

Biden on balloon shoot-down incident



WR1
Where basic amenities remain elusive



P10
Tigers ready for all conditions



P7
Tasnova Tamanna is here to stay



P6
US opposes UN bid to denounce Israeli settlements

Militants storm office of Karachi police chief

3 gunmen, 4 others killed; Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan claims responsibility

DAWN ONLINE

Militants yesterday stormed the office of the Karachi police chief in southern Pakistan, which was cleared after hours-long operation that left at least three gunmen dead.

"I can so far confirm that the Karachi Police Office (KPO) building has been cleared. Three terrorists have been neutralised," said Sindh government spokesperson Murtaza Wahab on Twitter at 10:42pm, three-and-a-half hours after the attack occurred.

Speaking to Geo News separately, he reiterated that the building had been secured. He said that the bomb disposal squad was checking if the jackets worn by the militants were rigged to detonate.

Sindh government spokesperson Murtaza Wahab also gave a breakdown of the civilian deaths during the attack, saying they included two policemen, one Rangers official and one civilian.

The outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement issued by its spokesperson Mohammad Khurasani. In 2011, TTP had claimed the attack on PNS Mehran – one of the most densely populated naval bases located in Karachi.

DIG East Muqaddas Haider, who was among the senior officers leading the operation yesterday, told Dawn.com, that there were a total of three attackers who arrived at the KPO in a Toyota Corolla.

In a statement, a spokesperson for the Karachi police said all three

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Sand dredged from the Karnaphuli is piled up on the bank of the river near Chattogram's Kalurghat bridge. Contractors have been granted permission to extract sand from the river at 29 locations in Boalkhali. An official of Bangladesh Water Development Board said banks at some of those locations were already hit by erosion due to excessive extraction of sand. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'No polls possible under AL govt'

Says BNP despite govt assurance to foreign diplomats about free, fair nat'l election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even though the government is assuring visiting foreign diplomats of a free and fair national election, the BNP will not take part in it with the ruling Awami League in office.

Activists of the party organised silent marches in the north and south parts of the capital to press home their 10-point demand that include holding the next national election under a non-partisan government.

BNP leaders said Bangladesh was not invited to the US democracy summit because "democracy was absent in the country".

Dhaka South BNP leaders and activists held silent marches from Motijheel to Nayabazar, while Dhaka North BNP marched from Uttara to Abdullahpur.

"This government turned the country into a failed state. They destroyed the country and its institutions. The USA did not invite Bangladesh to its Summit for Democracy. It is a matter of shame," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam

Alamgir said at Motijheel.

He said the prime minister told visiting foreign diplomats that a free and fair election would be held under the AL government. "Neither the BNP nor the people will participate in any election held under the [current] government. The people's only demand is the resignation of the government. Resign from the office right now. Or, people will take steps."

Not long ago, the AL used to say that the BNP would not be able to launch a movement, but now it deploys guards out of fear, he said.

"Deployment of guards can't stop the movement. You [the ruling party] will not find a way to escape."

The government is using law enforcers to cling to power.

"The US imposed sanctions on Rab because it conducted extra-judicial killings at the government's behest. They are now using the police to kill the opposition leaders and activists and to repress them."

About the presidential election, he said nobody was aware of the nomination for

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US DEMOCRACY SUMMIT

Govt doesn't care about invitation

Says Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government doesn't care about who is invited to the democracy summit, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

"Sheikh Hasina doesn't bother who is invited to the democracy summit and who is not. We don't have the time to think about who is invited and where the summit is being held," he told a rally in the capital's Mohammadpur.

He further said that democracy in the country means "whether we are practising democracy, whether democratic elections are held, and whether the people can speak freely".

Bangladesh has not been invited to the US Summit for Democracy for the second time. The event will be held in March.

Speaking at a "peace rally" organised by the Dhaka North AL, he said the BNP neither has the support

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PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Focus to shift from lowest offer in tender

IMF-approved policy paper to be adopted by September

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is poised to adopt a set of guidelines that will fundamentally change the way 40 percent of the annual budget is spent, focusing on the whole life cycle cost of goods and services rather than the lowest tender offer in public procurement.

"Whilst existing procurement framework and practices are pursued to choose the 'lowest-cost' contract with some 'quality' check, lowest-cost purchase does not necessarily ensure maximum benefit in the long run," said a policy paper.

The reason being there are additional expenditures involved during the lifetime of the product in maintenance and then for the disposal of the product once its functionality expires.

So in many cases, the lowest offer in a tender does not end up being the cheapest in the long run. Besides, the costs to the environment are also not factored in.

Subsequently, the planning ministry, the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) and the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) have prepared the Sustainable Public Procurement Policy paper.

The policy paper has been prepared to ensure that the \$25 billion that Bangladesh spends annually on public procurement "achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation but also to society and the economy whilst minimising damage to the environment".

The International Monetary Fund has marked it down as a top

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- IMF stipulated policy and action plan adoption by September
- Whole lifecycle cost will be factored in
- 10% more can be paid for environment-friendly products and services
- SMEs and women enterprises to get preference
- Monitoring to ensure sustainability standards

ROHINGYA REFUGEES

UN plans to cut food aid due to fund shortfall

REUTERS, Bangkok

The United Nations plans to slash food aid to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, blaming a funding shortfall for cuts that agencies warn would deepen food insecurity and malnutrition in the world's largest refugee settlement.

About 730,000 Rohingyas, a persecuted mostly Muslim minority from Myanmar's Rakhine state, fled to Bangladesh in 2017 to escape an army crackdown the UN said was carried out with genocidal intent. Including others who left in prior waves, nearly one million live in huts made of bamboo and plastic sheets.

The World Food Program (WFP) said it would reduce the value of its food assistance to \$10 per person from \$12 starting next month. Donor budgets have been stretched by the pandemic,

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A silent march of BNP activists in the capital's Gopibagh area yesterday afternoon. Dhaka city (south) unit organised it to realise the party's 10-point demand that include holding the next national election under a non-partisan government.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

'Will continue to report without fear or favour'

Says BBC after India's tax dept ends search; authorities flag 'several discrepancies'

STAR REPORT

As India's income tax department concluded its three-day "survey" at BBC offices in Delhi and Mumbai on Thursday night, the international broadcaster said it would continue to report "without fear or favour".

"The income tax authorities have left our offices in Delhi and Mumbai. We will continue to cooperate with the authorities and hope matters are resolved as soon as possible," the BBC said in a Twitter post, adding that it will "continue to report without fear of favour".

It further said that some of its staff have "faced lengthy questioning" and had to "stay overnight".

The "survey" operation had begun at the BBC offices around 11:30am on Tuesday and ended just after 10:00pm on Thursday.

Tax authorities have made an inventory of the available stock, recorded the statement of some staffers and taken away some documents as part of the survey relating to the BBC's international taxation and transfer of profits.

According to the sources, as reported by NDTV, mobile phones of BBC's senior employees have been cloned and several desktops and laptops have been scanned during the operation. The laptops and phones were later handed back to the officials.

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4 ambassadors visit Rohingyas in Bhasan Char

UNB, Chattogram

Ambassadors of Japan, China, France and Indonesia visited Rohingyas living in Bhasan Char yesterday.

Japanese Ambassador Iwama Kiminori, Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen, French Ambassador Marie Masdupuy and Indonesian Ambassador Heru Hartanto Subolo reached Bhasan Char on a helicopter around 10:30am.

They were accompanied by UN Resident Coordinator Gwyn Lewis, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Representative Johannes Van Der Klaauw and World Food Programme Officer-in-Charge Simone Lawson Parchment.

Humayun Kabir, officer-in-charge of Bhasan Char Police Station, said the delegation, including the ambassadors of four countries, monitored the overall situation from 11:00am to 3:00pm.

They also talked to Rohingyas about their facilities, living standards and other issues, added the OC.

They left Bhasan Char for Dhaka around 3:30pm, said the OC.



Syrian residents of Hatay city wait to cross the Turkish-Syrian border after they were affected by the 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck the region nearly two weeks ago, at Gilvegozu border gate yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Bulgaria finds 18 migrants dead in truck

AFP, Sofia

Eighteen migrants have been found dead in an abandoned truck, the interior ministry said yesterday, as the Balkan nation struggles with an increase in illicit border crossings.

The vehicle "was illegally transporting around 40 migrants hidden under some wood", the ministry said. "Eighteen of them have died."

After locals alerted the police, the truck was located near the village of Lokorsko, 20 kilometres (12 miles) northeast of Bulgaria's capital Sofia.

Some of the migrants still alive in the truck were taken to the hospital.

A search was underway for human traffickers believed to have driven the truck and fled, authorities said.

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TURKEY-SYRIA EARTHQUAKE

Aid focus turns to homeless, destitute

UN launches \$1b aid appeal; death toll surpasses 43,000

AGENCIES

International aid agencies are stepping up efforts to help millions of homeless people, many sleeping in tents, mosques, schools or cars, 11 days after a massive earthquake hit Turkey and Syria killing more than 43,000.

Two people were reported to have been pulled alive from the rubble in Turkey on Thursday, but such rescues have become increasingly rare, leaving anger to smoulder as hope dies.

A 17-year-old girl was extracted from the ruins of a collapsed apartment bloc in Turkey's southeastern Kahramanmaraş province, broadcaster TRT Haber reported, 248 hours since the 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck in the dead of night on February 6.

About 10 hours later, Neslihan Kilic was rescued.

"We had prepared her grave and we asked the rescue workers to stop digging as we feared they would damage the remaining corpses under the rubble. Moments later, her voice was heard from under the ruins of the building," Kilic's brother-in-law told broadcaster CNN Turk.

Kilic's husband and two children are still missing.

The quake killed at least 38,044 people in southern Turkey, officials said yesterday, while authorities in neighbouring Syria have reported 5,800 deaths — a figure that has changed little in days.

The United Nations on Thursday appealed for more than \$1 billion in funds for the Turkish relief operation, just two days after launching a \$400 million appeal for Syrians, reports Reuters.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, speaking on Thursday in his first televised comments since the quake hit, said the

response to the disaster required more resources than the government had available.

Neither Turkey nor Syria have said how many people are still missing.

UN aid chief Martin Griffiths, who visited Turkey last week, said the people had "experienced unspeakable heartache", adding: "We must stand with them in their darkest hour and ensure they receive the support they need."

For families still waiting to retrieve relatives, there is growing anger over what they see as corrupt building practices and deeply flawed urban development that resulted in thousands of homes and businesses disintegrating.

"I have two children. No others. They are both under this rubble," said Sevil Karaabduloglu, as excavators tore down what remained of a high-end block of flats in the southern Turkish city of Antakya, SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Man killed in train accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The driver of a battery-run three-wheeler was killed as his vehicle was hit by a train at a level crossing in Joypurhat's Akkelpur yesterday.

Ataur Rahman, 48, of Boyarkha village, died on the spot, said Moktar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Akkelpur Police Station.

According to locals, the three-wheeler overturned on the level crossing.

Seeing the oncoming Dhaka-bound Kurigram Express train, four passengers of the three-wheeler hurriedly got out but the driver remained stranded, said the OC.

The passengers suffered minor injuries and were sent to Akkelpur Upazila Health Complex for treatment, he further said.

239 zero-line Rohingyas listed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The local union parishad has listed 68 Rohingya families from a zero-line camp on the Tambru border in Bandarban's Naikhongchhari.

The list includes a total of 239 unregistered Rohingyas, said Ghumdm Union Parishad Chairman AKM Jahangir Aziz.

He said the list has been prepared on the instructions of the Naikhongchhari upazila nirbahi officer so that Rohingyas can no longer enter different villages in Bangladesh from Myanmar.

Around 3,000 Rohingyas escaped the violence from the zero-line camp at Konarpara in Tambru and took refuge at Tambru bazar, the government primary school and surrounding areas.

Two war criminals arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab arrested two brothers, who were sentenced to death for their crimes against humanity during the Liberation War, in the capital's Mohammadpur and Mugda areas on Thursday.

The arrestees are Abdul Wahed Mondal and his brother Jachhizar Rahman Khoka.

They had been into hiding since 2016 when they came out of jail on bail, Lt Col Arif Mohiuddin Ahmed, commanding officer of Rab 3, told a press briefing yesterday.

A Rab 3 team arrested Wahed in Mugda and a Rab 2 team arrested Khoka in Mohammadpur, he said.

They had been moving around frequently to avoid arrest, Rab said.

Focus to shift from lowest offer in tender

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reform priority and the government has committed to adopting the policy paper and an associated action plan by September as part of the conditions agreed upon for the \$4.7 billion loan programme.

The policy would be piloted in the procurement of: paper and paper products; office supplies; computer and other electronic equipment and supplies; office and other furniture or related wooden appliances; vehicles and other transportation equipment; food services and catering; hotel materials like towels and bed covers; and official paper-made publications.

As part of the policy, the procurement agencies must go for competitive bidding and take a flexible approach if small and medium enterprises (SMEs), including women-owned enterprises (WOEs), are participating in the bidding.

To attract more SMEs and WOEs, the procurement agencies can minimise the complexity of tender documentation, divide contracts into

smaller lots, limit the number of lots that will be awarded to one bidder and allow more time for submission of expression of interest and tenders.

The contract subject matter should clearly indicate that a sustainable product or service will be purchased, and the accepted price point can be 10 percent more than non-sustainable products.

The products and services must be certified by the BSTI or ISO that they are sustainable.

The procurement process must consider the whole life costs covering: manufacture, delivery and installation; operating costs including energy, water usage and maintenance; end of life costs including decommissioning and disposal.

Bids that have met the minimum general criteria, financial criteria and qualification and expertise criteria should be evaluated against a specific set of award criteria for sustainability — social criteria, economic criteria and environmental criteria — using the rating system developed by the

competent authority from time to time.

All sustainability criteria that will be used, including the rating system given to each criterion, should be clearly indicated in the call for tenders.

The contracts must ensure compliance with all relevant existing public procurement legislation along with the social and environmental legislation to be mentioned, to the extent possible, in the procurement documents.

There would be performance monitoring for the duration of the contract to ensure compliance of suppliers with the specifications and contract terms.

Review meetings and periodic audits of suppliers throughout the life of the contract would be carried out to verify that the sustainability practices meet the agreed requirements.

Sustainability results should be reported openly and transparently in the procurement entities' reports, such as the annual report.

To assist the implementation, the

public organisations will work with the suppliers and determine sustainable products and services that have a less adverse impact on human health and the environment.

A high-level steering committee headed by the planning minister will annually select a sustainable procurement "champion" from amongst the procuring organisations. The committee will also review the policy every six months to adapt to the changing needs, circumstances and conditions.

The CPTU and IMED will provide secretariat services to the committee and lead the integration process, capacity development, amendment in the legal framework, and prepare procurement documents and make those readily available to the organisations.

By 2024, the Public Procurement Act 2006 and the Public Procurement Rules 2008 would be amended by incorporating the relevant sustainable public procurement provisions based on the lessons learned from the pilot.

Govt doesn't care about invitation

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of the country's people nor any foreign friends.

"Many foreign diplomats recently visited Bangladesh and exchanged views with the government. Despite repeated attempts, the BNP could not meet any diplomat and that's why it is upset," he added.

Quader further said BNP was unhappy because the AL government's various development initiatives were making people happy.

"Even amid the ongoing global crisis, the country's people are happy with Sheikh Hasina. They are happy because of the honesty of Sheikh Hasina and the development works by her government."

The BNP is the "patron of spoiled politics"; the country's democracy and people are not safe under its rule, he added.

Meanwhile, Jubo League Chairman Sheikh Fazle Shams Parash yesterday alleged that the

BNP wants to foil the next general election.

Speaking at a "peace rally" in front of the AL's central office in Gulistan, he said the BNP men are brandishing firearms in show of strength. "BNP leaders should be sent to jail to maintain law and order in the country."

"The BNP is trying to get sympathy from foreigners [diplomats]. But, no matter how many conspiracies are hatched, the anti-liberation forces will not be allowed to participate in politics in Bangladesh."

The Jubo League's Dhaka city (south) unit organised the rally.

The Dhaka city (north) unit of the organisation also held another rally at Farmgate. The BNP on the same day held a silent march programme in the capital.

Addressing the event, Jubo League leaders said they will organise programmes to be on the streets till December to "resist" the BNP.

'No polls possible under AL govt'

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president, and the president elect himself in a TV interview said he was not aware of his nomination.

"We repeatedly said it is not possible to resolve the crisis by staying in line with this constitution. It needs to be amended. We have placed a 27-point state reform proposal and those need to be implemented to bring checks and balances between the president and prime minister."

Dhaka South BNP convener Abdus Salam and member secretary Rafiqul Alam conducted the demonstration programme while Standing Committee members Goyeshwar Chandra Roy,

Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and other senior leaders spoke at the briefing.

The BNP organised the marches to protest against the rising prices of power, gas, essential goods, and repression of the opposition.

Addressing the crowd before beginning the march in Uttara, BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain said, "The people of the country and the international community do not believe that a free and fair election is possible under the Awami League government."

It would not be possible to mislead people with conspiracies, he said.

"The BNP and like-minded parties will not join any election under the current government. If the election is not held under an impartial caretaker administration, the issue will be settled on the streets."

Thousands of leaders and activists attended the two programmes, carrying banners, flags, festoons and portraits of the party's top leaders.

A large number of law enforcers were deployed in the areas.

The LPD, Gonoforum, People's Party, Jatiyatabadi Samamona Jote and Peshajibi Ganatantrik Jote also organised marches in different areas of the capital yesterday.

UN plans to cut food aid due to fund shortfall

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economic downturn and crises across the globe.

The WFP appealed for \$125 million in urgent funding, warning of "immense and long-lasting" repercussions on food security and nutrition in camps rife with malnutrition, where more than a third of children are stunted and underweight.

"That the international donor community is now turning its back on half a million Rohingya children and their families really shows the limits of its commitment to some of the most vulnerable people in the world," Onno Van Manen, Save the Children's country director in Bangladesh, said in a statement.

Two UN special rapporteurs, Michael Fakhri and Thomas Andrews, warned of the "devastating consequence"

of the funding shortfall, saying it was "unconscionable" to cut rations just before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the UN human rights agency said in a statement.

Cuts could cause more Rohingyas to take desperate measures to seek work, said Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, Bangladesh's refugee relief and repatriation commissioner, who is based in Cox's Bazar where the refugees live.

Rohingyas are barred from working to supplement their income, and fences have been constructed around the camps.

But an increasing number are fleeing for countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia via perilous and often fatal boat journeys, as violent crime adds to longstanding troubles like a lack of educational and work opportunities

and bleak prospects of returning to military-ruled Myanmar.

A boat carrying 69 Rohingyas landed in Indonesia's Aceh province on Thursday, the UN refugee agency said.

"In few places I've worked have camp-based populations had the meagre options of the type that the Rohingyas have today," John Aylieff, WFP regional director for Asia and the Pacific, told Reuters.

"It's unthinkable that that population, with all they've been through and with so few other possibilities and options, would on top of everything face a ration cut."

Arif Ullah, an 18-year-old refugee living in the camps, said the existing food allowance was barely sufficient. "If it's further trimmed, how will we survive?"

Militants storm office of Karachi police chief

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terrorists who attacked the KPO had been killed in the operation. The spokesperson said that this was a "major operation" in which senior police officials, including the South and East DIGs, had participated alongside the Rangers and the army.

"With grace of Almighty Allah, the KPO and surrounding areas have been cleared of the terrorists completely and further information will be shared with the media soon," the police statement said.

Reports of firing on Sharea Faisal — Karachi's main thoroughfare with a number of strategic installations, including the Pakistan Airforce's Faisal Base — emerged around 7:15pm. Extra police contingents and Rangers were called to the site of the attack.

Speaking to Geo News, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said the attack took place around 7:10pm. He said that the city police chief was not currently in Karachi.

South DIG Irfan Baloch earlier said "spectacular" firing was ongoing but the situation would be brought under control. He had, however, refused to comment on the number of people injured, saying that it could only be

confirmed once officials would sweep the area.

He said that the entire city's police force had been called to the scene, in addition to the Rangers and the Quick Response Force (QRF). He further said that the attackers had also lobbed hand grenades. He said that the attackers had come "fully prepared" and were putting up a "tough fight".

Sindh Health Department's spokesperson Mehar Khurshed shared a list of the casualties with Dawn.com, which said four people were brought to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) dead, and 19 injured.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appreciated the police and security forces for their effective action against the terrorists.

He instructed the interior minister to extend the federal government's full cooperation in the clean-up operation. He underlined the need for collective action to root out the menace of terrorism.

He added that terrorists had once again targeted Karachi but said that these kind of cowardly acts would not weaken the resolve of law enforcement agencies.

British embassy guard faces jail for spying for Moscow

AFP, London

A former security guard at the UK's Berlin embassy, who pleaded guilty to spying for Moscow, faces up to 14 years in prison when he was sentenced yesterday.

David Ballantyne Smith, 58, admitted to passing sensitive material to the Russian embassy in Germany and was then caught in a sting operation.

Judge Mark Wall said Thursday that he would sentence Smith on the basis that he had an "ongoing relationship" with Moscow and was "paid for his treachery".

The sentencing hearing starts at 1000 GMT at the Old Bailey Court in central London.

The judge rejected Smith's claims that he had passed information to Moscow only twice in order to cause "embarrassment" to the UK.

Smith "was motivated by his antipathy towards this country and intended to damage this country's interests by acting as he did," the judge added.

The military veteran, originally from Paisley in western Scotland, had worked at the Berlin embassy for five years.

Prosecutors said Smith first wrote to the Russian embassy in 2020, revealing details of British embassy staff and suggesting further contact.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Welcome to Farmgate, where footpaths are not for pedestrians only. The footpaths from Ananda Cinema Hall to the Panthapath signal through Green Road have restaurants, book stalls, coaching-centre booths, stalls to open bank accounts, rickshaw and truck stands, tea stalls, a bazaar, dustbins, and a living space for the homeless. The one thing that is missing is ample space for pedestrians to walk on. Unfortunately, the same can be said for footpaths all around the capital. The photos were taken recently.

Footpaths not for pedestrians only

HELEMUL ALAM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

It's a 10-minute walk from Farmgate's Ananda Cinema Hall to the Panthapath intersection through Green Road. However, it takes 20 minutes to cross this 700-metre road, thanks to illegal occupants of the footpath.

The grabbers have even managed to occupy half the space on both sides of the road.

The six-foot wide footpath on the route has restaurants, book stalls, coaching-centre booths, stalls to open bank accounts, rickshaw and truck stands, tea stalls, a bazaar, dustbins, and a living space for the homeless.

These correspondents came across this situation when they went on a walk on the road on a Sunday afternoon.

The cinema hall near Farmgate intersection has three makeshift fruit shops in front of it. Moving up a little further, there are three bookstores. Each has an additional seating arrangement in front of them. This leaves only a narrow space, where two people can hardly walk simultaneously.

And then there are a couple of sanitary shops. These shopkeepers leave plastic pipes and some sanitary equipment on the footpath in front of their outlets. A passerby had to jump or go down to the main road to cross the area.

Then comes the tea stalls and food carts, followed closely by the rickshaw and truck stands, which occupy more than half of the walking space, leaving pedestrians no option but to get on the main road.

At the end of the road, many of the city's destitute population were seen in their small makeshift tents, making a home out of the road.

While returning to the cinema hall from Panthapath intersection, five tea stalls, two restaurants, a parking

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10 hurt as BCL men 'attack' Chhatra Odhikar Parishad activists in DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 were injured after Chhatra League men allegedly attacked activists of Bangladesh Chhatra Odhikar Parishad on Dhaka University campus yesterday morning.

The injured were taken to two hospitals in the capital for treatment, said Sifat Uddin Sifat, former office secretary of DU unit Chhatra Odhikar Parishad.

Witnesses said the BCL men carried out the attack when leaders and activists of Chhatra Odhikar Parishad started a procession towards TSC around 10:45am, marking the student body's fifth founding anniversary.

This newspaper has collected a brief video footage of the incident, where we could identify at least one BCL leader - Asaduzzaman Farid, joint secretary of Jahurul Haque hall unit BCL - among the attackers.

Among the injured are Chhatra Odhikar Parishad president Bin Yeamin Molla and its general secretary Adib Arif, their DU committee's former president Akhtar Hossain, organising secretary Molla Ramatullah and Ahsanul Mahub Jubair, Dhaka city unit's leader Yunus, Faisal Raky, Nirrob, Jahurul Islam and Sabbir Hossain.

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DSA CASE

2 IBBL officials held for defaming S Alam Group owners

STAR REPORT

Police have arrested two more officials of the Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd, in a case filed for putting up posters and making social media posts to defame the owners of Chattogram-based S Alam Group.

The arrestees are Mohammad Kamrul Bari and Mahmud Hossain Khan.

A Dhaka court on Thursday sent the two to jail after investigation officer Mofiz Uddin, also a sub-inspector of the Detective Branch of police, produced them before the court. The DB on February 15 arrested Kamrul in the Motijheel area and Mahmud in Mohammadpur, said the police forwarding report submitted before the court.

The investigator mentioned in his report that the two arrestees disclosed "important" information on various transactions of Islami Bank.

With the two, the DB arrested 14 people, including five current and former Islami Bank officials and two minors, in the DSA case so far.

Besides, Golam Sarwar Mia, an FIR-named accused in the same case, got bail from a Dhaka court on February 9.

Abdul Kuddus, a deputy manager of S Alam group, filed the case with Gulshan Police Station on January

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Man dies as truck hits bike in Rampura

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man died after a truck hit his motorcycle in Dhaka's Rampura early yesterday. The deceased was identified as Nawsha Mia, 28, an employee of a private firm who also used to provide ride sharing services occasionally, police said.

A truck hit the bike around 12:15am near Farazy Hospital, leaving him dead on the spot, said sub-inspector Saifur Rahman of Rampura Police Station.

"The truck driver fled the scene immediately. We are trying to identify the vehicle," he said.

Hailing from Rangpur district, Nawsha used to live in Bashundhara Residential Area.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Days of uncertainty

45th BCS candidates anxious over the unannounced date of preliminary exams

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Candidates of the 45th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) preliminary test are passing days in anxiety as they are still in the dark about when the exam will take place.

The Public Service Commission (PSC), in a circular published on November 30 last year, said the preliminary exams might take place in the second week of March.

In the last three BCS exams, the PSC officially announced the dates of the preliminary exams at least two months ahead of the tests. However, they were yet to officially announce the date of this year's preliminary exam as of now.

PSC announced the dates of the 41st and 43rd preliminary tests two months before the examinations, while the date of the 44th test was announced four months before the test.

They announced the date for the 42nd BCS preliminary test special for doctors 44 days ahead of the exam.

PSC officials said they are working to hold the examination according to their previously announced roadmap. However, it might be difficult to do so, as the authorities entrusted with the responsibilities to print and supply question papers are yet to assure the PSC when they will be able to supply the preliminary questions.

"Holding the 45th BCS preliminary test on March 10 will be very difficult. We will still monitor the situation till the first week of March. Candidates will have to wait

for more to know the exam date," a PSC member told the Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

Another PSC member said they held a meeting with the press authorities on Sunday, but the latter could not confirm when they will be able to provide the papers for the exams.

"The commission would announce the date only after getting confirmation from the printing authorities," said the member.

"We are passing our days in constant anxiety. PSC should announce the date immediately so that we can adequately prepare and plan for the exam. Many aspirants come from rural areas. They need to travel to cities to attend the exam."

SHARMIN AKTER
BCS candidate

"Apart from that there are some other issues, including the availability of test centres, that BPS is currently trying to resolve."

Several aspirants apprehended that PSC might not be able to conduct the exam in the second week of March as the Health Ministry has already announced that the medical college exams will be held on March 10, which is a Friday.

Usually, the BCS preliminary

tests are held on Fridays.

"We are passing our days in constant anxiety. PSC should announce the date immediately so that we can adequately prepare and plan for the exam," Sharmin Akter, a graduate from Government Rajendra College, told The Daily Star.

"Many aspirants come from rural areas. They need to travel to cities to attend the exam," she added.

Hamid Hasan, a graduate from Dhaka university and a BCS candidate, said as the PSC is not announcing anything clearly about the exam date, misinformation and rumours are being spread regarding the exam dates.

"Further delays would take a heavy toll on general students," he added.

The PSC published the 45th BCS circular - seeking applications for 2,309 posts - on November 30. About 318,000 candidates have applied to sit for the exam.

The BCS examination is a nationwide competitive examination for recruitment to the civil service. The examination is conducted in three phases - the preliminary examination, the written examination and the viva voce.

Contacted, Ananda Kumar Biswas, exam controller of PSC, said, "We are at the final stage of moderating the question papers and have already uploaded the admit cards on the website. We will hold a meeting once we get confirmation from the printing authorities and announce the exam date after that."

AMAR EKUSHEY BOI MELA

Friday brings smiles on publishers' faces

DIPAN NANDY

It was quite a sight. The premises of the Boi Mela in Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan were packed with bookworms. They were moving from one stall to another, turning through the pages of the books available and buying them.

As it was a Friday, the fair opened for visitors at 11:00am yesterday, hours earlier than the usual slot. The first two hours of the fair were dedicated to children.

Hundreds of them surrounded Sisimpur Mancha at Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela yesterday. They were accompanied by mascots of the popular characters from Sesame Street's Bangladeshi adaptation.

Marking the "Shishu Prahaz", Sisimpur's Halum, Ikri and Tuktuki recommended the children read more books and consequently performed skits, much to their excitement. Besides, children were seen walking around holding the hands of their guardians, and some were also being carried by the adults accompanying them.

According to Shyamal Kumar Das, publisher of Ghasfaring Prakashani, the crowd on the third Friday was more than double that of the previous two Fridays and sales were up.

Mohiuddin Ahmed and Ratri Ahmed came to the fair from Banashree in the



A father showing her daughter what a book on alphabets has to offer in front of a stall at the book fair. Many children, accompanied by their parents, thronged the fair premises yesterday as weekend mornings are dedicated for the little ones. This photo was taken from Suhrawardy Udyan.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

morning with their daughter Rupkotha. They said that they brought little Rupkotha to the fair to cultivate reading habits in her.

There was a huge crowd of readers yesterday in front of almost all the publications in the Suhrawardy Udyan. In particular, Anyaprakash, Mawla Brothers, Kakoli Prakashani, Samay Prakashan, Tamralipi, Pearl Publications and Prathama publications saw the most number of visitors.

Ashik Mahmud, a book lover who dropped by the fair yesterday, said, "I have come to the fair to buy my favourite books. I bought some books of essays on the culture of Bangladesh."

Sabbir Hossain, another visitor, said, "I live in Uttara, so it is tough to visit the fair regularly. That is why I choose the holiday. I bought some books by my favourite writers."

Hasan Zahedi Tuhin, owner of Pearl Publications, said, "Books are selling well. This arrival of people is a promising sign for us."

Sanaul Kabir Chowdhury Kiron, in charge of the pavilion of Anyaprakash, echoed the same.

According to Bangla Academy, 276 new books were published at the fair yesterday. With this, the number of new books in this year's fair stands at 1,936.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

In CMC, student politics

FROM PAGE 5
 However, the relatives and family members of the victims claimed that they were not involved in politics.

Of them, Mizanur Rahman, a cousin of Sakib, said, "Sakib's father is a day labourer. He is the eldest of three siblings."
 "Sakib has to earn through private tuition and by taking classes at coaching centres to support his family and maintain expenses of his younger siblings."

"BCL activists tortured Sakib by calling him to their room around 1:00am on Thursday. If police check the CCTV footage of the dorm, it would be proven."
 Manjur Quader, officer-in-charge of Chawkbazar Police Station, said no case has been filed in this connection. "Even when the injured students were asked about the incident, they claimed that they were injured in accidents."

Asked why they did not file any case with the police station over the incident, Mizanur said, "The family was scared of taking any legal step thinking about the future security of their son."

"We lodged a complaint with CMC Academic Council on Monday asking for a neutral probe into the incident, and ensuring punishment of the perpetrators and safety of the victims on the campus and dormitories in future,"

he said.

Contacted, CMC Principal Prof Shahena Akhter said she received a letter from the families of the victims, and the college academic council will sit in a meeting immediately to take action in this regard.

According to CMC sources, since Awami League came to power in 2008, the BCL faction loyal to Nasir took sole control over the campus and dormitories, driving out the Chhatra Dal and Shibir activists.

However, in 2020, the CMC BCL unit was divided into two factions – one loyal to Mohibul and other loyal to Nasir.

Since then, clashes started on the campus and dormitories. The two factions locked in clashes for six to seven times in 2020. At least 13 students from both factions were injured in the infighting that year. On October 30, 2021, CMC student Mahadi J Akib, also an activist of BCL faction loyal to Mohibul, was seriously injured in an attack by the faction loyal to Nasir. His skull was fractured in the attack, and he later recovered at the ICU.

Following the incident, CMC's academic activities were suspended for 27 days.

Later, academic activities restarted, and student dormitories were banned in November 2021.

But even then, clashes and torturing could not be stopped in dormitories.

On February 1 this year, two CMC dormitories located at Nasirabad Residential Area in the city were declared closed after BCL infighting and vandalism.

Two brothers

FROM PAGE 3
 According to the tribunal's investigation agency, they were involved in four incidents of killings, abduction, confinement, torture, arson and looting.

The charges involved killing one Hindu man, torturing two Hindu women and forcing around 400 Hindus of the Sadar upazila's Sahapara union to leave the country; killing nine people at Nandina village and looting around 50 houses; killing five people at Doulatpur village; and killing seven people in Sahapara union.

According to the list announced by the central committee of Jamaat-e-Islami in 1971, Wahed was the member secretary of Gaibandha Sadar of Jamaat-e-Islami.

His father Abdul Jabbar Mondol, who was also convicted of death in the same case, was the main organiser of the peace committee and the armed Razakar forces in Gaibandha Sadar area. Later, Jabbar passed away.

Footpaths not for pedestrians

FROM PAGE 3
 zone, a bazaar, a human-hauler stand, and a van stand were found grabbing the footpath and a portion of the road.

While this is just the western side of the road, a similar picture can be observed on the eastern side, stretching from the cinema hall to Hotel Sonargaon on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

Though the work to replace utility lines was done around a month back, the footpaths are in the same dilapidated condition, making daily commuters tougher for pedestrians.

"I walk through the road every day. It is particularly difficult because of the dust," said Polash Miah, a Mirpur resident who uses the footpath from Karwan Bazar to Farmgate every day.

"The authorities have turned a blind eye to this issue," said Anwar Hossain, a Lalmatia

resident who also walks there daily.

What's more concerning is that this picture is reflected in almost every area of the capital.

According to the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), the total area of footpaths under its jurisdiction is 450 square km. The total area of roads is 1,250 square km and that of the drains is 1,350 square km.

In Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), the total area of footpaths stands at only 217.38 square km, excluding the 18 newly added wards.

DNCC Superintending Engineer Khandokar Mahub Alam said utility works have not been completed yet, for which, they could not fix the spaces on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

He said several organisations, including the city corporation, Desco and the metro rail authorities,

are involved here.

"The footpaths will be fixed once the construction of the metro rail station at Karwan Bazar is completed," said Mahub.

About the occupation of footpaths, he said the city corporations always take action against footpath encroachment.

However, certain vested groups occupy the space again and again after the clearings.

"We will continue our drive against encroachers," added Mahub.

One district, two AL

FROM PAGE 5
 agreed to inaugurate the office. Under these circumstances, opening a new office is the expression of political jealousy," said Enamul.

This correspondent could not reach district AL secretary Kazi Abdul Wadud Dara over the phone despite repeated attempts.

The unit's office secretary Prodyut Kumar said it is not a negative thing to have different offices for a big party like AL.

"We heard about our

land but no land documents were made available to us. Having offices at different locations is not a bad thing. A big party like AL should have offices at different locations," he said.

Contacted, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Shariful Haque said the district administration leased the vested property for one year following an application of the district Awami League secretary.

"They (AL) have to renew the lease every year in the following years," he added.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Office of the Executive Engineer
 PWD E/M Wood Workshop Division, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka
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Memo No-25.36.2680.534.14.170.23-1611 Date- 16/02/2023

Corrigendum

This is to notify all concern that the following tenders are invited in the national e-GP portal:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Last Selling Date	Opening Date
01	788560	23/02/2023	26/02/2023
02	788536	23/02/2023	26/02/2023
03	788610	23/02/2023	26/02/2023
04	788615	23/02/2023	26/02/2023

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

(Md. Shajedul Islam)
 Executive Engineer (E/M)
 PWD E/M Wood Workshop Division,
 Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka.
 Email: ee_wood@pwd.gov.bd

Killing century-old canal by turning it into a drain

FROM PAGE 5
 Ismail Hossain Selim, former secretary of Tangail Municipality and president of Tangail Sangrahashala, said there was no road communication system in the region at that time.

Waterways were the main means of transportation.

Besides, various products, including jute, were brought to the markets of the region through Shyamababu's canal.

In the 1990s, a sluice gate was constructed on the Lohajang River at Jugani in Sadar upazila under a Water Development Board project.

Under the same

project, a 1.5km drain was constructed from Paradisepara to the Godown Bridge stretch of the Shyamababu Canal.

A few years later, the municipal authorities built a few commercial high-rise markets on the side drain and rented it out. This also ruined the drainage system of the area, said Ismail.

Recently, the construction of the drains in the rest of the canal in Biswas Betka area has started under the Infrastructure Development Project of the municipality.

Locals said the Betka section of the canal was already in life support due

to unabated encroachment and pollution.

Ratan Ahmed Siddique, member secretary of Tangail District River-Canal Protection Movement Committee said, "The hope we had of reviving the vital canal for the people of the town has been dashed by the construction of this new drain in the Betka section."

"After turning the Paradisepara part of the canal into a drain, it got clogged with dirt and there was no way for the water to flow. That's why only moderate rainfall causes waterlogging in the surrounding areas."

"However, it seems like

the municipality did not learn anything from its past mistakes," he added.

According to Ratan, as the town's population grows and high-rise buildings and unplanned infrastructure are built, the drainage system will soon collapse completely.

"The town will be flooded due to moderate rainfall. The environment will once again be severely polluted as a result of clogged drains. The town will eventually be rendered uninhabitable," said Ratan.

"The construction of drains is not a solution. Rather, the canals must be saved at any cost," Ratan added.

Gautam Chandra Chandra, divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), said most of the 27 canals flowing over Tangail town no longer exist. This has increased the chance of serious environmental disasters.

Tangail Municipality Panel Mayor Hafizur Rahman Swapan said the master drain is being constructed in the Biswas Betka section of the canal in the public interest.

"After the construction of the drain, the land on both sides will be reclaimed and turned into a footpath," he said.

2 IBBL officials

FROM PAGE 3
 5 under the Digital Security Act.

The case mentioned Mohammad Nur U Nabi, Golam Sarwar Mia and Mazharul Islam Rasel and some unknown persons as the accused.

Police arrested Rasel on December 27 in another DSA case filed by an S Alam Group official with Double Mooring Police Station in Chattogram. Nur U Nabi and Golam Sarwar were also made accused in this case.

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

Making polls

FROM PAGE 5
 During a press briefing at his Chattogram city residence, Hasan Mahmud said in the February 16 meeting led by the AL general secretary with various European Union ambassadors, a free and participatory polls took precedence over other issues.

"We... want all political parties – including BNP – to participate in the upcoming general elections," he said.

He said, in the world, the caretaker government system only exists in Pakistan. "The question is why does BNP want to imitate Pakistan? There will never be a caretaker government in Bangladesh," he said.

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e-Tender Notice: 16/2022-23

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Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tendering method
1	790134	GSID-2/NTR/DW-21	Improvement of Sontoshpur Jam-E-Mosque under Lalpur union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.190198, Longitude: 89.958367]	LTM
2	790135	GSID-2/NTR/DW-24	Improvement of Mohorkoya Muktiyoddha Graveyard under Bilmaria union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.171395, Longitude: 89.920573]	LTM
3	790136	GSID-2/NTR/DW-42	Improvement of Madhnapur Zam-E-Mosque under Madhnapur union, Upazila-Naldanga, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.499074, Longitude: 88.973248]	LTM
4	790137	GSID-2/NTR/DW-27	Improvement of Dhola Hindupara Kali Mondir under Kadimchilan union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.249572, Longitude: 89.077071]	LTM
5	790138	GSID-2/NTR/DW-44	Improvement of Chack Gopal Mashinda Baitul Jam-E-Mosque under Singra Pouroshova, Upazila-Singra, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.5081, Longitude: 89.1432]	LTM
6	790139	GSID-2/NTR/DW-34	Improvement of Roghunathpur Pachchimpara Jam-E-Mosque under Arbab union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.213612, Longitude: 89.913195]	LTM
7	790140	GSID-2/NTR/DW-28	Improvement of Modhubari Jam-E-Mosque under Gopalpur Pouroshova, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.210565, Longitude: 89.009854]	LTM
8	790141	GSID-2/NTR/DW-22	Improvement of Goyalpara Central Graveyard under Chongdhupol union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.224652, Longitude: 89.966541]	LTM
9	790142	GSID-2/NTR/DW-23	Improvement of Amritopara Central Graveyard under Arbab union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.195912, Longitude: 89.918867]	LTM
10	790143	GSID-2/NTR/DW-25	Improvement of Ahmedpur Pabra para Graveyard under Duaria union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.188022, Longitude: 89.073523]	LTM
11	790144	GSID-2/NTR/DW-26	Improvement of Bamangram Central Graveyard under Arjunpur Boromhali union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.215517, Longitude: 89.029987]	LTM
12	790145	GSID-2/NTR/DW-29	Improvement of Vatpara Graveyard and Jam-E-Mosque under Ishwardi union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.184536, Longitude: 89.994258]	LTM
13	790146	GSID-2/NTR/DW-30	Improvement of Bilmaria Sree Cholionno Sonaton Songshta Mandir under Bilmaria union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.163111, Longitude: 89.917357]	LTM
14	790147	GSID-2/NTR/DW-31	Improvement of Hapania Durga Mandir under Duaria union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.208595, Longitude: 89.090873]	LTM
15	790148	GSID-2/NTR/DW-32	Improvement of Angaripara Central Graveyard under Arjunpur Boromhali union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.178356, Longitude: 89.025833]	LTM
16	790149	GSID-2/NTR/DW-33	Improvement of Ghatchilan Jam-E-Mosque under Kadimchilan union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.228386, Longitude: 89.093343]	LTM
17	790153	GSID-2/NTR/DW-35	Improvement of Walla Bazar Jam-E-Mosque under Walla union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.248262, Longitude: 89.034998]	LTM
18	790154	GSID-2/NTR/DW-36	Improvement of Bidhirpur Graveyard under Durduria union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.207017, Longitude: 89.904057]	LTM
19	790155	GSID-2/NTR/DW-37	Improvement of Arjunpur Central Graveyard under Arjunpur Boromhali union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.184481, Longitude: 89.044013]	LTM
20	790156	GSID-2/NTR/DW-38	Improvement of Kadimchilan Purbopara Central Graveyard under Kadimchilan union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.246710, Longitude: 89.108872]	LTM
21	790158	GSID-2/NTR/DW-39	Improvement of Chalknazarpur Graveyard under Gopalpur Pouroshova, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.234292, Longitude: 89.017625]	LTM
22	790159	GSID-2/NTR/DW-40	Improvement of Sadipur Madhopar Central Graveyard under Ishwardi union, Upazila-Lalpur, District: Natore. [Latitude: 24.168216, Longitude: 89.03216]	LTM

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 4:00pm date: 06/03/2023.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and also from e-GP help desk (E-mail: xen.natore@lged.gov.bd or Call to 01708-123222).

Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

Mohd. Shohidul Islam
 Executive Engineer
 LGED, Natore
 Mobile No: 01708-123222
 E-mail: xen.natore@lged.gov.bd

In CMC, student politics is banned in name only Two BCL factions still terrorising campus, dorms, allege students

ARUN BIKASH DEY

Although student politics is officially banned on Chattogram Medical College (CMC) campus and its dormitories, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) has been carrying out its activities as authorities continue to turn a blind eye, alleged students.

They often lock into factional clashes, which put the lives of students at risk and hampers academic activities, they claimed.

They even use the dorm rooms as "torture cells" to "discipline" students who belong to or are suspected of belonging to a different political ideology, according to the students.

In the latest incident, BCL activists reportedly kept Zahid Hossain Wakil, Sakib Hossain, MA Raihan and Mobashwer Hossain Shubhra of MBBS 62 batch confined to a dormitory room from Wednesday midnight to Thursday evening, torturing them on suspicion that they were Shibir activists.

Zahid and Sakib had to be admitted to the ICU of Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Mahadi Bin Hashim, a former BCL leader and general secretary of CMC Intern Doctors' Association, said the BCL faction loyal to Deputy

Minister for Education Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury was involved with the incident.

Mahadi, a former leader of CMC BCL faction loyal to AL Chattogram city unit general secretary AJM Nasir Uddin, said no activist of Nasir's group was involved in the incident.

Meanwhile, Abhijit Das, a CMC unit BCL leader loyal to Mohibul,

We lodged a complaint with CMC Academic Council on Monday asking for a neutral probe into the incident, and ensuring punishment of the perpetrators and safety of the victims on the campus and dormitories in future.

MIZANUR
Cousin of injured Sakib

claimed that no students were tortured on campus. "The four students were conducting Shibir activities and were warned not to do so," he told the media.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Tangail's 128-year-old Shyamababu's canal had been in life support for the last 32 years after a part of it was converted into a drain. Now the last nail is getting hammered in the coffin of this waterbody after the remaining part of the canal in Biswas Betka area is also being turned into a narrow drain. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Killing century-old canal by turning it into a drain

MIRZA SHAKIL

The last nail is getting hammered in the coffin of Shyamababu's canal in Tangail town. After more than half of the town's main canal was converted into a central drain nearly three decades ago, now drain construction on the remaining part of the canal

has also started. Through this, the 128-year-old canal is going to end its life, leaving the ancient town in fear of environmental disaster.

According to Tangail municipality sources, Shyamacharan Gupta, a teacher of the local Bindubasini High School, who was also the then vice chairman of the

municipal council, dug the canal from Lauhajang River in Paradisepara area of the town to Burai Beel of Biswas Betka area in 1905 for the development of the town's drainage and local waterways.

Even in the 70s, people used to cross the 35 to 40 feet wide canal by cargo boats.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

One district, two AL headquarters Ruling party factions establishing different offices in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Despite owning land on which an office is being built, a faction of the Rajshahi Awami League inaugurated an alternative headquarters on a 14-decimal land leased from the district administration yesterday.

The incident caused a stir in local political circles, with many saying the incident has exposed infighting among the ruling party.

"Opening a separate office exposed nothing but the division among leaders," Asaduzzaman Asad, a member of the district AL, told The Daily Star.

Led by the district AL secretary Abdul Wadud Dara, the office was opened yesterday afternoon at the city's Ranibazar area, through a milad mahfil.

Meanwhile, the AL owns a 10-katha land in City Hat area for its office, where the construction of an office building on a 4,500 square-foot area is currently underway.

Both the sites have banners claiming the lands to be the office of the district AL.

AL lawmaker Enamul Haque said he donated the City Hat land to the district AL in 2017 and currently, he is also constructing the office building spending Tk 2.5 crore.

The current market value of the land is around Tk 5 crore, he added.

He said AL presidium member and Rajshahi city mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton visited the progress of the under construction office recently.

"The construction of the office building is expected to be completed within a month. Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader has

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Making polls participatory not just AL's responsibility

Says info minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Ensuring a participatory election is the responsibility of not only the ruling Awami League but also of all political parties including BNP, said Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday.

If any party boycotts the election or tries to prevent it, then they will be held responsible to make the polls non-participatory, he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

PRAYER TIMING
FEBRUARY 18

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
5:20	12:45	4:30	6:03	7:30	
JAMAAT	5:55	1:15	4:45	6:07	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Indian cyclists in the country to pay homage to language heroes



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

An eight-member Indian cyclist team from West Bengal has arrived in Bangladesh to pay homage to the language heroes on the occasion of International Mother Language Day. This visit also aims to build cultural unity between the two countries.

The team reached Pabna on Thursday night and visited historic places in the district yesterday. They started for Manikganj in the afternoon. The team is likely to reach Dhaka on February 19 by riding bicycles, said Shaibal Banerjee,

who is leading the team and a teacher in India.

The team comprising six teachers and two local businessmen began their journey from Hooghly in West Bengal on February 14. They entered Bangladesh through the Darshana border on February 15. Later they reached Pabna through Shilaidah Ghat.

"Although the barbed-wire fence divided the Bangla, we all are Bangalee. Despite the border, we speak in Bangla and we have the same passion and culture as the Bangladeshi people have," said Shaibal.

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SETTLEMENT EXPANSION US 'dismayed' with Israeli move Dubs UN vote 'unhelpful'

REUTERS, Washington

The United States voiced deep dismay at Israel's decision to expand Jewish settlements in occupied Palestinian territory but on Thursday also described as "unhelpful" a push for the UN Security Council to denounce the move.

In a rebuke of Israel - suggesting President Joe Biden was prepared to take a harder line in dealing with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu - the White House said settlement activity "creates facts on the ground" that undermine hopes for peace between Israel and a future Palestinian state.

"The United States strongly opposes these unilateral measures which exacerbate tensions, harm trust between the parties and undermine the geographic viability of the two-state solution," said White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre.

Netanyahu's government on Sunday authorized nine Jewish settler outposts in the occupied West Bank and announced mass construction of new homes in established settlements.

The United Nations Security Council is considering a draft resolution, seen by Reuters on Wednesday, that would demand Israel "immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory."

The 15-member council is likely to vote on Monday on the text, drafted by the United Arab Emirates in coordination with the Palestinians, diplomats said.



It's 'obvious' Ukraine won't be Putin's last stop Zelensky tells Munich conference, calls for faster weapons delivery as Russia intensifies attacks in eastern front

AGENCIES

President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday it was "obvious" Ukraine would not be the last stop of Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion, and that it was vital the West does not delay deliveries of weapons to help repel Russian forces.

The Ukrainian leader told the Munich Security Conference by video link that while the West was negotiating supplies of tanks to Kyiv, the Kremlin was thinking of ways to "strangle" the former Soviet republic of Moldova which lies west of Ukraine.

"It's obvious that Ukraine is not going to be his last stop. He's going to continue his movement all the way...including all the other states that at some point in time were part of the Soviet bloc," Zelensky said.

He urged the West to maintain speedy weapons deliveries. "Delay has always been and still is a mistake," Zelensky said.

He made his opening remarks in English as he addressed the security conference, an annual gathering of leading politicians, military officers and diplomats, days before Ukraine



marks the first anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

Despite his warnings, Zelensky said he did not think Russia could win.

He likened Ukraine to David and Russia to Goliath in the Biblical tale in which the underdog David wins, armed with a sling. He said David had defeated Goliath by action rather than conversation and that Goliath "has no chances".

"We need the speed, speed of our agreements, speed of our delivery, to strengthen our sling -

speed of decisions to limit Russian potential," he said.

In the battleground, Russian forces intensified attacks along front lines in eastern Ukraine yesterday. Bolstered by tens of thousands of reservists, Russia has intensified ground assaults, reports Reuters.

A major new Russian offensive appears to be taking shape and the governor of the Luhansk region in eastern Ukraine reported a significant increase in Russian attacks along front lines there.

IS leader killed, 4 US troops hurt in Syria raid

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

The US military has said it killed a "senior" IS (Islamic State) leader in a raid in northeastern Syria as Washington continues its targeting of the group.

The Middle East-based US Central Command (CENTCOM) of the American military announced the operation on Friday, saying that four soldiers were injured during the raid, which was carried out in coordination with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

The military said "an explosion on target resulted in four US servicemembers and one working dog wounded" during a helicopter raid in northeastern Syria on Thursday.

"The targeted IS senior leader, Hamza al-Homsi, was killed," CENTCOM said in a statement without providing further details about al-Homsi.

The four soldiers and the dog are receiving treatment at a US medical facility in Iraq, it added.

The raid came less than a month after US forces killed Bilal al-Sudani, an IS leader in Somalia, whom Washington described as a "key facilitator for IS's global network".

US forces killed IS's first top leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in a raid in northern Syria in 2019. His successor Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi was also killed in Syria in a similar US operation last year.

IS controlled large swaths of territory in Iraq and Syria from 2014 until its territorial defeat late in 2017. During that time, the group, which had declared a "caliphate" and inspired attacks on civilian targets across the world, attracted thousands of foreign fighters, including from Europe and the US.

The remaining IS cells have continued to carry out occasional attacks against SDF and Syrian government targets. At the same time, the US, which has maintained a military presence in Syria, regularly conducts deadly raids against alleged IS officials.

Scrap it if necessary Broiler chicken goes

FROM PAGE 12

power from Adani Power at this high price, it said.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said this agreement is considered inequitable and unclear and unprecedentedly discriminatory for Bangladesh by international reliable analysis.

"It seems that the agreement has ignored the interests of Bangladesh and favoured the interests of Adani Group in such a way that the electricity sector of Bangladesh can become a hostage in the hands of this company. This burden will have to be borne by the people of this country," he said.

Letter sent in 1916

FROM PAGE 12

Under the Postal Services Act 2000, it is a crime to open mail not addressed to you. But Glen said he can "only apologize" if he's committed a crime.

After realizing that the letter may be of historical interest, he gave it to the *Norwood Review*, a local quarterly magazine.

"As a local historian I was amazed and delighted to have the details of the letter passed to me," said Stephen Oxford, editor of the magazine, in a release.

The letter was addressed to "my dear Katie," who, according to Oxford, was the wife of local stamp magnate Oswald Marsh.

It was written by Christabel Mennel, the daughter of tea merchant Henry Tuke Mennel, while her family was on holiday in Bath, in western England. In the letter, Mennel writes: "I've been most miserable here with a very heavy cold."

The neighborhood of south London was a hub of business activity at the time. "Lots of wealthy, middle class people moved into the area in the late 1800s," Oxford told CNN.

Oswald Marsh, the former resident of the Hamlet Road property, "was a highly regarded stamp dealer who was often called as an expert witness in cases of stamp fraud," according to Oxford.

Aid focus turns

FROM PAGE 2

where her two daughters had lived. About 650 people are believed to have died when the Renaissance Residence collapsed.

Some 200 km (125 miles) away, about 100 people gathered at a small cemetery in the town of Pazarcik to bury a family of four - Ismail and Selin Yavuzatmaca and their two young daughters - who all died in the Renaissance building.

Turkey has promised to investigate anyone suspected of responsibility for the collapse of buildings and has ordered the detention of more than 100 suspects, including developers.

Across the border in Syria, the earthquake slammed a region divided and devastated by 12 years of civil war.

The Syrian government says the death toll in territory it controls is 1,414. More than 4,000 fatalities have been reported in the rebel-held northwest, but rescuers say nobody has been found alive there since February 9.

The aid effort has been hampered by the conflict. Many people in the northwest feel abandoned as supplies almost invariably head to other parts of the sprawling disaster zone.

Chicken, egg and fish are some of the main sources of protein.

FROM PAGE 12

A number of consumers at the kitchen markets in Karwan Bazar and Farmgate areas said the hike in price of essentials left them in deep trouble as they were struggling to purchase necessary items.

They said they were experiencing the soaring prices of daily essentials, especially different types of meat over the past one week.

Rawshan Ara Begum, 70, of East Rajabazar area, said she never saw in her entire life that broiler chicken was sold at Tk 240 a kg. "If this is the situation, then how low-income families like ours will

survive."

Nur Nabi, a wholesale chicken trader in Karwan Bazar, said he has been involved in the trade for over four decades in the capital. "This is the highest ever price of broiler chicken as far as I can recall."

The broiler chicken has seen an increase in price at the farmer level over the past one week while there is also a shortage in market against the demand, he said.

As a result, traders were selling it at an increased price, Nabi added.

Talking to *The Daily Star*, both experts and small farmers recently blamed the big shots of the poultry industry and intermediaries for the abnormal price hike.

Earlier, European Union leaders said they would tighten their borders to keep away unwanted immigrants, with some seeking more fences and walls while others would rather spend the money on improving living conditions in worse-off parts of the world.

Immigration has been a highly politically sensitive topic in the EU since 2015 when more than a million people - mostly fleeing the war in Syria - crossed the Mediterranean into Europe, and member states fought bitterly over how to provide for them.

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Shab-e-Meraj

FROM PAGE 12

Mukarram National Mosque at 1:30pm today highlighting the significance of Shab-e-Meraj, said a press release.

Mohammad Bashirul Alam, director general of Bangladesh Islamic Foundation, will preside over the meeting where Md Abdul Quadir, chairman of Arabic department at Dhaka University, will be a discussant.

IU suspends

FROM PAGE 12

directives of the university administration verbally.

"No one in the dormitory is a resident student of the hall, they are allowed to live there as non-residents," he said.

Sanjida is a student of statistics and Tabassum is a student of the finance and banking department at IU.

Won't accept names

FROM PAGE 12

through an "unfavourable" contract.

The allegation came a day after IOC took to the Twitter to clarify its initial pact for hiring the Adani Group port for LPG imports in addition to existing pacts with nearby ports, saying there is no take-or-pay agreement.

The IOC's statement, which came in response to TMC lawmaker Mahua Moitra raising a stink of a scam in hiring of the port facility without a tender, contradicted Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited's earning call presentation that said "MoU signed with IOCL for a take-or-pay contract at Gangavaram Port for building LPG handling facilities".

Meanwhile, BJP tore into billionaire investor George Soros's statement made at a conference in Munich that he believes that the turmoil engulfing Gautam Adani's business empire may open the door to a democratic revival

in the country.

"This war is being mounted against India and what stands between the war and India's interests is Narendra Modi," BJP leader and federal minister Smriti Irani told reporters in New Delhi. "Everyone should condemn Soros' remarks in one voice".

She alleged Soros wants to "destroy" Indian democracy and wanted some "hand-picked" people to run the government here. He has created a fund of over USD one billion to intervene in democratic systems, including in India, she claimed.

Smriti Irani, minister of Women and Child Development, pointed out it was Soros who "broke" the Bank of England and is "designated as an economic war criminal".

She said, "George Soros, who hedges bets against many countries, has now made known his ill intentions in the democratic processes of India."

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TASNOVA TAMANNA is here to stay

Tasnova Tamanna became the talk of the town after she was announced the 'Best Actress' in the National Film Awards 2021 this year—for her stellar performance in Rezwan Shahriar Sumit's directorial debut, "Nonajoler Kabbo". The actress rose to prominence with Abdullah Mohammad Saad's "Live from Dhaka". In an interview with The Daily Star, she opened up about working in the media, upcoming projects and more.

SHARMIN JOYA

How was the transition between *Rehana* (Live from Dhaka) and *Tuni* (Nonajoler Kabbo)?

Initially, I was not sure if I could crack the role of Tuni, since I was born and brought up in a metro. My thanks to Sumit, who had showed immense confidence in me. Tuni belongs to a rural area, and comes from a society that restricts women from raising their voices. Yet, her bold nature amazes everyone when she stands for her own rights.

Rehana was more relatable to me in terms of social perspective. However, her mental trauma and the reality she had to go through, was definitely challenging.

Among these two characters, whom do you find more resemblance to?

I would say Tuni, because she is a fighter and I believe that's how we survive. I have always been vocal about every odd thing in my life. My journey in showbiz has not been easy. I am here today, because I am a fighter.

Both films that you feature in are projects that earned less popularity in theatres, but won

accolades in different festivals across the world. If offered, would you ever work in a formula film?

Of course, I would, if it makes sense. As an actor, my job is to act, and build a character. Sadly, I have always been suggested for roles which could never impress me.

For my skin tone and body language, I have always been approached for typical roles. There is a very stereotypical idea that tanned girls are rebellious or they have to portray tough roles, which I have always refused. I feel it is mentally unhygienic that we don't accept individuals as they are, instead of offering them the role according to their capability and talent.

You are not found anywhere on the social media. Why is that?

I feel social media is unnecessarily complicated and draining. I actually don't understand what I'd do on social media.

What do you do in your leisure time then?

I love to sleep, read books, watch movies and enjoy the little things in life. I am fine by myself.

What are your upcoming projects?

I am in talks for a feature film, which will be announced soon.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Out and about IN DHAKA



Dhaka POP & Cosplay Fest 2023
February 24-25 | 3 pm - 8 pm
Jamuna Future Park



WOW Bangladesh 2023
February 24-25 | 12 pm - 8:30 pm
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy



Let's Mosh-pit
February 26 | 4 pm
Noborattri Hall, iccb

TRENDYSTREAMS

Netflix
The Romantics

Chorki
Unish 20

Hoichoi
Dilkhush

Amazon Prime
The Consultant

Disney plus
Clan of the Meerkats



STYLE STATEMENT HARRY STYLES

Harry Styles is famous for his gender-fluid sense of fashion. The singer knows how to carefully blend both his masculine and feminine sides to embody the ultimate version of 'fashion goals'. Recently, the *Watermelon Sugar* singer walked the red carpet of the Brit Awards wearing a structured, custom black Nina Ricci suit, with a matching flower corsage—that was about the size of his head.

TV TALKIES

LEGEND OF KORRA

A hint of real life in a childhood classic

Legend of Korra came as a follow-up to the cult-classic, *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and got mixed reviews back in 2012, when it was released. Still, reeling from 90s nostalgia and leaving out their childhood, millennials had quite the stirring reaction to the female protagonist.

Korra was the Avatar who came after Aang, an air nomad who ended the 100-year war and united the nations. However, Korra began her journey as part of the water tribe and later ventures into the Republic city—a united city, where there is no segregation.

Labelled as 'annoying' by fans, Korra unironically explores what it is like face the trauma of growing up and leaving the 'whimsical' period of childhood behind—a phenomenon a lot of people can't get over. An existential palate cleanser, *Legend of Korra* is now available on Netflix.



The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Why did Tagore have to be 'disappeared'?

Removal of the statue reveals the state of our freedom of expression

How ironic – or perhaps how fitting – that a statue protesting the recent incidents of censorship and repression in Bangladesh must meet the tragic fate of “forced disappearance.” Its removal by the Dhaka University authorities without so much as a warning or a show-cause notice to the artists who installed it on the campus, and the wording used to justify such an action, only solidifies the message the artists were trying to push forth in the first place: that the freedom of thought and expression in the country are under attack.

The statue in question was that of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, with his mouth taped, holding a book that had a nail pierced through it. It was set up on Tuesday by leftist students of DU near the Raju Memorial Sculpture, apparently to highlight the current climate of censorship and shrinking space for free thinking and creativity in the country, and was supposed to be in place till the end of February. The statue's placement near the entrance to Ekushey Boi Mela – a day after the Bangla Academy filed an appeal challenging the High Court order to allow Adarsha Prokashoni a stall at the fair – could also be interpreted as a criticism of the increasingly rigid stance of the academy on censorship of books that challenge the dominant state-endorsed narrative.

We recognise that there is an issue of permission, and that the DU authorities cannot simply allow everyone to arbitrarily erect statues on the campus without oversight or say. However, we are completely taken aback by the authorities' explanation – that they demolished it as it represented a “degraded culture” and that the poet's sculpture was “distorted.” What exactly do the authorities mean by “distorted” or “degraded culture”? We can only assume that they take issue with protest art and demands for free speech, for that is clearly what the statue signified.

If anything is out of place in a university that is historically linked to progressive student politics and mass struggles for emancipation in the country, it is the DU authorities' heavy-handed handling of the matter. It goes without saying that a university campus is one where students should be free to explore and exchange ideas, engage in constructive debates and experiment with different modes of artistic expression. Unfortunately, over the years, we have seen our campuses being held hostage by ruling party cadres, with the administrations implicitly or explicitly furthering the interests of the ruling party and clamping down on dissent. The space for critical thought – which ought to be a crucial component of higher education – is sorely missing on our campuses, and indeed in our society at large.

The ban on Adarsha Prokashoni, as well as on Jannatun Nayeem Prity's book *Jonmo o Jonir Iitihash* from the ongoing book fair, have already painted a bleak picture of artistic freedoms – or the lack thereof – in the country. We are alarmed to see that bodies such as the Bangla Academy and DU, which ought to be autonomous and custodians of free thought, are now playing increasingly authoritarian roles, arbitrarily shutting down critical discourses and artistic expressions. We urge the authorities to remember our foundational and constitutional commitments to work towards a society where, to quote Tagore, the mind is without fear, where knowledge is free, and where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way.

The world must take responsibility

Global action needed to help Turkey-Syria earthquake victims

The Turkey-Syria border and the nearby region, one of the most active seismic zones on the planet, is still reeling from the major earthquakes that took place on February 6. One of the earthquakes was the strongest in Turkey since 1939. In light of these events, we must question how much of the disaster was due to natural reasons and how much was influenced by humans, and consider what steps we must take now to recover from the disaster.

The total death toll in the two countries is close to 44,000 (as of 5 pm Bangladesh time, February 17), and millions are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance, with many survivors left homeless in near-freezing winter weather. In a welcome step, Turkey said it would demolish buildings that were severely damaged by the earthquake and launch a massive reconstruction operation. The Turkish government, even after admitting their own flaws, has encouraged people to return home “in order to start getting back to normal.” But it is easier said than done. The quake was so devastating because the Turkish government failed to act intently to enforce its building codes.

Experts say well-built structures should have been able to largely withstand the earthquakes despite their intensity. However, the Turkish government provided periodic “construction amnesties,” which are basically legal exemptions for the payment of a fee for structures built without the required safety certificates. These have been passed since the 1960s (with the latest in 2018). A geologist earlier this year said that passing such amnesties in a country located in an earthquake-prone zone amounts to a “crime.” This also sends a message to our own government about our own lack of earthquake preparedness. Scientists estimate that a seven-magnitude earthquake may kill up to 300,000 people in Dhaka alone. Many buildings in this city and other major cities, including Chattogram, were not built in accordance with the building code. Have we taken the appropriate precautions to mitigate the risk?

Another concerning issue that needs global attention is the relief that Syrians need. According to the United Nations, four million people needed assistance even before the earthquakes in those areas. Relief efforts have been impeded by a civil conflict that has fractured the country and divided regional and global powers. Despite the fact that a single border crossing from Turkey to Syria remained open following the earthquakes, the UN did not send supplies for several days due to “logistical challenges.” This is most unfortunate.

The global community must do better in serving the needs of the earthquake-struck people of Syria. If politics can be put aside, the reconstruction of this region is possible. We hope that the world will come together to serve these people in need, instead of pursuing their own agendas.

Poritosh Sarkar's Orwellian Experience

Berth in solitary confinement for alleged Facebook post



ON THE SHORES OF (IN)JUSTICE

Dr CR Abrar is an academic with interest in human rights issues.

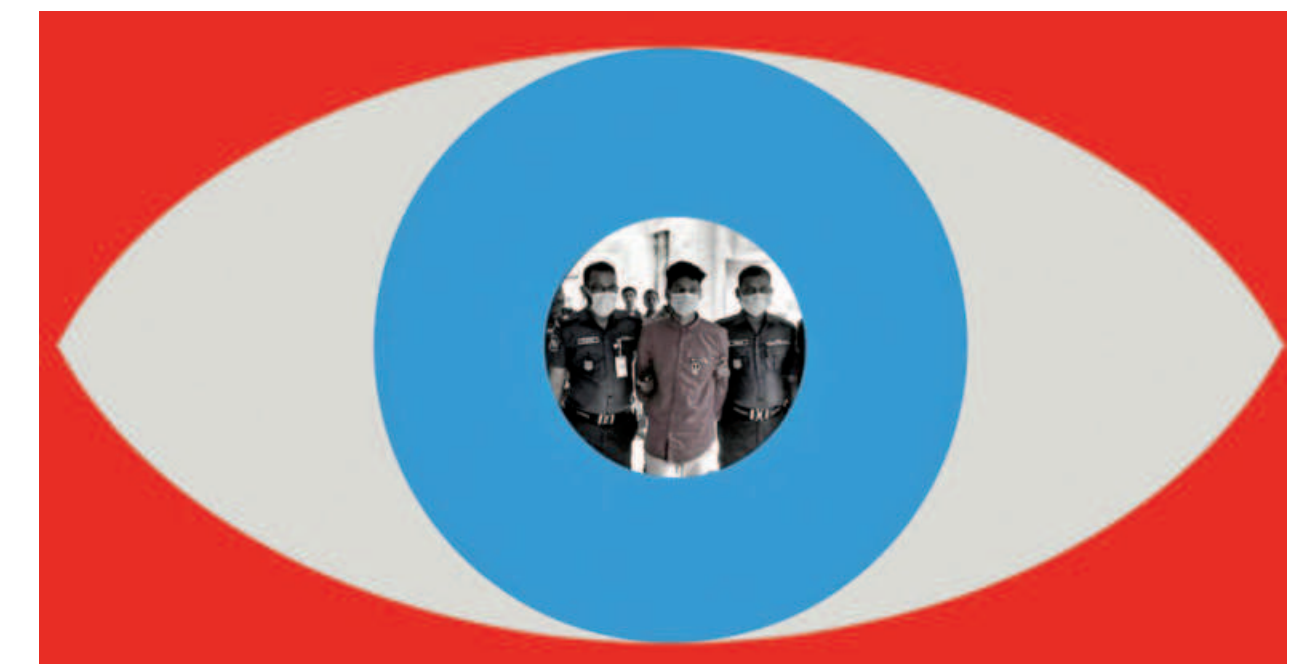
CR ABRAR

The draconian Digital Security Act (DSA) has claimed its latest victim. On February 8, the Rangpur Cyber Tribunal sentenced Poritosh Sarkar, a Hindu teenager, to five years in jail for “hurting religious sentiments.” Poritosh was sentenced under Section 31(l) of the DSA. The section criminalises publication and posting of any material that “creates enmity, hatred or hostility among different classes or communities of the society, or destroys communal harmony.”

Poritosh was the first person to be convicted for the communal frenzy that led to the razing of 60 Hindu homes in Rangpur's Pirganj upazila on October 17, 2021. Most of the other accused in the case secured bail, while others are on the run. It appears Poritosh, a 10th grader at the time of the incident, belonging to an economically disadvantaged fishing family, is paying the price for an act that he firmly maintains he did not commit. Until the day of the verdict, no evidence was furnished to back up the state's claim that it was Poritosh who posted the message as his phone was destroyed beyond repair and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) was unable to conduct forensic tests on it.

While Poritosh's sentencing raises concerns regarding the likely misapplication of the DSA, his treatment during detention has exposed the inhumane and brutal conditions that an accused may be subjected to under Bangladesh's criminal justice system. On February 5, speaking to *The Daily Star* at the Rangpur court premises, Poritosh informed that he had been kept in solitary confinement for eight whole months. The jail authorities claimed that the measure had been taken for Poritosh's own safety as the people who had set fire to the village were also in the same prison and were likely to harm him.

One may accept such flimsy reasoning in good faith; however, one is appalled by what Poritosh had further revealed, “I was not allowed to step out of my jail cell for eight months, not for a single day. There were no windows – just a vent at the top of the cell, which



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

was blocked. I had no way of knowing if it was day or night from inside the cell. I counted the days by the meals being given to me.”

The extent of mental harm Poritosh endured is further revealed when he said, “Not a single person spoke to me during those days. I tried talking to the guards, but they would not respond.” For the first several months, he was given some books by the authorities, but even that was stopped. He said the desperate situation had driven him to consider dying by suicide. The extent of ill treatment and denial of his fundamental rights is further reinforced by the fact that his lawyers were unable to contact him when he was incarcerated.

The most egregious breach of law in Poritosh's case was when he was placed in solitary confinement. Poritosh was a detainee, not a convict, and there is no scope under Bangladesh's criminal code to place a detainee in solitary confinement. Furthermore, Section 74 of the Penal Code says that “when the imprisonment awarded shall exceed three months, the solitary confinement shall not exceed seven days in one month of the whole imprisonment awarded.”

to communicate at any time with an officer of the prison, and every prisoner so confined in a cell for more than 24 hours, whether as a punishment or otherwise, shall be visited at least once a day by the Medical Officer or Medical Subordinate.”

The harsh treatment that Poritosh was subjected to raises several important questions. Firstly, why did the accused have to be in jail when those arrested for arson and communal violence were granted bail, including the muezzin of the village mosque who made calls for people to gather, and Saikat Mandal and Ujjal Hossain who were instrumental in triggering the rumour? Secondly, if the jail authority's justification for keeping Poritosh safe is taken at face value, was solitary confinement (reserved for hardened criminals) the only choice? Could he not be sent to some other facility? Thirdly, Doesn't the claim that the detainee was likely to be harmed within the jail compound also expose their failure to ensure the prisoners' safety?

Fourthly, under what grounds was the accused denied access to his counsel, a right guaranteed under the constitution of the republic? And

Clearly, the state has a case to answer on all of the counts above. It is unfortunate that after nearly 52 years of independence, such blatant acts of state crime under the rubric of DSA committed against a teenager belonging to a minority community don't merit any discussion in the national parliament, nor are they condemned by the otherwise vocal champions of the spirit of Liberation War and the guardians of national conscience. The silence of the minority faith-based groups and the human rights and child rights organisations is also baffling, and so is the ineptness of the progressive liberals who occasionally care to issue statements or embark on fact-finding missions on matters of their priority.

Defending rights entail taking principled position against all forms of violations. Our collective failure to stand up for Poritosh Sarkar makes us culpable for the grave wrongs done to him.

The author acknowledges the support of Rezaur Rahman Lenin and Zyma Islam.

Future of the university, university of the future



Mohammad Ehsanul Islam Khan is a teacher, researcher and the president of Hello Teen Society, a non-profit organisation for education, research and welfare in Bangladesh.

MOHAMMAD EHSANUL ISLAM KHAN

Driven by technological advancement and globalisation, higher education is undergoing significant transformation in the 21st century. This transformation rightly affects the traditional university system and the possibility of a new type of university that is better-suited for meeting the demands and challenges of the future. There are various elements, such as technology integration, pedagogical innovation, changing student demographics, and societal demands for education, that factor into this discussion. As the traditional approach to education becomes outdated, universities must adapt and innovate to meet the evolving needs of students and society.

Predictions range from the extinction of universities as we know them to a bright future for these institutions, with modifications to meet the demands of the modern era. The discussions and ideas around this topic are often forward-looking, striving to imagine and create a more innovative, effective, and accessible university system that prepares students for the future.

According to Clayton Christensen, a Harvard Business School professor, the traditional university model is facing a significant threat from online

education. He predicts that most college students will opt for online learning in the future, leading to the downfall of traditional universities. This is due to the fact that online education offers a more flexible and cost-effective option for students.

However, others see a different future for universities. Economist and futurist Thomas Frey sees universities as centres of innovation and creativity that will continue to thrive. He predicts that in the future, universities will focus more on experiential learning, offering hands-on experiences and opportunities for students to solve real-world problems. This shift will allow universities to stay relevant and provide students with the skills they need to succeed in the rapidly changing job market.

According to the author and futurist Richard Watson, the University of the Future will also focus on interdisciplinary education and research. He believes universities will cross traditional disciplinary boundaries to address complex global challenges, such as climate change and social inequality. This approach will require a new type of education, integrating knowledge from multiple fields.

The shift to digital education is one of the biggest changes that may impact the future of universities. With the rise of online learning and the increasing availability of educational resources, students will be able to access knowledge and skills from anywhere in the world. This will change how students learn and require universities to adapt their pedagogical approach to take full

Innovations such as blended learning, which combines traditional classroom instruction with online learning, and virtual and augmented reality technologies will play a significant role in the university of the future. These technologies will provide students with a more immersive and interactive learning experience and help bridge the gap between theory and practice.

advantage of digital technologies.

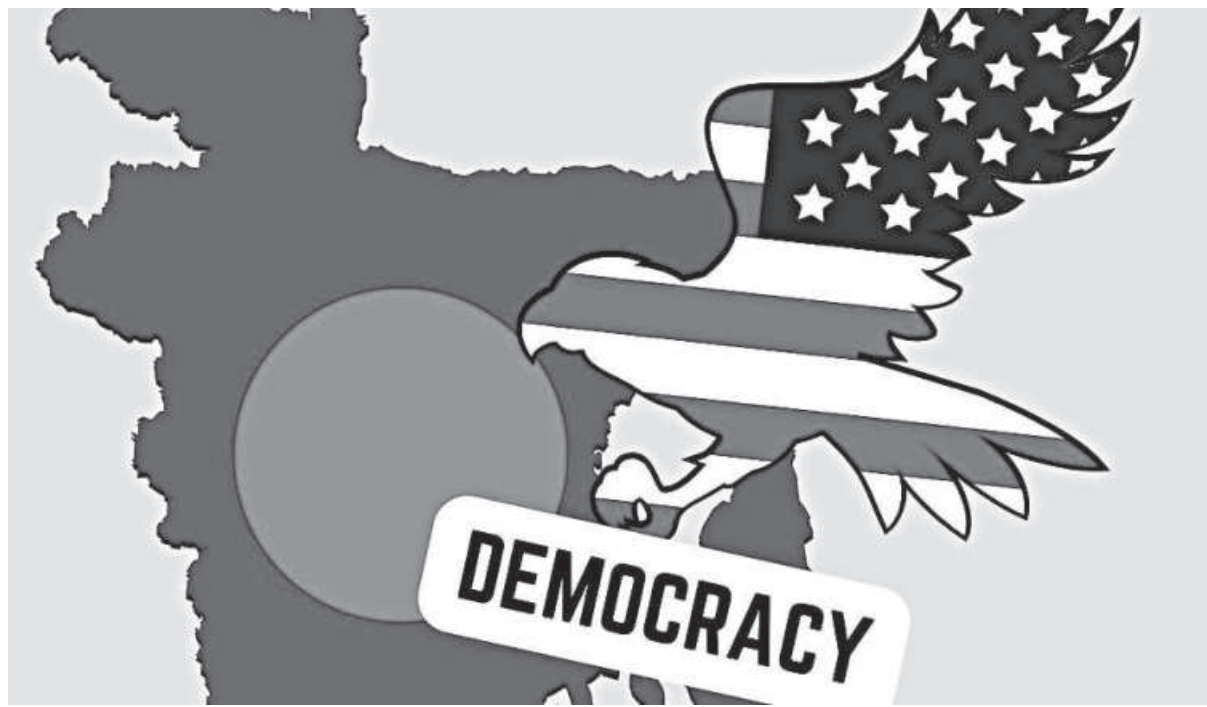
Another challenge facing universities is the changing role of the workforce in an increasingly automated society. As technology advances, many jobs that once required human touch will be replaced by machines. This will require universities to focus on developing the skills and knowledge that will help students succeed in future jobs.

To prepare for these changes, universities must be proactive in their approach to innovation. This will require a shift away from traditional ways of thinking, and a willingness to embrace new ideas and approaches. John Dewey, a renowned philosopher of education, once said, “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” This sentiment underscores the importance of universities in fostering the lifelong learning skills essential for success in an ever-changing world.

Innovations such as blended learning, which combines traditional classroom instruction with online learning, and virtual and augmented reality technologies will play a significant role in the university of the future. These technologies will provide students with a more immersive and interactive learning experience and help bridge the gap between theory and practice.

By embracing technology, focusing on the skills and knowledge that will be most valuable in the future, and being proactive in their approach to innovation, universities can ensure their relevance in the years to come. Still, the future of the university and the university of the future is uncertain, but higher education must adapt to the changing needs of students and society.

It is clear that many factors, including technological advances, will shape the future of higher education and workforce needs. By embracing innovation and focusing on the skills and knowledge that will be most valuable in the coming days, universities can ensure their relevance and help to prepare students for success in an ever-changing world.



VISUAL: STAR

Can the US Eagle Fly to Bangladesh?



Zillur Rahman
is the executive director of the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) and a television talk show host. His Twitter handle is @zillur

ZILLUR RAHMAN

The American bald eagle is known to fly over 125 miles per day during its seasonal migration. Though undoubtedly an impressive distance to travel, this flight range pales in comparison to the astounding 8,214-mile distance between Washington and Dhaka. Perhaps no bald eagle could ever fly across the Pacific to visit our shores, but the nation that the eagle represents now regularly flies high-level diplomats to visit Bangladesh.

The growing presence of the US in Bangladesh's national political dialogue is one of the most interesting trends in the latter's domestic politics today. The Bangladesh government has expressed that it is not the role of foreign ambassadors to make any assertions or opinions about a nation's internal governance and electoral system. On the other hand, we see multiple embassies, particularly from Bangladesh's most important development partners, come together in solidarity to advocate for human rights and democratic values and repeatedly state the need for inclusive elections. This drive to promote democracy is commonly seen as a counterpoint to China's growing power in Asia. Bangladesh is but one of the many nations that fall under this democratisation initiative currently spearheaded by US President Joe Biden.

In the landscape of world power rivalries, Bangladesh has somehow found itself in a dangerous and opportune position. We now have significant commercial relationships with Washington, Beijing and Moscow. We also have significant dependencies on all three. With Bangladesh's economy making dramatic progress over the last decade, such a situation was somewhat inevitable. Bangladesh is now too big and too important in the power balance of South Asia to ignore. However, that is not the only reason behind the US' recent step-up in diplomatic activities in our country. To understand why the current US ambassador is so prominent in the national news cycle, and why high-level US diplomatic officials are visiting the country, we must understand the turbulent bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and the US.

Changing bilateral realities

Over the last two years, both countries have increased their diplomatic engagement. Till now, 19 mid- and high-level bilateral visits have taken place: Bangladesh sent seven delegations to the US, while the US sent 12. Counsellor of the US Department of State Derek Chollet's visit earlier this week was the 12th in the last two years.

These visits are indicative of a big paradigm shift in the way the US approaches South Asia. Under its Indo-Pacific Strategy, the US has tried to move away from its traditional focus on India and towards bilateral approaches with each South Asian nation. The real-time example of this new paradigm is US Ambassador Peter Haas and his words and actions in Bangladesh. The ambassador has been much more outspoken and

public about promoting democratic values than any of his predecessors. This unabashed promotion of democratic values is the core tenant of US foreign policy under the current Democratic Party.

A significant portion of Bangladesh welcomes the US' renewed interest in promoting a democratic climate here, but this kind of assertiveness also fuels its biggest detractors. All democracies are flawed, and Bangladesh is definitely more flawed than others. Those who gain the most from the failures of democracy will definitely be the most critical of those who advocate for it. Detractors frequently portray this advocacy as yet another example of American imperialism; this is perhaps the strongest counterpoint to Peter Haas, but this point also falls short in the face of contemporary geopolitics.

The inconvenient truth must be accepted that Bangladesh is far

Friendship towards all, malice towards none: this is the only way for Bangladesh to survive and thrive in the world to come. Looking at the situation from a purely Machiavellian perspective, democracy and human rights are the US' trump cards in its policy to contain China in Asia. Coincidentally, those two cards are also the ones that the people of Bangladesh desperately need, and which will benefit them the most in the long run.

removed from the typical notion of sovereignty in the realm of geopolitics. The economy is far too dependent on imports and exports. India, China, the US, Russia, and Japan – all have significant strategic interests in Bangladesh. The nation is economically bound to all these world powers in far too many ways to count. And in this scenario, risking the ire of the most significant trade and development partner is out of the question. Friendship towards all, malice towards none: this is the only way for Bangladesh to survive and thrive in the world to come. Looking at the situation from a purely Machiavellian perspective, democracy and human rights are the US' trump cards in its policy to contain China in Asia. Coincidentally, those two cards are also the ones that the people of Bangladesh desperately need, and which will benefit them the most in the long run.

Envoy hardships

Of all the world powers, Bangladesh is most linked with the US in economic terms. The US is

the single largest importer of Bangladeshi RMG products. It also tops the charts in providing foreign remittances to Bangladesh. However, this kind of one-sided relationship is no basis for mutual cooperation – particularly when the US politically opposed the ideologies and circumstances behind the nation's founding at the time.

Even to date, it would not be amiss to say that no government in Bangladesh had any problem with the US. Now, relations with the US and the incumbent Awami League government are visibly strained. Bangladesh's removal from trade benefits after the Rana Plaza collapse, the multiple expressions of disappointment in both the 2014 and 2018 election proceedings, and the most recent US treasury sanctions against members of Bangladesh's security forces for violation of human rights – all of these acts, though entirely justifiable, have also served to broaden the divide.

However, some people are selectively blind to the enormous amount of US soft power over Bangladesh. Though not as glamorous as the infrastructure megaprojects funded by China, Japan or Russia, the massive levels of intangible and straight-out monetary support the US has been single handedly providing to Bangladesh since liberation is a fact somehow quickly forgotten. Case in point, the US has contributed the most to the Rohingya refugee crisis so far. The US secretary of state announced USD 170 million in additional humanitarian aid at the last UN General Assembly. Including this new fund, the country's contribution to the Rohingya crisis response has reached nearly USD 1.9 billion.

Added to that are the enormous amounts of vaccines donated during the height of the pandemic, and the other intangible ways the US has aided growth in Bangladesh.

In comparison, the treatment faced by the US diplomatic mission in Bangladesh should be a matter of shame. Previous US ambassadors Dan Mozena and Earl R Miller were not granted audience at the high offices in Dhaka before their final departures after completing their terms. US Ambassador Marcia Bernicat's convoy was outright attacked. And most recently, US Ambassador Peter Haas expressed concerns over his security after he was obstructed by a group of people during a programme.

The occasional tone taken by the incumbent government against US representatives may not be the best in the world of diplomacy. Several not-too-respectful statements have been made against previous envoys and state officials. This tone certainly wasn't missed by the US, as Donald Lu stated to *The Daily Star* during his visit last month, "We all agreed that we could work a little harder to prevent misperceptions on both sides... That it's important that when friends have concerns or questions that we're raising. But I think we can do that in a friendly environment."

Maybe the best thing that can come out of these high-level diplomatic visits from the US is that the elephant in the room is finally talked about. Due to Bangladesh's steady growth and progress, the US has finally begun to approach the nation on a strictly bilateral means outside of the lens of India. It would be foolish for any government not to see the value of this opportunity presented to us.

The appearance and disappearance of Tagore



BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza
is a professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

The installation and the consequent removal of a sculpture from the Dhaka University campus has triggered an interesting debate. On Tuesday, a group of students installed a large sculpture of Rabindranath Tagore next to the iconic Raju Memorial Sculpture. The campus authorities later removed the figure of a rather pensive-looking author of our national anthem, with a taped mouth, holding a nailed copy of his *Gitanjali*. The protesters responded by hanging a banner saying, "Tagore has been 'forcibly disappeared.'"

The left-leaning student body, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, has claimed responsibility for the installation of the protest art created by some fine arts students. The follow-up banner, with its crafty use of "disappearance," pokes at another political riddle now being investigated by different national and international agencies. The DU authorities have unwittingly opened a fresh can of worms.

The selection of Tagore and

newly partitioned country naturally felt threatened by the cultural materials available in Tagore. The Pakistani junta banned Tagore's songs in the 1960s. In response, Chhayanaut was created, and its contribution to the formation of our cultural identity is well-known.

The question then arises: do we have the same situation prevailing in Bangladesh today to forward Tagore as a symbol of freedom of expression? The answer is probably no. It is not an exaggeration to say that Tagore is more celebrated in Bangladesh today than in West Bengal. Then why tape him and pierce his work with a bleeding nail? Why didn't the protesters choose the rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, whose body lies in the heart of the Dhaka University campus? Or the persecuted community of Bauls?

If you ask me, the in-your-face sculpture of Tagore placed at the entry of the ongoing Ekushey Boi Mela would have died a natural death because of its vague references. If the

are so many ads that promote a sense of inadequacy and insecurity in us. The depiction of perfect human figures with their perfect lives in ads constantly reminds us of our shortcomings. Isn't that an infringement of my right to be who I am? What about those graffiti that simply act as a pissing competition?

Just like artists have the right to express themselves, the university authorities also have the right to protect the beauty and sanctity of its property. But the rational thing to do was to ask the responsible parties to remove the sculpture, poster, graffiti and the like. The power of democracy lies in its ability to accommodate the voices of dissent. In a free society, every individual has the right to decide what art or entertainment they want. The Tagore sculpture could have become banal without being banned.

They say censorship is like poison gas – it can harm you once the wind shifts. Those clamping bans on the voices and views of others may be subject to their own game of censorship in the future. Freedom of expression is a two-way street. Securing freedom of expression for ourselves requires freedom of expression for others. The idea is at the core of democracy.

Dhaka University has a proud legacy of forging the consciousness and conscience of the nation. Censorship at a public university curtails our right to be exposed to



The installation near Raju Memorial Sculpture in Dhaka University, which was removed by the university authorities.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Gitanjali as an emblem of free thinking was a non-starter. The status of Tagore in Bangladesh is stronger than ever. We have universities and institutions named after him as well as national-level celebrations of his anniversaries. *Gitanjali* (*Song of Offerings*) champions love as its principal subject, with the recurrent espousal of the internal conflict between spiritual longings and earthly desires. Modelled after the medieval Indian tradition, the spiritual (i.e. apolitical) nature of the collection even helped Tagore, a British subject in colonial India, win the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913.

Tagore was deemed a problematic figure by the rulers in the erstwhile West Pakistan. Tagore's song "Aaji Bangladesher Hridoy Hotey" (From the heart of Bangladesh), among others, acted as an impetus for Bangalee nationhood in the 1940s. Those who felt Urdu and Arabic should be the building blocks for the

sculpture was intended to highlight the publisher that was initially denied entry to the fair for publishing books that challenge the official development discourse, Tagore's *Gitanjali* is a wrong choice. But the hasty removal of the protest art by the authorities has simply turned it into the right choice.

The DU authorities' action has given the sculpture its desired public attention with an added agenda of "forced disappearance." They could have simply served a 24-hour notice to the student body for vandalising public property with the unauthorised installation of a sculpture that apparently compromises the sanctity of the nearby Raju Memorial Sculpture.

Then the bigger question arises: what is the graffiti policy of Dhaka University, or any public institution, for that matter? Why are public spaces adorned with advertisements that we don't want to see? There

and enriched by art. Dhaka University then must come up with a detailed policy of curating images and voices by the public, of the public, and for the public. While it can very well remove the graffiti presented as territorial markers, it can allow space for public art that creates public awareness. The response of the audience will tell us which art matters the most. For instance, even after the removal of the wall painting of "Shubodh has escaped," the image of a dishevelled, distraught figure with a caged sun strikes a chord with us. The word play on *Shubodh* (good sense or a possible proper name for a Hindu minority) stirs our imagination. A taped Tagore does not. Its placement before the Raju Memorial does not help either. But the handling of the sculpture has given it meaning that it did not originally have. Its expression was denied, proving that freedom of expression is indeed in jeopardy.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Bloke
- 5 Rancor
- 10 Crack up
- 12 Danger
- 13 Ordered display
- 14 Bakery come-on
- 15 Start for pitch or mo
- 16 Setting item
- 18 Dramatist Jonson
- 19 Iran, once
- 21 Blue cheese feature
- 22 Motherhood
- 24 Reversed
- 25 Contemporary quality
- 29 Fluctuate

- 30 Barefoot
- 32 Piggied out
- 33 Cherbourg chum
- 34 Reuben bread
- 35 Tea additive
- 37 "Adam Bede" author
- 39 Wear down
- 40 King march site
- 41 Transmits
- 42 Louver piece

DOWN

- 1 Brooch part
- 2 Apollo Theater setting
- 3 Dawn goddess
- 4 Links org.
- 5 Much email
- 6 For every

- 7 Asimov book
- 8 Opportune
- 9 Oryx's cousin
- 11 Health class topic
- 17 Tympanic membrane
- 20 Clue room
- 21 Some skirts
- 23 Fools
- 25 Grow up
- 26 Portland setting
- 27 Excitation
- 28 Famed cellist
- 29 Bud holders
- 31 Coup –
- 33 Son of Zeus
- 36 Throw in
- 38 French article



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



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

STAR SPORTS 1

India vs Australia
Second Test, Day 2
Live from 9:50 am
STAR SPORTS 2
Women's T20 World Cup
England vs India
Live from 7:00 pm
South Africa vs Australia
Live from 11:00 pm

SONY SIX & T SPORTS

PSL
Karachi Kings vs Quetta
Gladiators
Live from 8:00 pm
T SPORTS
BPL
Sheikh Russel vs
Rahmatganj
Live from 3:15 pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

EPL
Aston Villa vs Arsenal
Live from 6:30 pm
Chelsea vs Southampton
Live from 9:00 pm
Nottingham vs
Manchester City
Live from 9:00 pm

Kings go 12 points clear of Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Holders Bashundhara Kings almost made Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) a one-horse race after handing a 2-1 defeat to nearest rivals Abahani in Cumilla yesterday.

With Kings registering a maximum 30 points in 10 league games, 12 points now separate Kings and the six-time champions Abahani who, however, played a game less.

Abahani needed an outright win to keep the title race alive, but they fell apart under immense pressure in front of a full house at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium.

Having extended their unbeaten record over Abahani in the professional football league, Kings also remained unconquered this season -- with 18 wins and a draw across BPL, the Federation Cup and the Independence Cup. Meanwhile Abahani, after dropping six points in three drawn matches, tasted first defeat in the middle of the ongoing league to all but fall out of the title race.

In the match, Abahani got off to a commanding start by creating a few good opportunities but Kings took the lead against the run of play in the 25th minute when Brazilian Miguel Figueira side-volleyed home a cut-back from compatriot Robson De Silva. Abahani went on to equalise in the 36th minute with a header from Rezaul Karim off a Colindres corner kick.

After resumption, Abahani again created three more chances but failed to convert. They were eventually punished in the 71st minute when Miguel availed a defensive fumble before sealing the game off in Kings' favour.

In the day's other match, newcomers Azampur FC Uttara came from behind to hold Sheikh Jamal DC to a 3-3 draw in Gopalganj.



Marcus Rashford continued his electric form, delivering a scathing response to Barcelona's opening goal by lashing a shot into the back of the Catalans' net at the Camp Nou on Thursday. After scoring just five goals last season, Rashford has scored 22 goals this season, including 13 goals in the 16 games he has played since the 2022 World Cup. PHOTO: REUTERS

ETH, Xavi unhappy with ref

AGENCIES

Players and officials of both Manchester United and Barcelona were not satisfied with the referee's decisions in their pulsating Europa League knockout round playoff first leg that ended in a 2-2 draw at Camp Nou on Thursday.

United manager Erik Ten Hag was furious in the second half when Rashford went down under a challenge from last-man Koukou.

"You can discuss if it's in the box or outside, but definitely it's a red card," Ten Hag told reporters.

Meanwhile, amid the end-to-end drama in the closing stages, Xavi was adamant his side should have been awarded a spot-kick for a shot that struck Fred on the arm.

"For me, the penalty is very clear," he told Movistar+.

Bavuma makes history

AFP, Johannesburg

Temba Bavuma was on Friday named the first black African captain of South Africa's Test squad in what Cricket South Africa described as "part of a restructure within the leadership group of the national team".

Dean Elgar was axed as captain, although he remains a member of the squad which starts a series against the West Indies on February 28.

Chief selector Victor Mpitsang was another casualty of the shake-up, with CSA stating he had been "released" from the role.

Bavuma became the first black African to captain South Africa at cricket when he was named leader of the one-day international and Twenty20 international teams in March 2021.

At the same time Elgar was named Test captain.

Elgar's stint as captain started well with Test series wins against West Indies, India and Bangladesh and a shared series away against world champions New Zealand.

But they were heavily beaten in their two most recent series in England and Australia. Bavuma, meanwhile, came under criticism for his poor batting form in T20 internationals, notably in the T20 World Cup in Australia last year.

According to Friday's statement, Bavuma will remain captain of the one-day team but will relinquish his role in the T20 side.

Tigers ready for various conditions against England

SPORTS REPORTER

Low and slow tracks have been the norm when teams from outside the subcontinent such as England or Australia have toured Bangladesh for bilateral series, but with a balanced squad announced for the ODI series against England on Thursday, the team management is hoping not only to get good performances from the in-form ODI side, but preparing them for the challenges ahead with the ODI World Cup in eight months' time. Without a real shake-up, some players have been excluded as selectors look to add more options going forward.

The Tigers have recently beaten a strong India outfit 2-1 at home in ODIs and before that had beaten South Africa in South Africa on tracks that were fast and offered lots of runs. The management believes that the required balance is there to test England on the kind of conditions that will be on offer.

"We have a settled team that is performing. At the same time, England is playing a different kind of cricket and it won't be easy. It will be a good competition. Since we are playing at home, we are hopeful [of winning] but it will be tough," selector Habibul Bashar

due to the runs on offer, would

told The Daily Star regarding expectations following the announcement of the squad for the first two ODIs.

The Tigers' performances in ODIs over the past few years and the rise of a pace unit sees the selectors in good stead in ODI cricket and, with the ODI World Cup ahead, the set-up for the England series has been done with required balance for various kinds of conditions.

"Let's see what we decide. The World Cup will be played on such wickets [like BPL's]. Normally when teams like



"We haven't decided how to establish our home advantage yet [for the England ODIs]. If you look at the side, there are four pacers in the team and three spinners. We could go in any direction in terms of conditions after sorting out what might work best," he said.

With wickets in the just-concluded BPL impressing due to the runs on offer, would

the management prefer such wickets? A slower track has favoured Bangladesh here and may come into play given that the team wants to continue the winning habit. But the impending ODI World Cup means there is a possibility of different conditions.

"Let's see what we decide. The World Cup will be played on such wickets [like BPL's]. Normally when teams like

instead of Nasum Ahmed also means that option of tried-and-tested spin conditions remain viable.

"Since we have Shakib [Al Hasan] and [Mehedi Hasan] Miraz, if there are turning tracks on offer, Taijul is more effective than other bowlers," Bashar opined on Taijul's inclusion.

"Hridoy didn't only get a chance due to his BPL performances. He has been with the High Performance team and last year he did well for the A side. If you look at his record, he scored lots of runs in first-class and BCL. His performance in the BPL was definitely extraordinary, but he has performed well in the last two years in both white-ball and red-ball formats," he said about Hridoy's inclusion.

The likes of Anamul Haque and Nurul Hasan were dropped for the likes of Hridoy. Anamul's exclusion came since selectors felt Najmul Hossain Shanto had made a mark. "Shanto has been batting well and is a good fielder and is a team man. So, from a strategic point of view, he is in Bijoy's place," Bashar said.

It was learned the Nurul's exclusion was not due to performance but because management preferred a shorter squad and did not need three wicketkeeping options.

Sharma stung out of BCCI

AFP, New Delhi

India's chief cricket selector Chetan Sharma resigned Friday, an official told AFP, after a TV network sting caught him gossiping about players and claiming the widespread use of unsanctioned injections to pass fitness tests.

The 57-year-old had accused ex-captain Virat Kohli and former cricket board chief Sourav Ganguly of an ego clash in a candid conversation recorded on a hidden camera and aired by broadcaster Zee News.

Kohli felt he was "bigger than the board" but felt slighted after concluding that Ganguly had forced him out of the white-ball captaincy, Sharma said.

Sharma also claimed that doctors operating outside of the cricket board's oversight regularly gave Indian international players injections to help them pass fitness tests for selection, without giving further details.

"He has given his resignation and it has been accepted," a Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

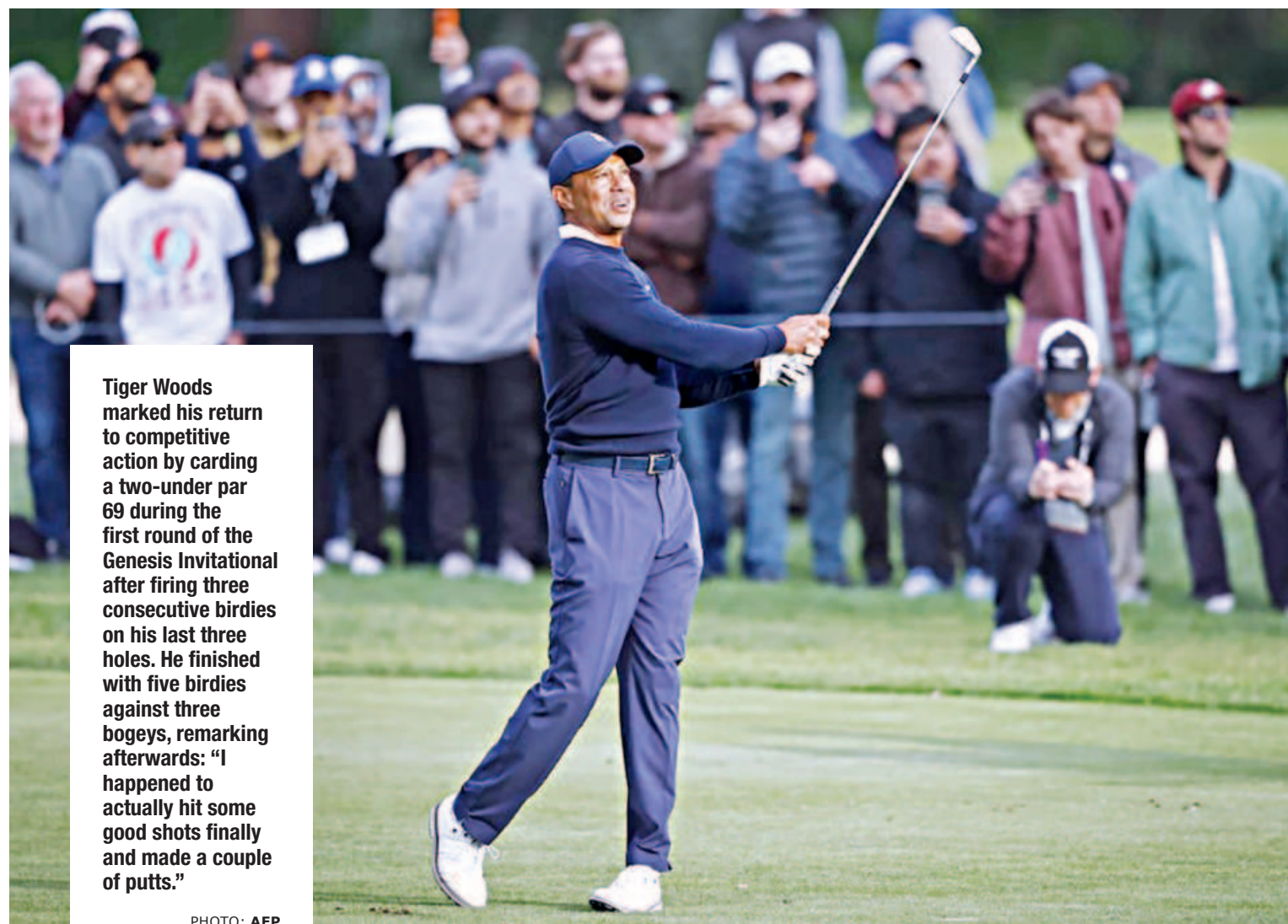
The Press Trust of India quoted an unnamed BCCI official who said Sharma's position had "become untenable" after the sting.

"He resigned voluntarily and wasn't asked to resign," PTI reported the official as saying.

Sharma was appointed chief selector in late 2020 and was reappointed in January after the BCCI sacked the entire selection panel following India's dismal T20 World Cup performance last year.

The former right-arm medium pacer represented India internationally until 1994 and in 1987 he was the first cricketer to take a hat-trick in a Cricket World Cup.

His exit comes in a bumper year for the international calendar, with India likely to make the World Test Championship in July and hosting the ODI World Cup from November.



Tiger Woods marked his return to competitive action by carding a two-under par 69 during the first round of the Genesis Invitational after firing three consecutive birdies on his last three holes. He finished with five birdies against three bogeys, remarking afterwards: "I happened to actually hit some good shots finally and made a couple of putts."

PHOTO: AFP

Arsenal 'highly motivated' for title battle

AGENCIES

Arsenal are "highly motivated" to compete with Manchester City in the Premier League title race, manager Mikel Arteta said on Friday after his side slipped to second in the standings following their midweek 3-1 defeat to Pep Guardiola's team.

Arsenal lost the top spot, which they had held since August, to their opponents on goal difference with both teams tied on 51 points.

Arteta's side, though, have a game in hand and travel on Saturday to face Aston Villa, who are managed by former Arsenal manager Unai Emery.

"I know the right things we have to do to continue to be there (at the top)," Arteta told reporters. "We have seen where the level is and what we have to do to be at that level."

"There are a lot of positive things to take from the season so far. We know that the level of efficiency has to be good with every single game to beat them (City) at the end. We are highly motivated to do that."

Arteta urged his side to be more efficient after they picked up only one point in their last three league games.

"With the amount of play and situations we generated we haven't had enough points. That is down to us, we have to improve on that because we want to win more games."

Arteta has also urged the Premier League to offer clubs protection from being forced to kick off early on Saturday after playing on Wednesday evening.

Premier League teams competing in the Champions League are not scheduled in the 1230 GMT slot on Saturdays if they played in Europe the previous Wednesday.

However, Arsenal face Aston Villa in a crucial Premier League fixture on Saturday morning, just 63 hours after the full-time whistle blew in their defeat against Manchester City.

While it is too late to help Arsenal on this occasion, Arteta wants the Premier League fixture schedule changed in future to offer protection to all clubs, rather than just those in the Champions League.

"There are certain rules with the Champions League. When you are playing on Wednesday night and then you cannot play (on Saturday lunchtime). So I think that should apply to any competition," Arteta told reporters on Friday.



“Not just one or two players; there are quite a few from HP who played well. So, it won't be right to point out one or two players' names.”

Chief selector
Minhajul Abedin Nannu



Ninth time's the charm

SABBIR HOSSAIN

Ever since its inception, the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) has had to live with the blame of failing to match its hype, mostly due to yielding fewer boundaries and high-scoring contests – the two T20 elements that are found in abundance in the most popular franchise-based competition, the Indian Premier League (IPL).

Much of the blame was placed on the extensive use of the pitches at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium (SBNS) in Mirpur. Given how worn out the surfaces become at the home of cricket due to year-round action, it is no surprise that the Chattogram and Sylhet legs have witnessed comparatively more high-scoring BPL contests over the years.

However, this year, in the ninth edition of the franchise-based tournament, Mirpur witnessed more high scores than before, especially in the early stages of the tournament. In the first phase, 152.06 runs per innings on average were registered in eight matches at the SBNS. The Chattogram phase that followed had yielded 156.29 runs per innings on average across 12 games, while Sylhet remained the venue to witness the highest number, at 161.25 runs per innings on average in eight matches.

Even though the average run scored in Mirpur gradually dipped as the tournament progressed, with the venue averaging 142.80 runs per innings in 10 matches before the play-off stages, the surfaces garnered high praise from both players and coaches.

After securing a place in the final with a win

LOCAL STARLETS refuse sidekick roles

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

The just concluded season of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) kicked off with mixed feelings a month ago owing to the unavailability of renowned, seasoned T20 campaigners in terms of foreign recruits, and of course the inclusion of the infamous Alternate Decision Review System (ADRS).

Setting aside the comedy of errors that took place along the way and the off-field conundrums, the entertainment provided by the on-field cricket has largely received a positive response from fans and experts alike.

The pitch has undoubtedly played a big role in the positive reviews. However, at the forefront of the overall success of this BPL has been the emergence of local starlets.

The absence of big names for the most part of the tournament appeared to have come as a blessing for the up-and-coming talents as the focus was on them to deliver. And quite a few, who are in and around the national setup, have shone under the spotlight this time around.

Sylhet Strikers, who have largely dominated the

tournament from the onset, have had the luxury of having a few of those stand-out players, on the batting front. The likes of Najmul Hossain Shanto, Towhid Hridoy, and Zakir Hasan helped Sylhet to become the first team to qualify for the playoffs and to clinch a qualifier spot as well.

Shanto has made the tournament his own, amassing 452 runs at an average of 37.66, including three fifties in the 14 matches he has played leading up to the final. A strike rate of 113.85 raises a few reservations about his stats but when it came to giving his team solid starts at the top of the order, very few actually managed to do it better. The issue about Shanto's sluggish strike-rate is nothing new in T20s as the team-highest 180 runs the southpaw accumulated in the latest edition of the T20 World Cup came at a strike rate of 114.64.

Shanto's opening partner, Towhid Hridoy has had a stellar BPL as well. Perhaps, he has had the best outing in the tournament amongst any local player. In terms of delivering impactful, match-winning knocks, the 22-year-old has come leaps and bounds in doing justice to his talents.

The right-handed batter looked easy on the eyes and scored, portraying good reading of the game in terms of keeping the scoreboard ticking, and hitting gaps frequently. In the few instances that he felt the pressure, Hridoy showed the know-hows of weathering the storms and taking his team through troubled waters. His impressive 141.40 strike-rate, 40.30 average, and five fifties on course to scoring 403 runs are testaments to his growth as a player.

At the bowling side of things, Rangpur Riders speedster Hasan Mahmud is leading the charts for highest wicket-takers, with 17 up to the final. The 23-year-old has bowled at an economy rate of 7.98 and he knows his way around the popping crease as very few can bowl

a yorker better in the national circuit. Hasan used this attribute to good use keeping a lid on things at death.

His teammate Rakibul Hasan has also impressed. The left-arm spinner has been difficult to hit due to his immaculate understanding of length and has managed to keep his end tight, boasting an economy rate of 6.47 while picking up 11 scalps leading up to the finale.

Of the same breed is Comilla Victorians spinner Tanvir Islam, though he is not quite a new name in the competition. The 26-year-old caught the eye in the previous season as well, helping his side win the competition.

Despite missing three matches at the beginning of Comilla's campaign, Tanvir made up ground and instantly showed what they were missing as with him in the side, Comilla won all of their matches after losing their first three contests.

Leading up to the final, Tanvir scalped 16 wickets going at just 6.31 in an over. Like Rakibul, Tanvir's sense of length is impeccable making him hard to put away. He has taken the challenge of bowling with the new ball and has been an important factor in taking his team to the grand finale.

“We consider those who perform well and we try to provide a platform for them. There won't be an exception this time,” national selector Habibul Bashar told The Daily Star on Tuesday.

With successive white-ball series in store against England and Ireland in the next two months, Hridoy seems most likely to have the shot at making the cut to the national T20I squad at least, considering the underwhelming form of players like Yasir Ali Chowdhury, Afif Hossain, and Soumya Sarkar, whose long-standing lean patch remains especially worrisome.

The absence of big names for the most part of the tournament appeared to have come as a blessing for the up-and-coming talents as the focus was on them to deliver semifinals, respectively.



against Rangpur Riders on Tuesday, Sylhet Strikers captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had praised the pitch curator for his efforts.

“In matches where teams failed to score big, I think the pitches were a bit tricky. The batters will not always get a flat pitch. However, the curator, Gamini de Silva, and the Bangladesh Cricket Board [BCB] should be praised for the pitches used in this edition,” Mashrafe said.

Another unusual yet satisfying moment for this BPL was when thousands of fervent supporters flocked to the Sylhet International Stadium to support their local team, something that the tournament has not witnessed in other venues. The deafening roar that engulfed the Sylhet stadium was unlike anything witnessed in Dhaka or Chattogram.

As home and away matches have yet to be introduced in the BPL, it becomes difficult to develop a dedicated fan base for any team. Sylhet fans, however, fuelled by their team's dominant performance, created a buzz and brought a much-needed breath of fresh air. The BCB might now be compelled to look beyond Dhaka and Chattogram to increase the tournament's popularity.

Comilla's recipe for success involves 'not just money'

It came as no surprise to witness Comilla Victorians live up to their reputation in the latest Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) season.

To know more about how the franchise consistently managed to produce success, The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin caught up with Nafisa Kamal, the owner of the Comilla franchise, who expressed her passion and pointed out the improvement areas for the tournament, alongside a few other topics. The excerpts of the exclusive interview are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): Comilla Victorians are the most successful franchise in the history of BPL. As an owner, could you tell us about the motto of your team?

Nafisa Kamal (NK): I believe we have managed to create a sustainable success-pattern solely because of our team culture. From day one, it is ingrained in our players' attitude that they belong to a team that's not going to settle for anything less than the cup. Our slogan 'win or win' is a mantra that sums up our team culture.

DS: Despite the huge challenge over the availability of top foreign cricketers, Comilla managed to rope in some big names this time too. Tell us how you planned in terms of forming a balanced team?

NK: The BPL group stage fixtures had clashed with the ILT20 and SA20 leagues. As always, I am solely

responsible for the recruitment of foreign players in our team. What I did right away was break down the BPL timeline into three slots. The first slot gave us a small window before the other two leagues started. The second window was entirely limited to Pakistani players, the only ones not participating in the other 2 leagues, but they were also at the risk of leaving upon the PSL announcement. So I created the third slot just for the playoffs, this was the time when the Pakistanis would leave and other players from the ILT20 and SA20 would be available as those leagues' group stages would end.

I remember when I approached players to sign them for my third slot, which involved the Eliminator and Final match of the BPL, they were shocked that no other team could dare to sign for the playoffs like we did. That was in October and we had already signed Sunil [Narine], Moeen [Ali] and Andre [Russell] for our playoffs in mid-February.

There's been a lot of talk on how

we spend more than other teams on foreign players, but our foreign players are almost all repeats from previous seasons. This happens when a successful franchise has built strong relationships and loyalties with these foreign players so that both the players and their agents give us priority and consider many other factors besides money. What makes one franchise more successful with foreign players' recruitment is not just money, it takes long-term vision, planning and courage too.

DS: Comilla started off this edition with three consecutive defeats before eventually becoming the first team to confirm the final. As an owner, how did you react to the ups and downs of the team?

NK: The first three defeats were unsettling, of course, because we were doing everything right according to plan and still not getting results. I remember, my father asked me and my sister to fly to Chittagong and give the team our support at this difficult

time. We got together with the coach, captain and all the players and support staff and shared our worries, hopes and everything that made us a team.

[Mohamad] Rizwan landed on the morning of the third defeat, after which he told us how his PSL franchise Multan Sultans turned around after six losses to become champions. I researched IPL teams that made strong comebacks after failing in the first half. We knew it has happened in history and if any team can achieve that comeback in the BPL, it's Comilla Victorians.

DS: Considering the current context, what should be your suggestion to make the BPL more lucrative and financially viable for franchise owners?

NK: I remember being invited for tea by the BPL governing council, I remember going to BCB, to discuss my views on how to make the BPL financially viable for all the franchises involved. I also remember how after that talk over tea, the whole BPL got cancelled that year. So, I think it's best that I keep my views on this topic to myself. I certainly don't want the BPL to be cancelled again, especially now that the three-year agreements have been signed.

DS: Despite huge potential in the first few editions, the BPL gradually



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LOW-INCOME PEOPLE Broiler chicken going off menu

Price soars by Tk 60 from Tk 180 two weeks ago; egg also gets costlier

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Restaurant staffer Md Masum yesterday went to Karwan Bazar kitchen market to buy daily essentials. He felt helpless after knowing the soaring prices of different essentials.

With his Tk 1,000, he wanted to buy chicken, sugar, pulse, potato, onion, ginger and egg.

He found that different breeds of poultry chicken were sold at about Tk 60 a kg higher than the price was two weeks earlier.

Traders were asking Tk 240 for a kg of broiler chicken and Tk 320 for a kg of Sonali chicken, Masum said.

"This frustrates me. How will people like me survive if prices of essentials are skyrocketing?" Masum said.

The restaurant worker added that with his limited monthly income of Tk 15,000, he is struggling to make ends meet for his three-member family.

He said although he could buy other essentials like potato, onion and ginger, he finally had to cut off chicken from the shopping list.

Masum said he did not even dare to buy pangas fish that is popular among the low-income group because of its low price.

Price of pangas has increased by Tk 30 to Tk 40 a kg from the previous price of Tk 130 a kg, he added.

Prices of all kinds of fish have also gone up.

He bought a dozen eggs at Tk 145, paying Tk 35 additional compared to the price two weeks ago.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Ignoring risks of being hit, people walk across rail lines as a train approaches a level-crossing in Gazipur's Joydebpur. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

IU suspends 2 BCL leaders over torture of student

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kushthia's Islamic University unit BCL suspended Sanjida Chowdhury and Tabassum Islam, who were accused of torturing a female student for staying at a student dormitory without informing them.

Faisal Siddique Arafat, president of IU unit BCL, confirmed the matter to The Daily Star yesterday.

Faisal said, "If they [Sanjida and Tabassum] are found guilty in the investigation, recommendations for action against them will be submitted to the central Bangladesh Chhatra League unit and the university administration."

Both Sanjida and Tabassum also left the university's Deshratna Sheikh Hasina Hall Thursday night, confirmed hall Provost Prof Shamsul Haque.

"We instructed the accused to leave the hall after we received the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Mother, child found dead in hotel room

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A mother and her eight-month-old daughter were found dead in a hotel room in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

The woman was identified as Suma Dey, said Mizanur Rahman, additional superintendent (Sadar circle) of the district police.

But the daughter's name could not be known immediately.

The bodies were recovered from Hotel Sea Alif on Kalatoli Road, the police officer added.

Mohammad Ismail, general manager of the hotel, said Suma came to the hotel on Tuesday with her husband and their three children.

Her husband identified himself as Jemin Biswas on the hotel's register, he said, adding that the couple booked a room for four days.

Around 11:00am yesterday, a staff of the hotel went to the couple's room to remind them about their checkout time as Jemin could not be reached over the phone.

The door of the room was open and the bodies of the mother and her daughter were lying there. The father and two other children could not be found, he further said.

"We immediately informed police about the incident," the hotel's GM Ismail said.

Police primarily suspect that Jemin strangled his wife and daughter and then fled with his two other children.

"The killings might have taken place over marital discord," said additional superintendent Mizanur.

The bodies were sent to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies, he further said.

Won't accept names in sealed cover

Indian SC on Adani issue; BJP slams billionaire Soros for comments on Modi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court yesterday declined to accept the names proposed by the Indian government in a sealed cover to be included in a proposed experts' committee for strengthening regulatory measures for stock exchanges in the light of the crash in prices of the Adani Group.

"We will select the experts and maintain full transparency. If we take names from the government, it would amount to a government-constituted committee. There has to be full (public) confidence in the committee," Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud said.

A bench, comprising Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, Justice P S Narasimha and Justice JB Pardiwala, then proceeded to hear PILs which sought reliefs like the apex court-monitored probe into the recent crash in prices of the Adani group's shares.

The bench had last Friday sought the views of the Indian government and Stock Exchange Board of India on measures to protect the Indian investors. Later, the government had told the apex court that it was agreeable to the suggestion to form an expert committee to review the regulatory framework.

Accordingly, the government submitted a note in a sealed cover to the

court suggesting names of members who can be part of the committee.

Four PILs have been filed with the Supreme Court so far on the Adani-Hindenburg issue by lawyers ML Sharma and Vishal Tiwari, Congress leader Jaya Thakur and activist Mukesh Kumar. Sharma demanded an investigation into Hindenburg too.

Hindenburg has accused the Adani Group of manipulating share prices and resorting to accounting fraud, charges refuted by the Indian conglomerate.

On the political front, main opposition Congress launched a fresh attack on the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Adani issue.

It reiterated that a Joint Parliamentary Committee must be formed to probe the alleged stock manipulation and accounting fraud levelled against the firms of billionaire Gautam Adani, and accused the Modi government of hiding facts on the issue from citizens.

Congress yesterday opened a new front against the Modi government vis-à-vis Adani when it alleged that state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) had been importing LPG via the government-run Visakhapatnam Port but was now being made to use the Adani-owned Gangavaram Port

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

ADANI POWER DEAL

Scrap it if necessary

TIB urges govt

UNB, Dhaka

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday asked the Bangladesh government to reconsider, and if necessary, cancel what it calls the vague and inequitable power purchase agreement with the Adani Group.

"TIB expressed deep concern that Bangladesh's power sector may become hostage to this controversial company if the unequal, opaque, and discriminatory contract signed by Bangladesh Power Development Board to purchase 1,600MW electricity from India's Adani, which is an accused of share fraud, is implemented," said a press release.

This organisation suggested bringing applicable amendments to this agreement after reviewing its terms thoroughly by engaging experts, or if necessary scrapping the agreement for the sake of national interest, especially considering that the final burden of this agreement should be borne by the people of the country.

According to national and international media reports, the electricity generated from the Adani power plant located in Godda, Jharkhand, will cost almost three times more than the electricity produced in the country.

Again, there is an obligation in the power purchase agreement (PPA) to buy

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Letter sent in 1916 finally arrives at destination

CNN ONLINE

A letter has finally been delivered to its destination -- more than a century after it was written.

Sent in February 1916, the correspondence arrived at its intended address in Hamlet Road, south London, much to the bewilderment of the current occupants.

"We noticed that the year on it was '16. So we thought it was 2016," Finlay Glen told CNN Thursday. "Then we noticed that the stamp was a King rather than a Queen, so we felt that it couldn't have been 2016."

Glen told CNN that the letter arrived at the property a couple of years ago, but he has only recently taken it to the local historical society, so they can research it further.

The envelope has a 1 pence stamp bearing the head of King George V. The letter was sent in the middle of World War I -- more than a decade before Queen Elizabeth II was born.

"Once we realized it was very old, we felt that it was okay to open up the letter," said Glen, 27.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Children browse books at a stall during "Shishu Prohor" at Amar Ekushey Boli Mela in the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday. The children's hour, dedicated to children from 11:00am to 1:00pm on weekends, attracts a large number of young readers who have fun meeting popular TV characters including those of Sisimpur.

PHOTO: STAR

Shab-e-Meraj tonight

BSS, Dhaka

The holy Shab-e-Meraj will be observed tonight with religious fervour.

Every year, on the night of Rajab 26, Muslims observe Shab-e-Meraj when Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him) embarked on a special journey to meet the Almighty.

In the journey, the Prophet travelled on the "Buraq" to Heaven where Allah gave him some instructions to take back to the faithful regarding the details of prayers.

Muslim devotees will offer special prayers at mosques and homes seeking blessings of Allah for the welfare of the entire nation and the Muslim Ummah.

Bangladesh Islamic Foundation is going to hold a meeting, doa and munajat at the Baitul

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

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Where basic amenities remain elusive

In July 2017, Dhaka North City Corporation took 18 wards under its wing, which were previously under the union parishad system. It divided the newly added wards into 5 zones. While this move came with a promise of development for these wards, the reality after five years is way far from that. They remain as backward as they used to be, if not more.

ARAFAT RAHAMAN AND DIPAN NANDY

Residents of the newly-added wards in Dhaka North City Corporation expressed dissatisfaction after being denied civic amenities, claiming that life was far better when they were under the union parishad.

During a recent visit to several wards in zone 10 (wards: 37, 38, 41, and 42), The Daily Star correspondents found that the reality falls far short of expectations when it comes to major issues that people face in their communities.

Although high-rises have mushroomed in these areas, basic facilities — better roads, streetlights, electricity, gas, and proper waste management — remain elusive for its residents.

NO GAS FOR 4 MONTHS

"It has been four months since the gas supply was suspended in our line. But we still have to continue paying just for subscribing to the service," said Saiful Islam, a resident of Satarkul area in ward 41.

"We have been urging the company as well as the councillor to solve the crisis but they continue to turn a blind eye. So we have to buy gas cylinders, which costs us extra money," he added.

After failing to disconnect some illegal connections, the authorities



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

came under DNCC five years ago. But becoming a part of the city corporation has only brought sufferings to us," he added.

UNDER THE WATER, THERE WERE CROPLANDS

While visiting the Pukurpara area under Satarkul, these correspondents found an empty boat, waiting at the bank of what seemed a "waterbody".

But after a few minutes, a man approaching the boat proved these correspondents wrong saying, "Once I used to cultivate crops here. But the entire place went underwater, thanks to unplanned development."

Mujibur Rahman, who was formerly a farmer, said, "Tall buildings were being built around our croplands, which ended up blocking the regular flow of water. As a result, our lands submerged during monsoon and turned into such water bodies."

"Is this what development costs?" he asked.

While visiting Moynartek area under ward 38, Md Ridoy, a young rickshaw-puller, said, "You are lucky that you did not come here during monsoon. You would not even see these roads, as they remain underwater for most of that time."

Iqbal Hossain, a resident of Beraid, echoed the same. "As there is no proper drainage system in this area, it goes under knee-deep water after only half an hour of rain."

NARROW ROADS, NO STREETLIGHTS Apart from Satarkul's main road, most of the roads are in a dilapidated state. These roads are so narrow that only two small vehicles can move through them at a time.

Mohammad Abdullah, 70, a resident of Beraid, said, "The roads were made when we were under the union

parishad. They have not been repaired even after five years of being a part of the city corporation."

While talking about the streets, a youth showed some newly-installed streetlights with electricity poles. However, residents still have to depend on outdoor lamps while walking on streets at night, as those are still not functional, he said.

NO WASTE MANAGEMENT MECHANISM

In absence of a proper waste management system, many people dump household wastes into nearby canals or wherever they can. The roads remain dirty with garbage, as the authorities do not take any measures to clean them.

Farhad Hossain of Pukurpara area (ward 41) said, "We collected funds from locals to repair the old sewerage line and clean the streets. But all these are

responsibilities of the city authorities. What are they doing?"

"Waste and accumulated rainwater have also become a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes," he added.

THE DARK SIDE

Drug abuse has become a major issue in these areas, as a large number of youths in the neighbourhood are addicted to narcotics, according to locals. But councillors do not take the initiatives to solve this social crisis, said Kabir Hossain, a resident.

While talking to The Daily Star, Shafiqul Islam, a former councillor of ward 41, said, "As the first elected councillor, I tried to enrich civic facilities. The gas supply was normal during my tenure but residents now have been suffering from disrupted gas service."

He said two roads were also constructed during his time, which remain as the last bricks installed on these roads to date.

On drug addiction, he said, "I managed to improve the situation, which is again worsening."

THE AUTHORITIES' TAKE

Contacted, the current councillor of ward 41 Abdul Matin admitted that the condition of his ward is the same as it was under the union parishad, if not worse.

"I fear facing the people of my area and avoid social gatherings as I know I have not fulfilled most of my promises to them," he said.

"Gas supply will resume soon. We will adjust bills for those who have been paying without getting the service," he claimed.

He blamed budget constraints as the reason behind the current situation in the area.

Ward 42 Councillor Ayub Anshar Mintu also pointed out the scarcity of budget. "We only got around Tk 17 crore as budget last year. We are trying to improve the facilities using this low allocation," he said.

"We have been working on constructing a new road, installing streetlights and some other development works, which will be visible soon," he added.

Kazi Ziaul Baset, executive officer of zone 10 (additional charge), refused to comment on the matter when contacted.



The Daily Star explored the plight of these neglected wards in a five-story series. Today we look into wards 37, 38, 41, and 42 under zone-10.

suspended the gas supply of the entire line, he added.

Talking to the Daily Star, residents of Pukurpara, Taltola, and Merulkhola under ward 41, and different areas, including Beraid under ward-42, shared a similar experience.

"We were better off under Union Parishad," said another resident, Forhad Hossain.

"We thought we would finally see the light of development when our area

A village of mosques

DIPAN NANDY AND ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Beraid is a small place in terms of size, but it is huge in terms of popularity, thanks to a large number of ancient mosques.

Though this village is situated in a remote area, seven miles away from North Badda in the capital, it is popularly known as the "village of mosques".

Most of the mosques in the village were built during the Sultanate, Mughal, British and Pakistani periods, according to elderly locals.

The village now has a total of 15 mosques. Surprisingly, seven of the

"Bhuiyapara Jame Masjid mosque was established in 1505, although there are conflicting opinions regarding the authenticity of this information."

mosques were built before 1900, making this village popular, to the point that it was dubbed "Mosjider Gram" by locals.

Among others, Morolpara Jame Masjid was built in 1833, Purbopara Jame Masjid in 1893, Agarpara and Chotkipara Jame Masjid in 1893, Askartek Jame Masjid in 1888, Chinadipara Jame Masjid in 1893 and Aroiddopara Jame Masjid in 1896.

Apart from these six ancient mosques, Bhuiyapara Jame Masjid, also the central mosque of the village, is the oldest among all. Though there are differing opinions on the mosque's age, some claim it is 200 years old, while others say it is 400 years old.

However, most people think that the mosque was built during the Sultanate period. This mosque is architecturally similar to the Baba Saleh Mosque in Sonargaon.

A nameplate in front of the mosque reads: "Bhuiyapara Jame Masjid

mosque was established in 1505, although there are conflicting opinions regarding the authenticity of this information."

According to a booklet named "Mosjider Gram Beraid", published by Beraid Public Library, the mosque stood 17 feet 6 inches tall, while the interior was measured 16 feet by 16 feet.

In 1906, the authorities expanded the mosque areas for the first time. Later it was renovated several times, as mentioned in the book.

At present, the total length of the mosque's interior is 52 feet in the north-south and 33 feet

in the east-west. The balcony spans 52 feet and is 44 feet wide. The mosque now has a total area of 9,221 square feet.

Md Iqbal, a 70-year-old resident of Beraid, was found chatting with some of his old friends on the premises.

He said, "A long time ago, people knew our village as 'Mosjider Gram'. There are so many old mosques in our village like this one."

The mosque committee's President Haji Belayet Hossain said people often come wide to see the Department of preserved the the mosque, he



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



BERAID GONOPATHAGAR Cultivating reading habits since 2001

DIPAN NANDY AND ARAFAT RAHAMAN

At first glance, it looks like a simple tin-shed house. One will not even find any decent-looking furniture inside the room. But this tiny and simple room is the lighthouse for the people of Beraid, formally known as Beraid village, situated seven miles away from North Badda in Dhaka.

The place is called Beraid Gonopathagar, a library established in 2001.

When readers enter the library, they will notice the words of Henrik Ibsen, Vincent Starrett, and other thinkers hanging on the walls. Around 3,700 books are housed in the library, including histories of the Liberation War, novels, stories, short stories, essays, poetry, plays, children's literature, and many more.

Over 50 people, the majority of whom are youths, visit the library every day.

"Anyone can read books here, and they can also borrow books to read at home," said senior librarian Sirajul Islam Bhuiyan.

The library remains open from 9:00am to 8:00pm, seven days a week, he added.

These correspondents met Jannat Hossen at the library, who came to return a book on rhymes.

The five-year-old said reading books has become a hobby for her since she began visiting this library near her home. "I like to read books of rhymes and short stories the most," she added.

"My sister and I come to this library regularly and read our favourite books."

Apart from books, some daily newspapers were also seen hung in a corner of the library for its readers.

Emdad Hossain Bhuiyan, a journalist by profession and the man behind this initiative, said, "This library is not a profitable organisation. But the maintenance cost is on the rise as we have to buy new books every year."

"We have to spend around Tk 2 lakh per annum to run this library," he added.



ESSAY

What happened to him “One Day Eight Years Ago”?

Trigger Warning: Suicide

ABDULLAH RAYHAN

Unless you are familiar with the reference to the poem, the title probably confused you. No, it's not about Jibanananda Das himself, but one of his poems' protagonists who did something strange. The 10th poem from Jibanananda's *Mahapritihibi* tells the story of a person who had everything in life but still, for a strange feeling, an unknown ambivalence, chose to hang himself and now is lying in a morgue.

At the beginning and toward the end of the poem, the poet clarifies that the protagonist had a satisfying marital and material life. In the first stanza, the poet describes,

“His wife lay beside - his child too;
He had love, and dream.”

A similar idea is reflected in the second last stanza, where the poet says,

“No woman jilted him in love.
He did not miss
A bit of marital bliss;
His wife went beyond what the times required

And gave him the taste of honey -
Honey from the hive of her mind;”

In the following few lines, we also get the idea that this person owned “riches”, had done good “deeds”, and even was blessed with “a life of ease”. But these worldly pleasures were not enough for him. Something troubled his soul that he himself couldn't comprehend. And this troubled feeling is the reason he chooses to commit suicide.

But what can be the reason here?

One interpretation is that the protagonist was burdened by his loneliness. In the poem, the strange feeling that instigated the person to



ILLUSTRATION: AFSANA MIM

commit suicide was conveyed to him by “a silence like the neck of a camel.”

Sumita Chakravarty's interpretation says that this surrealistic imagery (or a metaphysical conceit?) indicates the feeling of loneliness that a desert evokes. The silent sense of solitude glided to the protagonist the way a camel would quietly stretch its long neck into the tent of bedouins.

The loneliness felt strange to him because he had a wife and a child. There is no reason for him to feel deserted while they lay right beside. Although he can't detect what it is, he infers that it's not merely loneliness. There's something more to it that trammelled his existence, and he wanted to escape the suffocation. He believed if he kills himself, he,

“Will not face anymore the stress
The heavy burden -
The deep unceasing pain of

consciousness.”

What is this pain-laden consciousness? It's a macabre realization that the poet either does not or refuses to understand. Toward the end of the poem, the poet again mentions that this “beguiling disaster”, this “baffling shock”, constantly “frolics in our blood”. In other words, it's something we all feel, yet the feeling is a stranger to us.

This same consciousness is referred to in another of Jibanananda's poems, “Bodh” or “Sensation”. Here, the poet says,

“Within my head,
Not a dream, but some sensation
works its will.
I cannot escape it.”

The poetic persona explicitly says this feeling is impossible to get rid of, and this inescapable sensation induces a nihilistic sentiment. In the poet's words,

“All thought - all times of prayer,
Seem empty,
Empty, so it seems.”

This “bodh”/“sensation” is the same as that “beguiling disaster,” the “baffling shock” that incited the protagonist of “One Day Eight Years Ago” to commit suicide. This strange, ungraspable, nihilistic consciousness is the reason why a person may choose to end their life despite having loved ones. Now the question is, what is this ‘consciousness’ or ‘realisation’? Perhaps Camus can answer.

The straightforwardness of Albert Camus has blessed literature and philosophy with certain explicit truths of the human condition that people are generally ashamed of or are afraid to reveal. Camus mentions one such impulse in *The Stranger*. He wrote,

“At one time or another all normal people have wished their loved ones were dead.”

Here, Camus is saying that we experience an ambivalence when someone has an enormous emotional power over us. We are delighted about it because it's a confirmation that someone cares. But, at the same time, it feels burdensome, and we get, to some extent, the sense of being controlled. The unwritten obligation of returning the love and care, the weight of carrying implicit expectations, and the potential of disappointment it contains become too much for us sometimes.

Camus explicitly points out that “all normal people” feel this way. It is an inevitable feeling, just like the sensation Jibanananda talks about, the one that “frolics in our blood”. It's a reasonable conclusion considering that

the protagonist of “One Day Eight Years Ago” had a loving family, but he still felt an estranged unfamiliar desire. This peculiar urge nurtured the burden he couldn't sustain anymore.

At this point, there's still one unresolved aspect yet to address. Camus talks about people wishing that their loved ones were dead, whereas in “One Day Eight Years Ago,” we see the protagonist killing himself instead of doing anything to his family. The reason is, unlike Camus, he couldn't apprehend this specific emotion. This particular sentiment, this morbid wish of parting with loved ones, made him feel guilty. Probably this is why he chose to shut his mind and denied that he recognized this desire from the very beginning. The poet mentions it this way,

“He asks,
What ghost did he see?
Why could he sleep no longer?”

Even though he failed to fathom the strange emotion, the stress and pressure that arose from this particular epiphany were still alive in his mind. It may not be apparent to his heart, but it profoundly throbbled in his veins. And it will all persist as long as his beloveds save space for him in their soul. This is that “beguiling disaster,” that “baffling shock” which made the protagonist of “One Day Eight Years Ago” drift off to an Ashwatha tree in a moonlit night like Gautama Buddha did one day 2,500 years ago.

The translations of the poems mentioned in this article are contributions of Fakrul Alam, Clinton B. Seely, and Faizul Latif Chowdhury.

Abdullah Rayhan is studying English Literature at Jahangirnagar University.

In tribute to
Jibanananda
Das, born on
February 17,
1899



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

She always wakes up at night and looks at me like I am some prey. These days I just keep the lights off and keep looking at the wall. She wakes up suddenly from her unnatural beeline posture, slowly and ever so gently, like a chained demon would after just hours of calculated slumber. I never look. I don't even want to accept the fact that she exists. I know her bloodshot eyes are preying on my fear.

FICTION

La Marionette

KAZI MAHDI AMIN

She is just three years old now. I have counted every day since this infernal presence took over my life. Her father died an unnatural death just 40 days after she came. A healthy man with stuffy arms just went a pale black, like wet coal or old blood-drenched rags. The doctors said it was some bug that ate up his veins. I never believed them. It was her. I knew it was her. “We can't be here anymore babe. We have to run somehow”, were his last words to me. But I knew we could not run. Her touch would burn my skin. She looked at me with a cold, blank and unforgiving stare. It was her.
My small apartment always felt colder.

I only felt the sun when she was asleep. Running, hiding—nothing worked. When she woke up, I had to be there. Spiked thorns dug out my insides every time I tried to run. It wouldn't stop until I

**I crept under my sheets.
It was cold again, like
it has been cold for so
long. Her voice turned to
a deep rumble, ordering
me to look at her.**

returned. I had to come back, always facing her wrath.

Today is the day. It was time for her to leave me. The demon that lived inside

my little child for so long, always said it would kill me. Her voice turned every time she said that. Like a trumpet blowing in the dead of the night. A chilling, unnerving voice that felt like needles all over my body. “You will die, you will die.”

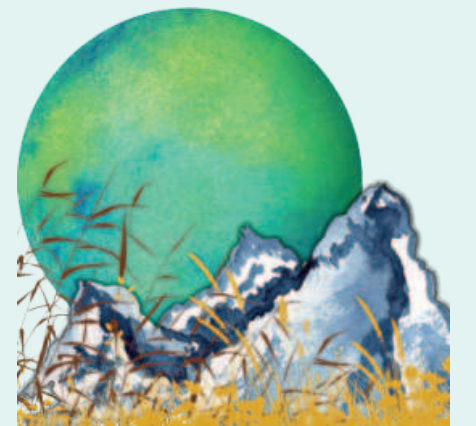
Today is the day.
I have been living like a puppet on strings for the past three years. I fed her. Every day her dark soul grew stronger. My little child, ever lost and unborn. She was never my daughter. She was a vessel for the insurgent from hell. Somehow, after three long years, it feels like a sigh of relief. A life taken, but freed.

The small hands caressed my forehead while I crept under my sheets. It was cold

again, like it has been cold for so long. Her voice turned to a deep rumble, ordering me to look at her. Her eyes were lost under tangled and wet hair. Yet I knew, the silhouette of the motionless toddler was unblinking, looking at its prey. My beating heart pressed against my ribs, like an overweight coat hanging in a cramped closet. I had to look, or I would be forced to. My hollow mouth with half of a tongue screamed in silence. Finally, I will be free. Dead and free from her. All dead.

She left again. Hunting for new prey.

Kazi Mahdi Amin is a seasonal poet, casual writer, and a full time keyboard warrior.



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

POETRY

Mothers of the earth

TASNEEM HOSSAIN

I sow the seeds, I nurture the ground.
I water the plant for bountiful sprouts.
This land is mine, here I fully survive.
When herbage abounds, I fully thrive
They come to claim and to deprive
me of my freedoms and rights;
of what I have brought to life.
They fake my true identity.
They burn me, they fake my cursed
infidelity.
I bleed, I lose my sanity.
I nurture and I give birth to all that grows.
I won't let anything rot;
I am the mistress of this field.
This ground is now my battlefield.
Come, if you may, with swords or guns.
Remember, I won't cry and run;
I will rise from the depths of the land;
The land that you have made into my
grave,
stop you from taking away what's not
yours.
I am the mistress of my own.
Goddess of the land—Tellus, Gaea, Ceres,
Diana, and Artemis;
Taking the form of Amanda, Amy,
Hannah, Leena,
Susan West Anna Baldwin;
Become today's Bellona, Athena ready to
win.
Let's rise against the beastly beasts.
Save our produce from hyena's teeth;
Nothing can stop our united screams,
Together we will break the grass and glass
ceiling.
This land is ours, no one can steal.
If together we stand with zest and zeal.
Together we will overcome the ordeal
Together we can make this a heavenly
field.
Rise O' woman!
Let our screams resonate;
As we walk the fields on our journey to
heal.
For the farmer women.

Tasneem Hossain is a multilingual poet, columnist, op-ed and fiction writer, translator, and training consultant.

The yellow days in Hanoi



Nazifa Raidah is a Sub-editor at The Daily Star. Reach her at nazifa@thedailystar.net

NAZIFA RAIDAH

When I visited Hanoi in 2019, I only had a chance to catch a whiff of Vietnam's capital. I took a glance at all the splashes of yellow architecture in awe and had little to no idea how to navigate myself in a town that hardly communicated in English. But even then, Hanoi found a place of eternal fondness in my heart and gave me a gift of familiarity that I couldn't make much sense of at the time.

However, very recently in December 2022, I had the chance to revisit the city's magic, and that too as my mum's personal tour guide.

When we touched down in Hanoi on December 28, 2022, little did we know that we'd be greeted by a heavy downpour. Much like Dhaka, Winter arrives in Hanoi after the rain washes over the city, welcoming a sombre atmosphere.

While there were many things we had adequately prepared for on this trip, the one thing we severely underestimated was how cold it would get. Vietnam's geography is interesting to say the least – the country hugs Laos and Cambodia like an inverted "C" and in the north, it gets as cold as an icicle. So it's safe to say that the two moderately warm jackets that we carried didn't quite suffice. But even then, the city had its

But first, we had to exchange money.

Running this errand was an adventure on its own. The thing about Hanoi is that most places that had an exchange money sign outside the shop were run by tour operators who kept a handsome sum for themselves as company commission. While one can respect this move as a standard business practice, it's quite hard to accept when you're travelling on a tight budget. After roaming around the walking district against the cold, gushing winds, we came across a jewellery shop on Hàng Bạc named "Giang Son Gemstone Jewelry Co" which also had exchange money signs on the storefront. We decided to try our luck.

Here's a fun fact – in Vietnam, whenever you have to make any sort of exchange, be it to purchase goods or to convert money, you have to adopt a new mode of communication – through calculators. Vendors and shop-owners alike will only communicate with you through calculators and negotiate through gestures. And if they don't like the price you offered, they will simply escort you out of the shop with no further quarrel.

And duly so, the owner of the jewellery shop typed in the exchange rate on a calculator, which was



The thrilling, yet dangerous Hanoi Train Street. Although most cities don't have establishments in such close proximity to the train track, one would find many makeshift coffee shops on both sides here. The street is maintained by the local coffee shop owners, who gatekeep access to the street unless you buy a cup of coffee. Two trains run along this route daily, one at 3:30 pm and another at 7:30 pm.

dear life, I noticed that all the street names started with the word "Hang". Later, I figured out that the streets in the Old Quarter are all named after what they sell. The previous street we went to, Hàng Bạc, stood for "silver street" in translation. Similarly, there's Hàng Da ('leather street'), and Hàng Cá ('fish street'), among many others.

When we finally reached Bánh Mi 25, the smell of mulled wine, dominated by notes of sweet cinnamon, had engulfed the whole street. The restaurant was quaint with stools to sit on inside. The kitchen was situated on the opposite side of the road and a huge line had followed its opening. After a considerable wait we finally had our hands on the ever famous snack.

Bánh mi, a Vietnamese sandwich, has a rich history that reflects the blending of French and Vietnamese cultures. During the French colonial period in Vietnam, baguettes were introduced and quickly became a staple food. To appeal to local tastes, Vietnamese street vendors started filling the baguettes with a variety of ingredients, including meats, pickled vegetables, cilantro, and chilli sauce.

There are certain bites of food you always remember for the rest of your life. A taste you crave, sitting a thousand miles away. This bite was one of them in my life. Crispy on the outside and fluffy on the inside, this bread is unlike anything you've ever had. The meat was tender, with flavours that came in with a punch, and a glass of chilled passion fruit juice on the side – what more could one ask for? And the best part? Each Bánh Mi cost us around Tk 135 and the fresh juice cost Tk 113.

With our stomachs

filled and our hands back to normal temperature, we set out to book our tour to Hạ Long Bay. We were warned beforehand by previous visitors not to get the tour booking done from the hotel as they're often way over price. And what they said checked out. The minimum cruise tour to Hạ Long Bay costs around USD 64 to USD 100 at hotels, depending on how luxurious you want your tour to be. But if you're the type that wants a comfortable trip to the Bay just to witness its beauty, you can get deals outside for USD 24.

And so, the next day, the tour bus picked us up from the hotel and we were off to witness one of the seven wonders of the world. When I visited Hạ Long Bay in 2019, I was quite disappointed to see that due to the influx of tourists, some parts of the Bay's water seemed murky and I even found a few plastic bottles floating here and there.

However, this time around I was impressed at the government's initiative to keep the tourist spot in tip-top shape. Before getting down the bus, the guide warned us not to take any plastic bottles, since if anyone is found carrying one, tour operators would have to give a fine of d 500,000, which is Tk 2,300, per person. And so, this time around, I found the jade waters completely crystal clear and fitting to the description of the myths that it carried.

According to local legend, the bay was formed when a dragon and a fairy descended from the mountains to the sea, and the dragon began to spit out jewels and jade, creating thousands of islands and islets in the process. The fairy then blessed the area, causing the rocks and islands to turn into stone, and the dragon continued to live in the bay, creating powerful currents and winds to protect the area from invaders.

This legend is often told as an explanation for the stunning beauty and unique geology of Hạ Long Bay. The area is known for its thousands of towering limestone cliffs and caves, which have been shaped by wind and water over millions of years.



Water puppet show at Thang Long Water Puppet Theatre. Five shows are held every day of the week.



The night market on New Year's Eve, filled with tourists and locals bidding adieu to the year. Inset, the infamous Bún cha, a traditional Vietnamese pork dish at Bun Cha Huong Lien, where Anthony Bourdain and President Barack Obama had shared a meal, popularising the dish to the world in the process.



way to make sure that we would be okay.

After dropping off our bags at a hotel in the city centre, we had a little chat with the concierge, who helped us mark off all the must eat places in the Old Quarter. We had three things on the agenda for our time in Hanoi – eat at the most iconic street food restaurants, book our trip to Hạ Long Bay and put our haggling skills to the test in a foreign country.

decently above the rate that showed up on Google. Excited, we grabbed the money and set out for lunch to satiate our rumbling stomachs. We planned on having the best Bánh mi in town at the ever famous Bánh Mi 25. As we walked through the streets of Hanoi, clenching onto a broken umbrella with our



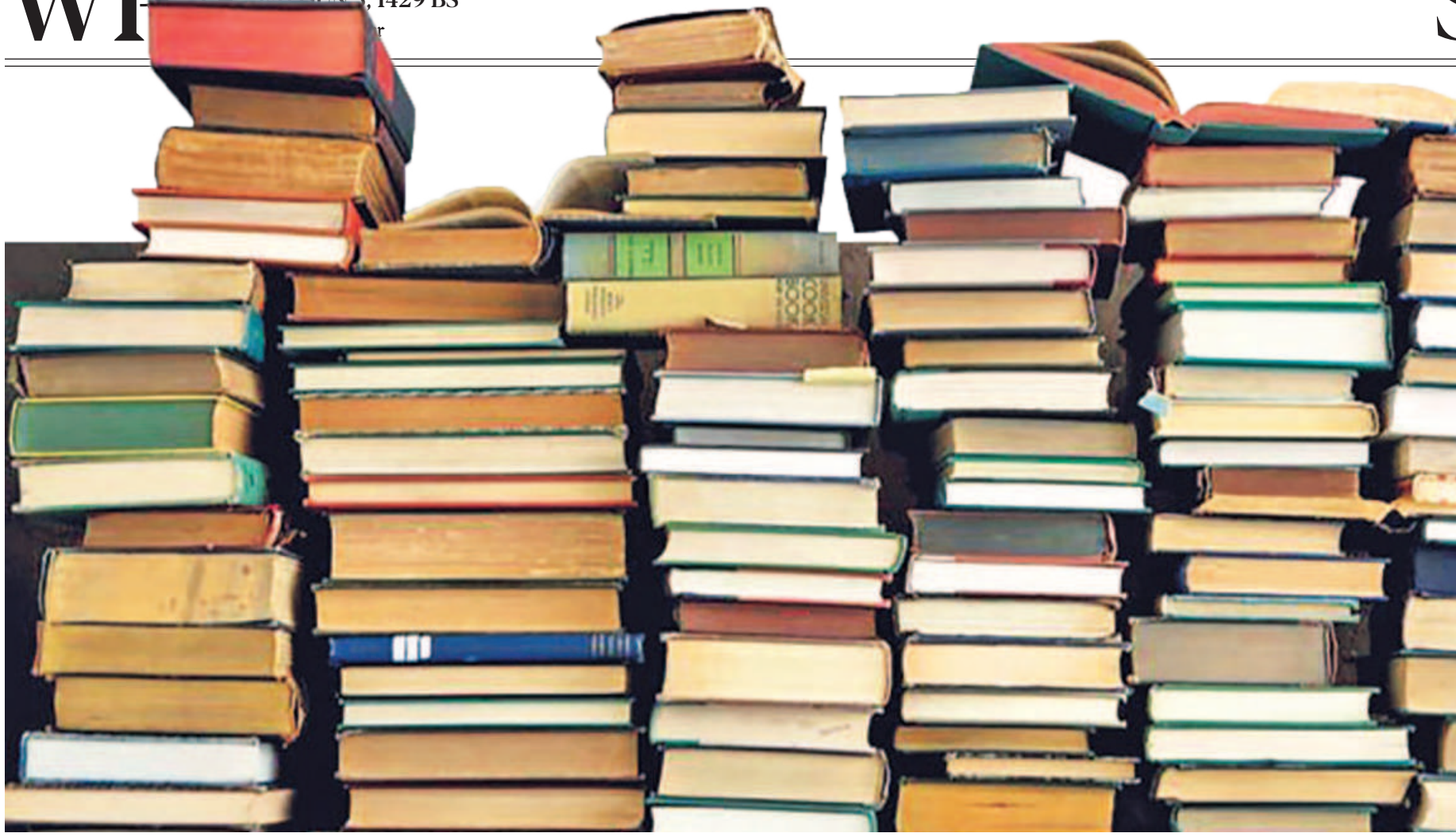
Sung Sot (Surprise) cave, the largest and one of the most beautiful caves in Hạ Long Bay, located on Bo Hon Island.



My mother and I, smiling through the exhaustion of going up the stairs to catch the magnificent view of the bay behind us.

After witnessing what was perhaps one of the most memorable sunsets of our lives on an open deck, Mum and I headed back to Hanoi. We paid a visit to Cafe Giảng, famous for their egg coffee, all the while awestruck at the beauty we witnessed. As the bustle of the night market unravelled in the streets, I found myself sitting with that familiar yellow warmth of Hanoi, yet again.





'I call him Bhai but found that he is actually younger'

MANSHOMMAN CORRESPONDENT

A man's world came crashing down around him when he found out recently that a colleague, who he used to address as "Bhai", was actually younger. "My whole world view has changed and this will affect my career," said Abul Hashem, the older man by six and a half months.

The younger "Bhai" is a man called Rony Zaman. "I used to think that this guy, who has been working here for a year longer than me, was much

I actually knew I was younger than him all along," Rony said. "But I actually thought that he must really respect me because even though he is older, he calls me Bhai. And you know, now it's too late. You can't reverse this. Now that would be really awkward.

older," said Abul.

Because he thought the colleague was older, Abul said that he treated him with more respect than he deserved.

"So, now he thinks that he can order me around, but I am older. I am actually older. What do I do? Should I actually start calling him by his name. It has always been Rony Bhai, how can I change that?" an exasperated Abul asked.

Rony, meanwhile, thought that it was not that big a deal.

"I actually knew I was younger than him all along," Rony said. "But I actually thought that he must really respect me because even though he



is older, he calls me Bhai. And you know, now it's too late. You can't reverse this. Now that would be really awkward.

"Besides, this has been good for my career at this firm, I am more confident all of a sudden."

In related news, some have said that it's the content of one's character and their ability that should garner respect, not the date they were born. The problem, however, is that those who say this are often very young, and have very few people calling them "Bhai" or "Apa".

Social media celebrities will soon become TAGORES AND NAZRULS

"I couldn't bring into a single frame all the writers I met at just one stall," Tausif, a voluntary photographer of the book fair, said after being astounded by the number of social media celebrity writers.

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

A recent, very confidential study has projected that very soon, Bangladesh will become home to not one, not two, but very many Nazruls, Tagores and Shakespeares.

The authors of the study came to this conclusion after its authors found countless social media sensations publishing their books in every book fair of this land of latent talents.

In fact, the count is so countless that the entire area of the book fair sometimes fails to accommodate the writers.

"I couldn't bring into a single frame all the writers I met at just one stall," Tausif, a voluntary photographer of the book fair, said after being astounded by the number of social media celebrity writers.

People often get puzzled when deciding whose book to buy. The sheer number of social media celebrities means that you have to have a healthy wallet if you don't want to miss the literary works of these sensations.

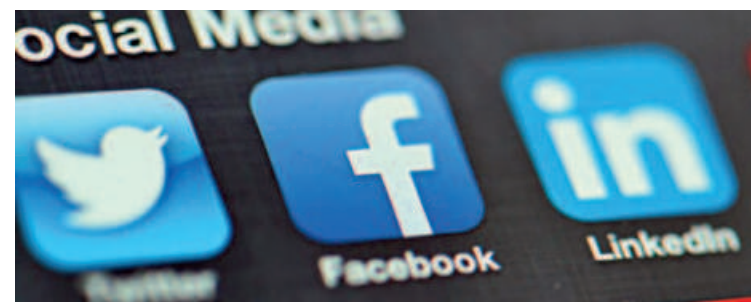
Recent data of the very

confidential research shows that 99 percent of people who went even remotely viral over the last 10 years ended up being either a writer or a motivational speaker.

"It's just the numbers game," said the very confidential lead author of the study. "If a

Pathok Aschorjo, who eagerly waits every year to take a selfie with social media celebrities after buying their books, said about his optimism.

This Satireday correspondent met some such writers and recorded their opinions. When



million people start writing and publishing, one will become an author of the stature of Nazrul or Tagore. You know that saying about monkeys and typewriters, right? Bangladesh will soon reach that critical mass."

"As someone new goes viral and becomes a Facebook celebrity, I see the faces of Nazrul and Rabindranath in his face,"

asked about when he thought he could be a writer, Zero Alom, a Facebook-viral singer said, "People think that my voice is sweet and therefore, they call me the 'voice of Bangladesh'. I am not a fool who will spend my talents on just one thing. Acting and writing a book are just my second and third big talents respectively. Just wait for my fourth one."

When asked why a motivational speaker should be a writer too, Bholamon Bhupon, country's unparalleled motivational speaker, said, "Bangladeshi people are basically Amir Khan of Ghajini. They forget everything they hear, even my speech. So, I decided to write it down for their convenience."

When asked how Facebook helped him be a modern writer, Sellman, who holds the record for being the most controversial figure, said, "Actually, Facebook showed me the way to get into the ocean of literature. Every time people called my name for my post they didn't agree with, I learned a new Bangla word that eventually enriched my knowledge and made me a writer."

Shakespeare, Tagore, Nazrul and other prominent figures were lucky that they did not have to compete with the modern writers. If they were alive today, they would have to be a social media celebrity first to be a good writer later. With so many other things to do, would Shakespeare be able to write Hamlet, Tagore Geetanjali or Nazrul Bidrohi?

Biscuit company goes broke after blowing budget on packaging

SELF-RISING CORRESPONDENT

A biscuit company shut down recently because, according to officials, they blew their whole budget on hiring designers to come up with an attractive packet.

"We had a grand vision to take our company to number 1," said Attaboy, the CEO of Market Cracker and Sons.

"After years of being at the forefront of biscuits, and biscuit-related things, we started to slip during the pandemic," he said.

"People started making their own biscuits at home. And also, their

purchasing powers declined."

Attaboy then said the head of his marketing team, Iknow Trenz, came up with a great idea.

"Well, marketing team is stretching it," Attaboy said. "Trenz had just one other guy working under him, and that was the problem. Trenz said the problem was not with the biscuits, but visibility."

"He wanted to hire more people in his team so that they could work on how to get 'some of that word of mouth going'."

He wanted to focus more on how the packets would look on

store shelves. We hired 53 people to come up with new designs for the package, including one with a microchip that would enable the packet of biscuits to literally jump out of store shelves at nearby customers."

A former employee wishing to remain unnamed (although we don't know why, he is obviously not working at Market Cracker anymore) said that is where the problem began.

"Obviously I know Trenz

just wanted to have more people under him so he could beef up his resume and look good on the socials," the unnamed employee said, and then leaned in to whisper: "Iknow Trenz doesn't really know trends, you know?"

Anyway, long-story-short and word-count-almost-reached, soon factory workers started quitting and leaving for other jobs because they weren't given raises while the company were hiring people

in other sectors. "Disaster struck when one fine day, we

realised that we had no flour to produce any more biscuits. And we had literally no money left in the budget to order a new batch. Trenz said it would be cheaper for us to shut down, and I trust him, he knows trends," said CEO Attaboy.

Contacted, Trenz said there was nothing to worry about, because he had already struck a deal to take his designs to another company. "The new company sees me as the shining light in a failed organisation. Now that's what you call packaging."



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