসিক মোট দরের জিডিতে বাৎসরিক মোট দরের ১০% সিকিউরিটি মানি প্রার্থী সাপেক্ষে কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা যাবে।

১০। পি.পি.আর এর শর্তাবলী অনুসরণ করতে হবে।


১১। কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও বাতিল করার স্বমতঃ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

কনিজ কান্তারী
১৫/০২/২০২৩
ডে-কেয়ার অফিসার
ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টার
মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর, কুমিল্লা

GD-278



ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208



INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

EDCL invites **Two Envelope System** International Tender for Supply of Pharmaceutical Raw Material on C&F © Dhaka By Air/Chittagong by Sea Basis:-

S.L No.	Tender No. Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & opening
01.	IMP/RM/SEM/63/2022-2023 dated 15/02/2023	Pharmaceutical Raw Materials: (Specification as per tender schedule): 01. Cetrizine HCl BP 02. Cefradine Micronized BP 03. Ciprofloxacin HCl Micronized BP 04. Fexofenadine HCl USP 05. Gentamicin Sulphate BP 06. Ibuprofen BP 07. Pantoprazole Sodium USP	Tk. 2550.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 24.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 12/03/2023 At 11.00AM Opening : 12/03/2023 at 11.15 AM
02.	IMP/RM/SEM/64/2022-2023 dated 15/02/2023	Pharmaceutical Raw Materials: (Specification as per tender schedule): 01. Pellets: Elemental Iron (As Iron, Carbonyl) USP+Folic Acid USP+Zinc Sulphate Monohydrate USP 02. Seal Coating Material (White) or equivalent to opadry 21K58794 ph.Gr. 03. Enteric Coating Material (White) or equivalent to Opadry 940580000 Ph. Gr. 04. Film Coating Material (Yellow) or equivalent to wincoat WT-MP-1143/ Spraycel SC MB 3125 Ph.Gr. 05. Orange Flavour powder Ph.Gr. 06. Sodium Carbonate Anhydrous BP 07. Diclofenac Sodium BP	Tk. 1900.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 18.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 14/03/2023 At 11.00AM Opening : 14/03/2023 at 11.15 AM
03.	IMP/RM/SEM/65/2022-2023 dated 15/02/2023	Pharmaceutical Raw Materials: (Specification as per tender schedule): 01. Aerosil 200BP 02. Calcium Hydrogen Phosphate BP 03. Sodium Starch Glycolate BP 04. Maize Starch BP 05. Albendazole BP 06. Amlodipine Besilate BP 07. Ondansetron HCl USP (For Tablet Grade)	Tk. 2850.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 27.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 16/03/2023 At 11.00AM Opening : 16/03/2023 at 11.15 AM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited (EDCL), Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays).

No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The Tender will be accompanied by an amount of Earnest Money in the form of Bank Draft/Pay order/ Bank Guarantee from any schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of “ Essential Drugs Company Ltd” without which the Tender will be considered as non-responsive.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

N.B: This information is also available at our Website : www.edcl.gov.bd

General Manager
Procurement
For : Managing Director.

(11 x 4 col.)

General Manager
Procurement
For : Managing Director.

MEHAZABIEN pushes forward

Mehazabien Chowdhury is well known for making headlines for her diverse selection of characters. From playing a police officer to donning the role of a greedy nurse—the talented actress knows how to blend into her roles effortlessly.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

This year, she has delivered two stellar performances in Vicky Zahed's projects, *Kajoler Din Ratri* and *The Silence*.

In conversation with The Daily Star, the actress opens up about her upcoming projects, and much more.

People have been loving your performance in 'The Silence'. How are you enjoying their feedback?

My greatest achievement is that my fans and co-artists have responded positively to *The Silence*. I cannot put into words how much this means to me. My fellow co-artists have also penned appreciative notes about my performance. All of this encourages me to pursue my passion more diligently in the future.

How challenging was it for you to play Ruby in the project?

Ruby was a complex, multi-layered character. I had to change my look for the role and had to stay silent throughout the series. It's really hard to convey a character's thoughts and feelings using just expressions, while staying silent. However, I got into the character while shooting and the end product is something that I am proud of.

What kind of response did your new look receive?

Everybody loved my new look in *The Silence*, it was something that created a lasting impression on the audience's mind.

Vicky Zahed is one of those directors who likes innovating and experimenting with their projects. He always keeps in mind what

intrigues the audience, and how to surprise them.

Many have written screenplays and characters with you in mind. How does that make you feel?

It feels surreal that everybody loves me so much that they try to make room for me in their projects. I am thankful to them for always believing in my skills.

Do you believe that you're a complete artiste?

I don't know whether I am a complete artiste or not, but

I do believe that I take my art very seriously. Acting is my love and passion. Whenever I do something, I try to deliver my best, so that the outcome is brilliant.

How did your family feel about 'The Silence'?

It is very hard to please my family members with my acting. However, when they truly like something, they do give me a lot of praise. They enjoyed *The Silence* a lot, and they are hoping for a second season of the Bing series.



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

'I am so proud of you', says Arnob to Pritom



The second season of Coke Studio Bangla was off to a flying start as the first song, *Murir Tin*, was released. The song, which features dialects from Chattogram, Sylhet and Khulna, was received well by the audience.

Coke Studio Bangla also arrived at 6 locations in four divisions, making it a countrywide celebration. New gen musician Pritom Hasan is a part of this season's CSB – he performed at Dhaka's Rabindra Sarobar alongside Shayan Chowdhury Arnob himself.

"Thank you Coke Studio Bangla for letting me be on stage with Arnob bhai", wrote Pritom on his verified Facebook page.

Arnob, who shared a wonderful medley with Pritom, was visibly impressed by his performance. "Thank god you were there, you were absolutely brilliant! I am so proud of you", wrote the renowned singer-songwriter on that post.

Pori, Razz celebrate son's 'Mukhe Bhaat'



Pori Moni is usually active on social media when it comes to sharing the wonderful moments of her life. The actress had recently been out celebrating Valentine's Day and Pohela Falgun with her lovely family.

Just earlier this month, the celebrity couple of Pori Moni and Sariful Islam Razz celebrated six months of their first-born child, Rajya.

On this special occasion, the star couple arranged the ceremony of his *Mukhe Bhaat*.

Pori Moni shared the pictures of the event, where she, Razz and Rajya are sharing their love with underprivileged children. Pori was also spotted serving food to the children.

NEWS

Debate over presidential polls 'unnecessary'

FROM PAGE 16

district judge, as the president-elect.

Many pointed out that the ACC law stipulated that at the end of a person's tenure, a commissioner shall not be eligible to hold any profitable office in the service of the republic. And the president's position was an office of profit.

"If anyone tries to raise an irrelevant debate over the head of state, it is unexpected," the CEC said while talking to reporters at his office.

Habibul Awal said the ACC law says at the end of a person's tenure, a commissioner shall not be eligible to get appointment to any profitable office in the service of the republic.

"There is a difference between an

appointment and being elected. He [Shahabuddin] is not appointed by anyone, rather he is elected."

The CEC added that many were not bringing up the issue of his election; rather they were saying that he was given a position that is an office of profit.

Talking about office of profit, Habibul Awal said he was aware of the High Court verdict in the case of Abu Bakar Siddique vs Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed in 1996.

"Operative part of the verdict clearly mentioned that election of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed was completely legal. The discussion part [of the verdict] said the president of Bangladesh holds office of profit,

but it is not an office of profit in the service of the republic.

"So, creating confusion by giving different opinions regarding it [the election] is unnecessary", he commented.

Meanwhile, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin yesterday said there is no scope for raising any question about Shahabuddin's election as president. "It is absolutely legal and it is irrelevant to raise any questions."

Speaking to reporters at his office, he said the post of president is not an office of profit.

The HC judgment in 1996 categorically said that the post of president is not an office of profit, the attorney general added.

Arsa, 9 other armed groups found active

FROM PAGE 16

According to reports, 10 miscreants groups are currently active in Rohingya camps. Among them, Arsa is active in Ukhia, Balukhali, Palangkhali and Whykong; RSO and Master Munna gangs in Ukhia and Palongkhali; Islami Mahaj and Jabu dacoit gangs in Whykong and Chakma dacoit gangs, Nabi Hussain dacoit gang, Putia dacoit gang, Salman Shah dacoit gang, Khaleq dacoit gang are active in Nayapara camp.

Noting that Arsa controls most of the camps, the report said Arsa and Nabi Hussain dacoit gang often engaged in clashes over dominance resulting in incidents of murders.

The report highlights the criminal activities that took place in 2021

and 2022. The overall crime appears to have decreased to some extent. However, during this period, the number of murders has increased. In 2021, 22 murder incidents took place. In 2022, the number of murder incidents was 32.

Meanwhile, the number of thefts and robberies decreased from 77 in 2021 to 75 in 2022, shootings from 51 to 18, kidnappings from 173 to 86, internal feuds from 11 to one, drug incidents from 268 to 249 and other crimes from 567 to 553.

The report mentions that 222 fire incidents occurred from January 2021 to December 2022. 99 of these are accidental, 60 were sabotage and 63 incidents were unknown.

In the report, it was said that Rohingya areas are vulnerable to HIV/

AIDS, hepatitis C, diphtheria, etc. So far, 710 HIV positive people have been detected in Cox's Bazar and 612 of them are Rohingya.

As of December 22, 61 Rohingya have died of HIV. More than 5 thousand Rohingya women are engaged in sex work in various hotels in Cox's Bazar.

The report also said, 95 babies are born every day in Rohingya camps. In 2025, the Rohingya population could grow to 12-13 lakh, the report said.

Ruling Awami League MP Shubid Ali Bhuiya, chief of the parliamentary body presided over the meeting. Committee members Muhammad Faruk Khan, Md Ilyas Uddin Mollah and Md Nasir Uddin participated in the meeting.

India probing into BBC's tax structure

FROM PAGE 16

western state of Gujarat during riots in 2002 in which at least 1,000 people were killed, most of them Muslims, though activists put the toll at more than twice that number.

The government last month dismissed the documentary, "India: The Modi Question", as propaganda and blocked its streaming and sharing on social media. The foreign ministry said last month the documentary was meant to push a

"discredited narrative", was biased, lacked objectivity and showed a "continuing colonial mindset".

The BBC has stood by its reporting for the documentary and said it was cooperating with Indian tax officials.

The BBC was served tax notices in the past but the organisation had not provided a convincing response to tax authorities, Kanchan Gupta, Senior Adviser at the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, told Times Now news channel.

"The Income Tax Department is conducting a survey of the BBC's tax status and affairs in India. We understand officers from the department may wish to speak to members of staff about the BBC in India," Liliane Landor, director of the BBC World Service, said in the note sent to staff and reviewed by Reuters yesterday.

A spokesperson for the BBC did not immediately respond to a request for comment from Reuters.

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ECP PROTEST CASE

Pak court rejects Imran Khan bail

DAWN/ ANN

An Islamabad court yesterday rejected the request of PTI chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan, for an extension of his interim bail.

The plea was made in a case pertaining to a protest outside the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) following its decision in the Toshakhana case.

The verdict was announced by Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan on the grounds of non-appearance in court.

Earlier yesterday, the court rejected Imran's request for exemption from appearance on medical grounds. "Imran Khan should appear in court by 1:30pm," the judge said in an order announced at 1:20pm.

The PTI chief has been convalescing in his residence in Lahore ever since he was wounded in an assassination attempt.

During today's hearing, Imran's lawyer Babar Awan told the court that Imran tried to travel to Islamabad but could not.

Previously, the court had granted the PTI chief the last opportunity to appear on February 15.

The case was filed against Imran after PTI workers took to the streets and held demonstrations outside ECP offices across the country.

The reference alleging that Imran had not shared details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana and proceeds from their reported sales was filed by lawmakers from the ruling coalition last year. On October 21, the electoral body had concluded that the former premier had indeed made "false statements and incorrect declarations" regarding the gifts.

The Toshakhana is a department under the Cabinet Division that stores gifts given to rulers and government officials by heads of other governments and foreign dignitaries. According to Toshakhana rules, gifts/presents and other such materials received by persons to whom these rules apply shall be reported to the Cabinet Division.



A photo taken yesterday shows people wading through flood waters in Napier, a coastal city on New Zealand's North Island. Authorities yesterday confirmed three deaths after Cyclone Gabrielle cut a trail of destruction across northern New Zealand, with helicopters plucking people stranded from their roofs as floods surged overnight.

PHOTO: AFP

Rising seas threaten exodus of 'biblical' scale

Warns UN chief, says Bangladesh, India, China are in danger

AFP, United Nations

The UN Secretary-General has warned that global warming could force a mass exodus "on a biblical scale" as people flee low-lying communities and called for legal frameworks to be implemented in preparation, especially for refugees. "The danger is especially acute for nearly 900 million people who live in coastal zones at low elevations -- that's one out of ten people on Earth," Antonio Guterres told the UN Security Council on Tuesday.

"Low-lying communities and entire countries could disappear forever... We would witness a mass exodus of entire populations on a biblical scale," he said. It is not only small island states at risk as sea levels rise, he added.

Countries such as Bangladesh, Chi-

na, India and the Netherlands are all in danger, Guterres said, while "mega-cities on every continent will face serious impacts" -- from Cairo to Jakarta to Los Angeles to Copenhagen.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says sea levels rose by 15-25 centimeters (6-10 inches) between 1900 and 2018.

If the world warms by just two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) compared to the pre-industrial era, then those levels will rise again by 43 centimeters by the year 2100.

But if it warms by three or four degrees Celsius, sea levels could rise by as much as 84 centimeters, the IPCC says.

The problem must be addressed "across legal and human rights frameworks,"

Guterres warned.

Rising sea levels means shrinking land mass, he said, which could drive possible disputes over land and maritime space.

"The current legal regime must look to the future and address any gaps in existing frameworks," including in international refugee law, he said.

It must also provide for the future of states that face losing their land territory completely.

Guterres said the Security Council has a "critical" role to play in addressing "the devastating security challenges arising from rising seas."

The issue has been controversial in the past: In 2021, Russia vetoed a resolution linking climate change and global security, which was supported by the majority of the Council members.



Govt set bar too low

FROM PAGE 16

China it is 10mg.

This analysis was presented in a study conducted by the Centre for Atmospheric Pollution Studies (CAPS) at Stamford University. It was revealed at a seminar at the university yesterday.

The DoE also allows 400mg of sulphur dioxide [SO₂] for plants launched before 2020 and 200mg for those launched later. The numbers are the same for nitrogen oxides [NO_x].

In China, the SO₂ limit is 35mg and NO_x is 50mg and in Japan, the limits are 28mg and 40mg respectively.

But the World Health Organization's limit for PM 2.5 is only 5 microgram per cubic metre, SO₂ is 40 microgram and NO_x is 20 microgram.

Romen Raihan, associate professor of public health and informatics at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, told The Daily Star that inhalation of PM 2.5 beyond limit can cause infections in the upper and lower respiratory tracts that can lead to pneumonia and aggravate asthma symptoms.

The excessive PM 2.5 in

lungs reduces the oxygen level in blood and can result in low birth weight of neonates.

Oxygen deficiency in blood puts stress on the heart which ultimately causes heart diseases, he said.

Ahmad Kamruzzaman Majumder, chairman of Department of Environmental Science at Stamford University, told The Daily Star that the new rules set a standard that would deteriorate air quality. "Our air is already toxic and has hit global headlines for being among the worst in the world."

Easir Arafat Khan, associate professor of Chemical Engineering at BUET, said he and several others made recommendations before the rules were formulated. But some of the recommendations were not reflected in the rules.

PM10 are inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometres and smaller; and PM2.5 are fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometres and smaller. For context, the average human hair is about 70 micrometres in diameter.

Iraq dig

FROM PAGE 16

The joint team from the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Pisa discovered the remains of a primitive refrigeration system, a large oven, benches for diners and around 150 serving bowls.

Fish and animal bones were found in the bowls, alongside evidence of beer drinking, which was widespread among the Sumerians.

"So we've got the refrigerator, we've got the hundreds of vessels ready to be served, benches where people would sit...

and behind the refrigerator is an oven that would have been used... for cooking food," project director Holly Pittman told AFP.

"What we understand this thing to be is a place where people -- regular people -- could come to eat and that is not domestic," she said.

"We call it a tavern because beer is by far the most common drink, even more than water, for the Sumerians", she said, noting that in one of the temples excavated in the area "there was a beer recipe that was found on a cuneiform tablet".

মকিউটো রিপেলেন্ট স্প্রে

ডেঙ্গু ও চিকুনগুনিয়াবাহী মশা থেকে

নিশ্চিত প্রাকৃতিক সুরক্ষা

সরাসরি ত্বকে ব্যবহারোপযোগী

সম্পূর্ণ কেমিক্যালমুক্ত

স্বাস্থ্য বর্ধক হিসেবে
ব্যবহার করুন

কক্সার টেকনোলজিস লিমিটেড

Erosion of democracy to limit US cooperation

FROM PAGE 1
have had about the treatment of certain advocates in civil society, particularly in human rights, concerns about previous elections,” he said.

He added, “The US will continue to voice those concerns in the months to come. But sure, we have confidence and we have heard from the government today their commitment to hold a free and fair election. And we’ll hold into that.”

During his courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday, the premier said, “The next election will be fair and free. I fought for democracy throughout my life.”

She reiterated that the Election Commission is completely independent.

Prime Minister’s speechwriter Md Nazrul Islam briefed reporters afterwards.

Hasina said if the people vote for the Awami League in the next general election, her party will govern the country.

“I never want to come to power through vote-rigging,” she said, adding that she always struggled for the people’s rights to food and vote.

She said the first-ever EC reconstitution law was passed in parliament and then a neutral EC was constituted based on the law.

The PM said that apart from the Awami League, no other political party in the country had any base at the grassroots. The BNP and the Jatiya Party were born in the cantonment.

Hasina said the transformation of Bangladesh has become visible over the last 14 years of her government.

The Russia-Ukraine war and the Rohingya issues also came up for discussion during her meeting with Chollet.

She said the world should stop this war as it has caused high inflation and commodity prices throughout the globe.

Mentioning that the US is the most powerful country, she said it can take steps to stop the war. The disputes can be settled through negotiations, she said.

About the Rohingyas, the premier said they have become a burden on Bangladesh and some of them are getting involved in criminal activities like drug and human trafficking,

militancy, and infightings.

She asked the international community to assist the initiative in Bhashanchar and try their best for quick and amicable repatriation of the Rohingyas.

Chollet said the US would try their best for the repatriation of the displaced people but added that the repatriation will be possible when a democratic government assumes power in Myanmar again.

PM’s Private Industry and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman, PM’s Principal Secretary M Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, and US Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas were present.

Chollet’s tour comes high on the heels of a series of visits by high-profile US officials in recent months.

The US is Bangladesh’s biggest foreign direct investor, and donor for the Rohingya crisis. It wants Bangladesh on its side under its Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Dhaka’s relations with Washington saw some strains following the sanctions on Rab and some of its officials and for not inviting Bangladesh to Biden’s Summit for Democracy in 2021.

Dhaka is eager to have the sanctions withdrawn. It also wants more support for the Rohingya crisis, climate change adaptation, and reinstatement of the GSP facilities that were suspended after Rana Plaza collapse in 2013.

Asked when will the sanctions on the Rab be lifted, Chollet, at the meeting with senior journalists, said it was good that there has been a decline in extrajudicial killings over the last one year.

“Nevertheless, in order to really turn the page on this issue, we are going to need to see sustained reforms as well as accountability [of the Rab],” he said.

“Quite frankly, I don’t think we’re there yet on these fronts ...We are committed to continuing to help Bangladesh strengthen the rule of law and security. But until we see accountability, until we see sustained reforms, we are not going to be able to turn the page on that.”

Asked why Bangladesh was not invited to the second summit for democracy, scheduled for March 29-30, Chollet said after the first summit

for democracy, the US asked all the countries to come up with a plan of action for the coming year.

“Many of them came up with their own plan of action, but Bangladesh chose not to ... That’s its decision to make. We’re looking forward to, perhaps in the future, them [Bangladesh] coming up with their own plan of action to be able to contribute to this important effort,” he said.

Chollet said part of the reason why he came to Bangladesh is to send the message that the US will continue to support Bangladesh on the Rohingya issue despite many challenges around the world.

While the US continues to work for improving conditions in Myanmar, it will also work with Bangladesh to ease the sufferings of the people inside the camps.

US Ambassador Peter Haas, The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam, Samakal acting editor Muzammil Husain, The Daily Ittefaq Editor Tasnima Hossain, The Business Standard Editor Inam Ahmed, AFP Bureau Chief Shafiqul Alam, Jamuna TV CEO Fahim Ahmed, and Channel 24 Executive Director Talat Mahmud were present at the event.

Chollet left Dhaka last night.

Invest more in Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 2
as part of the celebration of 50 years of the diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and South Korea.

The envoy said that his country is keen to strengthen the bilateral ties with Bangladesh further in the next 50 years.

The relationship will grow gradually from strength to strength in the days to come, said the Presidential Envoy and Senior Secretary for Future Strategy in the Office of the President of Republic of Korea.

Diplomatic relations were established 50 years ago as South Korea recognised Bangladesh on May 12, 1972.

During the meeting, the South Korean presidential envoy shared his personal experiences regarding his visit to Bangabandhu Memorial Museum yesterday morning.

At least \$4.45b needed to cover fuel costs

FROM PAGE 1
He hoped that there will no interruption in the fuel supply chain during the summer months.

Whether the government would be able to make the funds available to import the fuel necessary for power generation remains to be seen as the pressure on foreign currency reserves that saw acute loadshedding between August and November last year – is yet to subside.

As of February 8, foreign currency reserves stood at \$32.6 billion, down 28.1 percent from a year earlier – and enough to cover four months’ import bills, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

“In such a situation, it will not be possible to spend \$4.45 billion for fuel import – PDB’s estimation needs revision,” said Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

There were talks of the government increasing the local gas supply and setting up solar systems in schools and for irrigation as alternate options.

“Then why will they need the huge amount of money to import fuel?”

The government is trying to control imports in different sectors to preserve dollars. “PDB’s plan is contradictory to the government’s initiatives,” Moazzem added.

PDB’s plan to ensure 16,000MW electricity a day is appreciable as it

would go some way towards bringing down loadshedding and people’s sufferings, said Mohammad Tamim, professor of petroleum and mineral resources engineering at BUET.

“But from where they would be able to manage the dollars? It will be challenging,” he added.

The ongoing dollar crisis is PDB’s concern too.

And to meet the additional demand amid the narrow fiscal space, PDB is aiming to get the most out of the gas-fired power plants as those are the cheapest electricity generators.

In fiscal 2021-22 fiscal year, the cost per kilowatt-hour of electricity by gas-fired power plants was Tk 3.46. In contrast, it was Tk 9.17 for coal-fired plants, Tk 22.10 for furnace oil-based plants and Tk 154.11 for diesel-fired plants.

Of the 23,482 megawatts of electricity production capacity, gas-fired power plants account for 47.8 percent, furnace oil 25.2 percent, coal-fired plants 11.1 percent and diesel-run plants 5.5 percent.

Subsequently, PDB has asked Petrobangla to provide 1,200 million cubic feet (mmcf) of gas a day.

Recently, in a letter to the finance division, Petrobangla wrote that they will need around \$1.75 billion in five months to meet the demand for liquefied natural gas through spot purchases and long-term contracts.

The state-owned agency plans to

import 10-12 cargo LNG from the spot market by June. Another 24 cargo is expected under long-term agreements with Qatar and Oman, said a Petrobangla official requesting anonymity.

This will require \$1.75 billion, he said.

“Additional money will be needed as we have a liquidity crisis now. PDB said they will need additional gas but we have not got our dues from the company. Bangladesh Bank also doesn’t cooperate with us,” he added.

In another letter to the finance division, PDB sought \$750 million to import coal for the local coal-fired power plants including Payra and Rampal power plants.

Individual power producers told The Daily Star that they would require \$1.15 billion to import furnace oil and diesel to produce electricity as per PDB’s demand.

The Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation will need \$2.225 billion to import fuel, 10 percent of which will be needed for power generation.

Power Cell Director General Mohammad Hossain is hopeful of a better summer this year.

“Most of the coal-fired power plants are now in operation. Though the coal price hiked abnormally in the international market, we are trying to get it as coal is cheaper than furnace oil and diesel,” he added.

US MASS SHOOTING

Biden demands Congress act on gun violence

AFP, Washington

US President Joe Biden called on Congress Tuesday to act against America’s epidemic of gun violence, one day after a new massacre on a Michigan university campus killed three people and injured five.

As the leader of a nation plagued by daily shootings, Biden said he had promised the state’s Democratic governor the “deployment of all necessary federal law enforcement.”

The gunman shot his victims, all students, during a rampage on the Michigan State University (MSU) campus before dying of a self-inflicted gunshot wound several hours later.

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Chhatra League must be reined in

Will AL ever do anything about the criminality of its student wing?

There seems to be no end to the criminality of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL). In its latest display of atrocities, two BCL leaders of Islamic University (IU) in Kushtia have allegedly tortured a female student for hours. The two accused are Sanjida Chowdhury, vice-president of the IU BCL unit, and Tabassum Islam, an activist of the same unit. The victim, a first-year student, said she was at the Sheikh Hasina Hall when the accused took her to one of the gono-rooms (common rooms) at around 11pm on February 12, mercilessly beat her, insulted her using obscene language, forcibly stripped her naked, and took videos of her.

According to a written complaint submitted by the victim, after torturing her till 3:30am, the accused threatened that she would be driven out of the hall, and the video would be circulated, if she told anyone about the incident. A report by *Prothom Alo* revealed that this was not the first time that such an incident happened in IU. On the condition of anonymity, a number of students alleged that another female student was tortured similarly by BCL last year. They further alleged that Sanjida controls a group perpetrating such heinous offenses at the university.

According to another *Prothom Alo* report coming out on the same day, a male student of Rajshahi University also alleged that BCL members had locked him up in a room and mentally and physically tortured him. He said he had been threatened by the university's BCL General Secretary Naim Islam and 7-8 of his followers to vacate a dorm room that was allotted to him recently. When he refused to comply, they took him to Naim's room, and beat him up.

As the avalanche of media reports on BCL will suggest, its unchecked operation on nearly every university campus in the country has led to similar incidents of harassment and torture – and even murder, as in the case of BUET's Abrar Fahad – of ordinary students and rival political activists alike. We are treated to such horrific news almost every day. Just the day before, for example, this newspaper reported how BCL members are now increasingly getting involved in mugging-related activities in Dhaka University. After over a decade of establishing total control over all campuses – through torture, barbarities and collusion with university administrations – it seems the BCL has now turned into a full-blown criminal gang.

And why wouldn't it, when the ruling party itself has provided it with constant patronage to the effect of making university administrations and law enforcement agencies totally unwilling to take meaningful action against BCL atrocities? Instead of disciplining BCL, whose members have been involved in some of the most serious crimes as per the law of the land, ruling party high-ups have blatantly defended it, despite the ever-growing list of victims and protests from all sections of society. We call on the ruling party to abandon this strategy. It must show its commitment to democratic principles as well as establishing the rule of law for everyone.

A good incentive for primary students

School feeding project must be quickly and efficiently executed

We welcome the news of a government plan to introduce a new school feeding programme for students of all state-run primary schools starting July. According to a report by this daily, the primary and mass education ministry is set to complete a feasibility test for the mid-day meals project this month, and will start preparing a Development Project Proposal in March. Feeding programmes for government schools have existed in various forms since the country was liberated. They have always been an important part of the school system, ensuring that students not only consume a chunk of their required daily calories in school, but also stay at school.

As per data of the primary education ministry, attendance rose by 6.6 percent and dropouts fell by 6 percent in schools covered by the last government feeding programme (which ended in June last year). However, given the patchy track record of the planning and implementation of government feeding programmes, we also feel the need to be cautious in our optimism.

One may recall that the last proposed large-scale school meal project had made headlines for all the wrong reasons. In August 2020, the primary and mass education ministry had proposed a Tk 17,290 crore undertaking to feed 1.41 crore students of 65,566 government primary schools for five years. Controversy arose when the planning commission identified several unnecessary expenses in the proposal. The allocation for foreign trips by officials to "cook khichuri" – or as in the ministry's words, to "gather knowledge about implementation of mid-day meal programmes at schools" – was criticised. The proposal was ultimately rejected by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) headed by the prime minister. But it now stands as an example of how important projects like school feeding programmes can be derailed due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and mismanagement. This, we hope, will not happen with the latest feeding project under consideration.

It is also crucial that the new programme is implemented as soon as possible. The government's last school feeding programme ran from 2010 till June 2022, under which the authorities provided 75 grams of fortified biscuits to nearly 3 million schoolchildren in 104 upazilas. But it has already been almost eight months since public school students have been deprived of free meals provided by the government. This cannot go on – especially at a time when difficult Covid recovery and global inflation have strained the economy, making dropout seem like an unavoidable choice for many poor students and households.

We urge all relevant authorities to come up with a proposal for the mid-day meals programme that will be sensible. A speedy and efficient implementation is key to ensuring that students, especially in the most poverty-stricken areas of the country, will not only receive proper nutrition but also will stay focused in school.

Presidential election, AL strategy and the next polls



THE STREET VIEW

Mohammad Al-Masum Molla
is chief reporter at
The Daily Star.

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Although there was much speculation about who would become the next president of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and although some had reported about the "frontrunners," no one knew what was about to happen. The name Md Shahabuddin as president was not even muttered under the breath so far as the media was concerned. Not just every news outlet, but most of the country, including senior ministers, appeared to have been in the dark.

But then, the ruling party stalwarts could not really express discontent for not being involved in the decision. The entire leadership of the Awami League willingly and happily relinquished any authority they had and to allow the party president, who is also the prime minister, to nominate the next president of the country.

The nomination of a president is not to be taken lightly. The next parliamentary election is due to take place early next year, and the newly elected president will be in office at that time.

When the 2014 election was held, the BNP and other opposition political parties boycotted the polls to make them questionable. But the ruling party employed a strategy whereby 153 constituencies saw their MPs elected uncontested, which meant that even before the election was held, the Awami League had secured a mandate to form the government.

And then in 2018, the general election was also highly questionable with widespread allegations, including from lawmakers and diplomats considered "friendly" to the ruling Awami League, that the election was held "the night before." The Awami League returned to power with an overwhelming two-thirds majority.

Now that Bangladesh is less than a year away from the next parliamentary election, everyone is speculating about



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

the ruling party's strategy to win for the fourth consecutive term.

This nomination showed that the Awami League president is fully capable of pulling off a surprise without even the party stalwarts finding out. Not only was Sheikh Hasina able to evince her political shrewdness, but also that her party's strategy for the next election would most likely be a surprise as well – one that will ensure another five years in office for her party. On the face of it, this presidential nomination should at least boost the morale of the party loyalists and reassure them of another electoral victory.

Although the post of the president is mostly ceremonial – the president acts as advised by the prime minister, except when appointing the premier and the chief justice – it takes on some significance during elections

when the president assumes more of an executive role, issuing directives to the Election Commission.

According to Section 5(2) of the Representation of the People's Order, 1972, all executive authorities of the government shall assist the Election Commission in performing its functions, and for this purpose, the

Shahabuddin, in a television interview said it was not only the desire of the government, but also the desire of the whole world that the next general election in Bangladesh be held with the participation of all political parties.

"If there is a national disaster or if there is any anarchy regarding the

president may, after consultation with the commission, issue such directions as they may deem necessary.

So, while the BNP and other opposition parties have been staging demonstrations demanding elections under a non-partisan government, threatening to boycott the polls (if held under the ruling government), coupled with the mounting pressure to hold an all-inclusive election, the role of the election-time president will be crucial.

Speaking to *Prothom Alo*, senior Awami League leader Matia Chowdhury said the prime minister had chosen a person (for president) who had full faith in the country and the principles of the constitution, and would also have a strong stand against unrest and anarchy.

The newly elected president, Md

election, or if there is a deliberate attempt to sabotage the electoral environment, the president has some work to do," he said. "I am not going to back down from that. I am a freedom fighter; I liberated this country. We gave so much blood for the country. So if there is an attempt to create anarchy, I will play my role in making the election fair. But I would like to exercise my power judiciously and fairly so that there is no bias. So that people realise that their president has done his part for the country."

Predictably, the president has been quite the talk of the town over the last few days, as well as the likely strategy the Awami League may adopt in the run-up to the election. But as the ruling party president has shown, all those speculations could well turn out to be mere conjecture.

Clean energy will reduce our fiscal burden



Shafiqul Alam
is an energy analyst at the Institute
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SHAFIQU ALAM

Bangladesh's energy and power sectors continue to experience the pinch due to its reliance on expensive imported liquefied natural gas (LNG), coal and oil. This is increasing the country's fiscal burden, eventually prompting the government to pass the cost on to the consumers. For instance, amid the high fossil fuel costs, the government raised the price of electricity twice in a span of 20 days in January 2023. Between these electricity price hikes, the government increased gas prices from 14 percent to 179 percent for different sectors.

While the government cites fiscal reasons for such price hikes, the country's average power generation cost will increase considerably without any major overhaul of the imported fossil-fuel-dependent energy system. Moreover, high fuel and electricity prices will affect industries, and the power sector may still struggle to ensure an uninterrupted electricity supply.

This situation makes clean energy investment an even more compelling case for Bangladesh to reduce its fiscal burden.

The new gas price for power generation, effective from February 1, costs the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) an additional Tk 9 per cubic metre (CM). Analysing the BPDB's gas-based power plants' average generation costs, based on FY 2021-22's revised annual report, the incremental gas-based electricity generation cost is Tk 2 per kilowatt-hour (kWh).

In the same breath, coal remains costly at USD 245 per tonne in the international market, 88 percent higher than USD 130 per tonne considered in FY 2021-22 by the BPDB.

Hence, the average cost of coal-based power generation will shoot up by the end of FY 2022-23.

On the other hand, BPDB's average electricity purchase cost from independent power producers (IPPs) in FY 2021-22 was Tk 11.55 per kWh.

In all likelihood, Bangladesh's average power generation cost will cross double digits in taka during FY 2022-23, compared to Tk 8.84 per kWh in FY 2021-22. Therefore, the BPDB, despite recent electricity price hikes, will have a huge revenue shortfall. Notably, the subsidy burden of the power sector during FY 2021-22 was Tk 29,700 crore, which may further rise in FY 2022-23.

The government will ultimately feel the exigencies to pass the additional costs on to the consumers.

Following the unprecedented gas price hike, the government resumed LNG import from the spot market for the first time since July 2022. It recently ordered one LNG cargo, costing Tk 850 crore, and intends to purchase up to 12 LNG cargoes in 2023. Even if the next 11 cargoes are 25 percent cheaper, the total cost of 12 LNG cargoes will be more than Tk 7,850 crore.

Apart from gas, there are other areas of concern. For instance, the government needs funds to keep coal-based power plants operational to circumvent load-shedding. Reportedly, outstanding bills of the Payra coal-fired power plant against coal purchase reached USD 168 million. Banks declined opening Letters of Credit (LC) for further coal import. The widening foreign currency reserves earlier caused a delay in loan repayment for the Payra plant.

With the annual requirement of four million tonnes of coal to run the

Payra power plant at full capacity, the government requires substantial foreign currency to keep the plant operational throughout the year. Although the current coal price stands at USD 245 per tonne, considering a reduced coal price of USD 200 per tonne, the cost of fuel to operate the Payra plant from February to December 2023 will be a whopping USD 733 million.

Moreover, due to coal shortages, the first of the two units of the Rampal power plant suspended generation after just 29 days of commercial operation.

In all likelihood, Bangladesh's average power generation cost will cross double digits in taka during FY 2022-23, compared to Tk 8.84 per kWh in FY 2021-22. Therefore, the BPDB, despite recent electricity price hikes, will have a huge revenue shortfall. Notably, the subsidy burden of the power sector during FY 2021-22 was Tk 29,700 crore, which may further rise in FY 2022-23.

Keeping both power plants operational would heavily burden foreign currency reserves because of coal imports. If electricity production in Payra and Rampal power plants at full capacity cannot be ensured, Bangladesh will again opt for electricity rationing during the summer of 2023.

Industries have been the hardest hit due to gas shortages as they use this fuel in process and captive generation. As such, owners of textile industries previously expressed interest in paying around 40 percent

higher gas price, provided that the government imports additional LNG to fill the demand-supply gap. However, an 88 percent increase in gas prices has made captive power generation considerably expensive. The cost of gas per kWh of electricity from a captive unit now stands at Tk 6.58 against roughly Tk 3.5 in January 2023.

Similarly, two rounds of increase in electricity tariffs mean the cost of grid electricity for large industries, if purchased at a flat rate, is now Tk 9.32 per kWh compared to what was Tk 8.45 per kWh in December 2022.

With rising production costs, the apparel sector, which contributes to more than 80 percent of our export earnings, will lose its profit margin unless it can transfer the additional cost to international buyers or receive cash incentives from the government.

The cost of grid electricity has reached a level that it now provides a strong market signal to industries to promptly increase rooftop solar systems to reduce operational costs. Similarly, the rapidly rising average cost of electricity generation in the country makes a compelling economic case for Bangladesh to enhance deflationary renewable energy at the grid scale to rein in the soaring power generation costs and contain the challenges of imported fossil fuels.

Alongside this, energy efficiency measures on the demand side would reduce significant energy consumption and thus cut down on the import of LNG, coal and oil. High energy prices also demonstrate the strong financial viability of energy efficiency interventions.

While enhancing the share of renewable energy and optimising energy consumption through energy efficiency sound ambitious, these are achievable with proper action plans.

Both renewable energy and energy efficiency will immediately impact Bangladesh's energy and power systems. This is why the government and private sector should direct capital investments on the ground towards promoting renewable energy and enhancing energy efficiency.

What 50 years of World Bank partnership meant for us



Anu Muhammad is a professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University.

ANU MUHAMMAD

Fifty years of partnership between Bangladesh and the World Bank was celebrated recently. Events were held, praises were sung, and the organisation’s managing director of operations visited the country to join celebrations. Now that we have crossed this landmark, perhaps it’s time we analysed what this relationship has truly meant for Bangladesh.

The World Bank is generally known as a donor agency and a development partner. It is also an integral part of our foreign loan infrastructure. “Foreign aid” and “donor agencies” are frequently uttered terms, but their usage is actually misleading. If we take a loan from any bank, such as Sonali Bank or Krishi Bank or Agrani Bank, we don’t call them donors. Neither do we say that they are providing aid to us. We say that we are doing our work using a loan from these banks. The World Bank functions in a similar way, and the money to pay them back comes from the taxpayers. Therefore, what is known as World Bank’s money is actually people’s money.

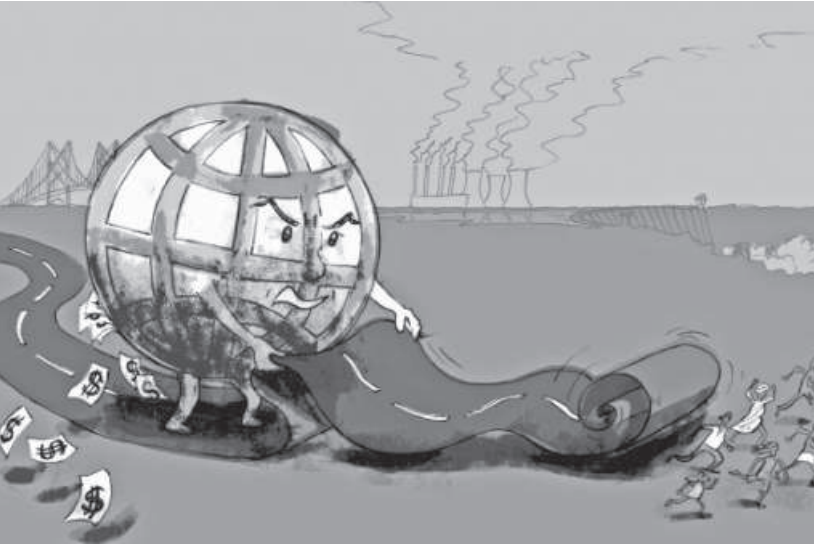
Officially, the World Bank lends money to countries for “development.” The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is its closest ally in monitoring the monetary systems of different countries. There is the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the Asian region, too. They are highly ideologically biased financial partners, so there are similarities between these three agencies in terms of policy outlines, methods of operation and their relationship with different countries. It is not possible to take a loan from one agency when another is hostile.



When a country takes loans from these organisations, the burden of paying off the debt and the incurring interests builds up. But this is not the major component of the whole process. The main agenda of these agencies is to carry out programmes to control and shape policy frameworks or push for structural changes in the countries seeking loans, to make it convenient for big capital. With various conditions and terms, they try to change the direction of the economies to make more space for big business groups.

To this end, these global agencies have been very successful in Bangladesh, accomplishing many things here that they could not in other countries. They have been able to create a strong support base among the elites – politicians, bureaucrats, university teachers, think tank leaders, policymakers, consultants, etc. – to push forward a neoliberal agenda. These agencies talk a lot about transparency and accountability, but they themselves have none of those qualities.

For example, the World Bank gave loans for the “development” of Bangladesh’s jute sector, but people never knew the details of those loans – the documents were highly confidential. In approving USD 247 million as “Jute Sector Adjustment



Credit” (JSAC), the bank did not ask to diversify the industry, remove corrupt officials, regularise jute purchase system, strengthen innovation and development, and modernise the mills. Rather, their conditions to disburse the loan in instalments included closing the public mills and downsizing others, reducing the number of permanent workers, wage restructuring, etc. What happened then? We saw a large number of jute factories close down since that loan was granted in 1994, including the world famous Adamjee Jute Mill, which was shut down in 2002. The present government closed down the remaining jute mills in 2020. The huge potential of this environment-friendly industry was sacrificed.

We hear the organisation works as a “development partner in the energy sector” by giving us aid and loans. But, in reality, it works to hand over public resources and services to profit-making private entities. Since the early 1980s, it has been pushing for privatisation and commercialisation of this sector. The first elaborate report by the World Bank on Bangladesh’s energy sector, released in 1982, assessed that the size of the country’s gas reserves was 10 trillion cubic feet and asked to “secure the participation of foreign oil companies in this area.” It also argued that since the supply of gas is “likely to remain well in excess of Bangladesh’s expected internal needs,” exporting gas was the best option. Later, during the late 90s, there was huge pressure from the bank, company, consultants and embassies to export gas through a pipeline to India.

These agencies also tried to push for open pit mining in Phulbari to export coal by destroying three crop lands, water resources, and evicting about a million people to give business to a fraudulent British company. All those would have happened and made the situation worse had the people not put up a resistance.

These organisations don’t like the growth of national capability; they consider it an obstacle to the free market process. Instead of developing our national capacity to explore and produce natural gas in still-unexplored areas, and also developing institutional capabilities to mainstream renewable energy, the government opted for highly expensive, import-oriented “solutions”: coal, nuclear power and LNG. This whole policy structure that came from their energy sector policy guidelines gave big profits to some

local and foreign businesses, but put our whole industry and businesses in a vulnerable position and the country in a severe energy and financial crisis.

The same World Bank took another initiative in the late 1980s to “help” Bangladesh after the massive floods of 1987-88, and finalised a megaproject titled “Flood Action Plan” in 1990. The plan was all about the construction of 4.5-7.5-metre high and nearly

4,000km long embankments on both sides of three major rivers in the country, with the initial loan of USD 5-10 billion. This was a disastrous plan for the country’s river system which people also had to resist. But they have still seeped into the government policies under different names and projects.

Drinking water has also become a costly commodity as an outcome of their projects. Dhaka Wasa, for example, has increased its water tariff a total of 15 times since 2009. Dhaka Wasa has undertaken many projects with foreign loans; these projects brought good fortune for many people including the officials, consultants, contractors and suppliers, but could not ensure safe drinking water for the people.

There are allegations that these agencies, not only in Bangladesh but worldwide, have an incentive programme for various key people as a form of bribes, and they prefer corrupt partners as it is convenient for them to sell their agenda, as described by John Perkins in his book *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, or as narrated by Graham Hancock in his book *Lords of Poverty*.

From the very beginning, Bangladesh needed to work on three things: national capability, universal public education, and universal healthcare. These three could never flourish because of the dominant development model. Instead, in the last 50 years, a super-rich class was consolidated, inequality deepened, and environmental disasters made people’s lives miserable. This is the result of the policy structures formulated and/or supported by these agencies.

The World Bank et al like to claim that all of these responsibilities fall on the governments. Yes, governments must bear the primary responsibility for all anti-people, anti-environment policies, looting and wastage, but these agencies must also be brought under scrutiny, because they play the key role behind all these. Therefore, people in many countries, including the US and Europe, organised people’s tribunals to make them accountable; we also did so in 2007. Unless we make these organisations along with their local partners accountable, we cannot claim true freedom or create a development policy that will serve all of our people.

Transcribed and translated by Anupam Debashis Roy.

Politics of aid

How Syria suffers due to shortage of critical aid



A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her Twitter handle is @tasneem_tayeb

TASNEEM TAYEB

The three devastating earthquakes last week that rocked Turkey and Syria have claimed the lives of more than 41,000 people (as of 3:30 pm Bangladesh time, February 15) and caused the displacement of millions in the region. While the international community did come forward with aid and rescue efforts to support the affected people, Syria – war-ravaged and in the grips of abject poverty and inexplicable human sufferings – was given a second-class treatment.

From sanctions imposed by the West, including the US, to the international community’s slow response in pledging aid and support and mobilising resources – except for a few countries including Bangladesh – to the earthquake-ravaged Bab al-Hawa land crossing connecting northwest Syria with Turkey (the only access point internationally acknowledged), aid reaching Syria has been inadequate, to say the least.

In the aftermath of the earthquakes, volunteer group the White Helmets, also known as the Syria Civil Defence, which operates in the rebel-held northern areas, took on the rescue operations and saved thousands from under the rubbles of levelled infrastructure with their bare hands, thanks to an acute shortage of rescue tools. Videos and pictures flooded the internet as White Helmets struggled to rescue as many people as they could. Meanwhile, in the critical first 72 hours, when chances of saving lives and rescuing people are the highest, the world watched the human tragedy intensify in Syria, like silent spectators.

Death toll in Syria currently stands over 5,800 (as of 3:30 pm Bangladesh time, February 15). With every passing hour, chances of finding survivors are becoming slimmer.

While initially adamant, in the

face of continued criticism from various quarters, including the United Nations – Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, “This is a moment in which everybody must make very clear that no sanctions of any kind should interfere with relief to the population of Syria in the present moment.” – international organisations, relief and rescue organisations, and human rights bodies, the US has finally relented and exempted earthquake aid into Syria from sanctions for 180 days. But not before the damage has been done and the critical 72-hour window has closed.

Even the UN acknowledged their failure to reach the much needed aid and relief supplies to Syria, in the face of the denunciation from the rescue workers working night and day. “We have so far failed the people in northwest Syria. They rightly feel abandoned. Looking for international help that hasn’t arrived,” tweeted Martin Griffiths, UN’s aid and relief chief.

It was shocking to see that no aid convoys reached the affected areas in Syria for the first three days after the earthquakes. Damage sustained by the Bab al-Hawa crossing have been cited as the reason. However, this could have been avoided had the West, for once, risen above the politics of aid and worked hands-on with the Assad regime and the opposing forces to provide for the victims, equitably.

Syria is already struggling from the shocks of a 12-year civil war; the Syrian people have been subjected to the vicious trauma of war, death, poverty and displacement—6.9 million people are internally displaced and about 13,000 children have endured death or sustained injuries since 2011. A UN report released last year revealed that more than 306,000 civilians have been killed in the civil war that began

in March 2011. Around 13 million people – about half the country’s population – have been forcibly displaced during this time.

Some of the people have been displaced up to 20 times since the civil war unfolded. They have very limited access to food (more than 12 million people are food insecure in Syria, which has seen an increase of 51 percent since 2019), safe accommodation, medical care or basic utility supplies.

These should have been enough reasons for the international community to rise above politics and come to the aid of the Syrian people in the aftermath of the earthquakes. Unfortunately, that was not the case. Even before the earthquake, only 50 percent of the required USD 4 billion aid could be secured. And even as lives in Syria got buried – perhaps forever – under the wreckage of the earthquake, the White Helmets could do little to save lives, despite their best efforts, due to a lack of resources.

“We could have saved many more people if we had the technology and heavy machinery needed to lift debris.. All of the aid and necessary provisions given to the overcrowded relief centres are donated by volunteers, civil organisations and charities on the ground,” shared a 26-year-old White Helmets volunteer, Fatima Obeid.

Perhaps kindness and compassion are afforded only to a selected few, and the helpless Syrians are certainly not among them. Had this been the scenario in some Western country – victims with whom people in power can relate to – perhaps it would have elicited empathy and prompted forthcoming support.

The West once again failed the people of Syria, and it did not even come as a surprise. But where the West failed, the others – governments, organisations, and individuals from various corners of the world – rose to the occasion. But Syria needs more. The shortages of aid and relief supplies are acute. The least the countries that have taken advantage of the civil war – directly and indirectly, by participating or by selling arms to and partnering with the attackers – can do is repay the people of Syria for everything they have taken from them.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Memo No. 37.03.9131.304.07.001.22.443

Date: ০২ ফেব্রুৱাৰী ১৪২৯ বঙ্গাব্দ
15 February 2023

e-Tender Notice (Re-Tender)

e-Tender Notice will be invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.procure.gov.bd>) for following procurement:

Sl. No.	Re-Tender ID No.	Description	Tender security	Online notice publication date & time	Online tender opening date & time
1	758187	Supply of Computer for Establishing New Lab	270000	16-Feb-2023 23:50	09-Mar-2023 10:00
2	759030	Supply of Raw Materials and Spare Parts of CT Technology	4000	16-Feb-2023 23:50	09-Mar-2023 10:00

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

Sd/-
Mohammed Rehan Uddin
Principal (Additional Charge)
Phone: 02-99632528

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ড্রাট কমিশনারেট, কুলানা।
ই-মেইল : khulnavathq@gmail.com

নথি নং- ১(১)২৩-জিএস/পাব্লিক/সল নম্বর ২০২৩/৬৩০৩

তারিখ: ১৫/০২/২০২৩ খ্রি

“মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়া দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি”

কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ড্রাট কমিশনারেট, কুলানা এর অধিক্ষেত্রে একদফা ভাড়া ভাড়া দরপত্র ও ভাড়া বর্ধক নির্দেশ, কর্তৃক নির্দেশিত যাত্রাকার এবং নির্দেশিত দায়িত্ব কর্মক্ষেত্রে-এর মাধ্যমে ভাড়া ভাড়া দরপত্র নির্দেশিত তারিখ হতে ৩০.০৬.২০২৩ খ্রি পূর্ব মাসিক ভিত্তিতে ০১ (এক) টি মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়া দরপত্র মাসিক/ত্রৈমাসিক-এর নির্দেশিত তারিখ প্যাকেজিসমূহের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাবে।

ক্র. সনাক্তকরণ নম্বর	১	কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ড্রাট কমিশনারেট, কুলানা।
০২. ক্রয়ের নাম	১	নুনতম ০৭ (সাত) অসল বিশিষ্ট ১৩০০ সিএস এর নিম্নে এবং ২০১৬ বা তার পরবর্তী সনের ভালে কমিশনের মডেলের ০১ (এক) টি মাইক্রোবাস (মালিক নাম) ভাড়া।
০৩. ক্রয়ের উদ্দেশ্য	১	সড়ক পরিবহন বিভাগে।
০৪. দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	১	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি।
০৫. দরপত্রের বৈধতা	১	নিম্নের ৬ প্রতিষ্ঠানের নামে গাড়ী মালিকানা সম্পর্কিত কুল দলিলবি অংশই থাকতে হবে (হালধাবান নবায়নকৃত ট্রাক লাইসেন্স, হালধাবান আভাস সনাক্তকরণ সন, সি, আই, এন), ড্রাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনাক্তকরণ, সর্বস্বত্বের গাড়ীর হালধাবান ক্র-ডক, ট্রাক ট্যাক্স, ফিটনেস, ইন্সুরেন্স এবং গাড়ী মালিকানা কুল ড্রাইং; লাইসেন্স সহ অন্যান্য কাগজপত্র বা দলিলপত্রের সমন্বিত মতাক্ষেপ।
০৬. দরপত্র দাখিলের সর্বশেষ তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	১	০২/০৩/২০২৩ খ্রি তারিখ ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত (সকাল ১২.০০ ঘটিকা) কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ড্রাট কমিশনারেট, কুলানা।
০৭. দরপত্র ফেরতের তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	১	০২/০৩/২০২৩ খ্রি তারিখ ১২.০০ ঘটিকা কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ড্রাট কমিশনারেট, কুলানা (সকাল ১২.০০)।

দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী

১. দরপত্র প্রস্তুতকারী অর্থাৎ ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানকে কুল কমিশনার, কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ড্রাট কমিশনারেট, কুলানা বরাবরে সীলমোহরকৃত কুল ভাড়া দরপত্র প্যাকেজিসমূহের মাধ্যমে করতে হবে। প্রস্তুতকারকের নামে উপরে ‘সরকারের বৈধতা’ এর বিশদীকৃত উপস্থাপিত সকল কাগজপত্র/দলিলপত্র মতাক্ষেপ (১ম স্টেপ) প্রস্তুতকৃত কর্তৃক কর্তৃক সনাক্তকরণ। অংশই দলিল করতে হবে।
২. সীলমোহরকৃত কুলের উপর দরপত্রের নাম ও ঠিকানা, টেলিফোন নম্বর উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
৩. মাইক্রোবাসের জন্য প্রস্তুতকৃত দর হিসেবে সৈনিক ভাড়া হার এবং মাসিক ভাড়া হার সুস্পষ্টভাবে (অনেক এবং কমা) উল্লেখ করতে হবে (কুলসীল) ও সকল প্রকার খরচ সহ।
৪. দরপত্র কোন প্রকার কমা-মোড় এবং গভীর রাইটিং করা সম্পূর্ণ নিষিদ্ধ এবং কোনপ্রকার শর্ত আরোপ করা যাবে না।
৫. সীলমোহরকৃত কুলে দরপত্র প্রার্থী ০২/০৩/২০২৩ খ্রি তারিখ বেল ১২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে এ দরপত্র পদ্ধতি টেন্ডার বাল্লি ফেল করতে হবে, যা একই দিন ১২.০০ ঘটিকার সময় দরপত্রদাখিলের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) ফেলা হবে। উক্ত দিন ভাড়া দরপত্র পদ্ধতি এ দরপত্র পদ্ধতি/প্রার্থীর জন্য উপস্থিত রাখতে হবে।
৬. মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়া মেয়াদ কার্যকর উপস্থিতি তারিখ হতে ৩০/০৬/২০২৩ খ্রি তারিখ পর্যন্ত মেয়াদ কাল্য থাকবে।
৭. মাইক্রোবাসটি কুল কুলানা কমিশনারেটের সকল স্টেশন ব্যবহার হবে। তবে প্রয়োজনে পার্শ্ববর্তী অন্য কোন স্টেশনও ব্যবহার হতে পারে। মাইক্রোবাসটি প্রতিদিন সকাল হতে হতে ১০.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত প্রয়োজনে চলতে হতে পারে।
৮. সনাক্তকরণ বর্ধক দিন এক সপ্তাহের ভিতরে দিন প্রয়োজনে মাইক্রোবাস সরবরাহ করতে হবে। এ জন্য মাসিক ভাড়া অতিরিক্ত ভাড়া লাই করা যাবে না অর্থাৎ এ হিসেবে ভাড়া মাসিক ভাড়া হতে অর্ধেক থাকবে।
৯. মাইক্রোবাস সরবরাহকালীন সময়ে যেকোন স্টেশন কার্যে গাড়ী চালানো বিধি খণ্ডিত কিংবা গাড়ী চালক অসুস্থ থাকলে, গাড়ী চালক/বিকল্প গাড়ী চালককে বিকল্প গাড়ী ব্যবস্থা করতে হবে।
১০. মাইক্রোবাসের মালিকানা, মালিকের ড্রাইং, লাইসেন্স ও কোন প্রকার দুর্ঘটনা সনাক্তকরণ যে কোন প্রকার আইনগত দায়িত্বের দায়িত্ব মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়া প্রদানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানকেই বহন করতে হবে। টেন্ডার প্রার্থী টেন্ডার সীলটি যে সময় প্রস্তুতকৃত গাড়ী প্রদান করেন উক্ত গাড়ীর সময় উল্লেখ করে কার্যকর করা হবে।
১১. সরকারি সিদ্ধান্ত অনুযায়ী প্রয়োজ কুল সমাধান করা (ড্রাট), অসল আভাস (এ আই টি) ও প্রয়োজ অন্যান্য কুল প্রাপ্ত করা হবে কর্তৃক করা হবে।
১২. দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত সকল কর্মসি The Public Procurement Act-2006 and The Public Procurement Rules-2008 অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে।
১৩. কোন কারণ দর্শালে বাধ্যতাকৃত যে কোন দরপত্র আশিষ্ট বা সম্পূর্ণ প্রণয় বা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা কর্তৃক সংরক্ষণ করেন।

১৫.০২.২০২৩

মোঃ মাহেদুল হক

মুখ্য কমিশনার

কমিশনারেট, কুলানা



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

1901 feels a lot like 2020 in Pamuk’s latest novel

Orhan Pamuk’s ‘Nights of Plague’ (Knopf, 2022)

NOUSHIN NURI

There is a woman who writes letters. She sits at her desk overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, day after day, and fills pages to send to her sister in Istanbul. Almost a century later, another woman would derive heavily from their correspondence to write the history of Mingheria and hand it down to us in the form of the book named *Nights of Plague*.

Orhan Pamuk shows Mingheria as the boiling pot of nationalism. As the plague covers the capital Arkaz like an ominous blanket, places where flowers used to grow start reeking of death. The sea turns into steel. Such extreme ordeal breeds the ground for seemingly inconsequential actions by individuals who change Mingheria forever.

The letter writing woman is Princess Pakize. She came to the Ottoman island of Mingheria with her husband, Prince Consort Doctor Nuri—a brilliant quarantine doctor—to put an end to the infectious bubonic plague that was creeping out of control yet was being kept secret by the authorities. The island, called the pearl of the Mediterranean Sea, has an almost mythical quality to it. Famous for its pink-white marbles and fragrant rose biscuits, Mingheria is the birthplace of a contemporary historian, Mina

Mingher, whose voice the writer chooses to tell the story in.

Our historian does a rigorous job of “verifying the authenticity” of the Mingherian history she learns. Her primary source, and inspiration, are the letters of Princess Pakize, and to confirm different historical details, she refers to memoirs of those who survived the time. Perhaps because of all the cross-referencing and promises of accuracy, it took me a hundred pages and a Google search of ‘Mingheria’ to realise that all of it—Mingheria, Princess Pakize, and Mina Mingher herself—are fictional.

Nights of Plague, like Orhan Pamuk’s prize-winning novel *My Name is Red* (Knopf, 2001), is historical fiction with a murder mystery. But as one historical event unfolds after another, with Princess Pakize and her husband constantly evoking for me a sense of Sherlock Holmes while trying to solve the murder, the book’s pages darken with a shadow of Westernisation at the dusk of the Ottoman Empire.

Opposed to most of the Empire, where Westernisation took a firm footing, Pamuk shows Mingheria as the boiling pot of nationalism. As the plague covers the capital Arkaz like an ominous blanket, places where flowers used to grow start reeking of death. With no scheduled ferries visiting the island anymore, the sea turns into steel, making it clear that Mingheria is left on its own. Such

extreme ordeal breeds the ground for very subjective, seemingly inconsequential, but history-altering actions by individuals who change Mingheria forever.

With the island completely cut off, pictures sent by correspondents to foreign newspapers remained the only source that allowed the world to know what was happening in Mingheria. The author, in a solemn but satirical tone, shows how these pictures were misinterpreted by newspapers—either due to lack of knowledge, or to create a more interesting narrative, or both. Reading about this brings a sense of déjà vu of our own struggle with fake news during the Covid-19 pandemic.

How Mingherians responded to the infectious plague in 1901 isn’t altogether different from our response to the Covid-19. They too hid their patients in fear of stigma and isolation, selfishly hoarded commodities, and used the disease as a political and religious weapon. The first edition of the novel (in Turkish) came out in October 2021 and Pamuk started writing it just four years before the pandemic broke out, which lends to him an almost clairvoyant quality.

But clairvoyant or not, he definitely was a painter, as he wrote in his memoir, *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (Knopf, 2005). ‘Painting with words’ takes a literal meaning in this novel. Historical landmarks are

captured in paintings that Pamuk describes, taking note of the little details of the background, rendering the mood in their subtle and dominant hues, and creating vicarious visual pleasure for the readers.

After Mina Mingher has told us the story of Mingheria, she walks us through her tiresome experience of writing this book. She is denied renewal of her Mingherian passport for 20 years. The authorities relent at some point, but her possessions would be searched in her absence and the secret police would monitor her every move. It’s the story of many intellectuals who have tried to tell a history without being blind to the Empire’s injustice against its Greek, Armenian, and Kurdish populations. Many writers, including Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak, have suffered because Turkey still holds on to this collective amnesia.

Be it lack of intellectual freedom or the outbreak of a disease, Pamuk constantly evokes the present through the past in this book. Plague has crept through the map of history, cloaking cities in death and desolation. But it didn’t stop at destruction. In Mingheria, the plague was as much about creation as it was about death.

Noushin Nuri is studying business in school and literature at home. Reach her at noushin241@gmail.com.

BOOK REVIEW: MEMOIR

A life in words and images

‘Je Jibon Amar Chilo’ by Imdadul Haq Milan (Ananya, 2023)

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Fiction writer Imdadul Haq Milan has written an autobiography, published at this year’s Ekushey Boi Mela. Against a large canvas, he paints a picture of his life and highlights stories that have not been told before. To a reader, these anecdotes will be delightful.

The memoir is no less than a novel—replete with sorrows, disappointments, love and joy. How many people the author has received neglect from in his life, how much humiliation he has endured, how many relatives have become strangers and how, those who were far away, have come close.

As a writer, Haque struggled early in his career. He went door-to-door to publishers—no one wanted to print his book. He started his career by writing fiction for a weekly magazine through the guidance of Rafiq Azad, a poet he greatly admired.



The two had met through Milan’s writing—he had written his novel, *Dukkho Koshto*, inspired by one of Azad’s poems in 1976. The book gained popularity, and the friendship between the two flourished. The bond led Milan to serialise his novel in the *Uttaradhikar* newspaper published by Bangla Academy.

Over the course of these years, Milan lost the newspaper job and later also moved to Germany in the hopes of better living for his family. But he couldn’t stay there for long. When he returned to Bangladesh, unemployment and depression gripped him.

Taking us from his childhood in Gendaria to the friendship, in later years, with actors Humayun Faridi and Afsal Hossain, other renowned characters, and back to talk of his Nana Bari, the author does not shy away from conveying the truth of his experiences.

The story begins in Medinimandal village, where the author grew up, where his father struggled to raise him and his siblings. The story takes us, also, to Milan’s first TV drama. Reminiscing about those days, he writes, “My first TV drama was *Mayakanan*. Afzal and Subarna’s pair was wildly famous then. *Mayakanan* became popular because of their performance, and people recognised me in the play.” Thus began the journey.

The story ends, at least in the book, with the author comparing human life to a river—its twists and turns, the many ups and downs, the characters who have loved and hurt, humiliated or disappointed him.

Milan’s life, as presented in this book, truly is like a story.

Shah Alam Shazu is a journalist and writer.

BOOK REVIEW: REPORTAGE

Feeling and doing for homeless children

‘Nobody’s Children’ by Rubaiya Murshed (University Press Limited, 2022)

PROTIK BARDHAN

Rubaiya Murshed’s *Nobody’s Children* is a genre of its own kind—it employs both stark facts and literary elements at the same time. As the title aptly suggests, it is focused on the issue of children who are living on the streets without proper care or support from their families.

One reading between the lines would unfailingly get tinged with the warmth and honesty of the author’s feelings. To me, that is the most noteworthy thing about the book.

Its preface starts with a quote from the famous Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky: ‘What is honour when you have nothing to eat’. Surely, it is a way of emphasising that necessities such as food and shelter are more important than abstract concepts like honour when it comes to survival and well-being. Only the victim knows how it hurts when one goes to sleep hungry or half-fed or how it feels to experience public negligence and scorn.

But Rubaiya, despite being an economist, does not reduce her characters to mere economic indicators like poverty, hunger, deprivation, and so on; instead, she

makes a beautiful rendering of them in their totality.

A chapter titled “The Boy Who Loved” offers one such heart-touching example of a street boy named Saiful. He was once forced to take refuge in a bus stop near TSC in the Dhaka University campus.

“For street children like Saiful on such rainy nights”, Rubaiya writes, “the only relatively dryer places to try and sleep are bus stands or under park benches”. But Saiful, despite having no shelter and food security, exhibits a strong sense of affinity towards a beautiful yellow-beaked bird—an ochin pakhri, in his own words. As its wing breaks, we see how a frantic Saiful risks his own life to heal the bird, which was in the custody of a DMC student. Saiful camps outside the student’s dormitory. It rains on and off all night, and he develops a high fever and pneumonia.

The bird cannot be saved, and Saiful cries out his heart for it, as if he were giving vent to all the frustrations and woes he has suffered since his birth.

Making others feel for them

Before joining the University of Dhaka, Rubaiya taught at the Sunnysdale School, Dhaka for a



DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI

few months. Sometimes as a proxy teacher, she shared the stories of the homeless children with class eight students and then asked them to write down whatever came to mind as they imagined themselves in the position of a homeless street child.

A part of Rubaiya thought that the children would feel bored by her approach. On the contrary, they wrote their impressions beautifully in their notebooks before tearing out the pages to hand over to her. The impressions of Fabiha Anbar,

a student of Class Eight, Sunnysdale School, go like this:

“Frankly speaking, I cannot even imagine myself as a homeless street child. We, the ones who have the privilege to stay with our families and enjoy the luxuries of life, are just so indulged in these that we never realise how important and valuable these things are. We just take everything for granted.”

SDG and Rubaiya’s efforts

Eradicating poverty is a central theme of the SDGs, with Goal 1

specifically aimed at ending poverty in all its forms everywhere. The goal recognizes that poverty is not only a lack of income, but also a lack of access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and clean water. A lack of opportunity is not just an economic problem, but also a moral and ethical issue, Nobel laureate philosopher and economist Amartya Sen has argued. To him, access to education is a fundamental aspect of human development and a key driver of economic growth and prosperity.

Rubaiya, in her way, makes a commendable attempt to ensure that these children can have access to education through the bot-tola school she and her cohorts run for them.

Feeling the same way

In his poem ‘Chimney Sweeper’, published in his collection, *Songs of Innocence*, in 1789, William Blake reflects on the bleak and unjust conditions faced by child chimney sweepers in 18th-century England, who were often forced into dangerous and dirty jobs at a young age. Blake uses imagery and symbolism to critique the treatment of these children and highlight the innocence and purity that are lost

as a result of their exploitation. The poem remains one of Blake’s most widely read and studied works and is regarded as an important work of social criticism, an expression of the Romantic movement’s concern for the oppressed and marginalised.

Both Rubaiya and Blake use their platforms to raise awareness about these issues and advocate for the betterment of these groups. Their actions demonstrate a strong sense of empathy and a desire to bring about change in society. Furthermore, both individuals show a willingness to challenge the status quo and speak out against the injustices they see in their communities.

This book, written in communicative and lucid prose, is a kind of docufiction, which is rapidly gaining popularity across the countries. It is a form of storytelling that uses real-life events, people, and places as the basis for a fictional or semi-fictional narrative. Rubaiya shows mastery in this particular genre. I hope her writer self will not be eclipsed by her researcher or economist self; rather, both will make a wonderful combination.

Protik Bardhan is Senior Sub-Editor, Prothom Alo.

Imranur waiting for good news

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Athletics Federation (BAF) is seeking further assistance for England-based sprinter Imranur Rahman to help him flourish after the 29-year-old sprinter created history by becoming the first Bangladeshi to win a gold medal in the 60m sprint at the Asian Indoor Athletics Championship in Kazakhstan last Saturday.

The 29-year-old, who arrived in Dhaka on Tuesday night, spent the hours yesterday meeting officials and media before a training session at the Army Stadium in Banani in afternoon. Imranur is also expected to receive a grand reception within a couple of days.

Imranur is a part-time athlete who has been working two jobs to bear the expenses of his family and training but the schedule means there is



little room for him to fully dedicate himself to training, although he has been working under a professional coach in England.

"We believe the way he has been training in England will stay intact because we are hoping for some good news in the coming days. We expect some sponsors to come forward and provide him with financial help because Imranur has the capacity to deliver more at the international level," said BAF general secretary Abdur Rokib Montu, who added that Imranur's success would have a positive impact on budding athletes that are currently participating in the School and Madrasa Athletics Championships as well as the Bangladesh Youth Games.

The BAF had previously sought help from the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA), who provide financial aid to athletes with potential to shine in international competitions.

"As he is representing Bangladesh Army, the Army is looking after him by paying him a monthly honorarium, bearing air tickets for international tournaments and providing pocket money. In addition, the Bangladesh Olympic Association has also been with him in different ways from the beginning since he came to Bangladesh," said BOA secretary general Syed Shahed Reza.

"After the competition of ongoing Youth Games, we will sit to discuss what he [Imranur] needs and what the BOA can provide for him, especially after his recent success. We will definitely do for him in the coming days," said Reza.



Comilla Victorians skipper Imrul Kayes and Sylhet Strikers' Mushfiqur Rahim, who showed up on behalf of Sylhet captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and appeared to have recovered from a fever which triggered controversy in the second Qualifier on Tuesday, pose with the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) 2023 trophy during an official photoshoot at Uttara's Diabari metro station yesterday ahead of the franchise-based T20 tournament's title decider between the two sides, scheduled to take place at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium today.

PHOTO: BCB

Sylhet, Comilla primed for 'battle of nerves'

SPORTS REPORTER

After over a month-long battle among seven teams, two of the best and most deserving sides rose to the top, with Sylhet Strikers set to take on Comilla Victorians in the final of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

Imrul Kayes's Comilla will be eying a fourth title while Sylhet, led by inspirational skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, will be eager to clinch their maiden BPL trophy.

The teams had made contrasting starts to the BPL, with Comilla losing their first three games on trot before becoming the first team to qualify for the final on the back of a 10-match unbeaten streak. Meanwhile, Sylhet had a dream start, winning their first five games on trot, and were among the first teams to qualify past the initial phase.

In terms of strength, Sylhet rely heavily on their local performers. The likes of Najmul Hossain Shanto and Towhid Hridoy are among the top run-getters in the BPL while the experience of Mushfiqur Rahim and skipper Mashrafe's leadership quality will also prove crucial in the all-important final.

On the other hand, Comilla have transformed into a dangerous unit that blends locals with some big overseas names that can single-handedly change the course of a game like Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Moeen Ali and Johnson Charles.

According to Kayes, the final will be a battle of nerves and he placed an emphasis on staying ahead of any mind games.

"I think tomorrow (Thursday) is totally



Comilla have transformed into a dangerous unit that blends locals with some big overseas names that can single-handedly change the course of a game like Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Moeen Ali and Johnson Charles.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

going to be about mind games. In such a high-voltage game, whoever holds their nerve and stays calm will do better because there's no guarantee that you will win even if you score 200 hundred runs. I remember during the final of the previous edition, we were behind till the 18th over but we went on to win in the last two overs. It's a different ball game. You have to be calm on the field," Kayes told reporters on the eve of the final.

Interestingly, neither Comilla nor Mashrafe -- who has led various franchises -- have ever been on the losing side in the final, meaning something has to give.

After losing to Sylhet in the first group game, Comilla managed to win the next

two encounters against them, including a comfortable four-wicket win in the first Qualifier.

However, Shanto -- who has been instrumental for Sylhet and is among the leading run scorers in the BPL with 452 runs in 14 games -- said that they were not thinking about their opponents and were instead focusing on executing their plans.

"I think two of the most deserving teams have reached the final by playing some brilliant cricket. I think it's unimportant who we are playing against since our aim will be to execute our plans. They (Comilla) are definitely a good side but whoever plays better cricket on the day will win. We are not worried about big names," said Shanto.

PSG left looking to Mbappe

AFP, Paris

Paris Saint-Germain were deservedly beaten by Bayern Munich in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie on Tuesday, but Kylian Mbappe's cameo on his return from injury gives them reason to believe they can still prevent another premature exit from Europe's elite club competition.

Mbappe did not look like a player who had been brought back much earlier than expected following a thigh injury as his electrifying pace caused panic in the Bayern defence when he came on for the final half-hour.

The France superstar could not inspire a comeback as Bayern left the Parc des Princes with a 1-0 win, but only a brave Yann Sommer save and then a marginal offside call denied him an equaliser.

"We only lost 1-0, there are no more away goals, and if we play our attacking game, cause them problems and score once, we'll be level," Mbappe said as he looked ahead to the return leg in Germany on March 8.

"We are not beaten, not at all. We still have every chance."

However, what Tuesday's game confirmed was the extent to which PSG are dependent on Mbappe,



despite the presence of Lionel Messi and Neymar in their attack as well.

Messi and Neymar struggled to have any real influence on the game in the first 57 minutes before Mbappe came off the bench, by which time Kingsley Coman had put the away side ahead.

"When he came on Mbappe completely lifted the atmosphere in the stadium and that also gave the other players a lift," admitted Bayern coach Julian Nagelsmann.

"It is clear that Kylian Mbappe can change any game."

Ten Hag wishes Barca tie was final

AFP, London

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag believes his side's last 32 Europa League clash against Barcelona would have been worthy of the final itself.

United have enjoyed a resurgence under their Dutch boss, who took charge ahead of this season.

They now travel to Spain for Thursday's first-leg tie against La Liga leaders Barcelona in third place in the Premier League, five points behind table-toppers Arsenal but having played two games more than the Gunners.

Both Barcelona and United have rich European histories, with eight European Cup and Champions League titles between them, in addition to other continental trophies.

"I think Barcelona and (us) as well (would) have preferred to play (this match) in the final," Ten Hag told UEFA in comments published Wednesday.

"We are looking forward to (it), it (takes) a lot of energy searching for that finish, and it will be a great game. "Hopefully, everyone is fit for Barcelona and for us. So we see a game (that will be played) at the highest level."

'There is something to learn no matter the result'

The Women's T20 World Cup has been going on in full-swing in South Africa since February 10 and although the group stages are yet to be completed, Bangladesh have already faced Sri Lanka and Australia and come out disappointed from both matches. Keeping wickets in hand appeared to be a major challenge for the Tigresses, as did setting a solid platform by attaining enough runs through the Powerplays. On a brighter note, some of the newer players in the team who joined just after a promising campaign in the inaugural U-19 T20 World Cup have been showing immense promise. Speaking to The Daily Star's Naziba Basher, Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana Joty shared her insights into the T20 World Cup and spoke about the different strategies the team could adopt to churn out wins. The excerpts of that interview are below:

The Daily Star (DS): What is the atmosphere like in South Africa?

Nigar Sultana Joty (NSJ): It is always exciting. Each World Cup and each country it is held in has a different atmosphere. It is our job to adjust and that is what we are trying to do.

DS: What are you hoping to get out of this World Cup?

NSJ: More than anything, we are hoping to take back some good experiences. We also have so many young, talented players and we want to show them through this World Cup that there is something to take back and learn from each of them, no matter the result.

DS: What are your hopes from the new players?

Joty: I have to talk about our new pacer Marufa Akter. She has been bowling sensationally and has been giving her absolute best in every game. As a matter of fact, all the young players have been doing the same. However,

there is a lot more for them to learn.

DS: The first two matches did not go our way. What did you take away from those defeats?

NSJ: We actually have some great players. But we are falling short when it comes to runs per over. I believe we are falling short especially in the Powerplay. While other teams manage to score at least 7-8 runs per over during the Powerplay, we are falling behind. We need to improve in that regard.

DS: What is your preparation like as a team?

NSJ: Like I said, everyone has been giving their best. There are some areas that we need to work on collectively and I believe if we can conquer those areas, we can move ahead.

DS: Which teams are your targeting?

NJS: Every team we are up against. Whether it's Sri Lanka, Australia or New Zealand. Every team we are playing against, we are targeting.

DS: Are there any specific players you and your girls watch out for?

NSJ: Well, seeing as our batters are getting dismissed early, I think we need to watch out for attacking bowlers more than anything else.

DS: You have had a couple of international tournaments during the run up to the WC. What did you learn from those in terms of WC preparations?

NSJ: We really need to pick up on our batting and the line-up needs to get

much stronger. However, we need to accept the fact that all of us have to try harder to play in different conditions. I think that is where we fall behind the most. We can't put up with different conditions. We need to work on that.

DS: We know it is quite difficult for those used to playing in South Asian conditions to excel in countries with different conditions in terms of pitch and weather. How much do you think you can use the South African conditions to your advantage?

NSJ: Like I said, it is different for each country. After many tournaments and matches, some of us were able to acclimatise to different types of weather, pitches and more. But with new players in the team, it becomes a little tougher. They will need to learn how to adjust as well.

DS: What is your ultimate goal from this T20 World Cup?

NSJ: We just want to be able to bring something back to the country, for the country.



New Zealand captain Tim Southee and his England counterpart Ben Stokes pose with the trophy in Mount Maunganui yesterday ahead of the first match of the two-Test series beginning today.

PHOTO: ECB



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

SEE PAGE 9 COL 5

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



উচ্চ মূল্যমান ব্যাংক নোটের প্রধান নিরাপত্তা বৈশিষ্ট্য

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জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান এর প্রতিমূর্তি সংশ্লিষ্ট ১০০, ২০০, ৫০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমানের নোট সেনেদেনে নিম্নবর্ণিত নিরাপত্তা বৈশিষ্ট্য খোঁজার করলে আমরা সহজেই আসল নোট চিনতে পারব :

নিরাপত্তা সুতা : ১০০ ও ৫০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের বাম পাশে ৪ মি.মি. চওড়া ১মের স্টেটী সূক্ষ্ম নিরাপত্তা সুতা রয়েছে যার একটি অংশ লাল হয়ে সূত্বক হয়ে পরিবর্তিত হয় এবং অপর অংশে স্টেটীর মূল্যমান (১০০ টাকা/৫০০টাকা) মুদ্রিত রয়েছে। ২০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের বাম পাশে ৪ মি.মি. চওড়া নিরাপত্তা সুতা রয়েছে যা লাল হয়ে সূত্বক হয়ে পরিবর্তিত হয় এবং ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটটি ৫ মি.মি চওড়া নিরাপত্তা সুতা রয়েছে যা সোনালী হয়ে সূত্বক হয়ে পরিবর্তিত হয়। ২০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের নিরাপত্তা সুতার বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের মসজিদ ও স্টেটীর মূল্যমান (২০০ টাকা/১০০০ টাকা) মুদ্রিত আছে। নোটগুলো লুপতলাতন করলে এতে হাইপেরলুমিনেস ইন্ডেক্স পরিদর্শিত হয়।

হুকানো ছাপা : ১০০, ৫০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের সামনের দিকের শিরে অক্ষর করার নোটের মূল্যমান ১০০, ৫০০ ও ১০০০ এবং ১০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটটি TWO HUNDRED TAKA হুকানিত অক্ষরায় মুদ্রিত আছে, যা নোটটি অলুপনিকভাবে ভালো দেখা যাবে।

অতি সূক্ষ্ম আকারের লেখা : ১০০, ৫০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের পেছনের দিকের বিভিন্ন অংশে অতি সূক্ষ্ম আকারে BANGLADESH BANK এবং ১০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের পেছনের দিকের বিভিন্ন অংশে অতি সূক্ষ্ম আকারে ২০০ প্রতিক রয়েছে, যা আতশী কাঁচ অথবা জিজ্ঞাসনের স্মার্ট মোবাইল ফোনের ক্যামেরা প্রয়োগের পর লুপ করে কিংবা "Flashlight & magnifying glass" App এর সহায়তায় মোবাইল ফোন করে দেখা যাবে।



জ. পরিবর্তনশীল কলি (OVI) : ১০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটটি এনিক-এনিক করলে জ. পরিবর্তনশীল কলিতে মুদ্রিত অংশ সোনালী হয়ে সূত্বক এবং ৫০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটটি এটি মেয়েলী হয়ে সূত্বক হয়ে পরিবর্তিত হবে। অত্যাধিক, ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের পেছনে বাম দিকে থাকা ছাপা বিশ ধরের BANGLADESH BANK লেখানিত নোট এনিক-এনিক করলে দেখা যাবে।

SPARK : ২০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটের উপরে জল ফেললে সোনালী থেকে সূত্বক হয়ে SPARK (Optically Variable Magnetic Ink) ছাপা ২০০ দেখা যাবে, নোটটি লুপতলাতন করলে যা সোনালী থেকে সূত্বক হয়ে পরিবর্তন হবে। পানপানি একটি উদ্ভল বস উপরে নীচে উল্টানো করলে।

অক্ষর ছাপা : ১০০, ২০০, ৫০০ ও ১০০০ টাকা মূল্যমানের প্রত্যেক প্রকার নোটের সামনের ও পেছনের দিকের ডিজাইন, মাসখানের লেখা, ইয়েজরী ও থালা সম্বন্ধে লেখা নোটের মূল্যমান, খটি সম্বন্ধে লেখা মোহরো মসজিদে (করে ২০০ টাকা মূল্যমান নোটটি ৮টি সমান্তরাল মসজিদে) এবং এর ঠিক নীচে অবস্থিত যেটি ছোট লুপতলাতন/প্রতিমূর্তির ছাপ খসখসে অনুভূত হবে।

UV সাইটায়ুজ জাল নোট সনাক্তকারী মেশিন ও মোবাইল ফোন এবং আতশী কাঁচ দ্বারা জাল নোট সহজে পরীক্ষা করা যায়।

নোট জালকারী চক্রের প্রস্তাবনা থেকে নিজেদের রক্ষা করুন এবং এসকল নোট জালকারীকে ধরিয়ে দিন। আসল নোটের বিভিন্ন নিরাপত্তা বৈশিষ্ট্য সম্পর্কে নিজে জানুন এবং অপব্যবহারে জানতে সহায়তা করুন।

ব্যাংক নোটের ব্যবহার সম্পর্কে সচেতন হোন