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ONE YEAR OF UKRAINE WAR

# Undoing of Bangladesh economy

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

In the end, it was a war that began some 5,800 kilometres away a year ago that laid bare the longstanding weaknesses of the Bangladesh economy.

Low tax revenue, overreliance on imports, narrow export base, inefficacy of the central bank's monetary policy methodology, interest rate caps, project cost overruns and banking sector weakness are some of the structural problems.

The issues left the country exposed to the wrath of the war, which escalated global commodity prices.

This sparked a cost of living crisis in Bangladesh, drained the central bank's reserves at an alarming rate, compelled the government to go into harsh austerity mode and left the economy mumbering.

Growth has weakened, the taka has depreciated by about 25 percent and reserves have shrunk by about 28 percent, prompting the government to knock at the doors of the International Monetary Fund for support.

But that does not mean that people like Alam Hossen and Al Hossain Chisty can get back to their pre-war lifestyle anytime soon.

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Hundreds of people stand in line to buy daily essential items, including soybean oil, at reduced prices from a TCB truck in the capital's Azimpur. People with limited income have been bearing the brunt of skyrocketing prices caused by the Russia-Ukraine war. The photo was taken a few months ago.

PHOTO: FILE

## Uprooted from a life once stable

**Bangladeshis displaced by the Russia-Ukraine war still struggling to start afresh**

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Mehedi Hasan Mohon knew his life would never be the same when the Russia-Ukraine war began a year ago.

"Back in Kyiv, I had my own house and automobile business. Now, I'm living in the Netherlands as a refugee," he told The Daily Star over the phone.

Mohon had gone to Ukraine 32 years ago on a scholarship for higher education. "I had been there since then and married a Ukrainian woman.

"I had to struggle a lot to settle there. I did various jobs before being able to start my own business. Despite all of that, I was leading a very happy life. But then the war came and all my happiness went away."

Mohon, an engineer who is now working as a robot operator in the Netherlands, said, "I am having to start

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## Both AL, BNP wooing Islami Andolon

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Both the ruling Awami League and the opposition BNP are out to get one religion-based party as an electoral ally, a gain which may help boost the vote bank ahead of the next general polls.



For its performance in the recent elections, Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB), founded by "Charmonair Pir" Fazlul Karim, has become a factor in the country's politics. And it led the two major parties to make one request to IAB: if it can't join their electoral coalition, it should go it alone, said sources.

Starting from Barishal in March 1987, the party emerged as the fourth most popular political party in the last general election.

In the last Dhaka city mayoral polls, it was the third most popular political party, beating the main opposition Jatiya Party.

On February 17, a 10-member BNP delegation visited the annual "Mahfil" at "Charmonair Durbar Sharif" in Barishal Sadar upazila, the headquarters of Fazlul Karim.

Though it was a religious event, politics came into discussion and the delegation proposed that IAB join the simultaneous movement initiated by the BNP and like-minded parties to realise the 10-point demand, including a general election under a caretaker government.

But no decision was made at the meeting.

Rather, the Islamist party told the BNP delegation that they have strong reservations about the caretaker system

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## KHALEDA IN POLITICS

### Confusion as ministers differ in opinions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With their conflicting remarks, four ministers have caused confusion about whether BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia can engage in politics.

Law Minister Anisul Huq began it all on Sunday when he said there was no legal bar to Khaleda getting involved in politics again but wondered whether her poor health would even allow her to do so.

Yesterday, he again said that even though there is no bar to Khaleda engaging in politics, people think she practically cannot do so as she is sick.

She, however, cannot take part in the election as she is convicted, he reiterated.

"You will have to understand what the real situation is. It has been stated in the application submitted by her brother for her release from jail that she was seriously ill and her life would be in jeopardy if she was not given better treatment," the law minister said.

The former prime minister was

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## The devil is in implementation

Says IMF Asia-Pacific director on Bangladesh's loan programme

REJAUL KARIM BYRON, back from New Delhi

Bangladesh's economic crisis will not go away if the government does not strictly adhere to the conditions tagged with the International Monetary Fund's 42-month loan programme, said the lender's top official.

"Implementation is the key," said Krishna Srinivasan, director of the IMF's Asia-Pacific department, in response to questions from Bangladesh journalists earlier this week in New Delhi.

IMF organised a three-day training programme for economic and financial reporting at the Indian capital for a select group of journalists from Bangladesh, India, Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives.

The Washington-based multilateral lender has designed the \$4.7 billion loan programme around restoring macroeconomic stability, increasing tax revenue, addressing banking sector vulnerabilities, modernising monetary policy framework and climate- and pandemic preparedness.

If the programme is well-adhered to,

the upsides are pretty strong, he said.

"In every country where we had a programme, if the programme is adhered to, there is a virtuous cycle which comes back and the problem we faced start declining. That is the whole idea. Being on the programme is one thing, implementing the programme is equally important."

When Bangladesh 'proactively' reached out to the IMF for fund facility, the country faced back-to-back shocks, which left its economic growth tapering off, external accounts weak, reserves strained and currency depreciating rapidly.

"If the programme is implemented, you will see a reversal in the context of the shocks. When a country comes to the IMF, its reserves have fallen. Once the programme is implemented, you build reserves organically."

The objectives set out by Bangladesh's loan programme have been cherry-picked by the government itself and not the IMF.

"This is the government's programme. It is part of their five-year plan -- they

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## HAJJ REGISTRATION

### Poor response compels govt to extend deadline

RASHIDUL HASAN

Only 18,140 Bangladeshis have completed registration till date to perform hajj this year against the country's quota of 1.27 lakh.

Due to the poor response in registration, the government has extended the registration deadline to February 28 from yesterday.

At least 15,000 of the 1.27 lakh were supposed to perform the ritual under government management and the rest under private management.

Top leaders of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) and Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB) said despite the huge interest of people in performing hajj, fewer people registered due to the high cost of Hajj packages this year.

According to sources at the religious affairs ministry, of the 18,140 registered people, 11,248 will perform hajj under private management and the rest under government management.

Hajj agencies now doubt whether Bangladesh will be able to meet the quota this year if the costs are not reduced.

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## Suspended cop threatens Star journo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A suspended traffic police constable threatened a journalist of The Daily Star over the phone yesterday over publishing a news item on the constable hiring a helicopter to fly his daughter 2km to her wedding ceremony.

Md Mohibullah Shapla of the Chattogram Metropolitan Police's Traffic West Division was suspended after he was arrested with his son in connection with extorting money from a person holding him hostage last year.

Victim Nabi Hossain filed a case against four, including Shapla, with Pahartali Police Station on January 18 last year.

The Daily Star online Bangla ran the news yesterday with the headline "Police constable suspended over extortion allegation hires helicopter for daughter's wedding".

Shapla called The Daily Star Chattogram Bureau's

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Workers loading fly ash onto a vessel from a truck in Khulna city's Launch Ghat area. Such handling of fly ash, imported from India for producing cement, exposed the labourers to health hazards and also causes air pollution. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## NEXT NAT'L POLLS Lack of political consensus may lead to chaos

Says chief election commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal has said the country's law and order may deteriorate and public safety may be jeopardised if the next national election is held without a political consensus.

"It may put people in danger. We don't expect such a situation in the country," he said.

The CEC made the comments yesterday while talking to reporters after a meeting with Election Monitoring Forum (EMF), a platform of election observers, at the capital's Nirbachan Bhaban.

"We urge the ruling party to make cordial attempts so that opposition political parties participate in the national election and we can present an acceptable, credible and transparent election to the nation," he said.

The political division over the caretaker government issue remains one of the major challenges to holding a fair and credible election, Habibur observed.

The CEC, however, expressed optimism that major political parties would be able to reach a consensus before the parliamentary polls, scheduled to be held in late December this year or early January next year.

"The election is still a few months away. We hope that we will see a political consensus and all political parties will join the polls."

He said the EMF delegation was comprised of some foreign election observers, including former Nepal prime minister Jhala Nath Khanal.

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## TORTURE AT IU Probe body to submit report February 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One of the committees formed to investigate the torture of a student at Islamic University in Kushtia is likely to submit its report on February 26.

The probe body formed by the university authorities on February 15, the day after the incident, and headed by Prof Reba Mandol has completed taking depositions of 40 students, including the victim, both accused, two house tutors and four staffers.

"We are reviewing the statements and will submit the report on time," Prof Debashish Sharma, a member of the committee, told reporters.

On February 14, Phulpori Khatun, a first year non residential student of the university, alleged that its BCL Vice President Sanjida Chowdhury and activist Tabassum Islam, along with others, tortured her on the night of February 12 for staying at university's Deshratna Sheikh Hasina Hall without their "permission".

Beside the university probe committee, two others bodies are carrying out investigations into the incident.

## Grameenphone network restored after hours of disruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Normal service of the Grameenphone mobile network was restored across the country after more than two hours of disruption, the telecom giant's officials said yesterday.

Khairul Basher, head of communications at the carrier, said the network was restored at 1:50pm after about two hours of disruption, which happened due to damage to fibre-optic cables caused during road construction work in Gazipur, Tangail, and Sirajganj.

While Grameenphone officials said the network was disrupted for two hours, users have been complaining of connectivity issues since before 11:00am yesterday.



The mangled remains of an auto-rickshaw after it collided head-on with a bus in Sujabad-Dahapara area of Bogura's Shajahanpur upazila yesterday morning. The accident left the driver of the three-wheeler and its four passengers dead. The bus was set ablaze by angry locals. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

## Ukraine 'will prevail'

Zelensky says ahead of invasion anniversary; G7 mulls new sanctions; UN prepares peace vote; Putin to deploy Sarmat nuclear missile

AGENCIES

Ukraine "will prevail" over invading Russian forces, President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday, a day before the first anniversary of Moscow's assault on his country.

"We have not broken down, we have overcome many ordeals and we will prevail. We will hold to account all those who brought this evil, this war to our land," Zelensky said on social media.

In India, G7 ministers yesterday discussed imposing fresh sanctions on Russia. And the UN General Assembly was preparing to vote on a motion calling for "lasting" peace in Ukraine.

The year-long conflict has devastated swathes of Ukraine, turned Russia into a pariah in the West and according to Western sources, has caused 150,000 casualties on each side.

The approach of the first anniversary of Russian troops storming across the border on February 24, 2022 has seen Western leaders step up their show of unity with Kyiv, with the Spanish prime minister the latest leader to visit the capital.

"This has been the most difficult year of my life and that of all Ukrainians," said Diana Chestakova, 23, who works for a publishing house and whose boyfriend has spent the last year away in the military.

"I am sure that we will be victorious, but we don't know how long we will have to wait and how many victims there are still to come."

In Moscow, President Vladimir Putin promised to boost arms production as Russia marked the annual "Defender of the Fatherland Day" holiday.

In India, G7 finance ministers met in the city of Bengaluru to discuss further

sanctions and more financial help for Ukraine.

A senior US official has said that the United States and its G7 allies planned to unveil "a big new package of sanctions" around the anniversary, including measures to crack down on the evasion of existing sanctions.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen told the G7 meeting that the unprecedented Western sanctions imposed on Moscow over the last 12 months were hurting Russia badly.

"Our sanctions have had a very significant negative effect on Russia so far... Russia is now running a significant budget deficit," Yellen said.

"It is finding it extremely difficult... to obtain the material it needs to replenish its munitions and to, for example, repair 9,000 tanks that have been destroyed because of the war," she added.

## Poor response

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A Bangladeshi will have to spend at least Tk 6.83 lakh to perform hajj under government management this year, up by around Tk 1.61 lakh from the previous year. The minimum cost for performing hajj under private management has been fixed at Tk 6.72 lakh this year, about Tk 1.5 lakh more than that of the previous year.

Apart from this, each pilgrim will have to pay about Tk 22,000 for a Qurbani coupon from the Islamic Development Bank in Saudi Arabia. The amount is used for meeting the expenses for sacrificing animals.

The hajj will be held in late June. Abdus Salam Aref, general secretary of ATAB, said a Bangladeshi pilgrim will have to spend around Tk 8 to 9 lakh to complete hajj this year.

The HAAB, a platform of around 1,500 private hajj agencies, said this year's airfare was high for which the costs of hajj packages have increased significantly.

"The airfare of Biman was Tk 1.40 lakh last year. But this year it is around Tk 2 lakh ...," said HAAB President M Shahadat Hossain Taslim.

Sources at the HAAB and ATAB said in India, the airfare is around Tk 1.25 lakh and in Pakistan it is about Tk 1 lakh.

"Due to the high prices of hajj packages, we are now worried whether the hajj agencies and the government will be able to send the targeted 1.27 lakh Bangladeshis to Saudi Arabia to perform hajj this year," he added.

Md Khorshed Alam, managing partner of Al-Madina Travels and Hajj Kafela, said many people had completed pre-hajj registration through his firm.

"When we are asking them why they are not completing their registration, 99 percent of them are saying that the prices of hajj packages have increased significantly this year.

"They say that they are finding it difficult to manage the additional money due to such huge increase in the prices," he said.

HAAB and ATAB leaders said in Bangladesh husband and wife, or mother and son or close relatives perform hajj together.

"Due to the increased costs, it would be very tough for a family to manage Tk 15 to 16 lakh for two persons," said the ATAB secretary general.

ATAB leaders said they have already asked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to reduce the prices of hajj packages.

## Undoing of Bangladesh economy

FROM PAGE 1

Hossain, a diabetic patient, had to switch to rice for sustenance after the wheat price snowballed to an all-time high in the global market with the onset of the Ukraine war.

"The change in diet wrecked my health," said the owner of a small grocery shop at Sirajganj Sadar. The doctor has advised him to move back to his previous wheat-based diet, which he can ill afford thanks to elevated inflation and the 41.5 percent price hike of loose flour in the past year.

Since the war began on February 24, inflation averaged 8.14 percent, way higher than the reasonable 5 percent.

The elevated price level means Chisty, an SME entrepreneur in Dhaka, is unable to replace his wife's stolen smartphone, that his wife lost her smartphone last week, but he can't buy a new one for her at this moment as his net income has reduced to a large extent.

"My income has reduced greatly. I can't get her a new smartphone. I asked her to use an old feature phone used by my father who died in 2021."

Such intense is his cost of living crisis that he has to entirely cut back on indulgence.

"Before, I used to buy beef twice a month. Now, I can't even buy beef once in two months."

His purchasing power is deteriorating so swiftly that he is

concerned about how he will manage his living expenses with his income in the days ahead.

"The prices of most of the commodities have declined in the global market, but our economic woes remain due to our own inherent problems," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh economy has failed to absorb the shock emanating from the war.

The central bank should have withdrawn the interest rate cap of 9 percent on loans and allowed the floating exchange rate immediately after the war started, said Mansur, a former economist of the IMF.

"Had we taken the measures on time, the ongoing worse situation could have been tackled largely. But we have made the situation critical. So there is no scope to blame the war blindly."

If the central bank does not take the issues with the utmost importance, the country will have to face more stress, said Mansur, also the chairman of Brac Bank.

The macroeconomy has not turned around yet after a year of the war. Rather, its vulnerability may deepen in the coming days," said Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling.

There is no effective policy to restore stability in the foreign exchange market

as several exchange rates of dollar-taka are being followed, he said.

Remittances are not rising to their expected level although Bangladesh sent a record number of workers abroad last year.

The government should take strict measures to contain hundi -- an illegal cross-border financial transaction system -- to boost remittances.

"We have not taken any effective measure to stop the illicit money flow. Besides, the country's banking sector is still facing higher amounts of default loans and scams."

The government should implement the recommendations of the IMF properly to restore discipline in the macroeconomic zone, said Raihan, also a professor at the University of Dhaka's economic department.

The war has already created a wide range of instability both at micro- and macroeconomic levels, said Anu Mohammad, a former professor of Jahangirnagar University's economics department.

The net income of the industrial workers has decreased to 30-40 percent since the inception of the war due to inflation, he said.

The prices of essentials may rise again in the future as there is no sign of the war ending anytime soon, said Binayak Sen, director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

## The devil is in implementation

FROM PAGE 1

have certain policies they want to pursue. So it is a homegrown programme which is being supported by the IMF. Let's be clear about that."

One of the long-term issues of the Bangladesh economy is the low tax revenue, and the IMF programme has focused on addressing this.

The root of Bangladesh's economic problems is its 'pretty weak' fiscal position, said Srinivasan, who assumed his current position of overseeing the IMF's work on all countries in the Asia-Pacific region in June last year.

"And that is based on mobilising higher revenue, largely because Bangladesh has one of the lowest tax-GDP ratios across the world. Bangladesh is an outlier in terms of tax revenue as a share of GDP."

The ratio is below 9 percent, which is lower than the low-income developing countries' average of 12 percent and emerging markets' average of 17 percent.

"One anchor for the programme is on ensuring that the fiscal position comes on a strong footing. They have to boost the tax revenue to GDP, which is very, very important."

Part of improving the fiscal position is rationalising the subsidy expenditure.

"Not all subsidies are good, not all subsidies are geared towards the poor and the vulnerable. If you look at Bangladesh, a lot of subsidies are given for gas and electricity. Who drives cars? Who consumes air conditioning? It is

not the poor, it's the rich people. Those people do not deserve the subsidy they are getting in the context of a country going through a fiscal problem."

Blanket subsidies also limit how much the government can support the social safety net programmes and infrastructure spending.

Subsequently, the lender insists on providing targeted subsidies and not blanket subsidies or blanket tax exemptions.

It is important in the case of Bangladesh for fiscal discipline to rationalise subsidies, make taxes progressive and broaden the revenue base, Srinivasan said.

"For the poor and vulnerable, you provide them targeted support through direct transfers and so on. You create a social registry and you see who are the poor and vulnerable and you provide them targeted support. That is the way to go, esp. when you are facing such significant fiscal problems."

Vulnerabilities in the banking sector are also being addressed through the programme.

"Clearly, the state-owned commercial banks are on the weaker side. But in the context of the pandemic, they did provide the kind of support which was needed for the economy. Now, going forward those vulnerabilities have to be addressed."

The vulnerabilities stem from inadequate regulation and supervision. The authorities with the help of IMF staff will address the issues in the financial sector, he added.

## Confusion as ministers differ in opinions

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convicted and imprisoned in a corruption case in 2018. She was released in March 2020 with an executive order and on condition that she would not leave the country and must receive medical treatment in the country.

Agriculture Minister and AL Presidium Member Abdur Razzaque on Wednesday echoed the law minister and said Khaleda could run her party and direct party activists even from jail.

However, Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday contradicted the law and agriculture ministers and said Khaleda could not engage in politics due to the conditions for her release.

"Considering her age and health issues, she was released and allowed to stay home on conditions. As per the conditions, she cannot take part in politics," he said while talking to reporters at his secretariat office.

"Anyone sentenced to two or more years cannot take part in elections as per the law of Bangladesh. Khaleda

Zia has been sentenced to more than two years. So, there is no question of her participating in elections," he said.

The confusion was further fuelled by Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader who made contradictory comments within two days.

On February 20, he said the BNP chief must follow the conditions of her release if she wants to get involved in politics.

Then yesterday, Quader said that as a convicted person, there is no scope for Khaleda to get involved in politics.

"Has Khaleda Zia been relieved from her sentence? She is convicted. Has she been released [from jail]?" he said.

"Had she not been sick, she would have been in jail. So where is the opportunity [for her] to get involved in politics?" he said while addressing a meeting of the AL and its associate bodies.

All four ministers, however, have said that she cannot run for office.

## Univ student dies as bus hits bike in Jatrabari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A private university student was killed after a bus hit his motorcycle in Dhaka's Jatrabari this morning. Two others were left injured in the incident.

The deceased was identified as Omar Faruk, 22, a first-year BBA student at Bangladesh Islami University. The accident took place around 9:00am at Bhanga Press area.

Riaz Farid, a rickshaw puller who took the three to a hospital said a few other witnesses saw the students lying on the road.

"We took them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Omar dead around 10:15am," Riaz said.

Talking to reporters at the hospital, injured Jewel said the accident took place when they were on their way to campus on Omar's bike.

OC Mofizul Islam of Jatrabari Police Station, said they are trying to identify the bus that killed the student.



A man carries a woman towards an ambulance after she had an accident on Mayor Hanif Flyover yesterday afternoon. She fell off a motorbike while it was racing with another one on the flyover, according to witnesses. An ambulance, passing them by, stopped to take her to a hospital. Such risky and reckless driving could have easily resulted in a tragedy.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## 'Water governance need of the hour' Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the parliamentary body on the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, yesterday stressed the need for sustainable water governance to meet both current and future socio-economical and ecological demands.

Water governance refers to the political, social, economic, and administrative systems that influence the use and management of water. It is essentially about who gets what water, when and how, and who has the right to water, its related services and their benefits.

"Almost two-thirds of the available water has been used for food production. Hence, we need to think about food security as well as water security," he said at a discussion, titled "Thinking Beyond Sanitation: Transitioning to a Sustainable Urban Water Cycle", organised by The Daily Star in association with SNV at The Daily Star Centre.



Prof Muhammad Alamgir, UGC member, during his keynote presentation, said some 55pc of the urban population does not have access to clean water, which may increase further if the problem is not addressed properly.

Citing a recent survey of Urbanet Records, he said, "Currently, 39.70 percent of Bangladesh's people live in urban areas. The percentage may rise to 50 percent in 2037. The scarcity of water in the urban area will increase more if necessary measures are not taken."

SNV Country Director Ismene RAC Stalpers said Bangladesh has been facing an increasing number of impacts of climate changes.

Folkert GJ de Jager, first secretary of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, said financing in the water sector is a challenge that needs to be addressed.

AHM Khalequr Rahman, executive engineer of the Department of Public Health Engineering, said, "As the contamination of water is increasing day by day, we must think about alternative sources in urban areas."

Sumana Sharmin, city planner of Gazipur City Corporation, said, "We cover 30 percent of areas in Gazipur with supply water, but many people of these areas have a tendency to extract groundwater."

## ADDRESSING ROHINGYA CRISIS

# Look beyond political agenda

Law minister tells UN Security Council

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq has called for the UN Security Council to go beyond the political agenda to address the Rohingya crisis that otherwise is posing a serious security challenge for the region and the whole world.

Safe and sustainable Rohingya repatriation from Bangladesh to Myanmar is the only solution to the crisis, which requires the creation of conducive conditions in Myanmar. However, repeated efforts of repatriation have not worked since about a million Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh in 2016 and 2017 following a military crackdown, he said.

There have been some significant developments, including the International Court of Justice's verdict allowing the Rohingya genocide case of the Gambia to proceed, the US declaration of the atrocities as genocide and dozens of sanctions against the Myanmar military and businesses linked to it.

However, there is no progress towards a solution because of some regional and global powers' support towards Myanmar, said analysts.

Permanent members of the UN Security Council — Russia and China, which have a major interest in Myanmar — have not taken any concrete actions that could help solve the Rohingya crisis.

"The UN Security Council should play a constructive role, going beyond political agenda. We expect UN special envoy for Myanmar to play a role in creating conducive conditions so Rohingyas can return," Anisul Huq said while addressing as chief guest at a seminar yesterday.

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organised the event, titled



**The UN Security Council should play constructive role, going beyond political agenda. We expect UN special envoy for Myanmar to play role in creating conducive conditions so Rohingyas can return.**

ANISUL HUQ

"Rohingya Crisis and the Emerging Security Challenges: Response Strategy of Bangladesh", at its auditorium in the city.

The minister said the prolonged stay of some 1.2 million Rohingyas is a huge burden for Bangladesh. Moreover, it is posing risks of radicalisation, while many of them are getting involved in drug smuggling, human trafficking and other crimes.

The UN must take tangible actions for addressing the crisis, he added.

Dhaka University International Relations Professor Dr Delwar Hossain said there have been discriminatory policies against the ethnic communities in Myanmar. And, the Rohingyas were not even recognised as

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## DHAKA BAR Election ends amid boycott by pro-BNP lawyers

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The two-day election for the 2023-2024 executive committee at Dhaka Bar Association ended yesterday amid boycott by pro-BNP lawyers.

The BNP-backed "Blue Panel" brought allegations of irregularities and rigging against chief election commissioner Abdullah Abu. However, pro-Awami League "White Panel" attended the voting.

Mizanur Rahman Mamun and Khandakar Golam Kibria Jobayer contested for the posts of president and general secretary from White Panel respectively, while Khorshed Miah Alam and Sayed Nazrul Islam vied for those posts from Blue Panel.

Abdullah Abu, also Dhaka Metropolitan Public Prosecutor, said the allegations were false and fabricated.

Khorshed claimed on a Facebook live video on Wednesday night that they observed irregularities and vote rigging.

He said BNP-backed election commissioners counted a total of 4,023 votes on Wednesday, but Abdullah Abu declared that a total of 5,028 voters cast their votes.

"Yesterday, I went to the office of the chief election commission to submit a written application, seeking re-voting, but... he was not present there," added Khorshed.

## Boost agriculture research to increase production: PM

UNB, Gazipur

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday reiterated her call to scientists to put extra efforts on research to attain excellence in agricultural production.

"I always think that without research it's not possible to attain excellence. As we are agriculture dependent country, we have given extra importance on agriculture," she said.

The prime minister was speaking at a programme to mark the 50th founding anniversary of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) and inauguration of the "Bangabandhu Pierre Trudeau Agricultural Research Center".

She, however, said the government has given importance on the research work in other sectors too.

"Besides, we have given emphasis on research works on health, education and science," she said.

The PM said Bangladesh frequently faces adverse circumstances due to the geographical location and impact of climate changes. "So, we have to produce our crops." She said the production has to be continued with new varieties of crops in tune with the climate changes and environment.

Hasina said the country is about to enter the fourth industrial revolution and so, the government has taken steps to create skilled manpower. She emphasised on learning and producing bio-informatics, nano-technology, machine learning, internet of things and new agriculture technologies.



## It's hard to trust anyone these days Man embezzles wedding gifts after carrying them to country from Dubai

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Mujibur Rahman and his family were eagerly preparing for his daughter's and his niece's wedding in Madaripur's Shibchar.

The brides' brothers, who are currently working in Dubai, sent 28 tolas of gold bars and ornaments, and phone sets as gifts through another expat.

However, the festive mood in the family soon turned into a state of panic when their carrier went into hiding with the gifts, upon landing in Dhaka.

According to the statement of a case filed over the embezzlement, Dubai expatriate Md Arif and his cousin Md Toyab purchased two gold bars weighing 20 tolas and gold ornaments weighing eight tolas at a cost of Tk 26.04 lakh for the brides.

For the grooms, they purchased one iPhone 13 at Tk 1.75 lakh and a Samsung Galaxy S 22 Ultra at Tk 1.40 lakh.



**With the money, he started constructing a one-story building at his in-law's house and bought a motorcycle. A portion of it was also spent on repaying the loans he made for going to Dubai.**

As they could not manage to leave work, they decided to send the gifts through one of their acquaintances Md Shawon Ahmed, 30, who went to Dubai around six months ago. However, he decided to return failing to manage any job.

Arif and Toyab provided Shawon with a Dubai to Dhaka air ticket and 1,400 Dirham worth Tk 42,700 to pay the taxes for the gifts. They even recorded a video while handing over the items to Shawon.

Shawon landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka at 4:00am on January 13. However, without handing over the gifts to Arif's father Mujibur, who was waiting at the airport, he left the airport through the staff gate and fled to his father-in-law's house at Bogura's Sariakandi.

He switched his phone off and stopped contacting his family as well. In no time, he sold

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Five more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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

According to the DGHS, the total number of dengue cases this year rose to 713.

Nine persons have died of dengue this year so far.

Some 22 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment while some 682 have been released from hospitals.

**PRAYER TIMING**  
FEBRUARY 24

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Be it browsing through books at a stall or hanging out with friends, the Ekushey Boi Mela has something for everyone. This photo of a youth engrossed in reading a book was taken at Suhrawardy Udyan. On the 23rd day of the fair yesterday, 78 new books were published, according to Bangla Academy.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## PUBLIC HOSPITALS Decision on pvt practice guidelines still pending

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The committee, tasked to set the guidelines for the private practice initiative at public hospitals for three hours, ended its third meeting yesterday without finalising the procedure.

The 26-member committee, led by Saidur Rahman, additional secretary (administration) at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, will sit again on Sunday, a member confirmed this newspaper.

There are some issues involving the hospital preparedness that need to be addressed before introducing the system, said the member.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Maizbhandari's comment on ACC not decent: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court bench yesterday expressed annoyance at a statement made by Tarikat Federation Chairman Syed Najibul Bashar Maizbhandari against the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Maizbhandari, a lawmaker from Chattogram-2 constituency, reportedly threatened the ACC for filing a corruption case against his two sons recently. Speaking at an event at Shahi Maidan in Chattogram on Monday night, he reportedly said, "ACC does not know Maizbhandari. How dare they put hands on Maizbhandari? Will peel off all the skin..."

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat said, "His [Maizbhandari] comments were not decent. He should not have said such things."

It said this after Supreme Court lawyer Syed Sayedul Haque Suman placed a report published in Bangla daily Prothom Alo in this regard yesterday.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan requested the HC bench to order Maizbhandari to give an explanation about his statement. The bench, however, refused to pass any order saying that the ACC can act on this matter as it has filed a case.

## Look beyond

FROM PAGE 3  
an ethnic group. Such problems were there for many years.

"Rohingya crisis... is in no way a Bangladesh problem. It has regional and global consequences and so the world community must come forward to address it," he said.

While repatriation may take time, the funding for Rohingyas is declining, which is creating another challenge for Bangladesh and Rohingya. Lack of basic amenities in the Rohingya camps can lead to bigger problems, he added.

Former ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad said the ICJ case, the US determination of Rohingya persecution as genocide, and sanctions by the US, Canada and European countries are some of the important efforts and

stronger initiatives should be built upon them for a sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis.

BISS Director General Maj Gen Sheikh Pasha Habib Uddin, Lt Gen (Retd) Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman, Dr Niloy Ranjan Biswas of DU's International Relations, and BISS research fellow ASM Tarek Hassan Semul also spoke.

## After 6 years'

FROM PAGE 5  
He declined to disclose more details about the report.

Diaz was found hanged in his flat near CU campus on November 20, 2016. His family then filed a murder case against 10 Chhatra League members of CU unit and a former assistant proctor of the university.

## It's hard to trust

FROM PAGE 3  
the gold bars, some of the ornaments and the cell phones. With the money, he started constructing a one-story building at his in-law's house and bought a motorcycle. A portion of it was also spent on repaying the loans he made for going to Dubai.

Mujibur eventually filed a case against Shawon, his brother Md Nirob and two others with the Airport police station on February 9.

## Two slaps and off

FROM PAGE 5  
Shahrukh and Rifat. From the college BCL faction, Rafi, Imon, Torikul, Raju, Hasan and Ahsan were involved in the attack, said the students.

All of them are followers of BCL college unit's president Rashik Dutta, they added.

In the meeting, Rashik admitted his responsibility for the attacks. During the meeting, he allegedly slapped the attackers and sought pardon for them from the college authorities.

After a lengthy discussion with the college principal in the chair, the college authorities decided to pardon the BCL men involved when its leaders promised to punish them.

"We wanted justice, but we had nothing to do as our teachers and senior journalists were in the meeting," said Abdul Hakim, president of the college's reporters' unity.

The college authorities promised to take a strong stance against such incidents in future and said they will ensure the safety and security of all students on campus, Hakim reported. "Everyone agreed on the

finally arrested Shawon on Wednesday from his rented house in Bogura. Around Tk 4.5 lakh, five tolas of gold and the cellphones were recovered from him.

Shawon is currently under a two-day remand by DB.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Lalbagh Zone of DB Mostafa Kamal, who led the drive, said they are trying to arrest the man to whom Shawon sold the gold at almost half the actual price and recover the rest of the gold.

decisions to maintain peace on the campus," said Rafiqul Islam, president of Rajshahi Union of Journalists.

Contacted, Principal Prof Md Abdul Khaleque told The Daily Star that they pardoned the BCL men as they were outsiders and the others were not involved in the attack.

Asked about students' demand for legal action, the principal argued that the BCL leaders punished the attackers themselves and promised the authorities to remove them from the organisation.

However, Prof Khaleque mentioned that the authorities pardoned another BCL member for a similar attack on a student a week ago. "We are yet to hear of any organisational punitive measure taken against the attacker by BCL."

Asked why authorities pardoned them this time too, he said they have been pardoned for the last time.

## Decision on pvt

FROM PAGE 3  
The committee earlier sat twice in this regard and prepared a draft titled "Institutional Practice Guideline".

According to the plan, the system would be introduced at 83 public hospitals from March as the government looks to get more use out of the existing healthcare infrastructure.

The programme, which will begin on a pilot basis next month, will be rolled out at all public hospitals by August.

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## Constable dies

FROM PAGE 5  
vehicle and it rammed into Emon's bike.

Emon fell on the road and suffered serious head injuries, said the OC, adding that locals took him to Kalaroa Health Complex where doctors declared him brought dead.

The OC said the body was sent to Satkhira Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. The truck has been seized but its driver managed to flee.

Emon's father Monayem Hossain said his son came to Satkhira from Rangamati a week ago after taking leave from work. He has a five-year-old son.

## Involvement

FROM PAGE 5  
During the hearing, Prothom Alo Editor Matuir Rahman submitted an affidavit to the HC bench through its lawyer Prashanta Kumar Karmoker saying that the report and editorial published in his daily over the incident are authentic and true.

The HC ordered the OC to submit the investigation report to this court and to inform it what action has been taken to this effect by April 4.

During the hearing, the HC had Shahriar Alam, senior vice president of Bagmara's Shubhadanga union, stand in the courtroom for around one and half hours and ordered him to further appear before it on April 4.

Deputy Attorney General Wayesh-Al Haroni represented the state during the hearing.

**Rajshahi City Corporation**  
Engineering Department  
Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi

Memo No. 46.12.5081.006.07.212.2023.374  
Date: 22.02.2023

**Invitation for Tenders (IFT) 02/2022-23**

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

SL No.	ID No.	Reference No.	Name of works	Tender/proposal document last selling time and date
1.	793512	46.12.5081.006.07.212.2023.375	Supply of 200 Watt LED Street Light Set at Different Road in City Corporation Area.	12.30pm on 16-Mar-2023

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.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 banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

A. B. M. Asaduzzaman Sweet  
Executive Engineer (Electrical)  
Rajshahi City Corporation  
Tel: +880 2588879220  
E-mail: [sweet\\_eee86@yahoo.com](mailto:sweet_eee86@yahoo.com)

**Kishoregonj Govt. Mohila College**  
Alormela, Kishoregonj Sadar, Kishoregonj  
Website: [www.kgmc.gov.bd](http://www.kgmc.gov.bd)  
Date: 23/02/2023

**e-Tender Notice-02/2022-2023**

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of package	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	794170	Establishment of Campus Networking at Kishoregonj Govt. Mohila College	13 March, 2023 13:00:00	13 March, 2023 14:00:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP 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 banks' branches up to 12 March, 2023 16:00. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Professor Md. Habibur Rahman  
Principal  
Kishoregonj Govt. Mohila College  
E-mail: [principal.kgmc@gmail.com](mailto:principal.kgmc@gmail.com)

**বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা**  
নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির সংশোধন

বাংলাদেশ প্রকৌশল বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বিভিন্ন বিভাগ/ইন্সটিটিউট-এর শিক্ষকপদের শূণ্য পদসমূহ পূরণের নিমিত্তে গত ২১/০২/২০২৩ তারিখে 'প্রথম আলো' ও 'The Daily Star' এ প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির ক্রমিক নং ৮ নিম্নবর্ণিতভাবে সংশোধন করা হলো:

৮। মানবিক বিভাগ  
সহযোগী অধ্যাপক-এর ১টি অস্থায়ী পদ (অর্থনীতি) (অধ্যাপক পদের বিপরীতে)। বেতন স্কেল ৮: ৫০০০০-৭১২০০/-

তারিখ: ০২৯  
রেজিস্ট্রার

## 8th DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF MD. RAFIUDDIN (BABLU)

Today the 24th February is the 8th death anniversary of late **Md. Rafiuddin (Bablu)**, Managing Director of **Modhumita Group** and youngest son of late Md. Sirajuddin founder of Modhumita Group.

Though he is not in this world he lives in our hearts, in our minds and in our memory.

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

**All Members of Modhumita Family**

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Chattogram City Corporation  
Tigerpass, Chattogram  
[www.ccc.gov.bd](http://www.ccc.gov.bd)

Memo No. 46.11.1600.002.36.06.198.2023  
Date: 22/02/2023

**Corrigendum Notice-CCC/XEN-5/2022-23/01**

Package/Lot No.	Tender ID	Identification of lot	Tender document last selling date and time	Tender closing & opening date and time
ccc/d05/ward 8/rev-2	786413	Development work of Bahaddarhat Jame Mosque at 8 No. Ward	Previously circulated Revised 23-Feb-2023 12.30 16-Mar-2023 12.30	23-Feb-2023 14.00 16-Mar-2023 14.00

CCC/PRD-122/22-23  
Size: 3"x4 col  
GD-342

Mohammed Abu Siddique  
Executive Engineer  
Chattogram City Corporation  
Tigerpass, Chattogram

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**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Upazila Engineer  
Upazila: Sarishabari, District: Jamalpur  
[www.lged.gov.bd](http://www.lged.gov.bd)

Memo No. 46.02.3985.000.14.001.2023-142  
Date: 23-02-23

**e-Tender Notice No. 06/2022-2023**  
Open Tendering Method (OTM)

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of works	Type	Tender document last selling date & time	Tender proposal closing date & time	Tender opening (date and time)
1.	785341	e-Tender/PEDP4/JML/SAR/2022-23/W-15.0672	Construction of Head Teacher's room with attached toilet of Dowail Govt. Primary School under PEDP4.	Works	19-03-2023 16:00pm	20-03-2023 13:00pm	20-03-2023 13.00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.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 branch up to 19-03-2023 Time 16:00pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Md. Zahidul Islam  
Upazila Engineer  
Sarishabari, Jamalpur  
Email: [ue.sarishabari@lged.gov.bd](mailto:ue.sarishabari@lged.gov.bd)

**গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার**  
জেলা প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা অফিস  
সিলেট  
[www.dpe.sylhet.gov.bd](http://www.dpe.sylhet.gov.bd)

Memo No. 38.01.9100.000.08.010.19-503(8)  
Date: 23.02.2023

**e-Tender Notice**

e-Tenders are hereby invited in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of the Goods stated as below:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of Works	Tender ID No.	Method of Tender	Closing date & time
1	NBIDNNGP SP-1/SYL/2022-23 G1.-45	Supplying of Furniture at 117 Nos. Class Room and 5 Nos. Teachers Room of Selected 23 Nos. NNGPS of Sylhet District (Balaganj-3 Nos, Beanibazar-10 Nos, Companiganj-02 Nos, Dakhin Surma-02 Nos, Fenchugonj-01 Nos, Jaintapur-01 Nos, Kanaighat-1 Nos, Osmani Nagar-3 Nos) under NBIDNNGPS-1 Project.	790832	OTM	12.03.2023 16:00
2	NBIDNNGP SP-1/SYL/2021-22 G1.-02	Supplying of Furniture at 52 Nos. Class Room and 13 Nos. Teachers Room of Selected 13 Nos. NNGPS of Sylhet District (Beanibazar-2 Nos, Biswanath-3 Nos, Companiganj-1 Nos, Goainghat-1 Nos, Zakiganj-2 Nos, Jaintapur-2 Nos, Sylhet Sadar-2 Nos) under NBIDNNGPS-1 Project.	790090	OTM	12.03.2023 16:00

This is an online Tender Notice, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no Offline/Hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender(s), registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online at any branch of registered banks.

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

The Tender Notice will be available on the website [www.dpe.gov.bd](http://www.dpe.gov.bd), [www.dpe.sylhet.gov.bd](http://www.dpe.sylhet.gov.bd)

Sakhawat Ershed  
District Primary Education Officer  
Sylhet  
Phone: 02996633527  
e-mail: [dpeosylhet@gmail.com](mailto:dpeosylhet@gmail.com)

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD  
Jamalpur Road Circle  
Telephone : 0981-65087  
Fax : 0981-63912  
E-mail : [sejamal@rhd.gov.bd](mailto:sejamal@rhd.gov.bd)/[serhdjrc@gmail.com](mailto:serhdjrc@gmail.com)

Memo No. 35.01.3936.180.07.003.23.1386  
Date : 15.02.23

e-Tender is invited in e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by the Superintending Engineer, RHD, Jamalpur Road Circle, Jamalpur for the procurement of below mentioned works :

Sl No.	Name of works	Last Selling Time	Tender Closing Time
01.	Periodic Maintenance Program by Providing DBS Wearing Course from Ch.20+670 Km to Ch. 28+500 Km (Milon Bazar to Gabergram Bazar) and Widening of intersection of Jamalpur-Madarganj Road (R-461) under Jamalpur Road Division during the year 2022-2023. Invitation Reference No. 08/e-GP/JRC-Jam/PMP-Road/2022-2023 (ID- 790693)	19-03-2023, 17:00.	20-03-2023, 12:40.
02.	Periodic Maintenance Work by DBS Wearing Course at 27th(p) to 44th(p) km(Ch. 28+500 km To 43+625 km) of Jamalpur -Islampur Dewanganj-Bahadurabad Ghat (R-465) Road Under Jamalpur Road Division during the year 2022-2023. Invitation Reference No. 09/e-GP/JRC-Jam/PMP-Road/2022-2023 (791053)	19-03-2023, 17:00.	20-03-2023, 12:20.

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

(Md. Zahangir Alam)  
ID No. 601915  
Superintending Engineer (C.C), RHD  
Jamalpur Road Circle.

# CITY

## Two slaps and off they go!

### Rajshahi Govt College spares BCL members of punishment after attack on students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Government College authorities have pardoned members of Chhatra League (BCL) involved in Wednesday night's attack on the college's resident students.

During a meeting held yesterday, students, teachers, and journalist leaders agreed to the decision in presence of the college's BCL leaders, despite initial demands from students to expel the BCL members and take legal action against the attackers.

On Wednesday night, two BCL men from outside, supported by around 10 members of the college unit BCL, stormed two blocks of the college's Muslim Hostel and beat up 25 students.

The assaulted students included two online journalists who told newspaper that BCL men took this measure as students were not joining Chhatra League events.

The attackers also hurled abuses at the college principal and hostel superintendent when they went to the building to investigate the incident in the early hours of yesterday.

Yesterday morning, when the assaulted students called for a protest, the college authorities invited them to a meeting held in the teachers' conference room.

The students told the meeting that BCL men turned the college into a "torture cell" and are using violence to force students to attend their events.

Even members of the reporters' unity and rover scouts are not spared from their torture, students alleged, adding that a similar attack occurred a week ago.

The involved BCL men include two outsiders --

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

**Students told the meeting that BCL men turned the college into a "torture cell" and are using violence to force students to attend their events.**

## 2 KILLED IN CTG WALL COLLAPSE Demolition went on without safety measures



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

When a building needs to be demolished, some basic safety measures are a must. If they are in place, tragedies like Wednesday's incident, in which a building's wall crushed two people to death, are unlikely to take place.

As one might suspect, this tragedy has taken place because authorities took no such measures. For example, there was no safety net or fence to catch the debris from above.

Rownak Chakrabarty and Jasim Uddin, who were working as contractor and subcontractor, were killed during the demolition work of the old building in the port city's Jamal Khan area.

Earlier, locals and eyewitnesses said during the demolition of the two-storey building, a part of the structure's wall collapsed, as work was underway without a safety net.

Shahidul Islam, senior station officer of Chattogram's Chandanpura fire station, told The Daily Star, "The demolition work was underway without any announcement and safety

measures." During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent found that many educational institutions -- including Khastagir Govt Girls High School, Shah Waliullah Institute, AG Church School and Ideal School -- are located there.

Many residents, including students and guardians, visit the area every day. Besides, many young people hang out at the quite popular Jamal Khan area.

The building is almost 30 years old. Businessman Ratan Bhattacharya bought it about 15 years ago and used it as a warehouse.

This newspaper could not reach the owner despite repeated efforts.

Kazi Hasan Bin Shams, chief engineer of Chattogram Development Authority, told this newspaper that as per law, authorities have to arrange a safety fence before demolishing old buildings. Secondly, they should make a public announcement for people to avoid moving in the area, he said.

An unnatural death case has been filed with Kotwali Police Station, said Officer-in-Charge Zahidul Kabir.

**As per law, authorities have to arrange a safety fence before demolishing old buildings. Secondly, they should make a public announcement for people to avoid moving in the area.**

KAZI HASAN BIN SHAMS  
Chief engineer of CDA

## Constable dies in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A police constable died after a truck hit his motorcycle at Satkhira's Kalaroa upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Emon Hossain, 30, a constable of Rangamati Sadar Police Outpost, said Kalaroa Police Station Officer-in-Charge Nasiruddin Mridha.

Quoting eyewitnesses and locals, Nasiruddin said Emon was going towards Signal Bazar from Shankarpur village on his motorcycle when the front wheel of a truck, coming from the opposite direction, exploded.

As a result, the truck driver lost control of the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

**Chandpur Govt. Mohila College**  
Mohila College Road, Chandpur  
Email: mohilacl@gmail.com, Website: www.chgmc.edu.bd  
Phone: 02334487374, 02334486374

Memo No. CGMC/CEDP/IDG-1072/G-11/391 Date: 23.02.2023

**e-Re-Tender Notice 01/2022-2023**

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of works	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
1.	794813	Establishment of Campus Networking for Chandpur Govt. Mohila College, Chandpur.	07-Mar-2023 13:00	07-Mar-2023 14:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP 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 banks' branches up to 06-Mar-2023, 16:00. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

**Prof. Md. Masudur Rahman**  
Principal  
Chandpur Govt. Mohila College  
Chandpur

GD-343

## ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY VC leaves campus amid protests His PS relieved of duty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islamic University Vice Chancellor Prof Shaikh Abdus Salam left campus for Dhaka yesterday morning, while a group of jobseekers, mostly former Chhatra League leaders, has kept his office padlocked since Monday.

The jobseekers have been staging demonstrations demanding Salam's resignation since several audio conversations, reportedly between the VC and a jobseeker, went viral on social media.

"I had a plan to visit Dhaka. My daughter will return from abroad. Again, I have some work at the University Grants Commission," Salam told The Daily Star over phone. "There is no relation with anything else."

"I will talk with UGC regarding university-related issues, and the present condition of the campus might come up casually," he said.

Salam has taken leave till March 4 and will probably return to the campus on March 3 or 4, he added.

Meanwhile, HM Ali Hasan, acting registrar of the university located in Kushtia, yesterday said authorities have relieved Ayub Ali from the post of personal secretary at the VC's office. He did not give any reason.

Several months back, a group of former and current BCL leaders launched a movement against Ayub. They alleged he misbehaves with people who go for work at the office. During this time, his office was vandalised.

On February 16 and 17, three audio clips of the VC's reported conversation surfaced on Facebook, which led to a commotion on campus. On Wednesday morning, the clips were played on loudspeaker in front of the university's administrative building.

## 'DIAZ MURDER' After 6 years' probe, CID says case has 'factual error'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

After investigating the case for six years, Criminal Investigation Department (CID), in its final report submitted yesterday, said the murder case of Chhatra League central leader Diaz Irfan Chowdhury has "factual error".

Assistant Superintendent of Police Abdus Salam Mia of CID Chattogram, also investigation officer of the case, placed the report to the GRO section of the court, said court sources.

Confirming the matter, Chattogram CID Special Superintendent of Police Shawnewaz Khaled told The Daily Star, "After investigation, the IO mentioned it in the final report of the case statement." SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## POISONING 50 PALM TREES Involvement of AL leader found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a primary investigation, police have found involvement of local Awami League leader Shahriar Ali Paramanik alias Shahriar Alam in damaging around 50 palm trees on Baigachha Road in Rajshahi's Bagmara upazila through injecting insecticide.

Bagmara Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Aminul Islam said this before a High Court bench during hearing of a suomoto (voluntary) rule yesterday.

OC Aminul, who appeared before the bench of Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman and Justice AKM Rabiul Hassan yesterday, in compliance with its February 12 order, said a team of police visited the spot and collected the samples.

The OC said the probe report will be submitted to the court concerned in Rajshahi by March 30.

At the same time, daily Prothom Alo's Bagmara reporter appeared before the bench in compliance with its February 12 order, described the event of making a report over the incident.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

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**দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

তারিখ: ২৩/০২/২০২৩

ক্রমিক নং	কার্যের নাম	দরপত্রের তফসিলের মূল্য (টাকা)	দরপত্র নিরাপত্তা জামানত (টাকা)	কার্য সমাপ্তির সময়সীমা (দিন)
০১	১০নং ওয়ার্ডে শহীদ মিনার সংস্কারের চক্কর উন্নয়ন ও সৌন্দর্য বর্ধন কাজ।	৳ ২,০০০/=	৳ ৭৫,০০০/=	৬০ দিন
০২	১২নং ওয়ার্ডে বাজুমিয়ার পোল থেকে আশাফ সড়ক পর্যন্ত আরসিপি রাস্তা ও ড্রেজ নির্মাণ কাজ।	৳ ২,০০০/=	৳ ৭০,০০০/=	১৮০ দিন
০৩	১৬নং ওয়ার্ডে পুরোনো সড়ক মঠ সলঙ্গা সেকেন্ডারি গার্লস স্টেটন নির্মাণ কাজ।	৳ ১,০০০/=	৳ ৩০,০০০/=	১৮০ দিন
০৪	১৭নং ওয়ার্ডে খোলা গ্রুপ খিচোর সংস্কারের মালামাল সরবরাহকরণ কাজ।	৳ ১,০০০/=	৳ ৫৫,০০০/=	৬০ দিন
০৫	২০নং ওয়ার্ডে আতশিয়া সড়ক সিটি রোডের আরসিপি ড্রেজ উন্নয়ন কাজ।	৳ ১,০০০/=	৳ ৬৫,০০০/=	১২০ দিন
০৬	২০নং ওয়ার্ডে জলাদ আহমেদ সেনে সিটি রোডের আরসিপি ড্রেজ উন্নয়ন কাজ।	৳ ১,০০০/=	৳ ৯০,০০০/=	১২০ দিন
০৭	২০নং ওয়ার্ডে ২টি সড়ক (ক) দেয়াপাড়া সড়কের অবশিষ্ট অংশের আরসিপি ড্রেজ নির্মাণ কাজ। (খ) দেয়াপাড়া সড়কের বাইরে আরসিপি ড্রেজের সিটি রাস্তা নির্মাণ কাজ।	৳ ২,০০০/=	৳ ২,০০,০০০/=	১৮০ দিন
০৮	২০নং ওয়ার্ডে সড়কের কলেক এডিনিউ মিউ পলি সেনে সিটি রোডের আরসিপি ড্রেজ উন্নয়ন কাজ।	৳ ১,০০০/=	৳ ৯৫,০০০/=	১২০ দিন
০৯	২০নং ওয়ার্ডে ডিএসপি সেনে আরসিপি ড্রেজের সিটি রাস্তা নির্মাণ কাজ।	৳ ১,০০০/=	৳ ১,৮০,০০০/=	১২০ দিন
১০	২০নং ওয়ার্ডে সড়কের হাওলাদার বাড়ি সেনে আরসিপি ড্রেজের সিটি রাস্তা নির্মাণ কাজ।	৳ ১,০০০/=	৳ ৮৫,০০০/=	১২০ দিন
১১	২২নং ওয়ার্ডে রিয়া সড়ক (মুন্সিরাবাদ C&B ব্লক থেকে লোহার পোল পর্যন্ত) বিসি ঘাট উন্নয়ন কাজ।	৳ ২,০০০/=	৳ ৪,০০,০০০/=	১৮০ দিন
১২	২৩নং ওয়ার্ডে খান সড়ক বিসি ঘাট পুনর্নির্মাণ কাজ।	৳ ২,০০০/=	৳ ২,৫০,০০০/=	১৮০ দিন
১৩	২৩নং ওয়ার্ডে মনসুরা সড়ক বিসি ঘাট পুনর্নির্মাণ কাজ।	৳ ২,০০০/=	৳ ৪,৬৫,০০০/=	১৮০ দিন
১৪	২৪নং ওয়ার্ডে হোট গালী বাড়ী সেনে সিটি রাস্তা নির্মাণ কাজ।	৳ ১,০০০/=	৳ ৩৫,০০০/=	৯০ দিন
১৫	২৮নং ওয়ার্ডে শের-ই-বালা সড়ক (মুন্সিরাবাদ C&B ব্লক থেকে লোহার পোল পর্যন্ত) বিসি ঘাট উন্নয়ন কাজ।	৳ ২,০০০/=	৳ ৩,৫৫,০০০/=	১৮০ দিন
১৬	২৮নং ওয়ার্ডে ফিশারী রোড প্রধান সড়ক ও বাইসেন বিসি ঘাট উন্নয়ন কাজ।	৳ ২,০০০/=	৳ ১,৯০,০০০/=	৬০ দিন
১৭	২৮নং ওয়ার্ডে হাটের ভাটার পলি বিসি ঘাট উন্নয়ন কাজ।	৳ ২,০০০/=	৳ ১,৬৫,০০০/=	১২০ দিন

**শর্তাবলী**

ক) পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন ২০০৬ ও স্থানীয় প্রকৃতি বিধিমালা ২০০৮ অনুসরণ করা হবে। উল্লেখ্য, স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগের বিধিমালা ১৬/০৮/২০১৬/২০১৬ তারিখের ৪৬.০৮৯.০১৮.০০.০১৫.২০১৫-১৮০৯নং 'অফিসের পুরোনো নির্মাণের ক্ষেত্রে নির্মাণের পুরোনো প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন, ২০০৬ সনের ২৯নং আইনের ধারা ৩১ এর সংশোধিত/সংশোধিত উপ-ধারা (৩) ও (৪) অনুসরণে "(৩) উক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতির অধীন অত্যন্তগতীয় কার্যক্রমের ক্ষেত্রে কোন মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক দরপত্রের মারফত প্রকল্পের ব্যয় ১০% (শতকরা দশভাগ) এর অধিক অর্থ বা অধিক বেশি দর উদ্ধৃত করা হইলে উক্ত দরপত্র স্বীকৃত বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে, (৪) উপবন্ধ (৩) এ উল্লিখিত দরপত্র মূল্য সমতার ক্ষেত্রে বিধি ঘাট নির্ধারিত পদ্ধতিতে মূল্যায়ন ও কৃতকার্য মনোনয়ন নির্বাচিত করিতে হইবে কিন্তু সর্বাধিক মাপের কৃতকার্য মনোনয়ন নির্বাচন করা যাবে না।"

খ) দরপত্রের তফসিলের নির্ধারিত মূল্য সিডি/বিডি/পিও মেসার, বরিশাল সিটি কর্পোরেশনের অনুকূলে জমা দিতে নির্ধারিত অফিস থেকে ক্রয় করতে হবে।

গ) ক্রেতার সন্তোষ প্রাপ্তি অথবা অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দরপত্র থেকে সন্তোষ প্রাপ্তি হবে।

ঘ) দরপত্রের সঠিক সন্মুখ অধিকৃত পর্যালোচনা করে অনুদানের প্রকৃতিতে হবে।

ঙ) দরপত্র খোলার সময় মনোনয়ন/প্রতিনিধিত্ব উপস্থিত থাকতে পারবে।

চ) নির্ধারিত প্রকল্পের প্রকৃতিতে হওয়ার পূর্বে যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাঙ্ক থেকে উদ্ধৃত সন্তোষ প্রকৃতির (৩) বা (৪) বা (৫) বা (৬) বা (৭) বা (৮) বা (৯) বা (১০) বা (১১) বা (১২) বা (১৩) বা (১৪) বা (১৫) বা (১৬) বা (১৭) বা (১৮) বা (১৯) বা (২০) বা (২১) বা (২২) বা (২৩) বা (২৪) বা (২৫) বা (২৬) বা (২৭) বা (২৮) বা (২৯) বা (৩০) বা (৩১) বা (৩২) বা (৩৩) বা (৩৪) বা (৩৫) বা (৩৬) বা (৩৭) বা (৩৮) বা (৩৯) বা (৪০) বা (৪১) বা (৪২) বা (৪৩) বা (৪৪) বা (৪৫) বা (৪৬) বা (৪৭) বা (৪৮) বা (৪৯) বা (৫০) বা (৫১) বা (৫২) বা (৫৩) বা (৫৪) বা (৫৫) বা (৫৬) বা (৫৭) বা (৫৮) বা (৫৯) বা (৬০) বা (৬১) বা (৬২) বা (৬৩) বা (৬৪) বা (৬৫) বা (৬৬) বা (৬৭) বা (৬৮) বা (৬৯) বা (৭০) বা (৭১) বা (৭২) বা (৭৩) বা (৭৪) বা (৭৫) বা (৭৬) বা (৭৭) বা (৭৮) বা (৭৯) বা (৮০) বা (৮১) বা (৮২) বা (৮৩) বা (৮৪) বা (৮৫) বা (৮৬) বা (৮৭) বা (৮৮) বা (৮৯) বা (৯০) বা (৯১) বা (৯২) বা (৯৩) বা (৯৪) বা (৯৫) বা (৯৬) বা (৯৭) বা (৯৮) বা (৯৯) বা (১০০) বা (১০১) বা (১০২) বা (১০৩) বা (১০৪) বা (১০৫) বা (১০৬) বা (১০৭) বা (১০৮) বা (১০৯) বা (১১০) বা (১১১) বা (১১২) বা (১১৩) বা (১১৪) বা 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# I have nothing to be sad about

SOHEL RANA



PHOTO: STAR

**I don't want to live for a long time now. I just wish to be with everyone for 5-7 years and leave the world without hurting anyone.**

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Sohel Rana, for over 5 decades of his illustrious career, displayed excellence not only in acting but also in direction and production. The actor has earned numerous National Film and Lifetime Achievement awards.

In addition, he is also a respected freedom fighter. After the birth of the nation, Sohel Rana was the first to produce a film based on the Liberation War called *Ora Egaro Jon*.

On the occasion of his birthday, the actor had a casual chat with The Daily Star.

**You have just turned 77 years old, how are you feeling about it?**  
I'm alive, and for that, I am grateful to the Almighty. With every breath, my lifespan

is nearing its end. Many of my time have already left us. Their memories often flash before my eyes. Times have changed, and so have our beliefs.

I just pray that the Almighty keeps me as I am today. I want to stay healthy and leave this world while I remain healthy. I don't want to fall ill and be a burden to anybody.

**You are both an actor and a freedom fighter. What do you consider your greatest achievement?**

That would be the love and respect of the people. What could be a greater achievement than that? I think I got everything that the Almighty had in store for me. I

am an ordinary man who has only acted in films. For me, to gain the love and blessings of so many people—nothing could triumph over this.

**Do you have any regrets?**

No, I don't have any regrets. I am satisfied with all I have got in my life. I dabbled into politics as a student for my country, and even fought to free my motherland. I never thought I would be an actor but here I am. I have been here for 50 years and received love, blessings and respect in return. What could I possibly have to regret?

I don't want to live for a long time now. I just wish to be with everyone for 5-7 years and leave the world without hurting anyone.

**How is your health nowadays?**

At my age, I am as healthy as I could be. But I have to do regular health checkups. I will be going to Singapore again next month for a checkup. Other than that, my eyesight feels a bit hindered.

**How did you spend your birthday?**

I was at home. Numerous people congratulated me over the day and expressed their love. Some people came over as well; I spent the whole day showered with well wishes.



## Akshay Kumar breaks the Guinness World Record of selfies



While the promotional work for the Akshay Kumar and Emraan Hashmi starrer film *Seljee* is still underway, Akshay Kumar surprises fans by breaking the Guinness World Record for Self Portrait Photographs (Selfie) taken during the film's promotion event in Mumbai.

The *Welcome* famed actor took 184 selfies in three minutes, making him the new world record holder. Previously, this record was held by Dwayne Johnson with 105 selfies back in 2015, and then by James Smith in 2018 with a record of 168 selfies.

Speaking about the world record, Akshay Kumar posted on his social media accounts, "I am ecstatic about breaking this unique World Record and sharing this moment with my fans! Everything that I have achieved so far and where I am at this moment of my life, is due to the unconditional love and support of my fans everywhere."

## Chorki's latest series 'Overtrump' is a crime-comedy



Once a genius sweets vendor or once a truck driver, Chanchal Chowdhury has donned many faces on Chorki's platform. After the success of projects like *Guti* and *Unish 20*, Chorki has now unveiled the official poster of *Overtrump*.

Directed by Bashar Georgis, the crime-comedy features Chanchal Chowdhury, Fs Nayeem, Ashna Habib Bhabna and Samira

Khan Mahi in pivotal roles. In the first look, Chanchal can be seen in a full white suit with a floral shirt and tinted glasses on, looking perplexed. He is surrounded by the different characters of the series, all decked out in different poses and clothing. The car motif on the bottom of the poster does give off the idea that the plot might revolve around a car chase or kidnapping.

## NEWS

### Won't be pricier

FROM PAGE 12  
revise the Power Purchase Agreement as it involves their lenders.

A number of PDB officials, including members of company affairs and finance, were present in the meeting, reports UNB, quoting an anonymous top official of PDB.

The issue of the meeting was kept secret as it was sensitive for both sides, UNB wrote.

Sources said both sides heard each other's points and arguments in favour of them and expressed interest in virtual follow-up meetings.

The Adani delegation said they would communicate PDB's stance on coal pricing mechanism to their top management.

"We're hopeful that Adani will finally accept Bangladesh's request for revising the PPA [Power Purchase Agreement] to set a new coal pricing mechanism," the PDB official told UNB.

The Adani team later met the PDB chairman.

Earlier, Bangladesh sought a revision of the PPA it signed with Adani Power Ltd for importing electricity from Adani Godda Power Plant in 2017.

However, Adani Power said it could not revise the agreement but could give discounts on the coal price.

The cost incurred to import the coal, including transportation cost from port to plant, will ultimately be borne by Bangladesh.

An analysis of the Power Cell of the energy ministry revealed in January that the government pays \$245 for a tonne of coal for the Payra plant, \$254.38 for the S Alam power plant in Banskhalhi and gthe Rampal power plant in Baerhat, and \$270 for the Barishal coal-fired power plant. It estimated that the Adani plant's coal price would be \$346 per tonne.

### Ansar al Islam

FROM PAGE 12  
Md Shahidullah, deputy commissioner of Ramna Division Police, confirmed The Daily Star about the "unverified letter".

The letter has been sent to the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of the DMP for further scrutiny, he said. The CTTC will investigate if the threat is genuine, he added.

Mahfuzul Haque Bhuiyan, OC (investigation) at Shahbagh Police Station, said security around the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela has been beefed up.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the hand written letter. The person also threatened to attack the police headquarters.

It said the attack would be carried out since police did not stop prostitution in some city hotels and book authors did not write against such activities.

### Suspended cop

FROM PAGE 1  
Staff Reporter FM Mizanur Rahaman from his phone at 2:22pm and said, "Your news was fantastic. Very good. I came to learn that you are an extortionist [journalist] and you extort money from police traffic boxes and different institutions. I will see you. Will talk again. I will find out how you become a great journalist. Just sec."

He called again at 2:53pm and said, "You along with another journalist tried to extort money from me for the news. I will expose you."

Faisal Mahmud, additional commissioner (Traffic) of CMP, said issuing such a threat is a criminal offence. "If any such threat is issued, the reporter concerned

may inform us of the matter in writing or file a general diary. We will take departmental action upon investigation."

Mizanur filed a general diary late last night.

Md Mostafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Pahartali Police Station, told The Daily Star, "Police submitted the charge sheet implicating Shapla and three others as the allegations against them over extorting money was found to be true."

According to the case statement, Nabi Hossain was going to a court from Cumilla to appear in a case on January 16 last year via Pahartali area in the city.

Shapla intercepted the car he was travelling in and threatened Nabi with implicating him in another case

### Indian-origin Ajay

FROM PAGE 12  
leader of the International Monetary Fund is customarily European.

Banga, 63, is Indian-American and currently serving as vice chairman at equity firm General Atlantic.

He was previously chief executive at Mastercard.

Banga has "critical experience mobilizing public-private resources to tackle the most urgent challenges of our time, including climate change," said Biden in a statement.

Last week current World Bank President Malpass -- who was nominated to the post by Biden's predecessor Donald Trump in 2019 -- said he would step down nearly a year early, ending a tenure that was clouded by questions over his climate stance.

His term would originally have ended in 2024.

Banga's nomination comes amid a push for development lenders to revamp and address global problems like environmental issues more effectively.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen earlier said that lenders' core models, where countries borrow to make specific investments addressing developmental constraints, is "insufficient to meet the moment."

The United States is the World Bank's largest shareholder.

In a separate statement, Yellen yesterday said that she applauded Biden's decision.

and demanded Tk 10 lakh. Shapla took Tk 1.22 lakh from Nabi using mobile banking.

Police arrested Shapla, his son Yasin Arafat Tushar, and two others in connection with the case and suspended him.

On February 18, Shapla hired a helicopter to fly his daughter to a convention centre.

The groom also travelled by helicopter drawing public attention. When The Daily Star correspondent called Shapla, he claimed it cost him Tk 65,000 to hire the helicopter.

Abdullah Al Mamun, deputy manager of BCL Aviation Ltd which rented out the helicopter, told The Daily Star, "We charge Tk 75,000 per hour for any kind of usage."

### 5 lives lost in road crash

FROM PAGE 12  
Hossain, assistant sub-inspector of the hospital's police outpost.

Meanwhile, after the accident, agitated locals set fire to the bus, which firefighters later doused, said Abdul Jalil, assistant director of Bogura fire service station.

"Police seized the bus but the driver and his assistant fled. Police are trying to arrest them," said Abbas Ali, assistant sub-inspector of Koigari Police Outpost under Shajahanpur upazila.

Imran Hossain, son of Golam Rabbani Badsha, said, "My father went to Bogura town to buy clothes

### Four victims

FROM PAGE 12  
where they were forced to con people over the internet.

They alleged that they had to bribe, through their families, Abdul Hadi, an administrative officer (labour wing) at Bangladesh embassy in Bangkok, for obtaining travel permits and necessary documents to be released.

A Bangladeshi in Cambodia known as "Lion Kamal" was also involved in the process, according to the victims.

Prosenjit and Ismail claimed that their relatives in Bangladesh had to pay around Tk 48,000 for each of them to two mobile banking accounts provided by Hadi and "Lion Kamal".

Foysal and Rubel claimed that their families sent Tk 16,500 and 16,320 respectively to a mobile banking account provided by Hadi.

On January 2, this newspaper also talked to Hadi in this regard. He denied the allegation but claimed that he had taken the money from the victims which was "embassy's service charge".

On January 14, this newspaper emailed the Bangladesh embassy in Bangkok requesting an official statement in this regard.

Two officials at the embassy contacted this correspondent over phone and said they would investigate the allegation.

After this, "Lion Kamal" contacted Prosenjit and Ismail and gave each of them Tk 50,000 back through a bank and mobile banking accounts.

"Lion Kamal had made us sign a statement that we [Prosenjit and Ismail] would not make any complaints against Abdul Hadi,"

for his store. He died on his way back."

Aminul Islam, a relative of Shahana and Keya, said, "The mother and her daughter were supposed to attend a religious programme in Bogura's Gabtoli area. But the tragic accident claimed their lives before they could reach their destination."

According to the local office of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), the fitness documents of the bus were up to date.

"But we have not yet confirmed whether the bus had a route permit to operate on this highway," said Aminul Islam, motor vehicle inspector of BRTA's Gaibandha office.

Prosenjit told The Daily Star yesterday. This newspaper has obtained a copy of the statement from Prosenjit.

It has also got two audio clips in which a voice, presumably of "Lion Kamal's", is heard instructing Ismail on how to write the statement.

Contacted, "Lion Kamal" said he returned the money on behalf of a man. When asked whether the man was Hadi, he declined to comment.

Foysal said, "One unidentified woman clad in a black burka along with three men came to my home and gave Tk 16,500 to my mother when I was away. She also requested my mother not to file any complaints."

Another victim Rubel received a phone call from an unknown number on January 23.

"A man asked me whether I had given money to Abdul Hadi. As I said yes, he said he will send the money and asked me not to file any complaints against Hadi," Rubel said, adding that he later got Tk 16,000 to his mobile banking account.

### One woman dies

FROM PAGE 12  
Greece and Cyprus, the report's author Jenny Cresswell told journalists.

Maternal deaths remain largely concentrated in the world's poorest regions and in conflict-affected countries.

Around 70 per cent of those deaths recorded in 2020 were in sub-Saharan Africa, where the rate is "136 times bigger" than in Australia and New Zealand, Cresswell said.

### Dhaka-Moscow ties

FROM PAGE 12  
Russian agency reported quoting the Russian foreign ministry.

"This step runs counter to the traditionally friendly character of bilateral relations and can have a negative effect on the prospects for our cooperation in various spheres."

Last week, the Russian Embassy in Dhaka told TASS that 69 Russian ships (sanctioned) had been barred from calling at Bangladesh ports.

However, according to the embassy, this step did not mean that Bangladesh had banned imports of Russian goods.

Later, Russian foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said Bangladesh had made this decision under the threat of US secondary sanctions, according to a TASS report.

In January, Bangladesh told the Russian side that they could send any ship, except the sanctioned ones, carrying equipment for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

Bangladesh hoped that Russia would now send non-sanctioned ships carrying the required materials.

### Life on Mars

FROM PAGE 12  
So far, state-of-the-art instruments onboard Nasa's Curiosity and Perseverance rovers have only identified low levels of simple organic molecules.

Scientists said these results raise questions about the limitations of current scientific equipment.

An international research team led by Dr Armando Azua-Bustos of the Astrobiology Centre in Spain tested versions of the instruments that are currently on Mars or due to be sent there in the near future.

These instruments were tested in Red Stone, which is located in the Atacama Desert in northern Chile.

This area is thought to bear a close resemblance to the conditions on Mars, and contains an abundance of hematite - an oxidised form of iron that gives Mars its famous red colour.

The researchers analysed samples gathered from the sedimentary fossil remains of a river delta located in the desert.

These deposits were thought to have formed under highly arid conditions about 160-100 million years ago and are geologically similar to the Jezero crater on Mars currently being studied by Perseverance.

## No sign Russia mulling nuclear use

Biden tells ABC News after Moscow suspends START arms treaty

AFP, Washington

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday offered fresh criticism of Russia's suspension of a key nuclear treaty, but stressed there was no indication Moscow was moving closer to actually using an atomic weapon.

"It's a big mistake to do that, not very responsible," Biden told ABC News in Poland on the sidelines of a meeting with Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg and eastern European leaders in Warsaw.

"But I don't read into that that he's thinking of using nuclear weapons or anything like that," the US president added, noting that he had seen "no evidence" of any change in posture on nuclear arms use by Moscow.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday announced the suspension of Moscow's participation in the New START arms treaty during a state of the nation address -- a decision that was approved by Russian lawmakers on Wednesday.

The 2010 deal, the last remaining nuclear arms control treaty between the two rival nuclear powers, commits them to limiting their stockpile of nuclear warheads.

Putin's treaty announcement was met with widespread international condemnation, though Russia's foreign ministry later said Moscow would continue to comply with the treaty's restrictions in a "responsible" way until it expires in February 2026.

Biden told ABC News he was "confident that we'll be able to work it out," without elaborating, reports AFP.

On Tuesday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called Russia's decision "deeply unfortunate and irresponsible" but said Washington was still willing to talk about the issue.

Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said it made the world more dangerous, urging Putin to reconsider, reports Reuters.

Moscow has demanded that British and French nuclear weapons targeted against Russia be included in the arms control framework, a position seen as a non-starter for Washington after over half a century of bilateral nuclear treaties with Russia.



In this handout image released by La Moncloa yesterday, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and Mayor of Bucha Anatoliy Fedoruk leave floral tributes to the fallen, during his visit to the town of Bucha, 30km from Kyiv, in Ukraine. Pedro Sanchez arrived in Kyiv early yesterday in a show of support ahead of the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

## UN chief condemns Russian 'affront' in Ukraine

AFP, United Nations

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine Wednesday as the General Assembly met in a special session two days before the anniversary of Moscow's attack.

"That invasion is an affront to our collective conscience," Guterres said, calling the anniversary "a grim milestone for the people of Ukraine and for the international community."

As fighting raged on in Ukraine, the General Assembly began debating a motion backed by Kyiv and its allies calling for a "just and lasting peace."

While the measure is not as tough



with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

It reaffirms the UN's "commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine" and calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

It also demands Russia "immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine."

In his opening remarks, Guterres highlighted the impact on the world of Russia's invasion of its neighbour. He noted that it has generated eight million refugees, and hurt global food and energy supplies in countries.

## Violence flares around Gaza

AFP, Gaza City

Israel launched air strikes on Gaza in return for rocket fire from the Palestinian enclave yesterday, a day after the deadliest Israeli army raid in the occupied West Bank in nearly 20 years. Eleven Palestinians, including a 16-year-old, were killed and more than 80 wounded by gunfire on Wednesday, the Palestinian health ministry said, when Israeli troops raided the flashpoint West Bank city of Nablus, drawing international appeals for calm. The death toll was the highest since the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising, ended in 2005. It was described as a "massacre" by top Palestinian official Hussein Al Sheikh, who called for "international protection for our people". Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who heads a new coalition government regarded as the most right-wing in Israel's history, praised Israeli forces and vowed to "hit terrorism hard" after the army said it targeted suspected militants in Nablus. The United States said it was "extremely concerned by the levels of violence" and called for a de-escalation. UN Middle East envoy Tor Wennesland travelled to the Gaza Strip yesterday, his spokesman told AFP.



## Adani invests in crisis-hit Sri Lanka

AFP, Colombo

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka yesterday announced its first major foreign investment since it declared bankruptcy, approving a \$442 million wind power project by India's scandal-hit Adani group. Sri Lanka's Board of Investment said Adani Green Energy, part of the business empire of controversial Indian tycoon Gautam Adani, will set up two wind farms in the island's north. The total investment will reach \$442 million and the two plants will be supplying power to the national grid "by 2025", the BOI said. The project comes after Sri Lanka awarded Adani a \$700m strategic port terminal project in Colombo in 2021. That concession was widely seen as a bid to address Delhi's growing concern over China's expanding influence in the region -- Adani had been nominated as the contractor by the Indian government.

## Both AL, BNP wooing Islami Andolon

FROM PAGE 1

as its experience over the past caretaker rules was not pleasant.

At the same time, IAB leaders think no credible election is possible under the present system and they want an election time government comprising representatives from all political parties, said IAB sources.

Contacted, BNP central media cell chief Zahir Uddin Swapan told The Daily Star that they proposed that

Islami Andolon leaders join the BNP's ongoing movement as the party has some demands similar to the 10 points.

"Islami Andolon leaders, however, told us they want an all-party election time government," he added.

The AL, on the other hand, is trying to expand the grand alliance by taking some leftist and Islamist parties on board.

With this goal, the ruling party communicated

with Islami Andolon and expressed its interest to get the party into its fold, according to the sources in the two parties.

The AL, however, did not hold any formal meeting with the Islamist party. Neither did it participate in its annual Mahfil.

The ruling party wants to bring more political parties to its camp for two reasons -- if the BNP participates in the polls, votes of the allies and like-minded parties will help

grand alliance candidates win, and if the BNP boycotts the polls, partners of the AL will separately run to make the election look participatory, said sources.

According to the IAB sources, the party can field candidates for all 300 constituencies, and through the last national election and local body polls, it proved its organisational abilities.

The IAB ran for 299 out of 300 constituencies in the last national polls, held in 2018 --

the highest by a single party -- in the election whereas the AL contested in 262 seats, the BNP in 258 and the JP 45.

Contacted, KM Shariatullah, organising secretary of Dhaka city (north) of Islami Andolon, told The Daily Star that many political parties were keeping in touch with them, but they are yet to give a "positive response" to anyone.

"Rather, we are trying to form a greater unity with the other Islamists parties, and for this, we are having meetings with them," he said.

The IAB individually participated in national elections for the first time in 2008. It contested for 160 seats and secured 7,33,969 votes, which was 1.05 percent of the total vote cast.

In the last national polls in 2018, IAB contested for 299 seats and got 12.55 lakh votes, which was 1.52 percent of the vote.

Currently, the party has 10 union parishad chairmen and a ward councillor under Dhaka City (South).

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(বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ডের একটি অঙ্গ প্রতিষ্ঠান)  
শ্রীমঙ্গল-৩২১০, মৌলভীবাজার।

"বেশী বেশী চা পান করান,  
স্বাস্থ্য সুন্দর সতেজ রাখুন।"

"বেশী বেশী দিকার চা পানে  
ক্যাসার, হৃদরোগ হার মানে"

বিটিআরআই-এর বাসা-বাড়ির মেরামত ও সংস্কার (প্যাকেজ-২ ও ৩) কাজের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	বাণিজ্য মন্ত্রণালয়
২	এজেন্সী	বাংলাদেশ চা বোর্ড
৩	সংগ্রহকারী সংস্থার নাম	বাংলাদেশ চা গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট (বিটিআরআই)
৪	সংগ্রহকারী সংস্থার অবস্থান	বিটিআরআই, থানা ও উপজেলা- শ্রীমঙ্গল, জেলা- মৌলভীবাজার।
৫	আহবানকৃত দরপত্রের নাম	বিটিআরআই-এর বাসা-বাড়ির মেরামত ও সংস্কার (প্যাকেজ-২ ও ৩) কাজ।
৬	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (ওটিএম)
৭	দরপত্র নং	বিটিআরআই/ ২/দরপত্র/০৮(৯)- ৩০৪; তারিখ ৪ ২২ /০২/২০২৩ ইং
৮	অর্থের উৎস	বাংলাদেশ চা গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট এর সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ রাজস্ব বাত।
৯	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ও স্থান	২৮/০২/২০২৩ ইং হতে ১৩/০৩/২০২৩ ইং তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত। স্থান- ১. বাংলাদেশ চা গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট (বিটিআরআই), শ্রীমঙ্গল, মৌলভীবাজার।
১০	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	১৪/০৩/২০২৩ ইং সময়- দুপুর ১১-০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত, স্থান- বাংলাদেশ চা গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট (বিটিআরআই), শ্রীমঙ্গল, মৌলভীবাজার।
১১	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	১৪/০৩/২০২৩ ইং দুপুর ১১-১০ ঘটিকা, বাংলাদেশ চা গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট (বিটিআরআই), শ্রীমঙ্গল, মৌলভীবাজার।
১২	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের হালনাগাদ নবায়নকৃত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, আয়কর পরিশোধের হালনাগাদ প্রমাণক, জাট নিবন্ধন সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি, ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সার্টিফিকেট এবং টেন্ডার সিডিউলে উল্লেখিত অভিজ্ঞতা সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি, এ্যানুয়াল টার্নওভার ও লিকুইড গ্র্যান্ট এর তথ্যাদি দাখিল করতে হবে।
১৩	দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য	৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরযোগ্য)।
১৪	কাজের পরিচিতি-	কাজের অবস্থান
	বিটিআরআই-এর বাসা-বাড়ির মেরামত ও সংস্কার (প্যাকেজ-২ ও ৩) কাজ।	কার্য সম্পাদনের সময় ০২ মাস ১৫ দিন
১৫	কাজের স্থান পরিদর্শনের সময়	২৮/০২/২০২৩ ইং হতে ১৩/০৩/২০২৩ ইং তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
১৬	টেন্ডার সিডিউলটির অর্থের পরিমাণ	৪৬,০০০/- টাকা (ফেরত যোগ্য) সরকার অনুমোদিত যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংক হতে পরিচালক, বাংলাদেশ চা গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট এর অনুকূলে উক্ত টাকার ডিডি/পে-অর্ডার দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।
১৭	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর নাম, পদবী ও যোগাযোগের বর্ণনা	ড. মো: ইসমাইল হোসেন, পরিচালক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত), ফোন- ০৮৬২৬-৭১২২৫; মোবাইল- ০১৭১১৮৬৭৪৮৫। ইমেইল: <a href="mailto:directorbtri@gmail.com">directorbtri@gmail.com</a> , ওয়েব সাইট <a href="http://www.btri.gov.bd">www.btri.gov.bd</a>
১৮	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	ক) দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত যে কোন তথ্য অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে জানা যাবে। খ) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা সকল দরপত্র বর্জন করার পূর্ণ অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।

(ড. মো: ইসমাইল হোসেন)  
পরিচালক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)

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Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies  
University of Dhaka

### Master of Disaster Management Admission Professional Program, Session: 2022-2023

Required Qualifications and Other Information

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum bachelor's degree in any discipline with a minimum CGPA of 2.50 or 2<sup>nd</sup> class/division at all level of education.</li> <li>Those who require equivalence certificate or migration certificate must submit their document(s) before admission.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PMDM Written Test (2022-2023) of the Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies, University of Dhaka will be held on Friday, 5 May 2023 at 10.00 am.</li> <li>An applicant with a degree from UGC unapproved program of any university is not eligible to apply for admission.</li> <li>The application fee is BDT. 1200. The application form must be collected and submitted by 1 March-15 April 2023.</li> <li>For detailed information, please visit our office (Room No. 6081, Arts Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000) between 10.00 am to 4.00 pm on Sunday-Thursday.</li> <li>For further information, please call 01918864314, 01914225151, 01632881948; E-mail: <a href="mailto:idmvsdu@gmail.com">idmvsdu@gmail.com</a>, <a href="mailto:idmvs@du.ac.bd">idmvs@du.ac.bd</a>; Web: <a href="http://www.idmvs.du.ac.bd">www.idmvs.du.ac.bd</a></li> </ul>
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Director  
Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies  
University of Dhaka

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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

## We deserve free and inclusive polls

### Bangladesh's democracy will not survive another controversial election

The government is reportedly looking to go all out to make the next general election inclusive, which is essential to saving our wobbling democracy from descending into a major crisis. The extreme level of adversarial politics and democratic deficit that have plagued our nation for more than a decade have eroded the foundations of our key institutions, led to deterioration of rule of law and human rights, and held us back from developing a politically mature society. That is why, above all, we want fair and inclusive polls – a sentiment which, we believe, is shared by the overwhelming majority of our population.

After the experiences of the last two general elections – and several local level elections – there is a widespread sense of doubt that has crept in among voters about the credibility of our elections. It falls upon the government to convince both the general population and the opposition parties that it is sincere about creating a truly level playing field. Unfortunately, the derailment tactics used by the AL against BNP programmes over the last months – that too with the help of state apparatuses at times – have thus far failed to ignite confidence in the ruling party's previous assurances.

The recently concluded by-elections to six parliamentary constituencies, although relatively peaceful, left much to be desired, given the low voter turnout, widespread intimidation and harassment during campaigns in all those constituencies, to the mysterious disappearance (and reappearance) of one contestant. Although the incumbent Election Commission (EC) showed some promise with a few of its actions in the beginning – particularly in comparison to its weaker predecessor – it has not been able to keep up that momentum, and seems to have fallen back on old practices of toying the party line.

The clear absence of voters is a strong message for the government as to how little faith citizens now have in our electoral system. The reality is that genuine electoral reforms alone can reignite voter interest ahead of the next general election, and ensure the participation of all political parties in it.

The BNP, on the other hand, must also cooperate with the ruling party and the EC to come to an acceptable compromise to ensure its participation. Any genuine outreach by the government should be welcomed and met by the BNP with an equally genuine willingness to negotiate a solution to the current political impasse that has brewed over time. The BNP should carefully analyse the pros and cons of boycotting another election (which it has threatened to do on a few occasions), particularly in light of what its boycott of the 2014 general elections has cost the party and the country in general.

Ultimately, the country cannot afford a repeat of another boycotted election like that of 2014, nor can it afford another controversial election such as the one in 2019. We have lost a lot of ground in regard to our democracy because of them. We hope the EC will take all necessary measures to fulfil its constitutional obligation of delivering a free and fair election to the people – a precondition of which is to ensure the inclusion of the major political parties.

## A war of egos that continues to devastate

### One year on, why is there no willingness to end the Russia-Ukraine war?

Today marks one year since Russia advanced into Ukraine with assaults by sea, land, and air – giving way to what many have opined are the worst war-borne consequences since the Second World War. And – as we did in this column on February 26, 2022 – we reiterate our condemnation for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which continues to cause blisters of conflict and tension all over the world. No doubt, the conflict that began a year ago had been in the making for over a decade. But the fact that it has been allowed to escalate to the point of such a wide-spanning war speaks to our collective failure to prioritise peace.

The human cost of this war in particular is unjustifiable, with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights recently deploring that at least 8,006 civilians have died and 13,287 have been injured over the past 12 months. To say nothing of the dire ways in which this war has disrupted the livelihoods of the affected citizens. And the situation now only seems to be getting worse.

Just on Tuesday, President Vladimir Putin declared that Russia is suspending participation in the New START nuclear arms reduction treaty with the United States, accusing the West of being directly involved in attempts to attack its strategic air bases. Signed between President Obama and President Medvedev in 2010, the treaty is the last remaining nuclear arms control pact between the two countries which collectively hold 90 percent of the world's nuclear warheads.

The stoking of the fire by the West is undeniable. In particular, its practice of not heeding Russia's security concerns has been a constant. But, at the end of the day, the onus is squarely on Russia for resorting to such intense and unflinching aggression in the first place instead of exploring all the available avenues of peace.

And now, as all had predicted, the tremendous effects of this war in Europe continue to spill over into the rest of the world, with common citizens of many countries, including Bangladesh, having to face hiked prices of essential commodities that threaten to choke them to poverty. Essentially, the consequences of this war have pushed millions more towards devastatingly lower living standards just as economies were preparing to somewhat recover from the pandemic. Meanwhile, it has been disappointing to see some nations, especially those bordering Russia, egging on the perpetuity of violence rather than trying to encourage dialogue.

Still, we must demand that this war reach a peaceful conclusion before even more damage is inflicted upon innocent citizens. The international community, instead of sticking to sides, must push for resolution. War is never good news for any party involved, and this has been starkly exemplified by the current financial collapse being experienced worldwide. As always, it is only through dialogue and compromise that lasting and necessary peace can be achieved.

# President, Presidency and Democracy

## Should the selection process be so arbitrary?



THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam  
is the editor and publisher of  
The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

The first thing that one needs to remember about our president is that he does not represent the government, let alone the party that selects and later elects him. He represents the state in all its magnificence – the people, culture, history, heritage, etc. The irony is that all of us remember this, except the ruling party of the day. The BNP did not when it ruled, and the Awami League is not doing so now.

So how does a president balance the interest between the party that elects him and the nation that he represents? How does a president serve democracy with all his obligations being to the party that elects him? Should he reflect the expectations of only the ruling party? What about that of the nation? Should it be just another post to be occupied by the ruling party of the day, without any set criteria? Should all the pomp and pageantry, the protocols, not to mention the expenses on taxpayers, mean nothing more than being an extension of the ruling party?

Questions are endless and the answers, sadly, are partisan. If asked, the rulers will hold us guilty even for asking. The other side will, of course, laud us for exemplary journalism. Until, of course, the roles are reversed. No norms, no ethics, no bigger picture, only partisan considerations – that is how we have compromised most of our crucial institutions, including the presidency.

What we saw in the just concluded election of the president is that the ruling party's parliamentary wing – representing 305 members out of a total of 350 MPs – met and authorised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to select a candidate on their behalf.

That's precisely what the prime minister did. She made her own selection, kept it to herself and, on the date, just before the submission of the nomination papers, she made it known to a select few – excluding the candidate himself, who said in an interview that he knew nothing till minutes before signing his nomination papers.

We know that everything is decided by our prime minister. As the leader of the House and head of the government,

the constitution empowers her to do so – even when it comes to choosing the president. But shouldn't there be a difference between the way a party functionary is selected and the way a presidential candidate is?

Before every party election, the leader is given the sole power by the councillors and delegates to select nominees for every important post. In this case, too, the Awami League parliamentary party did the same, and so did the leader. Should a party position and the occupant of the highest constitutional post be filled in the same manner? Should it be so arbitrary, so narrowly focused, and so personalised?



Shouldn't there be a difference between the way a party functionary is selected and the way a presidential candidate is?

PHOTO: PID

Our president is the head of state. According to Article 48 (2) of the constitution, he takes precedence above all others. Every act of parliament, every law, every treaty, every constitutional appointment, every year's budget – the list can go on – is sent for his signature to become operative. If that is how "central" this "ceremonial" position is, then shouldn't the occupant of that position be selected with more circumspection?

Then there is the question of the president's "moral authority." Though the position is almost totally devoid of any executive power, it is more

than made up by undefined and all-encompassing "moral authority." It is a very significant component of the post. It is an office of prestige, of impeccable credentials, of ethics, of values, and of unquestioned acceptability. Take away the moral authority from the post, and what is left is a cipher. So when we trivialise the process of how we select our presidential candidate, we trivialise that "moral authority" and end up losing a vital element of democracy – the "moral presidency."

A government cannot always be totally moral, but a president has to be. Political expediency is a constant reality of a government. But it can never be that of a president. It does not mean that presidents don't have political affiliations. Mostly do, but it can never be their sole credential. The "highest protocol" position was patterned to be kept above politics so that if occasions arise, the president can play the part of the "big conciliator." But this he can only do if he enjoys the trust, confidence and "acceptability" of all parties.

posts and a party loyalist, as president.

To Sheikh Hasina's great credit, when she first assumed power in 1996, she tried to restore the traditional neutrality of the president by electing – in face of tremendous resistance from party stalwarts – Shahabuddin Ahmed, former chief justice and former acting president (during the transition from autocracy to an elected government) as the president from 1996 to 2001. It was a bold and visionary move and could have changed the nature of our presidency, and may be of our politics. However, the example was not followed up.

BNP, on the contrary, tried to further consolidate party political hold over the presidency by dragging their own president – Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury – into controversy on the floor of the House, insulting him and forcing him to resign for faults that were never made public. This killed the possibility of ever having a non-partisan president that Sheikh Hasina's action had sparked. From then on, it was a fast slide down the road of totally partisan presidents.

We write today to underscore how, over the last 32 years, since Ershad's fall and the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh, we have failed to give institutional shape to democracy. One by one, we destroyed or made dysfunctional the institutions that make democracy work: the legislative, the judiciary, the independent constitutional watchdog bodies, the independent media, etc. In a nutshell, there is no accountability system in our whole governance process.

We wrote earlier and we repeat here that the most significant failure – the one that shouldn't have happened at all – is the practical dysfunctionality of parliament. Today, instead of raising the vital questions of public interest, it has been made into a publicly funded platform of government propaganda and denigration of the opposition, even though there is hardly any.

With all other institutions having their roles shrunk, we became a democracy solely focused on elections. And when elections became highly questionable, we even lost that – the one process through which some semblance of accountability could have been ensured.

This daily headlined yesterday that the government may go for inclusive polls this time around. We really hope so. However, the way our new president was chosen, and the publicly announced reasons for choosing him – his long-standing and unwavering party loyalty – have further pushed that possibility into question.

## PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

# A Farewell to Russia



Anastasia Edel  
is the author of 'Putin's  
Playground: Empire, Revolution,  
and the New Tsar.'

ANASTASIA EDEL

It has now been a year since Russia, my birthplace, invaded Ukraine. For 365 days, we have been waking up to news of Russian missile strikes, bombings, murders, torture, and rape. It has been 365 days of shame and confusion, of wanting to turn away but needing to know what is happening, of watching Russians become "ruscists," "Orks," or "putinoids." For 365 days, the designation "Russian-American," previously straightforward, has felt like a contradiction in terms.

For those in my situation, some methods of adapting to the new circumstances have come easier than others. Russian books still crowd my bookcase, but I no longer have any wish to re-read them. Chekhov and Nabokov cannot be blamed for the aggression against Ukraine, but it nonetheless has stolen their magic and their capacity to teach. These authors were my friends, as were the old-country rituals like Russian Easter vigils and New Year's screenings of the Soviet classic *Irony of Fate*. I feel the loss acutely, but perhaps it is for the better. It helps me concentrate on the present.

Other changes have required more soul-searching. Every Russian in the West used to feel like an envoy of a

great culture and a great country. In the West, the romantic appeal of Russia's stated priorities – communal over individualistic, socialist over capitalist, spiritual over material, heart over head – was so strong that I, too, became convinced of Russia's hidden goodness, even though I had left the country as soon as I could in the 1990s.

Now, I am reminded why. Russia is special, but mainly in the sense that it is uniquely capable of destroying, in a matter of days, what took centuries to build. From Tchaikovsky's harmonies to Pushkin's verses, Russian culture has been besmirched by people whose atrocities have negated their ancestors' achievements. Russia has been dragged back to the barbaric customs of Muscovy, as if the 19th century never happened.

As someone who was shaped by Russian and Soviet literature, I have been made to feel like an unwilling partner to Russian crimes. That is why, since last February, I have abandoned any pretence of being a cultural envoy. In some ways, it has been liberating. I now know that one's search for meaning need not – and sometimes must not – be confined to any cultural tradition.

Still, it isn't easy questioning your own past. Flipping through family albums, we used to see our grandfathers as heroes who had survived the great terror, won the great war, and built a great country. They suffered so that their grandchildren could live in peace (and "they," of course, included Ukrainians).

But those sacrifices have been squandered. We now must consider the possibility that our grandparents' achievements merely extended the life of a totalitarian monster, imparting to it the legitimacy that it craved. How should we think about the 23-27 million Soviet citizens who died in the 20th century's war against fascism? Many of them were the grandparents of the 21st century's own fascists.

This answer wasn't so straightforward just a few years ago. After the end of the Cold War, Russia seemed like the freest country in the world. It was also believed to be a country capable of repentance. The fact that nobody was called to answer for the communist regime's crimes was viewed as proof of our collective desire for national healing, rather than as a deliberate effort by the new authorities to clear themselves of any blame.

Today, Putin's war on Ukraine is being directed, supplied, and supported by Russians who, like me, lived through *perestroika* and *glasnost*. They have wasted that era's promise and built another prison "on the ruins of despotism." What felt like a conscious national choice in the 1990s turned out to be an aspiration of the few. The very idea of "national choice" seems like a hollow concept now. Russians exist only as subjects,

their society an atomised mass where some just try to survive, and others cheer on the regime's crimes so that they can forget about their own misery for a while. Those brave few who stand up to defy the system end up being swallowed by it.

To be Russian today is to be culturally hollowed out. For those of us with half our lives behind us, it is not as though we can simply adopt a new set of favourite books, movies or holiday traditions. You can read Gogol and explore Ukrainian folk songs, but you cannot adopt a Ukrainian identity, because it would feel immoral even to try. All you can do is dissolve into the background and hope nobody asks where you got your accent. When you cheer for Ukraine, you do it quietly from the sidelines.

What are we to do with our memories, family sagas, and earlier exalted perceptions of our place in the "historical process" (as the Marxists used to put it)? Since the past cannot be cancelled, it must be either repressed or deglamorised for the sake of the present and the future. Everything now hinges on the outcome of the war. If Ukraine wins and Putin's regime falls, it may still be possible for Russia to rehabilitate itself someday – as Germany once did.

That will be a task for every decent person – Russians and everyone else – to advance when the time comes. But even with a hoped-for Ukrainian victory, there will be no return to the past when Russia existed as a unique civilisation. That Russia, real or imagined, expired on February 24, 2022. Let us drink to the departed.





A development process that doesn't factor in measures to protect the environment is ultimately detrimental to people's well-being.

FILE PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Polluted development

### Profits for few, losses for all



Kallol Mustafa is an engineer and writer who focuses on Power, Energy, Environment and Development Economics.

KALLOL MUSTAFA

Environmental awareness is often depicted as a luxury only suitable for the elite or celebrities who can go a long way to protect a few pandas or blue whales. But from the perspective of marginalised people – especially that of their lives, livelihoods, and culture. When the inhabitants of the Himalayan region in India formed the "Chipko" or tree-hugging movement to protect the forests of Uttar Pradesh, or when men, women and children formed human barricades known as "empates" to prevent bulldozers from tearing down trees in the Amazon, or when people rose up in Bangladesh's Phulbari to protect water bodies and agricultural land in the area, they were all part of the same struggle to protect life-livelihood-culture.

Bangladesh's ongoing development model is insensitive towards the importance of a healthy environment in the livelihoods and culture of people. And it is mainly built on low wages and high environmental pollution. Just as labour, the environment, too, seems cheap in our country. Here, labour and environment can be exploited for the sake of profits, the consequence of which is severe pollution and damage to people's lives and livelihoods. Under this development model, some groups may benefit financially in the short term, but in the long term, it appears as a big obstacle in the path of growth and development for all.

The Shitalakkhya, Turag, and Balu rivers around Dhaka city are dying due to the pollution caused by untreated industrial waste that is dumped into these rivers by the numerous factories located on their banks. Present data tells us how tens of thousands of cubic metres of untreated liquid industrial waste are dumped in the Buriganga River alone every day. Given that treating one cubic metre of liquid waste costs around Tk 30, the factories choose to not treat this waste and instead find it easier to dump it into our life-giving rivers year after year.

This practice may earn factory owners some short-term financial gains, but for everyone else, the loss is devastating in the long term. Fish production decreases in these rivers' polluted water, which affects the livelihoods of fishermen. Soil is contaminated due to water pollution, leading to reduced crop production in the dry seasons. The groundwater table also gets polluted, which contaminates our food production and water. Gazipur can be cited as an example of this kind of polluted development: over the past decade, many industries have been set up in Gazipur destroying a large amount of forests and wetlands. Only 556 out of 2,220 factories in the industrial

district of Gazipur have effluent treatment plants. Of these, fewer than one percent use or maintain treatment plants.

To understand the consequences of such cost-saving practices and who has to pay for it, one can look at the pollution of Belai Beel, spanning a 40 sq-km area across Gazipur Sadar, Kapasia, Kaliganj, and Sreepur upazilas. Liquid effluents from factories in these areas are polluting the water of Turag, Chilai and Balu rivers, and through the canals polluting the Belai Beel. Whereas during the 90s, the average yield of paddy per bigha in the area was 24-25 maunds, due to pollution, the average yield of paddy per bigha has reduced to only 13-14 maunds. Even five to six years ago, a group of fishermen used to catch 35-40 kg of fish every night, but due to pollution, it has come down to only 7-8 kg. Because of this, many fishermen have been forced to leave their profession and become day labourers. Thus, the present and future of millions of people are being damaged because of the pollution of our rivers, canals and rivers, which is happening for the profit maximisation of only a few

**Bangladesh's ongoing development model is insensitive towards the importance of a healthy environment in the livelihoods and culture of people. And it is mainly built on low wages and high environmental pollution. Labour and the environment can be exploited for the sake of profits, causing damage to people's lives.**

hundred factory owners.

Let's take a look at the state of air pollution. According to the World Air Quality Report of Switzerland-based organisation IQAir, Bangladesh's air quality remained the worst in the world for four years in a row. The average annual airborne particles, referred to in the report as PM 2.5, was 76.9 micrograms per cubic metre in Bangladesh, which was 15 times the limit set by the World Health Organization (WHO). With an annual average PM 2.5 concentration of 78.1 micrograms per cubic metre, Dhaka ranked the second most polluted capital in the world, only behind New Delhi.

The main sources of air pollution are emissions from unfit vehicles, fumes from factories and brick kilns, and dust from construction activities. Although thousands of vehicle and factory owners or contractors benefit financially by driving unfit vehicles, operating factories and brick kilns without emission control, and carrying out construction work and transporting and storing construction materials without proper dust control measures, people across the country are suffering physically, mentally,

and financially because of different diseases catalysed by air pollution.

Instead of mitigating this crisis, the government is taking steps to legitimise air pollution. According to a report published in *The Daily Star*, the Department of Environment (DoE) recently allowed 400 mg of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides and 100 mg of particulate matter per cubic metre for coal-fired plants launched before 2020, and allowed 200 mg of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides and 50 mg of particulate matter per cubic metre for those launched after 2020. In comparison, the emission standards set in Japan and China, who have invested in coal-fired plants in Cox's Bazar and Chattogram, are far more stringent: Japan's standards for PM 2.5, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides per cubic metre are just 5 mg, 28 mg and 40 mg, respectively. In China, the limits are 10 mg, 35 mg, and 50 mg, respectively.

It is the general people who have to pay for the government's negligence in controlling air pollution for the benefit of local and foreign investors. Due to air pollution, people suffer from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, lung cancer, strokes and heart attacks at a higher rate. According to a 2022 World Bank study, for each percent increase in PM 2.5 levels above the WHO-recommended level, an individual's risk of developing shortness of breath increases by 12.8 percent, coughing by 12.5 percent, and respiratory tract infection by 8.1 percent. As the PM 2.5 concentration in our air far exceeds

the WHO-recommended level, a large number of people are suffering from these diseases, resulting in an average of 78,000-88,000 people dying prematurely every year.

Due to air pollution, people are suffering from mental illness too. Air pollutants enter the body through inhalation and eventually damage the nervous system, which in the long run can cause depression and anxiety. A one percent increase in PM 2.5 concentration above the WHO-recommended level increases a person's risk of developing depression by 20 percent. In addition, according to the report, the amount of financial loss due to air pollution is 3.9-4.4 percent of our GDP.

Therefore, raising voices against environmental pollution is not an elitist stunt; rather, staying silent against environmental pollution is serving the interests of the elite who are making profits from pollution. A model of economic development that only emphasises financial growth while neglecting the environmental aspect works in the interests of a few, while harming most people. It is, therefore, important to reject this type of environmentally destructive economic development model.

## Digital literacy is key to building a Smart Bangladesh



Dr Sayeed Ahmed is a consulting engineer and the CEO of Bayside Analytix, a technology-focused strategy and management consulting organisation.

SAYEED AHMED

Somewhere in medieval Europe, a despondent monk is staring at a bound book on the table. The door opens and a helpdesk person appears. What is our monk's problem? Well, the book is a disruptive technology replacing scrolls and, utterly confused, the monk has no idea how to open and read it. The support person opens it at the first page and explains how the reader can read it and turn over the next page and so on till the end. Our monk manages to learn the trick and is saved from being left out.

This, of course, is an imaginary story from the time when paper-made books came out as

become a subject of mainstream discussions, and shifted towards a plurality of literacies that includes elements of cognitive and practical skills. And it has huge implications on education, work, and society.

Today's workplace needs are evolving at such a fast pace that no education system can keep up with it. Digital skills enable us to perform today's jobs, but digital literacy is required to satisfy the ever-changing demands of the future. The relationship between the two are like that between data and information. We may be data-rich, but information-poor – unless we know how to skim useful information from data. That does

information. The traditional ways of education are unable to keep pace with the increasing demands for digital literacy, emphasising the need for a learning mindset that is ready to embrace a life-long journey of continually improving our skills.

Only with such a mindset can we cater to the present and future industry needs. But that requires a strong foundation in digital literacy. The time when a given skill set could take us to our retirement is long gone. Now, we need to continually reinvent ourselves to remain relevant in the industry – a mindset that must take root during one's student life.

There are a few key traits that we should acquire as students to become digital citizens. We should be empowered learners with the drive to remain updated, be curious, and continuously adapt. We should know how to promote open and responsible collaboration in the digital world for effective knowledge transfer. We must acquire the skill to "cut through" a sea of big data and noise to find out the pertinent



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

new technology to disrupt the conventional ways of reading, writing, and transferring knowledge. Before paper, monks had to depend on long scrolls, often made of sheepskin. As paper and printing became commonplace, the literacy rate shot up, vastly improving the knowledge transfer process.

These days, we have digital technologies that are disrupting everything we have long taken for granted. That includes how we learn, live, collaborate, think, work, and socialise. The American Library Association (ALA) defines it as "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills."

First coined by technology writer Paul Gilster in 1997, the term "digital literacy" follows on from visual literacy (using non-textual symbols and images to convey messages, such as hieroglyph); technological literacy (the ability to use a particular technology or technologies); computer literacy (using personal computers, which developed in the 1980s); and information literacy (finding, evaluating, using and sharing information). With the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), and the increased availability of various disruptive digital technologies – especially autonomous algorithms, machine learning, robotics, and artificial intelligence – digital literacy has

**With better cognitive and critical thinking skills, we can analyse news based on source, bias, and agenda. We will know when technology is trying to manipulate our opinion. We can safeguard ourselves from misinformation and disinformation. We can then focus on the entirety of working and living in the digital landscape.**

not mean that we must master all the software out there, but that we should be confident and keen to try new technologies and move ahead. At the same time, we should have the flexibility and adaptability to learn new processes. There is a global shortage of digitally literate workforce, and more work roles need digital skills than ever before.

A RAND Corporation study shows that employers are actively seeking workers with digital skills to survive in an increasingly digitalised

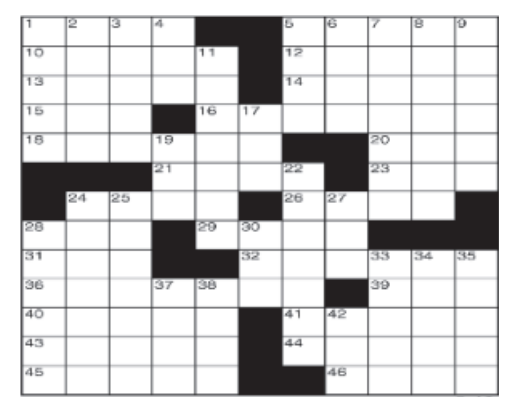
information. We should be problem solvers to constantly explore the potential for workflow and process improvements exploring alternative ways with new technologies. We must think outside the box and not be bound by traditional problem-solving methods. We should strive to become knowledge constructors to synthesise data from different sources and transform information into usable formats.

At a wider level, digital literacy can foster more open, inclusive, and secure societies. When we interact with digital infrastructure, digital literacy makes us aware of the privacy and data risks as well as cybersecurity challenges. Besides, with better cognitive and critical thinking skills, we can analyse news based on source, bias, and agenda. We will know when technology is trying to manipulate our opinion. We can safeguard ourselves from misinformation and disinformation. We won't focus on the technology, but on the whole way of working and living in the digital landscape.

Bangladesh has adopted a vision for building a smart nation, because it doesn't want to be left behind but play a leading role in the digital world. For that to happen, a strong foundation in digital literacy is essential, which comes from a commensurate education system. Without digital literacy, we risk being left behind like the medieval monk, and the vision of building a smart Bangladesh might remain a pipe dream.

### CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Dupes
  - 5 Cartoon genre
  - 10 Had a go at
  - 12 Element number 5
  - 13 Zellweger of "Chicago"
  - 14 Increase
  - 15 First numero
  - 16 Brit's wrench
  - 18 Fashion
  - 20 Ensign's answer
  - 21 Amorous archer
  - 23 "Aw, shucks!"
  - 24 Aid illegally
  - 26 Copied
  - 28 In the past
  - 29 Ump's call
  - 31 Chess pieces
  - 32 Leather worker
  - 36 Appointment book
  - 39 Brewpub order
  - 40 Mideast peninsula
  - 41 Words of surrender
  - 43 Open, in a way
  - 44 Rescued
  - 45 Rings
  - 46 Porgy's love
- DOWN**
- 1 Play, as a banjo
  - 2 Concert venue
  - 3 Western evergreen
  - 4 Spot
  - 5 "Waterloo"
  - singers
  - 6 Lunch time
  - 7 It began about 1000 B.C.
  - 8 Sauntered
  - 9 Main dish
  - 11 Barren areas
  - 17 NFL player
  - 19 Originally called
  - 22 Game quests
  - 24 Wrinkle
  - 25 Windfall
  - 27 Signing need
  - 28 Intensifies
  - 30 Put away
  - 33 Too trusting
  - 34 Pole workers
  - 35 Marsh plants
  - 37 Finger feature
  - 38 Wee bites
  - 42 Yak it up



### WEDNESDAY'S ANSWERS

B A R M A N S P A S  
E X H A L E H I L L  
G E O D E S H I P Y  
E X T O R T  
M A M A C R A S S  
E R A R E C Y C L E  
T I C E M U H U E  
R E A C T O R I N K  
O L D E R J O G S  
A R O U S E  
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LAW REVIEW

PHOTO: CCB.GOV.BD

# Some critiques of the Competition Act, 2012

KAUIM AHMED

Bangladesh has planned to be a developed country within 2041. However, anti-competition or antitrust activities could hinder this mission. In the absence of fair competition in the market, this mission is not possible to achieve.

Bangladesh Competition Commission (BCC) was founded in 2016 to create equality in the market by creating sustainable competition in the economy, ensuring consumer interest and best practices in the market. It has both administrative and quasi-judicial powers to eliminate practices having adverse effects on competition, and to promote and sustain competition and freedom of trade in the markets of Bangladesh.

After coming into existence, the BCC has faced many challenges starting from the implementation of the laws. With the passage of time, our business practice has shifted to online platforms. As a result, the role of the BCC also expanded to issues involving the digital economy and e-commerce sector. It has now become a necessity for the BCC to move away from strategies used to examine a conventional business and include parameters of data accessibility, network effects, and multi-sided markets for getting a better grip on new-age areas like the digital economy and the e-commerce industry. It is expected that the BCC would take some measures to implement a framework for adequate transparency and define basic conditions for the e-commerce industry and digital market platforms. However, it is almost impossible to create such an environment under the present legal framework.

For a fair adjudication, there should be a separate judicial body consisting of judges. With the help of this procedure, the ongoing weakness of the BCC could be diminished largely. After the creation of a separate judicial body, there will be a balance between the pre-inquiry procedure and regular trial. In the present system, there is hardly any difference between regular trial and pre-trial action. Currently, many times the pre-trial procedure turns into a regular adjudicating procedure



by the existing mechanism of the BCC. The normal procedure in our judicial system is that after an investigation by responsible agencies, the report is submitted before the court and then the regular trial commences. However, in the present mechanism, the BCC issues a notice and starts a regular procedure before conducting a proper investigation. This sort of activities is totally contradicting to our regular court procedure.

According to section 29 of this Act, an appeal against the order of the BCC shall lie to the government within 30 days from the date of such order. However, there is no definition of the term government for the purpose of this Act. As a result, it creates vagueness and confusion in case of filing an appeal against the order of the BCC.

A commitment in an anti-competition case is a recognised way by which a competition authority can terminate the investigation initiated against a party on the basis of certain behavioural remedies. However, there is no such procedure in our existing legislation. The government should enhance power of the BCC to add features of negotiated 'settlements and commitments', which are allowed in the

European Union, Japan, and the United States, to quickly resolve cases through financial or non-monetary provisions to reduce litigation.

Commitment is a remedial measure in a case of anti-competitive practice not requiring admission of an infringement by an entity facing investigation, while settlement requires the company to admit it and is often allowed in cases of cartelisation. In countries where these provisions are allowed, regulators are able to facilitate resolutions over concerns relating to anti-competitive behaviour and bring in the required changes in corporate conduct without pursuing long-drawn procedures or litigation.

The competition law is a growing segment of law that is highly connected with our economy, market price, and fair competition. We should remove all gaps and update the existing legislation to ensure that businesses and companies compete fairly with each other. A separate judicial body should be set up as well as an appellate tribunal for quick settlement of the matter arising out of various actions of the BCC.

The Writer is an Advocate, Dhaka Judge Court.

LAW LETTER

## Universal pension management and the rights of the elderly people

OLI MD. ABDULLAH CHOWDHURY

It is certainly encouraging to note that Universal Pension Management Bill, 2023 was passed in the parliament which would bring the country's growing elderly population under a universal pension scheme. Although demographic dividend is a much-talked about issue in Bangladesh, aging has become a dominant problem in most urban societies all over the world including ours.

Currently, there is 1.53 crore people aged 65 or above in the country, according to the preliminary report of the Population and Housing Census 2022. The report further revealed that the number of elderly people increased by 50.01% in the last 11 years, while the size of the population increased by only 14.66%. That means the increase rate of the number of elderly people is 3.41 times higher than the population growth in the country.

The Finance Division prepared the draft of the Bill which seeks to provide financial security to the growing elderly population in case of unemployment, disease, paralysis, or penury. According to the Bill, expatriate Bangladeshis can also avail pension by getting registered under the scheme.

Ms. Claudia Mahler, UN independent expert on Older Persons, called Bangladesh to take concrete action to combat ingrained and pervasive ageism and follow through on the planned measures to ensure that the rights of older persons are protected. During her visit in November last year, she also referred to the National Policy on Older Persons and observed that the lack of a timely action plan to comprehensively implement the policy remains an issue.

Recent joint research undertaken by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) suggested ensuring right-based healthcare services for older persons and inclusion of ageing issues in different general and professional academic curricula. Summary findings were shared in the leading national daily Prothom Alo on occasion of the International Day for Older Persons last year on October 1. The Study recommended the inclusion of 'Geriatric Medicine' in the ongoing medical academic curriculum of Bangladesh to improve the healthcare services of older persons on a priority basis. The gradual establishment of the 'Geriatric Medicine Department/Ward' in all medical college hospitals and general hospitals was recommended as well.

It is instrumental for Bangladesh to make a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the elderly and prepare healthcare or other infrastructure accordingly. Appropriate political will and budgeting to strengthen the protection of older persons in the country are certainly the need of the hour. According to Article 15 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, the state has the fundamental responsibility "to attain, through planned economic growth, a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people, with a view to securing to its citizens - the right to social security, that is to say, to public assistance in cases of undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness or disablement, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or in other such cases."

The Writer is a Human Rights Worker.



The competition law is a growing segment of law that is highly connected with our economy, market price, and fair competition. We should remove all gaps and update the existing legislation to ensure that businesses and companies compete fairly with each other.

# Implementation of laws combating air pollution

TASNIM NUSRAT REZA

Dhaka has consistently been identified as having one of the highest degrees of air pollution. Large amount of emission from motorised vehicles coupled with unplanned urbanisation and deforestation are the leading reasons for air pollution.

Within the legal framework of Bangladesh, the concept of air pollution is not bereft of its deserved attention. The Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 1995 not only acknowledges air pollution but also provides certain provisions to combat it. Some restrictions have been imposed on the operation of motorised vehicles and manufacturing of objects that are injurious to the environment through sections 6 and 6(Ka) of the Act respectively. Section 9 requires those who are responsible for the discharge of any environmental pollutant in excess of the prescribed limit to take measures to control or mitigate such pollution. Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) as enunciated in section 12 also has a crucial prospect in mitigating the adverse impact likely to generate from

the industrial projects. Apart from these, other provisions of the 1995 Act also have indirect implications in controlling air pollution as all the elements of the environment are intertwined.

In line with the global trend of keeping the environment at the centre of attention, the Air Pollution Control Rules, 2022 has recently been passed. Though many environmental organisations expected a dedicated and separate act for combating air pollution, the Rules of 2022 was introduced instead. It has detailed the provisions focusing on the aim to control, prevent, and reduce air pollution. The Director General (DG) of the Department of Environment (DoE) has been conferred with certain responsibilities for the purpose of giving effect to the Rules of 2022. Rule 4 empowers the DG to formulate a scheme of national air quality management in order to reduce and control air pollution. As per Rule 5, the DG is also vested with the power to announce a certain area as a 'Degraded Air Shed' when the air quality of the same exceeds the prescribed limits and the air thereof becomes severely polluted. To effectuate



the Rules of 2022, the DG can catalogue the activities responsible for air pollution under Rule 6. Besides, some categories have also been made based on the sources of pollution i.e., industries, vehicles,

construction projects, and garbage. Rule 15 establishes a committee comprising all the concerned personnel from concerned ministries, organisations, and institutions for giving directions,

advice, and recommendations regarding air pollution management. Non-compliance with the provisions of the Rules of 2022 will invoke the punishment of a fine of up to 2 lacs and imprisonment of up to 2 years. The most innovative provision is envisaged in Rule 16 which allows the government to award any person or institution that contributes to controlling and protecting air quality. Moreover, different departments of government and organisations including the DoE, local government, and others are directed to cooperate with one another to maintain air quality and prevent air pollution.

Though the Rules of 2022 envisions a healthy environment, only its proper implementation can guarantee the same. If the state fails to reduce air pollution, that is in fact the harbinger of its failure to ensure the healthy right to life. Hence, all the sectors of the states should remain poised to give their best effort for implementing the 1995 Act, the Rules of 2022 along with the relevant provisions of the Constitution to reap the best benefit therefrom.

The Writer is a Graduate from the Department of Law, University of Dhaka.

## Tigers begin preparations as England beckon

SPORTS REPORTER

The preparations for the upcoming series against England officially kicked into gear yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur with an intra-squad practice game keenly observed by newly-appointed head coach Chandika Hathurusingha and other coaches.

Yasir Ali Rabbi, Hasan Mahmud, Taijul Islam and Ebadot Hossain impressed during the game between Blue Team, led by ODI captain Tamim Iqbal, and Green Team, led by Najmul Hossain Shanto.

Before yesterday's session, Hathurusingha held a team meeting with all the players and coaching staff.

Tamim won the toss and elected to bat on a surface where run making appeared a little difficult. There were plenty of moments when batters found it difficult to time their shots. Tamim, who skipped the national team's assignments against India due to injury, lasted only eight deliveries, departing to Hasan after nicking one through to the wicketkeeper after scoring two.

Taijul and Hasan held sway with the ball during the Blue Team's innings, with the former bagging Zakir Hasan, who did not anticipate the skid on the ball after scoring eight before Nurul Hasan took a fantastic diving catch to his right off the bowling of Hasan to see off Mushfiqur Rahim.

Liton Das, back for his first session following the BPL, looked good during a 49-ball 36 until Taijul's arm delivery got the better of him.

Between the fall of wickets, Yasir stitched together a 53-run stand with Aminul Islam for the eighth wicket. Jamie Siddons, watching on, encouraged from the dressing room during Yasir's 58-ball 61 before the right-hander, who remained unpicked in the ODI squad, fell trying to clear the off-side boundary. Taijul bagged four for 23 while Hasan finished with three for 20 runs as Blue Team managed 205, bowled out in 42.4 overs.

In reply, Ebadot Hossain rattled Green Team after a fast start, ignited by Shanto's 15-ball 27. Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Mahmudullah Riyad and Sohan failed to get going as Green team went from 46 for 1 to 101 all out. Ebadot bagged four wickets and Mehedi Hasan Miraz bagged three as Blue Team won by 104 runs.

The Tigers will hold further preparations today, engaging in match scenario simulations with all the senior cricketers, bar Shakib Al Hasan, back in the fold.

Meanwhile, England pacer Saqib Mahmood and the team manager arrived in the country yesterday. The rest of the ODI side are slated to arrive in Dhaka today in two separate groups. With the T20 series set to follow the ODI series to begin on March 1, England's cricketers will be coming in for the white-ball series till March 6.

The 23-member England side will hold their first practice training session at Mirpur on Saturday under Joss Butler's leadership.



Chandika Hathurusingha was apparently working on ace left-arm pacer Mustafizur Ranman's release point during his first official practice session with the Bangladesh players at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Thursday after being reappointed as the head coach of the national side for the second time.

PHOTO: STAR

## 'I prioritise keeping a smile on my face'

**Najmul Hossain Shanto has managed to navigate troubled waters with perhaps the best tool there is: performance. The 24-year-old was the highest run-getter for Bangladesh in the T20 World Cup and followed that up by becoming the player of the tournament in the recently concluded Bangladesh Premier League. The southpaw caught up with The Daily Star's Mazhar Uddin and discussed his return to form and how he brushed off the weight of criticisms. The excerpts are below:**

**The Daily Star (DS):** Did you have a specific goal for the BPL?  
**Najmul Hossain Shanto (NHS):** No, I didn't have any particular goals leading up to the tournament but I wanted to take the team to a good place. It was something that I always had on my mind. My plan was to contribute to the team in any capacity. I was able to do it so it was a good tournament for me.

**DS:** You were very consistent throughout the tournament. Was that ingrained in your mind?  
**NHS:** I think what played a big part in that was my level-headedness. When I scored runs, I didn't get too happy about it and when I failed to score, I wasn't that upset. The idea was to perform in every game. There was a hunger, which is why I was successful in scoring regularly.

**DS:** You were solely thought of as a Test batter. But you came back and scored the most runs for Bangladesh in the T20 World Cup. How are you adjusting to all three formats?  
**NHS:** The goal since childhood was to play all three formats for Bangladesh and play well in all formats. Although I am not

happy with my international career so far, the plan and effort in terms of training and preparation is always to take my game to a solid platform. When I train, I practice accordingly with the format, situation and opponent in mind. There is still a lot of room for improvement because we are playing so many games these days, which wasn't the case in the past.

**DS:** You have always been rated very highly and even as a future captain. Do you feel that now you have made that push to utilise all that potential that people believe there is? Has maturity played a part in that?  
**NHS:** It's difficult to say because other than my performance in the T20 World Cup and a few knocks in Tests, I don't think I have had that many standout performances in the international arena. But, yes, in the domestic circuit, I have done well. I believe that I will be able to take this form to the international arena as well because I feel that I've been able to bat with a lot of thought and with the understanding of different situations.

So far, I have learned that my practice patterns should match those challenges that are there in international cricket. Though it's very difficult to create that match environment in practice, I still try to create it in training.  
**DS:** There hasn't been much change to your technique, but there definitely has been in your mindset. How did you manage that?  
**NHS:** It's a misconception that we, including myself, have very good technique. People think I have good technique but I have had to work on it a lot. Compared to earlier, I think I have a much wider range of shots in my arsenal now. I can perhaps now hit a boundary at will or rotate the strike easily. These things have improved which is why I've been able to score runs in those two tournaments.  
**DS:** You have received more than a fair share of criticism online and on social media platforms. How did you overcome this and perform?  
**NHS:** In all honesty, I focused on my game. I believed that if I could perform then these things wouldn't be there. Another thing I realised was that it is nothing new. It happened to all cricketers, some more and some less. I may not score runs at times but I prioritise keeping a smile on my face and enjoying my cricket. We play cricket because we have loved the game since childhood. So when I think along those lines, thoughts (of criticism) don't really bother me.



## 'Shred fat, gain muscle': CR7 impact at Al-Nassr

AGENCIES

Cristiano Ronaldo is having a significant influence behind the scenes at Al-Nassr as his arrival in the Saudi club has inspired the rest of the team to shred fat and gain muscle.

The 38-year-old superstar arrived in Saudi Arabia last month on a staggering £175m a-year deal, and his impact is being felt on and off the pitch.

According to Al-Nassr club nutritionist Jose Blesa, Ronaldo's new teammates have been copying the 38-year-old's diet and training regime, leading to impressive results in fitness of the club's players.

Speaking to Ideal about Ronaldo, Blesa said: "He is the best footballer in history, or one of the two best. I was uncertain, like everyone else, about what it was going to be like to work with him and if the club was going to change a lot, but I haven't found a more professional footballer than him."

"Since he has been here, all the players have trained more intensely and followed a stricter diet. I have not seen a club like this in which the players improve practically 90% in their body composition every time I see them: they have less fat, more muscle and they do all the exercises at their fingertips. It is a luxury to work there."

Blesa also informed that even he learns from Ronaldo.

"Every conversation with him is a learning curve."



We met and talked about his diet, about how he understands the importance of this and rest for performance. He wears two rest meters: the ring and the bracelet. He is the first to arrive at training and the last to leave. Dealing with him is wonderful.

"Cristiano helps me a lot, because we can no longer teach him anything, but he creates a school around him. The rest of the players do what he does because everything he does is wonderful to improve his performance."



PHOTO: COLLECTED

The torch relay of Sheikh Kamal 2nd Bangladesh Youth Games, organised by the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA), was held on Thursday. Some 14 current and former athletes, split into seven groups, carried the games' torch after the BOA president and Chief of Army Staff, General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, handed it over to hockey star Rasel Mahmud Jimmy and shooter Kamrunnahar Koly at the Bangabandhu Mausoleum Complex in Tungipara. Sprinter Imranur Rahman and SA Games gold winner karateka Marzan Akhter Priya will inaugurate the event by lighting up the torch on the opening day at the Army Stadium in Banani next Sunday.

## No more breakaway leagues for English clubs?

AFP, London

England announced plans for an independent football regulator to oversee the financial sustainability of the men's game in the country, with powers to prevent clubs from joining breakaway leagues.

The regulator would license clubs, requiring them to demonstrate sound financial business models, run robust owners' and directors' tests and give fans a greater say in the running of clubs.

It would also have the power to block clubs joining breakaway leagues, appearing to prevent a repeat of any attempt to form a Super League such as the one that proved so unpopular with supporters in 2021.

Six English clubs — Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham — were among a dozen from across the continent that announced plans to form a European Super League in a shock move in April 2021 before abandoning plans after a fans' backlash.

"Despite the success of the sport both at home and abroad, we know that there are real challenges which threaten the stability of clubs both big and small," said British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

"These bold new plans will put fans back at the heart of football, protect the rich heritage and traditions of our much-loved clubs and safeguard the beautiful game for future generations."

Football Association CEO Mark Bullingham said the FA welcomed the plans, set out in a government white paper — a policy document setting out proposals for future legislation — to be published on Thursday.

"Our response will highlight a critical point

made repeatedly by the fan-led review, which recommended that the professional game increases funding of the grassroots game," he said.

The Football Supporters' Association also welcomed the proposals.

"The football governance white paper clearly addresses our key concerns around ownership, rogue competitions and sustainability and of course we support any proposals that offer fans a greater voice in the running of their clubs," said FSA chief executive Kevin Miles.

But the Premier League warned it was vital that regulation did not damage the game.

"We will now work constructively with stakeholders to ensure that the proposed government regulator does not lead to any unintended consequences that could affect the Premier League's position as the most-watched football league in the world, reduce its competitiveness or put the unrivalled levels of funding we provide at risk," it said in a statement.

West Ham owner David Sullivan echoed previous concerns expressed by some owners of Premier League clubs, describing the plans for greater regulation as a "terrible idea".

"The regulator will have a huge staff that football will have to pay for," he told Sky Sports News. "It will be a total waste of money. I bet it grows in size and cost every year."

"The Premier League is the best mark and most successful league in the world. It gives more to the lower leagues and the PFA (Professional Footballers' Association) and the grassroots than any other top league in the world. It's a fantastic export."



Former India captain Sourav Ganguly graced the grand inauguration programme of the DNCC Mayor Cup 2023, set to begin next month, as the chief guest on Thursday. Overwhelmed by the reception, the former BCCI president said: "The thing is that whenever I come to Bangladesh, I get the love of so many people that I don't know whether I am in India or Bangladesh."

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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## ADANI POWER Won't be pricier than local plants'

Company assures PDB, refuses to revise PPA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A delegation of Adani Power yesterday told officials of the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) that its electricity price will not be higher than that of Bangladeshi coal-fired power plants, including Payra and Rampal.

The Adani delegation, which included its Managing Director Anil Sardani and the CEO, had a meeting with PDB officials at the Bidyut Bhaban yesterday afternoon for more than an hour.

Four members of the delegation flew in for the meeting.

They discussed the coal pricing system of India's Adani Godda Power Plant, which is going to start its commercial operations next month, a source in the Adani delegation told The Daily Star.

Bangladesh will start importing 750MW of power from the plant next month.

"We placed a way to make discounts factor into the pricing formula," the source said.

The delegation said Adani cannot

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A Palestinian youth waves a Palestinian flag amid plumes of smoke during a protest near the Israel-Gaza border east of Jabalia refugee camp, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## 5 lives lost in road crash

Mother, 8-yr-old daughter among the dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Five people, including a woman and her daughter, died after a CNG-run autorickshaw collided head-on with a bus in Bogura's Shajahanpur upazila yesterday.

The victims are three-wheeler driver Hazrat Ali, 50, and its passengers Shahana Akhter, 35, her eight-year-old daughter Keya Moni, Golam Rabbani Badsha, 60, and Tuhin Pramanik, 20.

Starting from Bogura town, the autorickshaw headed towards Dhunat upazila on the Betgari bypass highway.

"When the autorickshaw reached Sujabad-Dahapara area, it suddenly decided to take a right turn to get on the Dhunat upazila link road," said Md Yunus, a local shopkeeper, who witnessed the accident.

"At the same time, a speedy bus that was coming from the opposite direction hit the autorickshaw and dragged it on for some 30-40 metres," he added.

The accident left four people dead on the spot that occurred around 11:30am.

Locals rushed Keya Moni to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, where she died while undergoing treatment around 2:00pm, said Lalon

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## 'Ansar al Islam threatens Boi Mela with bomb attack'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Someone claiming to be a member of the militant outfit Ansar al Islam threatened to carry out a bomb attack on Amar Ekushey Boi Mela.

The person, claiming to be Mohammad Saiful, wrote to the director general of Bangla Academy to issue the threat.

"It [the letter] reached the Bangla Academy today,"

Mohammas Jahangir Alam, security officer of Bangla Academy told the Daily Star over phone yesterday.

"We have filed a general diary with Shahbagh Police Station," he added.

The letter was posted from Khilgaon Post Office on February 20 and it reached to Bangla Academy through the GPO, said the officer.

"We have identified the post office analysing the seal on the envelope," he said.

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## TRAFFICKED TO CAMBODIA Four victims get their money back

Another awaits full reimbursement

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Four out of the five trafficked Bangladeshi youths, who were forced to con people over the internet in Cambodia last year, have got their money back.

One victim paid a local recruiting agency for his "migration to Cambodia", while four others had bribed an official for documents from the Bangladesh embassy in Thailand to get released from the Immigration Detention Centre in Cambodia.

The victims shared their sufferings with The Daily Star that ran a story headlined "Sold as cyber slave" on January 22.

Of them, Abdus Salam from Natore was sent to Cambodia by Radiation Associate recruiting agency, owned by one Abdul Hannan.

"The agency owner has promised me to give back Tk 3.50 lakh. He already paid me Tk 2 lakh after The Daily Star published the news. Earlier, we tried to negotiate, but he did not respond," Salam told this newspaper, adding that he had spent Tk 4 lakh to go to Cambodia.

Contacted, Hannan said he had returned some of the money.

In October last year, four other victims – Prosenjit Sarker from Khulna, Ismail Hossen from Manikganj, Foyzal Hossain from Narsingdi, and Rubel from Pirojpur – ended up in the detention centre in Phnom Penh after being rescued by Cambodian police from different sites

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## PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH

# One woman dies every 2 mins: UN

AFP, Geneva

A woman dies every two minutes due to pregnancy or childbirth complications, despite maternal mortality rates dropping by a third in 20 years, the United Nations said yesterday.

Rates fell significantly between 2000 and 2015 but largely stagnated between 2016 and 2020 – and in some regions have even reversed, the UN said.

The overall maternal mortality rate dropped by 34.3 percent over a 20-year period – from 339 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 223 maternal deaths in 2020, according to a report by the World Health Organization and other UN agencies.

Nonetheless, that means nearly 800 women died per day in 2020 – or around one every two minutes.

Belarus recorded the biggest decline – down 95.5 percent – while Venezuela saw the highest increase.

Between 2000 and 2015, the biggest rise was in the United States.

"While pregnancy should be a time of immense hope and a positive experience for all women, it is tragically still a shockingly dangerous experience for millions around the world," said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

"These new statistics reveal the urgent need to ensure every woman and girl has access to critical health services... and that they can fully exercise their reproductive rights."

The report found that between 2016 and 2020, maternal mortality rates dropped in only two of the eight UN regions: in Australia and New Zealand by 35 percent, and in Central and Southern Asia by 16 percent.

The rate went up in Europe and Northern America by 17 percent, and in Latin America and the Caribbean by 15 percent. Elsewhere, it stagnated.

The two European countries witnessing "significant increases" are

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## Life on Mars could be evading detection Say scientists



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Lifeforms on Mars could be evading detection by the instruments currently on the planet, scientists have warned.

Probes currently being used using to hunt for alien beings might not be sensitive enough to spot those organisms, according to a new paper.

Researchers made the warning after testing material that was taken from the Chilean desert, where conditions are somewhat similar to the area on Mars being studied by the Perseverance rover. Scientists know that area contained ancient life – but it would not be found using the instruments that rover is carrying.

Since the Viking missions in the 1970s, many probes have been sent to the red planet to search for microbial life.

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## Indian-origin Ajay Banga nominated to lead WB

AFP, Washington

US President Joe Biden yesterday said that Washington is nominating former Mastercard Chief Executive Ajay Banga to lead the World Bank, after its current chief David Malpass announced plans to step down early.

The development lender has just started accepting candidate nominations in a process set to run until March 29, with the bank saying that women candidates would be "strongly" encouraged.

The president of the World Bank is typically American, while the

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**KINGS OF CAMOUFLAGE ...** A collared scops owl nestled in the hollow of a tree in the capital's Botanical Garden. While it was spotted for its big, eager eyes, the bird otherwise could have remained completely unseen. All species of scops owls, as a matter of fact, are masters of camouflage. As they are easily preyed on because of their small size, the birds have had to undergo physical and behavioural adaptations to survive. While their plumage helps them blend in with trees, they have also learned to stretch out to look leaner and also sway back and forth to appear like a tree branch moving in a breeze. Collared scops owls are resident breeders in South Asia – from northern Pakistan, northern India and the Himalayas, all the way to South China. Partially migratory, some of these birds prefer wintering in the warmer parts of India, Sri Lanka or Malaysia. As they are common across their ranges, the IUCN has listed them in the "Least Concerned" category. However, rampant deforestation remains a continuous threat to their habitats.

PHOTO: MD RIDWANUR RAHMAN

## SANCTIONED RUSSIAN SHIPS Dhaka-Moscow ties won't be impacted by 'single issue'

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has said it does not think that there will be any adverse impact on Bangladesh-Russia's existing friendly relations over a single issue, noting that the two countries are working jointly on many fronts.

"Russia is Bangladesh's tested and long-term friend with its special role during Bangladesh's War of Liberation. We are working jointly on many areas. Our understanding is so good that we don't think a single issue will adversely impact the existing bilateral and friendly relations," Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Seheli Sabrin told reporters yesterday.

She said the issue related to barring a sanctioned ship into Bangladesh was a six-week-old issue but the Bangladesh Ambassador was called to the Russian foreign ministry on February 21.

The spokesperson said Bangladesh maintains good relations with all countries as it is a trade-dependent country.

Bangladesh earlier sought a detailed report from its ambassador in Moscow to know what exactly was discussed with the Russian foreign ministry.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Russia Kamrul Ahsan was summoned to the Russian foreign ministry following Bangladesh's decision to ban Russian ships (sanctioned) from calling at Bangladeshi ports, reported Russia's state-owned news agency TASS on Tuesday.

"We drew the attention of the head of the diplomatic mission to the reports about the decision of his country's authorities to ban Russian ships carrying cargoes for Bangladesh from calling at Bangladeshi ports," the

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