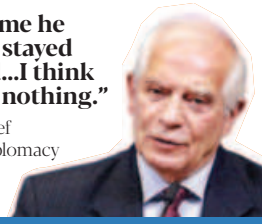




“At least this time he [Sergei Lavrov] stayed and he listened...I think it's better than nothing.”

EU foreign policy chief
Josep Borrell on diplomacy with Moscow at G20 meeting



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4 NARSINGDI AL MEN 'Picked up' 6 years back, no trace yet

SHARIFUL ISLAM and JAHIDUL ISLAM

It has been almost six years since four Awami League men disappeared after police allegedly picked them up from a village in Raipura, Narsingdi.

Over the years, desperate family members' wait for their return turned into dismay. Now they just want to know whether the men are alive.

A team from Raipura Police Station picked them up around 2:30pm on May 26, 2017, and took them to Bashgari Police Outpost in the upazila, at least 13 witnesses told this newspaper.

Soon after they were detained, a demonstration for their release turned into a deadly clash between locals and

Desperate family members of the missing men visited the police headquarters, the home ministry, and even appealed to the prime minister, but to no avail.

police, leaving at least one dead and many injured.

In the evening, two of the witnesses saw a police team, led by Azharul Islam Sarkar, the then officer-in-charge of Raipura Police Station, take the detainees to Syedabad Ferry Ghat in a police pick-up.

That was the last time anyone in the area saw the four.

Azharul, now OC of Ghatail Police Station in Tangail, denied taking the four in the vehicle.

According to a case filed by police following the clash, locals snatched away Rup Mia, the then vice-president of Bashgari Union AL, after police arrested him on criminal charges.

Police claim they never detained the other three missing men: Habibur Rahman, union AL sports secretary; Zakir Hossain, a ward-level AL president; and Azizul Islam, a union Jubo League organising secretary.

All of them were accused in multiple cases filed mostly by their rival groups.

Meanwhile, desperate family members of the missing men visited the police headquarters, the home ministry, and even appealed to the prime minister, but to no avail.

"I waited for my son's return for the last five years. Now I just want to know whether he is alive," Azizur's 80-year-old mother Nur Jahan Begum told The Daily Star.

WHAT HAPPENED ON MAY 26, 2017

"I was stacking up hay in a field when I heard a commotion

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Twelve-year-old Sabbir, breaks down in tears after learning that his father Akbar Hossain, 40, a three-wheeler driver, had been killed in a crash in the capital's Rayerbagh early yesterday. Akbar and another man were killed and two policemen injured when a pickup ran them over. Story on page 2

PHOTO:
ANISUR RAHMAN

High-yielding rice offers new hope

BIRRI develops new variant beneficial for diabetic patients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After years of testing, the high-yielding rice variant "BRRI dhan 105" was given approval for commercial production in Boro season by the National Seed Board on Thursday.

The new variant, developed by Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI), has a low glycemic index (GI) score, meaning it causes a slower rise in blood sugar levels which is good for diabetic patients.

"Doctors prescribe bread instead of rice to diabetic patients to keep blood sugar level in

control. Unlike other high GI rice, this rice [BRRI dhan 105] slows down digestion which means a slower glucose release," said Md Alamgir Hossain, chief scientific officer and head of the Genetic Resources and Seed Division at BRRI.

The GI ranks food on a scale from 0 to 100. The scores indicate the effect of the food on blood sugar levels.

The GI separates food containing carbohydrates into three general categories -- high (70 and above), medium (56-69), and low (55 and lower).

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



2 killed, 30 hurt as Islamists clash with cops

30 houses torched as violence flares up in Panchagarh over Ahmadiyya event

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Two persons were killed and at least 30 others, including seven policemen, were injured yesterday in a clash between law enforcers and supporters of some Islamist organisations who were demonstrating against a programme of the Ahmadiyya community in Panchagarh.

The agitators set fire to 30 houses and four shops belonging to Ahmadiyyas, and attacked a local police station, vehicles of law enforcers and a traffic police office.

According to locals and police, Ahmadiyyas organised a three-day Jalsa Salana, their annual gathering, at Ahmednagar in Panchagarh

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

P3 Migrant workers returning with ailments

P6 Myanmar junta at war with its own people: UN

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গণবিজ্ঞপ্তি

“উন্নত প্রযুক্তিনির্ভর পাট ও পাটবীজ উৎপাদন এবং সম্প্রসারণ প্রকল্প”

উৎকৃষ্ট মাটি ও উপযুক্ত আবহাওয়ার কারণে বাংলাদেশে বিশ্বের সেরা মানের পাট উৎপন্ন হয়। বাংলাদেশের মোট জনসংখ্যার প্রায় এক চতুর্থাংশ প্রত্যক্ষ ও পরোক্ষভাবে পাট এবং পাট শিল্পের সাথে জড়িত। শিল্পক্ষেত্র বিবেচনায় পাটশিল্প এখনো বাংলাদেশের অন্যতম বৃহৎশিল্প। পাট একটি পরিবেশ বান্ধব ফসল এবং পরিবেশ রক্ষায় এটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রাখে। দেশের অর্থনীতিতে পাটখাতের অবদানের স্বীকৃতিস্বরূপ গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী ১ জানুয়ারি, ২০২৩ তারিখে পাট ও পাটজাত পণ্যকে “বর্ষপণ্য-২০২৩” হিসেবে ঘোষণা করেছেন। এ ঘোষণা পাটের সোনালী অতীত ফিরে আসবে।

- পরিবেশ রক্ষা ও পাট পণ্যের অভ্যন্তরীণ বাজার সম্প্রসারণের লক্ষ্যে “পণ্যে পাটজাত মোড়কের বাধ্যতামূলক ব্যবহার আইন ২০১০” এর অধীন তফসিলভুক্ত ধান, চাল, গম, ভুট্টা, সার, চিনি, মরিচ, হলুদ, পেঁয়াজ, আদা, রসুন, ডাল, ধনিয়া, আলু, আটা, ময়দা, তুখ-খুদ-কুড়া, পোস্তি ফিড ও ফিস্ ফিড মোড়কীকরণে পাটজাত মোড়কের ব্যবহার বাধ্যতামূলক করা হয়েছে।
- আইনি জটিলতা এড়ানোর লক্ষ্যে নির্ধারিত পণ্যে পাটজাত মোড়কের ব্যবহার নিশ্চিত করুন এবং পরিবেশ রক্ষা ও পাট পণ্যের অভ্যন্তরীণ বাজার সম্প্রসারণে অবদান রাখুন।
- পাট আইন, ২০১৭ মোতাবেক পাট ও পাটজাত পণ্যের ব্যবসা পরিচালনার জন্য পাট অধিদপ্তর হতে লাইসেন্স গ্রহণ ও তা সময়মত নবায়ন করা বাধ্যতামূলক। প্রতিবছর ৩০ সেপ্টেম্বরের মধ্যে লাইসেন্স নবায়ন না করলে নবায়ন ফির সমপরিমাণ অতিরিক্ত অর্থ জরিমানার বিধান রয়েছে।
- লাইসেন্সবিহীন পাট ও পাট পণ্যের ব্যবসা পরিচালনা আইনত: দণ্ডনীয়। সময়মত পাট ও পাটজাত পণ্যের লাইসেন্স গ্রহণ ও নবায়ন করুন।
- পাট অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক “উন্নত প্রযুক্তিনির্ভর পাট ও পাটবীজ উৎপাদন এবং সম্প্রসারণ” শীর্ষক প্রকল্পটি দেশের ৪৫টি জেলার ২২৭টি উপজেলায় বাস্তবায়িত হচ্ছে। উক্ত প্রকল্পের মাধ্যমে প্রকল্পভুক্ত পাট চাষীদের বিনামূল্যে উন্নত জাতের পাটবীজ, সার ও বালাইনাশকসহ কৃষি যন্ত্রপাতি বিতরণ করা হচ্ছে, এ বিষয়ে পাটচাষীগণ নিজে জানুন এবং অন্য চাষী ভাইকে জানান। পাট ও পাটবীজ উৎপাদনের চাষ পদ্ধতি, পাট পচন, বাজারজাতকরণ এবং পাটবীজ সংরক্ষণ/কলাকৌশল সম্পর্কে পাট অধিদপ্তরের প্রশিক্ষণ গ্রহণ করুন।
- পাট উৎপাদন মৌসুম আসন্ন হওয়ায় জমি প্রস্তুত করুন। বিজেআরআই কর্তৃক উজ্জ্বলিত বিজেআরআই তোষাপাট-৮ (রবি-১)/৬-৯৮৯৭ জাতের পাটবীজ ব্যবহার করে গুণগতমান সম্পূর্ণ অধিক পাট ফসল ঘরে ভরুন।
- বাজারের নিম্নমানের পাট বীজ ব্যবহার হতে বিরত থাকুন। পাট ও পাটবীজ উৎপাদন সংক্রান্ত কলাকৌশল সম্পর্কে প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য জানার জন্য পাট অধিদপ্তরের কর্মকর্তাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ রাখুন।

ড. সেলিনা আক্তার
মহাপরিচালক।

‘I don’t want to go back to that hall’

Says Phulpori

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Pabna

Islamic University student Phulpori Khatun does not want to return to Deshratna Sheikh Hasina Hall where she was brutally tortured by BCL activists.

She neither wants to recount nor recall the horrific incident that took place at the very early stages of her academic life.

Phulpori is expected to go back to IU in Kushtia today for submitting an application for seat allotment at the Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall, another dormitory, for her safety and a peaceful environment for education.

Talking with The Daily Star last afternoon, Phulpori said she will never forget what happened with her.

“If I return to that hall [Deshratna Sheikh Hasina Hall], the memory of the incident will haunt me when I will see that room, dining space, and other places. So I don’t want to go back to that hall where I was brutally tortured,” Phulpori said.

I will submit an application to get a seat at the Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

THE BUSINESS STANDARD

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Dhaka, Delhi happy with existing ties

Momen, Jaishankar meet on G20 sidelines, discuss bilateral issues

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Dhaka and New Delhi yesterday expressed satisfaction with the existing relations between the two countries as Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen met India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi.

Momen and Jaishankar also discussed bilateral issues, said a press release issued by the Bangladesh High Commission.

Momen, who was in Delhi to attend the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting congratulated Jaishankar for the successful completion of the event, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Jaishankar in a tweet reiterated India's neighbourhood-first policy.

"So nice to meet FM Dr Abdul Momen of Bangladesh on #G20FMM and #RaisinaDialogue2023 sidelines. Neighbourhood First, always," Jaishankar wrote.

Earlier yesterday, Momen held separate bilateral meetings with the foreign ministers of Brazil, Mexico, Slovenia, and Sweden, the press release said, adding issues of mutual interest were discussed during the meetings.

Momen "sought active support from countries in addressing the Rohingya crisis, including through their early repatriation from Bangladesh to Myanmar," the release said.

"They also exchanged views on the ongoing geopolitical issues and enhancing multilateral cooperation, including in the UN.

The foreign minister of Mexico told Momen that Mexico would open their

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



A Ukrainian serviceman fires a Msta-B howitzer towards Russian positions, near the frontline town of Bakhmut on Thursday, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

Bakhmut 'practically surrounded'

Says Russian mercenary boss; Ukraine confirms situation there 'critical'

REUTERS, Chasiv Yar

Russian troops and mercenaries rained artillery on the last access route to the besieged Ukrainian city of Bakhmut yesterday, bringing Moscow closer to its first major victory in half a year after the bloodiest fighting of the war.

The head of Russia's Wagner private army said the city, which has been blasted to ruins, was now almost completely surrounded, with only one road still open for Ukraine's troops.

Reuters observed intense Russian shelling of routes leading west out of Bakhmut, an apparent attempt to block Ukrainian forces' access in and out of the city. A bridge in the

adjacent town of Khromove was damaged by Russian tank shelling.

Ukrainian soldiers were working to repair damaged roads and more troops were heading towards the frontline in a sign that Ukraine was not yet ready to give up the city. To the west, Ukrainians were digging new trenches for defensive positions.

Victory in Bakhmut, with a pre-war population of about 70,000, would give Russia the first major prize of a costly winter offensive, after it called up hundreds of thousands of reservists last year. It says it would be a stepping stone to capturing the surrounding Donbas region, an important

war aim.

Wagner boss Yevgeny Prigozhin, appearing in combat uniform in a video that Reuters determined was filmed on a rooftop in a village 7 km (4.3 miles) north of the centre of Bakhmut, called on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to order a retreat from Bakhmut to save his soldiers' lives.

The commander of a Ukrainian drone unit active in Bakhmut, Robert Brovdi who goes by the name "Madyar", said in a video posted on social media that his unit had been ordered by the military to withdraw immediately. He said he had been fighting there for 110 days.

'Picked up' 6 years back, no trace yet

FROM PAGE 1

on the road and went to see what was going on. I saw police and the four detained men," said Akter Mia, one of the witnesses.

As the policemen were taking them to Bashgari Police Outpost on foot, local AL leader Shahed Sarkar, along with some followers, approached the officers and requested them to release the four.

As the policemen refused to free them, Shahed's supporters stopped them and started chanting slogans. The law enforcers opened fire and fatally shot a man named Mustafa.

The police team then took the four men to the outpost in Bashgari. A violent clash between locals and police took place near the outpost.

The other 12 witnesses also gave similar accounts of the events. One of them is an employee of Raipura Bhumii Office.

Following the clash, he and an official went to the Bashgari area in a microbus to enquire about the incident.

While returning to Raipura town from Bashgari, he saw a police pick-up taking the four men to Syedabad Ferry Ghat from Bashgari outpost, he said, adding that OC Azharul was in the pickup. "When our microbus crossed the Pagla river, the police vehicle was still at the ferry ghat."

He said that he clearly recognised the four men, known in the area as

political activists, at the ferry ghat. "One of the policemen told us that they detained the four men from a boat in Rajnagar area."

"The time was around 6:30pm and it was drizzling. The detained men were wearing helmets and bullet-proof vests," he said, requesting not to be named.

At a rally in Raipura on February 11, 2018, local lawmaker Raziuddin Raju said, "Where are big leaders like Rup Mia? Police know how they had swallowed them."

A footage of his speech went viral on social media at that time. Several newspapers ran reports on his speech.

When he was asked about what happened to the men, he said, "A clash took place after Rup Mia and others first attacked the police with spears. I do not know what happened later."

Asked about his comment, he denied saying such things.

He added that he was willing to help the families find out if the missing men became victims of enforced disappearance. "But none of them ever contacted me."

However, Rup's wife Nasima Begum and Azizul's elder brother Horun Mia said family members of each of the victims met Raju at his office and sought his help.

'POLICE ACCOUNT FALSE'
A day after the clash, Sub-Inspector

Raijul Alam filed a case accusing 23 named and 200 to 300 unnamed people of attacking police.

The complaint said while a police team was taking Rup to Bashgari outpost, his supporters attacked with firearms, crude bombs and sharp weapons and snatched him away from custody.

The case mentioned names of several witnesses.

But two of them, Aminul Islam alias Khokon Doctor and Abdus Samad, told The Daily Star that they were not present at the scene and they did not even know that police made them witnesses to the incident.

Both of them said they were in Raipura town, around 6km away from the scene, at the time.

Aminul, who now lives in the US, said naming him as a witness was wrong and it was false.

Abdus Samad said he returned home from the town at night and heard that police picked up the four men.

FAMILIES IN DISTRESS

Azizul's elder brother Horun Mia and Rup's nephew Moyeen Uddin alleged that police detained them and shot them in the leg a few months after the incident.

Police then falsely accused them of carrying firearms and narcotics, they added.

Harun and Moyeen said their legs had to be amputated.

2 killed, 30 hurt as Islamists clash with cops

FROM PAGE 1

Sadar upazila. The programme was scheduled to begin at noon.

But leaders and activists of several Islamist organisations, including the Islamic Andolon Bangladesh, were staging demonstrations since Thursday demanding cancellation of the event.

After Juma prayers yesterday, they gathered at the town's Chowrangi intersection, brought out a procession and started marching towards the venue.

The clash ensued as police obstructed the procession. The agitators hurled brick chips at the law enforcers, and in retaliation, police charged batons and fired teargas shells.

At one stage, the mob took position surrounding Panchagarh

Sadar Police Station and hurled brick chips targeting police around 3:30pm, said Akhterul Islam, assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of the police station.

Two vehicles -- one of police and another of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) -- were damaged. The protesters also vandalised and torched a traffic police office in Dhakkamara area, said locals and police.

Besides, the agitators blocked the Korotoa Bridge, the main entrance to the town, around 4:00pm. It caused public suffering as traffic remained halted for around one and a half hours.

Around 5:30pm, the protesters marched again to Ahmednagar, an area on the town's south-eastern part where Ahmadiyya community

people reside, and vandalised 30 houses and four shops.

"As we came under attack, we were compelled to stop our programme," said Mahmud Ahmed, a member of the Ahmadiyya community.

Contacted, Md Abdullah, general secretary of Panchagarh unit of Islami Andolan Bangladesh, denied their involvement in the arson and said his party men were not involved in the incident.

COPS HURT, BGB DEPLOYED

At least seven policemen were injured during the violence, said the district's police chief, SM Sirajul Huda, around 8:00pm.

Police brought the situation under control and additional law enforcers were deployed to maintain law and order, he added.

Seventeen platoons of border

Horun, also the Bashgari Union Swachhasebak League president, alleged that on November 20 in 2018, police picked him up from his house in Raipura.

The police blindfolded him and tied his hands and took him to a quiet place and shot him in the leg.

Moyeen said immigration police arrested him at Dhaka airport on September 17, 2017 while he was going to the Middle East.

"I was handed over to a three-member police team from Raipura. They tied my hands and blindfolded me and took me to Raipura in a microbus.

"I was shot in my right leg. As I cried in pain, they took the blindfold. I saw the OC [Azharul] standing before me holding a gun," said Moyeen.

Deputy Inspector General Amena Begum, who was the Superintendent of Police in Narsingdi at the time, said when several thousand people attacked a police outpost and a policeman was seriously wounded, "I ordered the local OC and circle ASP to release Rup Mia, who is a heinous criminal. Police are still looking for him."

Azharul, the former OC of Raipura, denied the allegation of shooting anyone.

The current Superintendent of Police Kazi Ashrafur Azim declined requests for comments on the matter.

guards were deployed in the area to maintain law and order, said a BGB statement.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, SM Sirajul Huda, superintendent of police in Panchagarh, said the deceased have been identified as Arifur Rahman, 26, and Jahid Hasan, 23.

Arifur, a resident of Masjidpara area, used to work at a local printing press, said locals.

He was returning home from a mosque after offering Juma prayers. He sustained bullet injuries in his head, said his relatives.

Arifur was rushed to Panchagarh Sadar Modern Hospital. As his condition deteriorated, he was referred to Rangpur Medical College Hospital but he died on the way, said the relatives.

It also said government censorship of the media was worsening in 47 countries while government repression of civil society organisations was worsening in 37 countries.

According to the report, the quality of elections is worsening in 30 countries.

India was placed in the 97th spot on the Liberal Democracy Index and 108th on the Electoral Democracy Index. Pakistan ranked 106th and 110th on the two indexes respectively.

2 pedestrians killed in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two pedestrians were killed and several others injured in the capital's Rayerbagh after a speedy pickup van ran over them yesterday morning.

The dead are Akbar Hossain, 40, a CNG-run three-wheeler driver, and Hasan, 30.

Akbar died on the spot while Hasan breathed his last at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), said Mofizul Alam, officer-in-charge of Jatrabari Police Station.

Of the injured, two were policemen, he said. Police sent the bodies to DMCH morgue, seized the vehicle and detained its driver and helper, he further said.

The victims were standing under the Rayerbagh footbridge around 6:00am when the speedy pickup van hit them, said witnesses.

Rohingya crisis not forgotten

Says EU top official

UNB, Dhaka

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell has assured of the EU's continuous humanitarian support to deal with the needs of Rohingyas in Bangladesh.

"This crisis is not forgotten. The EU remains one of the largest humanitarian donors, with €287m since 2017," he said after his meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam in New Delhi yesterday.

They discussed the present global crises -- climate change and vulnerabilities of the LDCs, as well as the Rohingya refugees hosted by Bangladesh.

"Great to meet Josep Borrell, high representative of foreign affairs of the EU, and talk about the bilateral relations and world affairs including the Rohingya crisis," said Shahriar.

High-yielding rice

FROM PAGE 1

The BRRI dhan 105 has a GI score of 55.

Khandakar Md Iftekharuddaula, head of BRRI's Plant Breeding Division, said BRRI dhan 28 and BRRI dhan 29 are cultivated during the Boro season in about 40 percent of rice fields.

BRRI dhan 28 and BRRI dhan 29 have GI scores of 70.96 and 62.36 respectively.

The average cost of producing a kilogramme of rice is Tk 27.10; the BRRI dhan 105 will cost the same.

"It [BRRI dhan 105] has opened new prospects for farmers as low GI rice has huge demand in both international and local markets," Iftekharuddaula said.

There are three more varieties that have a low GI score namely, BR-16 with 52.4, BRRI-46 with 53.1, and BRRI-69 with 54.9.

BR-16, locally known as Balam, got approval from the National Seed Board in 1983.

Some big companies still cultivate Balam in Dinajpur's Parbatipur on a small scale as it is in demand among a certain group of people, said Iftekharuddaula, also a chief scientific officer at BRRI.

The other two varieties are also not cultivated on a large scale, he added.

The BRRI dhan 105 surpassed Balam in terms of productivity and life cycle.

The average grain yield of BRRI dhan 105 is 7.6 tonnes per hectare compared to 6 tonnes per hectare of Balam rice.

It takes around 155 to 160 days for farmers to harvest Balam rice, while for BRRI dhan 105 it takes 148 days.

This rice was first cultivated in 2006 in Cumilla on a test basis. Its yield and adaptivity were tested in 2017 and 2018 at the farmers' level.

The National Seed Board on Thursday also gave approval to BRRI dhan 106, a high-yielding rice variety suitable for non-saline tidal submergence areas.

'I don't want to go back to that hall'

FROM PAGE 1

"I have already spoken with the proctor sir and student advisor madam for the seat allotment. I will visit the university campus on Saturday [today] regarding the administrative process for the transfer," Phulpori said.

"After getting a seat, I will return to the campus to continue my regular academic life," she claimed.

Phulpori, a first-year student of Islamic University, was tortured and humiliated at Deshratna Sheikh Hasina Hall on February 12 by BCL activists in the hall, found a probe committee report formed by the university.

The High Court earlier ordered the

authorities to suspend five accused students, remove the hall provost, ensure security to Phulpori, and also give her the opportunity to choose a seat at a hall.

Talking with The Daily Star, Proctor Shahadat Hossain Azad said the university authority already took necessary steps as per the High Court directives.

"Phulpori has informed me that she will come to the university on Saturday [today] to resolve the seat allotment issue. The student advisor will take necessary steps."

After the incident, Phulpori has been living with her parents in Shibpur village in Pabna.

Blinken and Lavrov

FROM PAGE 12

the West is continuously saying that it is not time to negotiate yet because Ukraine must win in the battlefield before any negotiations," he said.

At the G20, the United States and its allies called on member countries to keep pressuring Russia to end the conflict, but the G20 was unable to agree on a joint statement on the war due to opposition from China and Russia, which calls its actions a "special military operation" aimed at removing what it says is a threat to its own security.

The Russian minister went on to accuse Washington of "trying to militarise" the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, a partnership between the United States, Australia, India and Japan that focuses on strategic issues in the Indo-Pacific region.

Earlier in the day, Blinken had met with his counterparts from the Quad, as the grouping is informally called,

and they issued a statement saying "the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible".

Late last month, Russian President Vladimir Putin suspended a landmark nuclear arms control treaty and threatened to resume nuclear tests.

During their brief exchange on the sidelines of the G20 meeting on Thursday, Blinken told Lavrov to end the war and urged Moscow to reverse its suspension of the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) on nuclear weapons.

The Quad statement also took a barely disguised swipe at China by denouncing actions that increase tensions in the South China Sea, and the "militarisation" of disputed territories in the area.

China has denounced the Quad as a Cold War construct and a clique "targeting other countries".

Bangladesh slips one notch

FROM PAGE 12

the previous year, said the report released on Thursday.

In the Electoral Democracy Index, Bangladesh this year ranked 131st with a score of 0.28, down by 0.03 from the previous year.

"72 percent of the world's population -- 5.7 billion people -- now live in electoral or closed autocracies. That is an increase from 46 percent ten years ago. This fact is another reminder of how the wave of autocratization is unfolding across the world," the report.

It mentioned that only 13 percent population of the world lives in liberal democracies.

V-Dem Institute of Gothenburg University in Sweden has been publishing the democracy report for the last seven years.

"Türkiye is another country that went from democracy to autocracy and increased its share of global GDP from 1.3% to 2.1%. Bangladesh, Nigeria, and the Philippines are other countries that are part of this trend," the report said.

A total of 33 countries, including

Iran, China, Myanmar, and North Korea, have been placed in the "Closed Autocracies" category while 32 in the "Liberal Democracies" category and 58 in the "Electoral Democracies" category.

Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Estonia, and New Zealand are placed in the top five positions while North Korea is at the bottom.

The report said freedom of expression was deteriorating in 35 countries in 2022. Ten years ago, the figure was seven.

TAQI MURDER

No justice even after a decade

Eminent citizens demand killers be brought to book at rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Ngani*

The killers of young Taqi could not be brought to justice even after a decade because they are well-connected, eminent citizens said yesterday.

During a protest rally at Narayanganj city's Central Shaheed Minar premises, the speakers said investigators unearthed the mystery of the killing and also identified the killers long ago.

However, a charge-sheet has never been produced due to political influence, they added.

They demanded Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's intervention in ensuring trial and punishment of the killers.

Santrash Nirmul Taqi Mancha, a platform working to curb crimes in Narayanganj, organised the rally ahead of the sensational murder's 10th anniversary.

A-level student Tanvir Mohammad Taqi, 17, went missing after he left home for a library in Narayanganj city in the afternoon of March 6 in 2013.

His body was found floating in Shitalakkhya river on the morning of March 8.

Addressing the rally, eminent economist Prof Anu Muhammad said

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Civil-society leaders, activists, and people from all walks of life held demonstrations in Narayanganj city yesterday, ahead of the 10th anniversary of Taqi murder. The young boy went missing after he left his Shaista Khan Road home in Narayanganj for Sudhijon Pathagar, a local library, around 4:00pm on March 6, 2013. His body was found floating on Shitalakkhya river on March 8. This photo was taken from the city's Bangabandhu Road.

PHOTO: STAR

How a student is reuniting families

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

It was March 2019. The clock ticked 1:30am. An old man was lying in the middle of Dhaka-Mawa highway.

Abid Sahriar Pulok, a student of North South University (NSU), spotted the man when he was travelling with his friends on a bike.

When he went near, Pulok saw the man's flesh was decaying. An odour was coming out of his emaciated body -- which was covered with mud and human waste.

While most people would turn a blind eye to this incident, Pulok decided otherwise. He hired an ambulance for Tk 1,800 to take him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.



ABID SAHRIAR PULOK

I have spent around Tk 7 lakh to treat these people, which I collected from my pocket money, my friends, and by tutoring students.

They reached DMCH around 5:30am. At first, the doctors refused to admit the man seeing his condition. Pulok then gave Tk 500 to the hospital ward for bathing the man and giving him a haircut. After which, the doctors started his treatment.

But another issue arose. The man seemed mentally unstable and couldn't provide the address of his home or name his relatives.

Pulok refused to give up.

He raised Tk 50,000 to buy medicine for the man through a Facebook post. He visited the hospital every day for a month and used to ask him three questions: "Where are you from? What is your name? What are your children's names?"

Pulok used to record the answers on his phone. After a month, he made a summary of the answers and noted down which names or addresses the man mentioned the most.

Pulok found that most of the time, the man repeated Debidwar of Cumilla as his address and his name as Abdul Haque.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Families caught in bureaucratic tangle

Relatives of cops killed in the line of duty not getting compensation in due time

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Partha Roy Chowdhury, a sub-inspector of Itna Police Station in Kishoreganj, was severely injured in a road accident on the way to a Khagrachhari court for testimony on October 14, 2020.

Three days later, Partha succumbed to his injuries while being treated at a hospital. Two months later, his family claimed the government "compensation" given to the Kishoreganj district deputy commissioner (DC) for disbursement on January 14, 2021.

"Two years have passed since then. We are yet to get the compensation. I have talked with the DC office in Kishoreganj many times but to no avail," Partha's wife Aparna Roy Chowdhury told The Daily Star recently.

Aparna is currently living at her husband's residence in Rangamati with her two sons -- Priyotosh Roy Chowdhury, 14, an SSC examinee, and Poritosh Roy Chowdhury, 10, a fourth-grader.

"It's becoming increasingly harder to support my family. It'd be easier for us if we get the compensation," said Aparna.

This is not an isolated case. At least 179 police families did not get compensation in due time due to bureaucratic complications.

The family of a deceased police official recently filed an application under the financial grant payment policy for Death and Disability of Government Servants, 2020 (Amendment) law. It states that

The DC office holds monthly meetings regarding the compensation for all government officials, including those in the police force. As a result, the files remain stuck in a serial.

the family of a government official will get Tk 8 lakh if the official dies on duty. The amount is Tk 4 lakh in case of severe injuries.

Sources said the application was first sent to the office of the superintendent of police for verification. From there, it was sent to the DC office within the next 15 days.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Returning with ailments

Migrant workers with health issues get little support as government doesn't have data on them

JAMIL MAHMUD

Md Monir, a migrant worker, returned home from the United Arab Emirates with severe physical pain in June 2021.

The Munshiganj resident had been employed at a road-construction site in Dubai. He, along with his coworkers, used to load and unload heavy objects like stones weighing 30 to 50 kilos for 10 to 12 hours a day under the scorching desert sun.

"My [health] problems started because of such work," 52-year-old Monir told this newspaper. He started to feel the pain after the first month of work. It was mild in the beginning but started to worsen and at one point became unbearable, forcing him to return home after four months.

Whether Monir's health problems are associated with excessive workload depends on medical examination and scientific research. However, two studies suggest that low-paid migrant workers like him are exposed to different health hazards in the Gulf countries due to poor working and living conditions amid the harsh climate.

The Bangladesh government hardly addresses the health issues of migrant workers as it does not maintain comprehensive data on those returning home with ailments. However, Wage Earners'



Between 2019 and 2021, Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (Okup) provided healthcare support to 228 returnee migrants. Thirty-seven percent, the highest, received support for back pain or joint pain, 32 percent for abdominal pain, 27 percent for leg pain, and 21 percent for a workplace injuries.

Welfare Board (WEWB) under the expatriates' welfare ministry maintains statistics of injured and ailing returnee migrants who get financial support from it.

Last year, WEWB provided such support to 383 returnee migrants.

Shakirul Islam, chairperson of Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (Okup), a community-based migrant workers' organisation in Bangladesh, said every ailing returnee migrant does not apply to

the board and get support, as many are unaware of the service.

Between 2019 and 2021, Okup itself provided healthcare support to 228 returnee migrants.

Thirty-seven percent, the highest, received support for back pain or joint pain, 32 percent for abdominal pain, 27 percent for leg pain, and 21 percent for a workplace injuries.

Other mentionable ailments included fatty liver, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, and vision problems.

Shakirul said these returnees, nearly 80 percent of the workers who were employed in the Gulf developed health-related problems in host countries.

The Vital Signs Partnership (VSP), a group of organisations in five Asian migrant-source countries, including Bangladesh, published two reports last year on low-paid migrant workers' health challenges in six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries -- Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain.

These countries hired nearly 77.5 percent of Bangladesh's 1.48 crore workers between 1976 and January this year, according to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

The VSP reports point out that harsh climates such as excessive heat, coupled with abusive

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

More midwives needed to aid safe birth

TAHIRA SHAMSI UTSA

Umme Kulsum was terrified when she encountered a mother in labour with no dilation around 3:00am at Brac centre in Dhaka. After several attempts, she could only bring out the baby's head. The mother was exhausted from all the pushing. But Kulsum trusted her midwifery skills and eventually conducted a normal delivery.

The baby was provided oxygen immediately afterwards to prevent neonatal death and other complications.

Currently, Kulsum, 39, a certified midwife, is serving the mothers and children of the Rohingya community at Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar.

"I am trained till the end to avoid C-section delivery as it causes health complexities in mothers and children. My midwifery training even taught me to repair 4-degree tears," said Kulsum.

Trained midwives can play a vital role in reducing the currently practised unnecessary C-section in Bangladesh. The latest data showed that the C-section rate has increased to eight folds in the past 14 years, believe public health experts.

According to UNEPA, global evidence shows that midwives educated and regulated as per the international standards can provide 87 percent of the critical care needed for women and babies, and investing in midwifery education and deployment to community-based services might potentially produce a 16-fold return on investment in lives saved and caesarian section expenditures avoided.

Unfortunately, trained midwives are often overlooked

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'INSULTED BY TEACHER'

DU student 'tries taking own life'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka University student, who was accused of harassing his female classmate, reportedly tried to take his own life alleging that one of his teachers insulted him in front of his classmates.

However, some of his classmates said the teacher -- Prof Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan of international relations department -- did not say anything that would insult him.

SM Ehsan Ullah Dhrubo, also deputy training affairs secretary of Chhatra League's (BCL)

I am shocked with the dirty game that has begun centring the Facebook status and the suicide attempt. Dhrubo came to my office once and said some vile words about his classmate. I stopped him and said that's a personal matter. Later in class, I wanted to know from him the source of his information.

PROF MOHAMMAD TANZIMUDDIN KHAN

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall unit, made a Facebook post around 8:30pm on Thursday, accusing Prof Tanzimuddin of "insulting" him. He reportedly went missing after making the post.

Soon after, around 500 BCL activists took position in front of the DU vice chancellor's residence, chanting slogans against the professor.

Tanbir Hasan Shaikat, general secretary of DU unit BCL said in a Facebook post, "No one will be spared if anything happens to our brother. Everything will be answered in blood."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

PRAYER
TIMING
MAR 4

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5-15	12-45	4-30	6-05	7-30
Jamaat	5-50	1-15	4-45	6-10	8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Students participate in the "Mujib Utshab 2023" organised by Liberation War Museum authorities at Dhaka University Central Playground yesterday. The event was organised with the slogan "Amra Gorbo Shomproti Bangladesh (We will build contemporary Bangladesh).

Families caught in bureaucratic

FROM PAGE 3
However, the DC office made no dealings with the family. The DC office holds monthly meetings regarding the compensation for all government officials, including those in the police force. As a result, the files remain stuck in a serial.

Besides, often the common funds fall short while compensating eight to 10 officials from all sectors simultaneously, resulting in the delay, according to sources.

Police Headquarters (PHQ) database shows that at least 620 officials of Bangladesh Police were killed while in service in the last three years since January 2020.

As per the financial grant payment policy, family members of 568 deceased officials of the force, who perished while discharging duty, have sent applications to the divisional commissioner or district DC for compensation in the last three years since October 2020 to date.

However, the applications of only 389 families have been approved so far. The rest of the 179 families still await their turn, according to the PHQ data.

Police high officials said before September 2020, approval and disbursement of the compensation were under the jurisdiction of PHQ.

From January 2018 to September 2018, families of around 549 officials of the force who died while on duty applied to PHQ for compensation, and all of them got the benefits in due time, as shown in the database.

PHQ mentioned that they used to discuss the submitted application by holding a special meeting each month, which facilitated the disbursement of the compensation on time.

The delays started occurring after the process went under the jurisdiction of the divisional commissioner and district deputy commissioner, they claimed.

Meanwhile, the PHQ

welfare wing sent an application to the home ministry on December 24 last year, requesting to get back the authority to pay the grant.

Md Nazmul Islam, assistant inspector general of PHQ, told The Daily Star that working for the police force is a risky job, and many officials get killed every year while discharging duty.

“Earlier, the ‘economic code’ to pay compensation to the deceased family was under the authority of PHQ, and we used to disburse the compensations in the fastest time,” he said.

“If we get back the authority again, then the families of the deceased will receive the compensation quickly,” added Nazmul.

Abul Fazal Mir, joint secretary (police-I branch) of the home ministry’s public security division, said they have received the application from the PHQ.

“The Ministry of Public Administration is responsible for the ‘economic code’. We are working on it and it is under process,” he added.

More midwives needed to aid safe birth

FROM PAGE 3
and their numbers are unproportionate, as data from Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC) showed that currently, there are about 7,122 registered midwives (Diploma in Midwifery 2012-2013), to look after an estimated 35 lakh pregnant women a year.

BNMC Registrar Rashida Akhter said, “We still have a scarcity of midwives. The number must increase, ensuring no union is left out. Furthermore, there must be community-based employment to reach mothers’ doorsteps.”

In January 2013, the Bangladesh government launched a separate cadre of professional midwives, a three-year Diploma in Midwifery.

James P Grant School

of Public health, Brac University, and UNFPA run a 3-year midwifery curriculum approved by BNMC.

Dr Sharmina Rahman, assistant director of Brac’s Midwifery Education Programme, said, “To mitigate maternal mortality rate, midwives are essential and thus the profession is established globally. Earlier in Bangladesh, 3,000 midwifery posts were there, and 5,000 new posts will be created soon.”

“Midwives assist mothers during the pre-labour and post-labour periods to ensure their sound health and that of their children. Hence, midwifery training should be developed in the private sector too,” she added.

Another family welfare visitor (FWV), Fatema,

34, is pursuing midwifery training at Azimpur Maternity Hospital, Dhaka. She has operated on several regular deliveries, even with the C-section history in the case of previous deliveries of the same mother.

After eighteen months of FWV training, followed by 6 months of basic midwifery training afterwards, these experts look after maternal and neonatal health all over Bangladesh.

Dr Md Mahmudur Rahman, director (MCH-services) and line director (MC-RAH) of DGFP, said, “Trained midwives look after mothers during their antenatal care to make the delivery time proper. Mothers die mostly from postpartum bleeding. These midwives understand this emergency. They

also have the professional support and equipment with them.”

Previously, Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) performed normal deliveries at home, getting training under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). They assisted community women, especially in remote areas.

Sadly, TBA training has ceased in digital Bangladesh.

On the cancellation of TBA training, Dr Rahman said, “Major neonatal complications like Autism, Cerebral Palsy, and Down Syndrome are avertible within one minute of childbirth. Midwives identify those, whereas TBAs are not adequately prepared.”

“Home deliveries must

stop. Only 100 percent delivery in hospitals under expert midwives can ensure zero maternal deaths. Every union must need at least 3 midwives,” he added.

However, Shireen Huq, a member at Naripokkho, said, “When there were no hospitals, TBAs worked as social workers, arranging safe childbirth. Their contribution should be recognised.”

“Trained midwife tag brings class discrimination with financial issues. So, poor and underprivileged pregnant women face communication barriers,” she added.

Bangladesh targets to make below 70 maternity deaths by the year 2030 to achieve the SDG target. Empowerment of more midwives can bring a huge development.

How a student is reuniting

FROM PAGE 3
He then contacted the local police station through the national emergency helpline number 999 and queried whether anyone named Abdul Haque was missing from the area.

Eventually, Pulok was able to trace the man’s family and get contacts of his son, Billal.

When Billal was contacted, he confirmed that Abdul Haque was indeed his father. He started developing a mental illness when he turned 58. Billal informed that his father had been missing for five years, when he went to a mosque and didn’t return home.

Pulok said when Billal came to Dhaka Medical College Hospital to meet his father, the man identified his son immediately, greeted him with a smile and hugged him tightly.

“I will never forget this moment. I started helping people whenever I found them in helpless conditions,” Pulok said while talking to this newspaper.

In the last three years, except the Covid-19 period, Pulok helped around 60 people; 17 of them were reunited with their

families, and eight were sent to old-age homes as no family members were found for them to take care of.

“I have spent around Tk 7 lakh to treat these people, which I collected from my pocket money, my friends, and by tutoring students,” he claimed.

But in some cases, Pulok struggled identifying the rescued people as some had speech impairments, while some totally lost their memory after getting hit on their head.

Then he sought help from one of his cousins, Jewel Rana, who is currently working as an additional deputy commissioner at the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

Jewel helps Pulok to get access to fingerprint identification through Shahbagh Police Station to recognise the rescued people.

In this way, Pulok on January 23 this year, managed to get the identity and address of a 53-year-old man – Azhar Uddin, who went missing from his home in Mymensingh eight years back. He found Azhar in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Using the address found in the national database service through fingerprint, Pulok located Azhar’s family taking the help of local police, and finally handed him over to his son Md Sakib.

Abdus Salam, a ward attendee ward-216 (surgery unit) at DMCH, said, “I have never seen such a cordial approach from an individual towards unattended people. Pulok treats them as if they are his close relatives.”

“I first met Pulok a year before the pandemic started. During the period, he has brought several dozens of patients to the hospital and reunited some of them with their family members,” he told The Daily Star on Friday.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Jewel said, “We try to help Pulok as much as possible. Now, we are trying to give this initiative an institutional form so that unattended people can be helped.”

No justice

FROM PAGE 3

Taqi was growing up as a creative person, which was evident through his poems, essays and paintings.

Taqi’s killers have not been brought to book, and now, they have continuously been threatening people who demand justice, he said, stressing on continuing such protests and demanding justice.

Taqi’s father Rafiur Rabbi, also convener of the platform, said police unearthed the mystery within two-and-a-half months of the killing. However, a chargesheet in the case has not been produced.

Rights activist Khushi Kabir urged the PM to ensure justice for Taqi’s murder.



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Therefore preparations are underway to take legal action against all fraudulently misusing/hacking former metro.net.bd domain and in this regard Gulshan Police Station GD No. 1095, 1171 and WUODKP, KCHP02 has been filed.

MetroNet Bangladesh Limited

PBL Tower (13th Floor), 17 (New) Gulshan North C/A Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212. Tel: +8809612341000



বাংলাদেশ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইন্টারন্যাশনাল এন্ড স্ট্র্যাটেজিক স্টাডিজ (বিআইআইএসএস)
১/৪৬, পুরাতন এলিফ্যান্ট রোড, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০।

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১। বাংলাদেশ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইন্টারন্যাশনাল এন্ড স্ট্র্যাটেজিক স্টাডিজ (বিআইআইএসএস)-এ নিম্নলিখিত পদে নিয়োগের জন্য বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

পদ ও বেতন স্কেল	পদ সংখ্যা	বয়স সীমা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা
গবেষণা কর্মকর্তা (গ্রেড-৯ম, বেতন স্কেলঃ টাকা ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/-) সরকারী নিয়ম অনুযায়ী অন্যান্য ভাতাদি।	০১ টি	১৬ মার্চ ২০২৩ তারিখে বয়স ১৮ হতে ৩০ বছরের মধ্যে হতে হবে।	আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক অথবা রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান বিষয়ে অনার্স এবং মাস্টার্স পর্যায়ে প্রথম শ্রেণি এবং অন্যান্য পর্যায়ে ন্যূনতম দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণী/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। অভিজ্ঞ বা পিএইচডি ডিগ্রীধারীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে।

বিঃ দ্রঃ বিপত ১১ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৩ “দৈনিক ইত্তেফাক” এবং ১২ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৩ তারিখ “প্রথম আলো ও ডেইলি পত্রিকা” বিআইআইএসএস এর প্রকাশিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির মাধ্যমে যারা আবেদন করেছেন তাদের পুনরায় আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নাই।

২। প্রার্থীকে বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক এবং শারীরিকভাবে সুস্থ হতে হবে।

৩। দরখাস্তের সাথে নিম্নলিখিত নথি/পাঠ্যকৌটসমূহ সংযুক্ত করতে হবেঃ
(ক) প্রার্থীর পূর্ণ জীবন বৃত্তান্ত, **(খ)** জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র (NID)- এর সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি, **(গ)** নাগরিকত্ব সনদপত্র, **(ঙ)** সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সত্যায়িত সনদপত্র, **(চ)** সদ্য তোলা সত্যায়িত ৩৩ (তিন) কপি পাসপোর্ট আকারের ছবি **(ছ)** প্রথম শ্রেণির গেজেটেড অফিসারের নিকট হতে চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র।

৪। আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণপরিচালক, বিআইআইএসএস এর বরাবরে আপাদী ১৬ মার্চ ২০২৩ তারিখের মধ্যে নিম্নলিখিতকারী নিকট পৌঁছাতে হবে।

৫। প্রাথমিকভাবে বাছাইকৃত প্রার্থীদের লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের জন্য ‘খ’ ষ্ঠিকানার পত্র ও এসএমএস মাফহিত অবহিত করা হবে।

উপ-পরিচালক (প্রশাসন)

বাংলাদেশ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইন্টারন্যাশনাল এন্ড স্ট্র্যাটেজিক স্টাডিজ

GD-405

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The national park is home to 167 species of trees, 59 reptile species, 246 bird species, 20 mammal species, and 22 amphibian species.

Meanwhile, a group of rights activists formed a human chain in Kamalganj, yesterday urging the government to take immediate steps to reduce train speed to 20km per hour inside the forest.

Science

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can avert emergence of an epidemic of cholera in Bangladesh.

She said due to putting focus on Covid-19 vaccination, all other vaccination programmes have been halted in current times, which may have an adverse impact.

Dr AKM Mollah, chair of the conference, said, “I am confident that the scientific research carried out by the participants from various academic and research institutions, which were shared during this conference, will enable us to find collective solutions to the global problems faced in the scientific community,” he said.

Dr Vidhya Jagannathan, senior scientist, University of Bonn, Germany, and Dr Ananthi Sivagnanam, CEO and founder of Clinbiocare Technology, India, also addressed, among others, the first day of the two-day conference.


বাণিজ্যিক জমি বিক্রয়

মালিবাগ ১০০ ফুট ডিআইটি

রোডের সাথে ৫ (পাঁচ) কাঠা

কর্ণার বাণিজ্যিক জমি বিক্রয়।

০৯৬৬৬৭৬৪৪০০



রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

২০২২-২০২৩ শিক্ষাবর্ষে প্রথমবর্ষ স্নাতক/স্নাতক (সম্মান) শ্রেণিতে ভর্তি আবেদনের বিজ্ঞপ্তি

মেমো নং- এ-২৪১১-৪২/২(২০২২-২০২৩) তারিখঃ ০২/০৩/২০২৩

১। (ক) ২০২২-২০২৩ শিক্ষাবর্ষে প্রথমবর্ষ স্নাতক/স্নাতক (সম্মান) শ্রেণিতে ভর্তির আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। আবেদনকারীকে রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট <http://admission.ru.ac.bd> এ প্রকাশিত নিয়মাবলী অঙ্গুলণ করে সঠিক ইউনিটে অনলাইনে প্রাথমিক আবেদন করতে হবে। ১৫/০৩/২০২৩ তারিখ দুপুর ১২টা থেকে ২৭/০৩/২০২৩ তারিখ রাত ১২টা পর্যন্ত প্রাথমিক আবেদন করা যাবে।

(খ) প্রাথমিক আবেদনকারীদের মধ্যে থেকে এইচএসসি/সম্মান পরীক্ষার ফলাফলের ভিত্তিতে প্রতিটি ইউনিটে সর্বোচ্চ ৭২,০০০ (ষাটহাজার) জন এবং বিভিন্ন কৌটার আবেদনকারী ভর্তি পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ পাবে।

চূড়ান্ত আবেদনের সময়সীমাঃ

প্রথম দফাঃ ০৯/০৪/২০২৩ থেকে ১৫/০৪/২০২৩ তারিখ পর্যন্ত, দ্বিতীয় দফাঃ ১৭/০৪/২০২৩ থেকে ১৯/০৪/২০২৩ তারিখ পর্যন্ত, তৃতীয় দফাঃ ২৬/০৪/২০২৩ থেকে ২৯/০৪/২০২৩ পর্যন্ত, এবং চতুর্থ দফাঃ ০১/০৫/২০২৩ থেকে ০২/০৫/২০২৩ তারিখ পর্যন্ত।

(গ) আবেদনকারীকে সঠিক ইউনিটের ভর্তি পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণ করতে হবে। ভর্তি পরীক্ষা ২৯, ৩০ ও ৩১ মে ২০২৩ তারিখে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। ভর্তি পরীক্ষার কটিন যথাসময়ে প্রকাশিত হবে। চার শিফটে নির্দেশিত সময়সূচি অনুযায়ী ভর্তি পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হবেঃ (১) সকাল ৯:০০ থেকে ১০:০০টা পর্যন্ত (২) সকাল ১১টা থেকে ১২টা পর্যন্ত (৩) দুপুর ১:০০টা থেকে ২:০০টা পর্যন্ত এবং (৪) বিকাল ৩:৩০টা থেকে ৪:৩০টা পর্যন্ত।

২। ভর্তি আবেদনের যোগ্যতাঃ

(i) ২০২১ ও ২০২২ সালের এইচএসসি/সম্মান, ডিপ্লোমা-ইন-কমার্স, বিএক্সএ (প্রাক), বাংলাদেশ কারিগরী শিক্ষা বোর্ডের অধীনে এইচএসসি (ভোকেশনাল), A সেভেল এবং অন্যান্য সমমান পরীক্ষায় [এইচএসসি সম্মান নির্ধারণ কমিটি কর্তৃক অনুমোদন সাপেক্ষে] উত্তীর্ণ শিক্ষার্থীরা কেবল ভর্তি পরীক্ষার জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবে। উল্লেখ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে এসএসসি ও এইচএসসি পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ শিক্ষার্থী আবেদন করতে পারবে না। বিএক্সএ (প্রাক) ডিপ্লোমার শিক্ষার্থীদের ফলাফল এখনও সনাতন পদ্ধতিতে হওয়ায় তাদের আবেদন গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে। তবে তাদের মার্কশীট থাকতে পারে।

কারিগরী ও মাদ্রাসা শিক্ষা বোর্ডের অধীন কারিগরী শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ হতে ডিপ্লোমা-ইন-ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং-এ উত্তীর্ণ শিক্ষার্থীরাও সঠিক ইউনিটে আবেদন করতে পারবে তবে তাদের প্রান্ত জিপিএ ৫.০০ ছেলে নির্ধারিত হবে।

(ii) মানবিক শাখা থেকে উত্তীর্ণ আবেদনকারীদের এসএসসি/সম্মান ও এইচএসসি/সম্মান উভয় পরীক্ষার (৪র্থ বিষয়সহ) ন্যূনতম জিপিএ ৩.০০ সহ মোট জিপিএ ৭.০০ পেতে হবে।

বাণিজ্য শাখা থেকে উত্তীর্ণ আবেদনকারীদের এসএসসি/সম্মান ও এইচএসসি/সম্মান উভয় পরীক্ষার (৪র্থ বিষয়সহ) ন্যূনতম জিপিএ ৩.৫০ সহ মোট জিপিএ ৭.৫০ পেতে হবে।

বিজ্ঞান শাখা থেকে উত্তীর্ণ আবেদনকারীদের এসএসসি/সম্মান ও এইচএসসি/সম্মান উভয় পরীক্ষার (৪র্থ বিষয়সহ) ন্যূনতম জিপিএ ৩.৫০ সহ মোট জিপিএ ৮.০০ পেতে হবে।

জিসিই O সেভেল পরীক্ষার ৫টি বিষয়ে এবং A সেভেল পরীক্ষায় অন্তত ২টি বিষয়ে উত্তীর্ণ হতে হবে এবং উভয় সেভেল মোট ৭টি বিষয়ের মধ্যে ৪টি বিষয়ে কমপক্ষে B গ্রেড এবং ৩টি বিষয়ে কমপক্ষে C গ্রেড পেতে হবে। O সেভেল, A সেভেল এবং ইন্ট্রি জার্নাল (ন্যাশনাল কারিকুলাম) পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ আবেদনকারীদের প্রাপ্ত প্রযোজ্য স্কোরে ইয়েজিতে অনুবাদ করা হবে। ইয়েজি প্রাপ্তরে পরীক্ষা দিতে ইচ্ছুক প্রার্থীকে ভর্তি পরীক্ষার চূড়ান্ত আবেদনকালে অনলাইনে থাক সঠিক অপশনটি অবশ্যই পূরণ করতে হবে।

(iii) ভর্তি পরীক্ষার পূর্বনাম, সময় ও পরীক্ষা গ্রহণের পদ্ধতি নিম্নলিখঃ

এইচএসসি ২০২২ পরীক্ষার বোর্ড কর্তৃক যে সংক্ষিপ্ত পাঠ্যসূচি (Short Syllabus) অনুসরণ করা হয়েছে তার আলোকে ২০২২-২০২৩ শিক্ষাবর্ষে প্রথমবর্ষ স্নাতক/স্নাতক (সম্মান) শ্রেণিতে ভর্তি পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

মানবিক, বাণিজ্য ও বিজ্ঞান শাখা হতে ২০২১ ও ২০২২ সালের এইচএসসি/সম্মান পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ শিক্ষার্থীরা A, B ও C তিনটি ইউনিটেই যোগ্যতা অনুযায়ী আবেদন করতে পারবে। আবেদনকারী যে ইউনিটেই আবেদন করুক না কেন সে যে শাখা থেকে এইচএসসি পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ হয়েছে সে শাখার জন্য নির্ধারিত যোগ্যতা তার ক্ষেত্রে প্রযোজ্য হবে।

১০০ নম্বরের MCQ পদ্ধতিতে ভর্তি পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। ভর্তি পরীক্ষার সময় হবে ১ (এক) ঘণ্টা। পরীক্ষায় প্রতিটি ইউনিটে ৮০টি প্রশ্ন থাকবে। ভর্তি পরীক্ষার মেসেটিংমার্কিং প্রযোজ্য হবে। প্রতিটি ৪টি কুল উত্তরের জন্য ১ (এক) নম্বর কাটা যাবে। ভর্তি পরীক্ষার পূর্ণ নম্বর ৪০। এছাড়া ইউনিট/বিভাগ/ইনস্টিটিউট কর্তৃক আরোপিত শর্ত প্রযোজ্য হবে। অনলাইনে প্রদত্ত নির্দেশনা অনুযায়ী বিশেষ কোডের প্রার্থীদের আবেদন করতে হবে।

এক বা একাধিক ইউনিটে প্রাথমিক আবেদন ফি ৫৫ টাকা। যারা ভর্তি পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ পাবে কেবলমাত্র তরাই নির্ধারিত ইউনিটেই ফি জমা দিবে।

চূড়ান্ত আবেদন ফিঃ ইউনিট A (মানবিক) ১০% সার্ভিস চার্জ ১২০ টাকাসহ সর্বমোট ১৩২০ টাকা, ইউনিট B (বাণিজ্য) ১০% সার্ভিস চার্জ ১০০ টাকাসহ সর্বমোট ১১০০ টাকা এবং ইউনিট C (বিজ্ঞান) ১০% সার্ভিস চার্জ ১২০ টাকাসহ সর্বমোট ১৩২০ টাকা।

ইউনিট/বিভাগ/ইনস্টিটিউট কর্তৃক আরোপিত শর্ত, অনলাইনে আবেদন পদ্ধতি, ভর্তি পরীক্ষার কটিন ও প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যাবলী যথাসময়ে রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ওয়েবসাইট <http://admission.ru.ac.bd> এ প্রকাশিত হবে।

পরীক্ষার হলে কোন রাসদে ইলেকট্রনিক ডিভাইস, যেমন মোবাইল ফোন, ক্যালকুলেটর, ডেভেলপ, মোবাইলফি যুক্তি ইত্যাদি সঙ্গে আনা যাবে না।

পরীক্ষা চলাকালীন পরীক্ষার্থীর কান অনাবৃত রাখতে হবে।

প্রফেসর মো. আবদুস সালাম

রেজিস্ট্রার

রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

জিভি-৪০৪

WORLD WILDLIFE DAY

Speed limit
20km, only
on paperWildlife dying unabated in
Lawachara rail track

It's been a month since the Ministry of Railways instructed Bangladesh Railways to bring down the speed limit of trains passing through Lawachara forest to 20 kilometres. However, the orders have not yet been implemented. As a result, rare animals and wildlife in general continue to be killed by speeding trains inside the forest.

MINTU DESHWARA

All trains running through the Lawachara National Park in Moulvibazar have been instructed to run at a maximum speed of 20 kilometres per hour to ensure the safety of the wildlife in the area.

It has been almost a month since the issuing of the order. However, the local railway authorities claimed they have not received any letter from the Ministry of Railways yet. The lack of implementation of the order has resulted in the continuous killings of rare and endangered animals on the rail tracks passing through the forest.

A week ago, the railway police recovered a deer on the rail track, with its throat slit by the Kalni Intercity Express. The forest department has claimed that the killing was purposeful

to avail of the deer's meat.

Divisional Forest Officer of Sylhet Wildlife Management and Nature Conservation Department Rezaul Karim Chowdhury sent a letter to the forest conservator of Wildlife and Nature Conservation Area in this regard on November 14, 2021. The letter proposed that the maximum speed on the train line be reduced to 20km per hour to protect the wildlife of the area.

Following the same proposal, Rezaul issued another letter to the Conservator of Forests, Wildlife and Nature Reserve on February 27 last year. The letter provided a rationale for reducing the speed of trains inside the Lawachara National Park, highlighting some of his experiences of travelling via trains through India's Rajaji National Park.

According to the letter, the speed limit of trains on the railway line

inside Rajaji National Park on the way from Dehradun to Haridwar-Rishikesh, a place of pilgrimage for the Hindu community, has been kept at a maximum speed of 20km to protect elephants, tigers, langur, monkey and deer in the national park.

Meanwhile, another letter was sent from the Ministry of Forest and Environment to the Ministry of Railways on January 25. On January 29, a letter signed by Taufiq Imam, deputy secretary (additional duties) of the Ministry of Railways was sent to the Director General of Bangladesh Railways, instructing him to take necessary measures to keep the speed limit of all the trains running on the existing railway within 20km.

Rezaul Karim told this correspondent, "Every year, seven to eight large animals are killed by the

trains. The track through the forest is only seven-and-a-half kilometres long. But the train goes so fast, the forest shakes."

"After we wrote a letter to the railway ministry over the matter, the ministry sent a letter to Bangladesh Railway on January 29 regarding the decision. It has been a month since the instructions were given but the local railway authorities are still not implementing them. A rare species of barking deer died two weeks ago after being hit by a train, only due to the negligence of the railway authorities," he added.

Mentioning the death of the deer a week ago, Assistant Conservator of Forests, Wildlife Management, and Nature Conservation Department Shyamal Kumar Mitra said, "There were scars on the body of the deer indicating

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Science should
be guided by
humanity
Speakers tell conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, City

Scientific achievements cannot sustain without the guidance of humanity, said speakers at a conference yesterday.

They made the remark at the seventh International Conference on Natural Science and Technology, organised by Asian University for Women (AUW) at a hotel in the port city.

In her speech, Dr Rubana Huq, vice chancellor of AUW, said science should be guided by humanity for its achievements to sustain.

"It's time to celebrate humanity's march towards scientific excellence; it's time to reflect on the major scientific advances happening in the world," she said.

In her keynote speech on "Research and capacity development – A case study for scientist in Bangladesh", Dr Firdausi Qadri, professor of public health at University of Bristol, UK, said oral vaccination programme is a must for controlling cholera, and pre-emptive vaccination

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Road crashes
claim six lives

STAR REPORT

At least -- people were killed and -- injured in road crashes in three districts yesterday, report our correspondents.

In Rangamati, one tourist was killed and seven were injured after a car fell into a deep ditch in Sajek valley of Baghaichhari upazila.

The accident occurred near Khasrang Resort of Sajek Tourist Centre around 5:00pm, said Nurul Alam, officer-in-charge of Sajek Police Station.

The deceased was identified as Fardin Hasan Vishal, 35, of Dhaka's Shyampur area, said the OC.

The injured, two of whom were in critical state, were undergoing treatment at Dighinala Upazila Health Complex in Khagrachhari, he added.

The accident occurred when the driver returning from Kanglak hill lost control of the vehicle and plunged into the ditch.

Later, with the help of army and police, the injured were rescued and sent to the health complex, the officer said. Identity of the injured tourists could not be confirmed till the filling of this report.

In Mymensingh, two people were killed in a collision at Bhoraduba area of Bhaluka upazila in the morning.

The deceased are Maulana Abdus Sattar, 28, hailing from Mymensingh Sadar upazila, and his friend Maulana Sajjad Hossain, 29, from

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Dry fish brings hope for
Kishoreganj locals

Dry fish, traditionally known as "shutki", has become a profitable business for Kishoreganj residents as the business expanded within the region in recent years. Farmers are finally being able to recover from their pandemic losses, as consumers of dry fish have also increased.

PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Kishoreganj farmers in the dry fish business are finally being able to turn back good profit to recover their losses.

"The number of consumers of dry fish has increased. So in recent years, we're enjoying a fair business," said Kajal Das, a dry fish businessman from Daspara in Kishoreganj's Kuliarchar upazila.

Kajal said he produced dry fish worth Tk 50 lakh this season. As the production season has almost ended, now the dry fish is ready for sale to the businessmen coming from different areas of the country including Mymensingh, Sylhet, Netrakona and Dhaka.

Kajal's sold dry fish worth Tk 39 lakh last year.

To dry fishes in traditional way, fishermen set up bamboo platform in the open field or spread the fishes on the mats made of bamboo slips on the ground.

During the coronavirus pandemic, those involved in this trade faced a terrible financial blow, said Sree Nibash Das, secretary of Satata Shutki Byabsaye Samity.

"But now, things are a little better. Many locals are considering producing dry fish as the business has picked up lately."

"A huge number of women are involved in cutting and cleaning fishes. Workers earn between Tk 8,000 and 10,000 every month, said Sree Nibash.

Parul Das, a worker of Daspara area said working in the dry fish trade helps her support her five-member family.

As the business has expanded in recent years, it has created job opportunities for hundreds of village people, mainly the women, said Gourango Das, president of the samity.

Hundreds of families in Kishoreganj haor areas are now dependent on this business, added

Gourango.

Masud Rana, senior fisheries officer in Kuliarchar, said 756 metric tonnes (MT) of dry fish have been produced in the upazila this year. Around 980 families are involved with dry fish production in the upazila, he added.

Contacted, Ripon Chandra Pal, district fisheries officer (DFO) in Kishoreganj, said 85,000 MT of fish was produced in the district through culture and capture this season, whereas the district's annual demand is around 72,000 MT. The surplus is supplied in other areas of the country.

He also said around 1,550 MT of dry fishes have been produced this season in the district.

Over 32,000 people, mostly women, are involved in this trade directly or indirectly.

The DFO also said Kuliarchar, Nikli, Bajitpur, Itna, Mithamoin, Astagram, Tarail, Karimganj and Bajitpur upazila are famous for dry fish, with Kuliarchar in the

lead.

The dry fish business has also bright export prospects and this item is hugely popular in neighbouring India and many other European countries.

Dry fishes are exported to Mizoram, Assam, Tripura, Darjeeling, Meghalaya and Kolkata in India through Akhaura border in Brahmanbaria. The list also includes different Middle East countries, United States of America, Japan, Singapore, Italy, United Kingdom, Canada and Malaysia.

This business has a bright prospect of producing huge amount of dry fishes in the district. For producing quality dry fishes, around 200 farmers are trained every year in Kishoreganj, said the DFO.

The demand of dry fishes of country varieties like boal, ayr and gajar captured from the open water bodies is ever increasing, the DFO added.

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Madaripur Public Works Division, Madaripur
Phone: 02478810125

Memo No: 25.36.5400.111.07.066.18-590

Date: 27.02.2023

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(Md. Kamrul Islam Khan)
Executive Engineer
PW Division, Madaripur.
ee_mdrpr@pwd.gov.bd

GD-403

Myanmar junta at war with its own people: UN

AFP, Geneva

Myanmar's military rulers now see civilians as their adversaries and are making war on the country's own people, harming even the basic ability to live, the United Nations said yesterday.

Two years on from the February 1, 2021 coup that toppled Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government, the situation is a "festering catastrophe", said UN human rights chief Volker Turk, adding that the military was operating with "complete impunity".

In a report examining the first two years since the takeover, the UN Human Rights Office said that at least 2,940 people had been verified as killed, of which nearly 30 percent died in detention. However, the true death toll is likely to be much higher.

James Rodehaver, head of the UN rights office's Myanmar team, said the armed forces were now actively fighting on around 13 different fronts.

"The military is stretched increasingly thin," he told a briefing in Geneva, so have relied increasingly on air power and artillery to clear the way for ground forces, with more than 300 airstrikes in the last year. Nearly 80 percent of 330 townships have been impacted by armed clashes.

DELAYED LOCAL POLLS Sri Lanka SC orders govt to go ahead

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's top court yesterday ordered the government to proceed with a delayed local election, overruling President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who said the country was too broke to pay for it.

The Supreme Court ordered treasury to grant funds for the polls which were originally planned for March 9, but put off indefinitely last week when the government refused to finance them.

Wickremesinghe had said the island nation needed its limited coffers for other priorities such as paying salaries.

The court issued a restraining order preventing the treasury chief and Wickremesinghe in his capacity as finance minister from "withholding funds allocated in the 2023 budget for the purpose of conducting the polls".

Tigers' home

FROM PAGE 12

Curran ended up picking four for 29 in 6.4 overs while Rashid also finished with a four-fer, having conceded 45 in 10 overs.

Earlier, Bangladesh perhaps missed the trick after Tamim won the toss and asked England to bat on a pitch that played a lot better in favour of the English batters.

Roy smashed his 12th ODI hundred and provided the platform for a big total. He alongside skipper Jos Buttler added 109 runs for the fourth wicket to help England in laying the platform for a big total.

Roy was eventually dismissed on 132 off 124 balls, featuring 18 fours and a six, while Buttler quick-fired his way to 76 off 64. Afterwards, cameos from Moeen, who scored 42 off 35 deliveries, and Curran, who stayed unbeaten on 33 off just 19 deliveries, ensured England added 57 runs in the last five overs of the innings.

On the bowling front for Bangladesh, pacer Taskin Ahmed picked up three while Mehedi Hasan Miraz bagged two wickets.

Left-arm seamer Sam Curran, upon his return to the England side, removed Liton Das and Najmul Hossain Shanto for golden ducks in the very first over of the innings. He went on to dismiss Mushfiqur Rahim in his next over, leaving the hosts struggling on nine for three inside the first three overs of the innings.

Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim attempted to stage a rescue act, adding 79 runs for the fourth wicket, and once the Bangladesh skipper was dismissed after scoring 35 off 65 deliveries at the bowling off Moeen Ali, the game began slipping away from Bangladesh's grasp.

It was then Adil Rashid who made sure the game was all but gone for the hosts as he removed half-centuryur Shakib before making Mahmudullah (32) his second victim. From then on, Bangladesh were never able to pose any form of threat.



Israeli security forces block Palestinian and Israeli peace activists protesting at the entrance of Huwara in the occupied West Bank, yesterday, following deadly violence by Israeli settlers. Israeli forces shot dead a 15-year-old Palestinian in West Bank late on Thursday, Palestinian officials said.

PHOTO: AFP

MILITARISATION IN ASIAN SEAS Quad powers concerned

AFP, New Delhi

The United States, Japan, India and Australia yesterday expressed concern over the militarisation of Asia's waters, in a veiled reference to China's growing presence in contested seas.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the foreign ministers of the other three nations assembled in New Delhi under the auspices of their Quad grouping.

In a joint statement issued by host India, the Quad called for "the importance of adherence to international law" in the East and South China Seas "to meet challenges to the maritime rules-based order".

"We strongly oppose any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo or increase tensions in the area," it said.

"We express serious concern at the militarisation of disputed features, the dangerous use of coast guard vessels and maritime militia and efforts to disrupt other countries' offshore resource exploitation activities," it added.

China claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea, through which trillions of dollars in trade passes annually.

It has ignored an international court ruling that its claims have no legal basis and built bases in the waters, alarming Washington and other Asian countries with territorial claims over its waters.

Cambodia opposition leader jailed for 27 years

AFP, Phnom Penh

Cambodian opposition leader Kem Sokha was sentenced to 27 years in jail for treason yesterday, a verdict that ruled him out of elections this year and was denounced by the US as a "miscarriage of justice".

Kem Sokha was accused of hatching a "secret plan" in collusion with foreign entities to topple the government of PM Hun Sen, upon his arrest in 2017.

Dhaka, Delhi

FROM PAGE 2

diplomatic mission in Dhaka soon.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh State Minister Md Shahriar Alam met Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, India's minister of state for external affairs, and both reiterated the importance of enhanced exchanges and cooperation on bilateral issues of mutual interest.

Shahriar Alam conveyed that the government of Bangladesh wishes to strengthen cooperation with the Northeastern states of India.

The state minister of Bangladesh is currently visiting New Delhi to attend the Raisina Dialogue 2023, India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics, jointly hosted by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and private think-tank Observer Research Foundation (ORF).

If the BNP takes part in the next general election, the election politics will be different. In that case, Jatiya Party may contest the polls under the Awami League-led alliance. They will not get that chance if they don't have the blessings of the prime minister," he said.

Asked about the issue, Quader said the ruling AL lawmakers raise a hue and cry and create obstacles if he speaks against the government.

"That's why I speak on different public interest issues at the beginning of my speeches in parliament," he added.

After the last national election, the JP decided to join the AL government.

The party, which is well-known for flip-flopping, later decided to serve as the main opposition in parliament with 26 MPs.

The JP became the main opposition in the 10th parliament, formed after the 2014 national election, which was boycotted by the BNP-led 20-party alliance. Three JP lawmakers were also made ministers.

JP timid inside

FROM PAGE 12

Of late, the JP has also been suffering from a leadership crisis which has visibly weakened its organisational standing, said Iftekharuzzaman.

The apparent anti-government rhetoric by JP leaders outside parliament may be intended to salvage the party's public image from further damage, he added.

On the other hand, the party's contrasting narratives in parliament may be aimed at keeping the option open in case the role of a "loyal opposition" becomes available again, observed the TIB executive director.

Parliamentary affairs expert Prof Nizam Uddin Ahmed said the JP is actually a "part of the AL-led grand alliance".

"They talked against the government on streets so that people consider them an opposition party. But they are afraid of the government and that's why they are not vocal about the allegations of widespread corruption against the government."

"Moreover, the election equation is still not clear.

distressed people. Instead, it stands by those who have made thousands of crores of taka through looting," he alleged.

The JP chief said "politics of looting" has started in the country and those who looted money from banks are being made ministers by the government.

On October 23 last year, the JP chief at a discussion in the capital said Bangladesh is "champion in mismanagement" as there is no democracy in the country. He said the country is seeing an "autocratic rule in the name of democracy".

Contacted, Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said the role of JP has always reflected inconsistency since the formation of the 10th parliament.

He said the JP was unsure of whether it was an opposition party or part of the ruling coalition. "Their leaders have admitted many times that theirs was neither a ruling nor an opposition party."

Biman blamed

FROM PAGE 12

The cost of pilgrimage under the government management reached Tk 6.83 lakh, according to an announcement of the religious affairs ministry.

Leaders of HAAB and Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB) said one of the main reasons for the rise in the cost is the fare of Biman Bangladesh Airlines.

Biman has increased the fare by 30 percent to make extra profit. As a result, the cost of packages under both the government and the private hajj management have increased by about Tk 1.61 lakh, they added.

Aviation expert Kazi Wahidul Alam, also editor of The Bangladesh Monitor, said Biman increases airfare for hajj pilgrims every year to cover its losses and to show that the airliner is a profitable entity.

Biman Managing Director and CEO Shafiu Azim was not available for comment on this issue.

However, a top Biman official, wishing anonymity, said their flights have to return to Dhaka from Saudi Arabia mostly empty, and as such they demand extra fare. Besides, he also mentioned the high price of jet fuel.

According to the information provided by the ATAB, Biman has increased airfare by almost 70 percent in the last six years.

In 2017, the fare was Tk 1.18 lakh, in 2018 it was Tk 1.28 lakh, in 2019 Tk 1.28 lakh, in 2020 Tk 1.38 lakh and in 2022 it was 1.4 lakh.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was no hajj pilgrimage from Bangladesh in 2020 and 2021, but the airfare was announced by Biman for the first of those two years.

ATAB and HAAB leaders said in a bid to get rid of the monopoly business from the flag carriers of Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia, the government should allow other airlines from India, Pakistan,

Malaysia and Indonesia to carry hajj pilgrims.

This year, 1.27 lakh Bangladeshis will be able to perform Hajj. Of the total, Biman is supposed to carry fifty percent and two flag carriers of Saudi Arabia – Saudia and Flynas – are supposed to carry the rest.

"We want an end to Biman's monopoly during hajj. That's why the government should allow all airlines operating on the Middle East route to carry hajj pilgrims," said HAAB President Shahdat Hossain Taslim.

Abdus Salam Aref, general secretary of ATAB, also said, "Biman wants to do its whole year's business only during the hajj season and that's why the airline is charging very high fare."

Of the total 1.27 lakh, only around 35,000 pilgrims have completed registration as of yesterday. HAAB and ATAB leaders believe the high cost of hajj package is to blame for the low number.

Scrap power deal

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) must send a power demand note to Adani every four months and if, due to changed circumstances, BPDB buys less power, Bangladesh will have to pay for the full amount mentioned in the demand note.

Furthermore, Bangladesh is required to purchase one-third of the total production capacity of the Adani plant, otherwise, Bangladesh must pay a fine.

In addition, Bangladesh must pay a capacity charge if the Adani power plant is forced to delay commercial production due to PDB's reduced demand.

Overall, the project imposes numerous obligations and risks on Bangladesh, the statement reads.

The green organisations said the government's present power development plan is not only coal-based but also foreign-dependent.

Under the plan, the percentage of imported electricity in the country's power distribution channel will increase to 15 percent in 2050 from five percent in 2021.

It is to be noted that excluding Afghanistan, at present Bangladesh imports the highest amount of electricity in South Asia.

The organisations said last year at a conference in Dhaka, they had demanded the government to formulate and execute a new power development plan, reducing dependency on coal-based power production, scraping import of electricity, and increasing the use of renewable energy.

They added that the re-analysis of the Adani deal proved the legitimacy of their demands, urging the government to reconsider those.

Ctg, CHT major hubs

FROM PAGE 12

trade in Bangladesh and the factors driving it.

Researchers recorded a total of 928 incidents of wildlife trading. Birds were traded the most followed by mammals and reptiles.

"Mammals are trafficked to Myanmar and India. There is a huge demand for their body parts in international market, especially in Asia," Nasir Uddin, lead researcher of the study, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The researchers identified 421 traders selling wildlife and interviewed 337 of them.

The study said birds were traded mainly as pets.

The mammals, on the other hand, were generally traded for meat, pelts, and body parts, which are often believed to have medicinal values. Some smaller mammal species, which could be carried and concealed easily, were traded alive, it added.

The study found trading of body parts of carnivore animals and deer in peri-urban markets near the Sundarbans.

Traders acknowledged the availability of body parts of high value species such as tigers, crocodiles, fishing cats and clouded leopards in some of those markets.

Trading of bushmeat, especially that of deer, was widespread, according to the study.

At least 20 wildlife traders said they don't keep high value species in shops or houses as they are difficult to conceal from law enforcers. Body parts of these animals or byproducts like oil are safer for trading, they added.

The researchers also found evidence of trading of endangered species, not endemic to the area, suggesting illegal trade from other countries.

"The availability of high-value wildlife in surrounding forests, the demand for bushmeat, the motivation of local poachers and traders, and the inefficiency of law enforcement agencies in and around peri-urban markets are driving the trade," the study said.

The study blamed law enforcers' inaction for the rampant illegal trading of birds. The law enforcers' perception of birds as low-value species is also helping the trade, it added.

Nasir Uddin said the government strengthen monitoring at the hill tracts and Sundarban areas and take specific measures to reduce the illegal trade.

Asked Md Sanaullah Patwary, director of the Wildlife Crime Control Unit of the Department of Forest, acknowledged the illegal trading, but claimed the situation was improving.

"It is not possible to stop wildlife trading completely. From 2012 to 2023, more than 49,000 animals were rescued. We are trying to improve the situation," he said.

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SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Barshon exudes brilliance

“We have a few songs including a Tagore rendition, which were released under the banner of G-series. We are working on our original numbers, which we plan to release soon.”

SHARMIN JOYA

With a keen interest in acting, Imtiaz Barshon, following a friend's advice, took part in a stage play held near his residential area in Chattogram. It changed his life, as he felt the urge of becoming an actor after being regular in theatres. He took appreciation course in the Fame School of Dance, Drama and Music.

Making his silver-screen debut with *Unoponchash Batash*, he caught the attention and further wowed the audience when he donned the role of Barrister in the web-series, *Kaiser*. Barshon, a member of Theatre Avant-garde, assisted noted filmmaker Nurul Alam Atique during his initial days. Yesterday, *Ora 7 Jon*, featuring Barshon hit the theatres across the country.

“My passion for acting grew gradually, as I was involved with theatre and began working in this fraternity,” shared Barshon. “Sort of unwillingly, yet, I had to join a regular job, which I was not interested in at all.” Resigning from the job, he shifted to Dhaka to pursue his ultimate dream of becoming an actor.

While Wahid Tareq's *Alganagar* was supposed to be his debut film, the film was



shelved due to some reasons. *“Unoponchash Batash”* and *Chandrabati Kotha* brought me appreciation, yet, my role in *Kaiser* was much more popular,”

digitisation, things have changed and every medium has a shelf life.”

Ora 7 Jon tells the tale of seven freedom fighters who run an operation during the Liberation War of Bangladesh. “We had to struggle getting good enough screens, as we all know that the Indian blockbuster film *Pathaan* was also likely to be released at the same time.” According to him, the hall owners were more interested in *Pathaan*, and Khijir Hayat Khan's *Ora 7 Jon* alongside Fakhru Arefeen Khan's *JK71* faced tough competition. “We really worked hard for our film, and to watch all the efforts going in vain is really heartbreaking.”

Apart from acting, Barshon is also the member of the newly formed band, Halley'r Dhumketu. “We have a few songs including a Tagore rendition, which were released under the banner of G-series. We are working on our original numbers, which we plan to release soon.”

As fans wait for *Kaiser* level 2, Barshon hinted that an announcement might come soon. He will be seen in the government-granted film *Japito Jibon*. He will also be seen in the Deepto Play original project, *Apolaap*.

TV TALKIES

Gilmore Girls: Finding warmth in the classics



Despite being released back in the early 90s, the warmth of *Gilmore Girls* still holds up to this day. Young heartthrobs, warm cocoa and the bitter-sweet bond of a mother daughter duo encapsulates everything that the series is all about. The romantic drama follows the lives of both the Lorelai Gilmores (Lauren Graham and Alexis Bledel), the daughter being named after her young mother in a morphine-induced euphoria.

While Lorelai, the mom struggles with raising her young daughter Rory, her own rich parents come into the picture, sweeping aside the values Lorelai had worked so hard to preserve. Meanwhile Rory struggles to grapple with her private school, a cute boy named Dean (Jared Padalecki) and keeping herself fed on their family friend, Sookie's (Melissa McCarthy) delicious food.

The 90s nostalgia and the quaint town of Stars Hollow provides the modern millennial with the perfect cosy atmosphere to escape into. In a time of teen angst and rom-coms, *Gilmore Girls* provided the reprieve that the older millennials required during that time in the form of Lorelai, who went about the series trying her best to recover from her past mistakes, while also ensuring that Rory grows up without having it held over her head.

WHAT'S ON THE GRAM

PUJA CHERY

Dhallywood bombshell, Puja Chery is setting social media on fire with her jaw dropping outfits. The glamorous diva donned a gorgeous off-white sequin saree, paired with a scintillating backless blouse—raising her glam level three times higher. The sweet, yet sensuous Puja Chery topped-off the whole look with a glossy lipstick, as she gave an enticing look in front of the camera to melt the hearts of her fans.

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Unlocked

Binge
Friday

Hoichoi
Dakghor

Disney plus
Star Wars: The
Mandalorian

Amazon Prime
Daisy Jones and
The Six

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



Rock N Rhythm 2.0

March 9 | 2 pm – 10 pm

International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB)



Classical Night

March 4 | 6 pm – 11 pm

Satori Meditations



Nutrition Stories

March 4-6 | 4 pm

Kala Kendra

Why the fall in remittances?

Take concrete steps to address loopholes in the system

For a country that depends on the earnings of migrant workers for its economic stability, it is certainly a worrying trend when remittance keeps on declining year after year. What is particularly perplexing is that this is happening despite an increasing number of Bangladeshis leaving for jobs abroad each year. In 2021, for instance, 617,209 workers left for overseas jobs, bringing in \$22.07 billion in remittances. In 2022, a record 1,135,873 workers found jobs abroad, which should have almost doubled our earnings. Yet, the remittance inflow was actually 1.5 percent lower year-on-year at \$21.25 billion.

One of the major reasons for this fall – and the one most often highlighted by the government – is that an unknown volume of money is being transacted through unofficial channels, i.e. hundi. Migrants prefer unofficial channels because they are offered better exchange rates than banks, they are not charged any transaction fees, there is no unnecessary paperwork or bureaucracy, and it is easier and considerably faster for them to send money to their families in the villages than through banks.

Given these realities, the question is, what has the government done to ease banking through official channels? The 2.5 percent incentive provided by banks is simply not sufficient to counter the attractive package offered by hundi agents, unless exchange rates are made competitive, transaction costs are removed, and bank services are made efficient and migrant-friendly. In addition, the lack of financial literacy and difficulty in accessing banks, particularly of female family members of migrants, must also be addressed through sensitive policymaking.

Another reason highlighted by migrant rights experts is the exorbitant recruitment costs, about 50-60 percent of which goes towards “paying” visa traders in the destination countries, even though selling or buying job visas is illegal. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, on average, the recruitment cost of a Bangladeshi migrant worker is \$4,903 or Tk 4.16 lakh, while the average monthly salary is Tk 23,093, which means it takes 17.6 months for a worker to simply recoup the amount he or she has to spend for recruitment. Many of them end up with no job even after spending such a huge sum of money, and are subsequently deported. Without meaningful efforts to reign in the ever-increasing recruitment costs, particularly the illegal visa trade both in home and destination countries, migrants will continue to bleed financially.

Additionally, most of our migrant workers are employed in low-paying, unskilled jobs, as a result of which the amount of money they eventually send back to the country – after their recruitment and living costs are deducted – are pitiful. According to the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), 78.64 percent of workers who migrated in 2022 were less skilled, and are prone to fraudulence and exploitation. It is of urgent importance that Bangladesh takes steps to upskill its workers and look for emerging markets where they can compete successfully.

The government needs to come up with a holistic plan to address the complex reasons that are holding back the growth of our remittance earnings. It needs to ensure coordination among different ministries to address migrants’ needs and concerns at all levels, and to provide them and their families with the necessary knowledge and skills to prosper.

Air pollution causing premature births!

What exactly is the government doing to improve Dhaka’s air quality?

We are alarmed by the findings of a new study that reveals that poor air quality is contributing to the rise in premature births and babies born with low birth weight in Dhaka. According to the study, jointly conducted by the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b) and the Directorate General of Family Planning, preterm births jumped from nine percent in 2014 to 15.2 percent in 2017, while the number of babies born with low birth weight increased from 20.6 percent to 36 percent during the same period, due to the mothers’ exposure to air pollution.

We know too well that Dhaka’s air is almost unbreathable these days. On the morning of March 1, it once again topped the list of cities around the world with the worst air quality, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) score of 198, which is considered “unhealthy.” Dhaka, however, is not the only city in the country with compromised air quality; other major cities are facing the same problem too. Such extremely polluted air is causing a host of diseases among our population – particularly children and the elderly – such as acute respiratory infections and heart diseases, as well as depression and other mental illnesses. The World Bank, in a report published in December, stated that around 80,000 people are killed every year in Bangladesh due to polluted air.

How much worse must things get before our government decides to take immediate steps to check air pollution? Unfortunately, till now, the government agencies concerned have not handled the issue with the importance it deserves, let alone prioritise it for the sake of people’s health and well-being. Will the knowledge that even newborn babies aren’t spared the curse of air pollution wake them up for their perpetual slumber?

In the absence of any substantial measures, the quality of air in our cities is deteriorating with each passing day. Vehicular emissions, fumes from factories and brick kilns, and dust accumulations from ill-planned development projects continue to pollute our air. Dust pollution from hundreds of construction sites has particularly become a choking nuisance for the city residents. Add to this the toxic microplastic that we are inhaling every day.

The entire situation is alarming, and we need to change it for our own survival – and particularly for our children. The government must stop treating it like a non-issue. We have repeatedly urged the authorities to declare air pollution a public health emergency and act accordingly. It is also time for the public to make collective demands for coordinated action from the authorities to make our cities liveable and breathable.

Shrinkflation: Downsizing in the time of inflation



BLOWIN’ IN THE WIND

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

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

One live poultry market in the capital has decided to sell pieces of chicken for those who cannot afford to buy an entire bird. This is not unusual: all supermarkets serve chicken cuts. However, the ones who cannot afford to buy a whole bird would probably not go to fancy supermarkets. Rather, they would get a portion directly from the poultry sellers. The price of one quarter of a small broiler chicken would come down to Tk 55-60. This will at least give them a fowl taste of a market that is fast spinning out of control.

We have heard of getting a share in the sacrifice of a cow. Getting a share of a bird or a fish is becoming popular as people are forced to downsize their monthly budgets. Our reputation as big eaters has taken a hit as we adjust to the recent price hikes. People have to “shrink” their food choices amid the inflation.

The other day, I was getting some confectionary items when a policeman walked in. He asked for the price of a sandwich; when told, he pondered for a while before leaving. I wanted to offer him the sandwich, but I realised it would be inappropriate for me to assume that he could not afford it. I did not want to offend him. But the thought left me disturbed. My middle-class sentiment did not let me reach out.

The provision for buying food in portions is meant for saving blushes. It is a face-saver euphemism like a “doggy bag” when diners request a box for the leftover food pretending that they would take it for their pets. Pretension is the hallmark of our middle class. They cannot queue up for subsidised food in an open market, yet they cannot afford to buy their essentials from the stores.

Inflation has hit hard. For ordinary people, the war in Ukraine or the tension in Taiwan is a distant event. For them, surviving every day has become a battle. The hike is everywhere: the prices of essentials, the bills for utilities, the costs of transportation and accommodation. The commodities are having a field day, while the value of humans is going down. Even the proverbial Bangalee resistance, found in the



Having to deal with the rising food prices, every day has become a battle of survival for ordinary people.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

idiomatic expression “While the heart bleeds, lips remain sealed,” is beginning to fall apart at the seam. The lopsided growth is not helping the cause either. The haves are having a buffet, and the have-nots are at the mercy of the market.

The month of Ramadan is unlikely to bring any relief as this month of fasting is also known for its traditional lavish breakfasts. As devotees overcompensate for their abstinence through their overindulgence during evening and morning meals, the market manipulators take full advantage of the seasonal food cravings. So while one group is planning furious feasts while they fast, another group is fast becoming furious.

With the IMF on board, food subsidies are off the table. So how do we address the silent famine that is looming large? In Karachi, where they

That is precisely what is happening in Bangladesh.

The state-level call for austerity is often ignored. Even the makers of rules are guilty of being the breakers. No one needs to know how many dishes were served at a party when people are starving. Yet, the media is never short of such images.

Did it occur to you that there is an extreme level of overindulgence all around? All the wedding parties now look the same. People go beyond their means to entertain. During the wedding season, nearly all the streets adjacent to my house remained covered under canopies of light. Some all-lit-up buildings here and there showed the sponsors who footed the bills for the lights. Then again, when we hear about our leaking reserve for the crude oil and liquefied natural gas needed to produce electricity, we realise how

greed in check. The hoarders who are planning to profit at the expense of ordinary consumers must be brought to book. The punters who are planning to make extra money keeping the ordinary people as hostages must be brought under control. Monitoring is the key. And those who will monitor also need to set a high ethical standard for themselves.

At the same time, innovative strategies need to be taken to lift the pressure from consumers with limited means. Anonymous charity rations can be introduced by stores for those who cannot afford essentials. Some of the initiatives during the pandemic can be reintroduced to help people who are struggling to make ends meet.

This is not the right time for pretension. Shrinkflation is here. The doggy bags are not for pets. They are for humans who cannot be downsized.

Make education accessible for children with disabilities

Maliha Noshin Khan and Marzuk AN Hossain are research associates at the Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD).
Md Kamruzzaman is senior research associate at BIGD.

MALIHA NOSHIN KHAN, MARZUK AN HOSSAIN
and MD KAMRUZZAMAN

According to the National Survey on Persons with Disabilities 2021 by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), there are about 4.5 million persons with disabilities in Bangladesh. This large population remains mostly excluded when it comes to access to education. While Bangladesh is nearing the goal of full primary school enrolment, only about 41 percent of children with disabilities of primary-school-going age (6-10 years) are enrolled in schools. The difference is partly due to their delayed admission. The rate is lower than the national average of 97 percent, and enrolment sharply drops to 24 percent for the 11-16 age group. So not only do children with disabilities have a low school enrolment rate and a delayed start, but they also tend to drop out early.

Inclusive development is stipulated in our constitution. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also seek to leave no one behind in the process of holistic development. Thus, excluding children with disabilities from education is tantamount to denying their constitutional and humanitarian rights.

An ongoing study by the Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), in collaboration with researchers from Cambridge University, found that the parents of children with disabilities value their access to mainstream education. The greatest interest was observed in

the households where both parents work. These parents do not have the opportunity to spend much time on their children’s education and self-care needs. Most parents, particularly those working outside, often cannot make the necessary adjustments for a more inclusive household infrastructure due to financial limitations or simply the lack of knowledge and awareness. When both parents work, it is difficult

Achieving inclusive education in Bangladesh will require learning from the teachers, students, and parents most closely involved with dealing with children with disabilities. Teachers need to be trained regularly. Interactive sessions between parents and teachers are also necessary.

to leave their child with a disability at home alone. Access to good primary education would not only enhance the skills of their children, but also provide reliable day-care support.

In this context, Bangladesh has some commendable laws in place. The most important of those laws states that no school can discriminate against a child based on their disability in the admission process, according to the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013. The BIGD study found that government primary schools generally follow this policy. Substantial difficulties in educating children with disabilities still remain.

handle these multifaceted issues while keeping the quality of education intact. The parents of children with disabilities also raised concerns about these issues in school.

However, there have been some positive developments recently. To comply with the law and the SDGs, about 38 percent of schools now have entrances with ramps for wheelchair users and toilets with high commodes for ease of access. However, there are still gaps. For example, in some cases, schools with ramps still have the bottom frame (choukath) of the door, preventing wheelchair access to school buildings or classes without help. In

many cases, accessing high commodes requires climbing steps, again making it difficult for a child who has difficulty walking.

One could argue that given the resource-intensive nature of their education, special schools could be built for children with disabilities. But children get their first and most expansive exposure to the outside world at school. Keeping children away from mainstream education means hindering their connection to the real world. When they learn and grow with other children, they gain critical social skills, confidence, and networks. It also raises awareness and a desire for inclusion among teachers, other children, and society as a whole.

Achieving inclusive education in Bangladesh will require learning from the teachers, students, and parents most closely involved with dealing with children with disabilities. Teachers need to be trained regularly. Interactive sessions between parents and teachers are also necessary at the beginning of each school year to ensure that teachers are well aware of the needs of the children they teach.

Ensuring inclusive education requires substantial investment and continuous learning. So, the improvements are likely to be gradual. Getting the basics right should be the priority; the more challenging targets, such as introducing inclusive teaching materials like braille, can be addressed in the longer term. But it will require the sustained commitment of policymakers and an application of focused, clever strategies. We hope the government and other stakeholders strive to invest in inclusive education in Bangladesh.

What makes a good teacher in the 21st century?

Over the next two months, *The Daily Star* will publish op-eds on six themes representing some of the most basic and important issues of higher education in Bangladesh. These articles will be written by four educators – professionals who have vast experience in learning, teaching, publishing, and managing various aspects of a university both in Bangladesh and the United States.

Despite some significant achievements in Bangladesh over the past few decades, some of the major problems that plague our education system make the graduates of our higher educational institutions some of the least prepared for the new age. The purpose of this project is to highlight the problems of low quality of education, lack of qualified teachers, lack of funding, low literacy rates, gender disparities, inadequate teacher training, limited use of technology, and limited access to higher

education compared to the need. The authors will also attempt to help us look for solutions.

The Bangladesh government with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at its helm has launched a major initiative to turn the recent technological achievements of our nation (“Digital Bangladesh”) into its next logical step – “Smart Bangladesh.” This is a laudable step. However, what needs to happen in order for this lofty goal to become a reality is precisely what this set of articles will be focusing on: recalibrate our education system to make it robust, responsive, vibrant and creative, with the goal of turning our workforce into a capable generation of Bangladeshis who can successfully participate in the fast-moving global economy. We certainly need to celebrate the spectacular economic growth of our nation over the past few decades spearheaded by the current government, but we must also recognise that unless we prepare our

workforce for the 21st century, we’ll risk falling behind in the race.

Another goal of this project is to create various forms of interactions between the academics, students, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders via live discussions, online seminars, on-campus discussions, and written correspondence to foster awareness and to encourage the stakeholders to assist with the government’s goal of becoming a “smart” nation. The authors will themselves interact via all forms of social media to generate enough interest to come up with ideas to transform higher education.

The Daily Star welcomes and encourages any and all thoughts, ideas and recommendations from our respected readers.

MAHFUZ ANAM
Editor and publisher, *The Daily Star*



Dr Ahrar Ahmad is professor emeritus at Black Hills State University in the US, and director general of Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation in Dhaka.

AHRAR AHMAD

For a person who, even as a child, has always wanted to be an educator, and has been one for all his professional career, being a good teacher has remained a dream, entailed a struggle, and encouraged an (elusive) quest. It is understood that a “good teacher” is not a finished product or a final condition, but a constant process of discovery and change. I am still taking notes.

Previously, we sought to explore, and learn from, the great “masters” and icons of education – Socrates, Confucius, Chanakya, Jean Piaget, Anne Sullivan, Paulo Freire, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Maria Montessori and others. We searched for the philosophical foundations, approaches and insights that would enlighten and guide us.

Today, the question of being a “good teacher” generates a new vernacular (jargon), and a profusion of techniques, strategies and “mechanistic” pedagogical skills, which centre on new testing regimes that are standardised, information-based and memory-dependent. The “goodness” of teachers is measured and rewarded by their ability to get their students to pass these exams. William Butler Yeats (some say Plutarch) had warned us that “education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” Sadly, current educational practices defy that wisdom, and thereby squelch creativity and inspiration.

The attributes of a good teacher are universal. They must have expertise and enthusiasm about subject matter, be prepared and organised for every class, be willing to admit mistakes, consider different points of view and be flexible, and must recognise the autonomy and agency of each student in an environment where their safety, equality and sense of belongingness are guaranteed.

Teachers must also be role models in terms of maintaining personal dignity, patience, professionalism, compassion, moral authority and fairness in all matters. They must remember that they are preparing students for life not for jumping through hoops, and that inculcating a civic consciousness and an inclusive world view, provoking them to ask questions, and encouraging them to be critical thinkers, remain their most urgent challenges. As Socrates indicated, “I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think.” If one can do that, one is well on the way to achieving greatness as a teacher.

If there is one quality that defines great teachers, it would be “caring” – they care about *what* they teach, *who* they teach, and *why* they teach. The first would imply their humility and willingness to enhance their knowledge through research and scholarship; the second their commitment to the intellectual growth and betterment of their students; and third their belief in the transformational and moral power of education itself. *How* they teach would only form a subtext in the context of the first three conditions.



ILLUSTRATION:
BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY



Dr Adnan Zillur Morshed is an architect, architectural historian, urbanist, and professor. He teaches at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, and serves as the executive director of the Centre for Inclusive Architecture and Urbanism at Brac University.

ADNAN ZILLUR MORSHED

I have long fancied being a student of two great university professors: Amartya Sen (1933-) and Edward Said (1935-2003). Each of them changed, in their distinctive philosophical ways, how we think about our world and its problems. Sen encouraged us to see development not merely as economic growth but as a challenge of social justice. Said enlightened us on how the West dominates the world not necessarily through military power but through culture. I wonder how such gifted professors as Sen and Said conducted their classes, treated students in the classroom, crafted their syllabi, and graded assignments. Were they as brilliant in the classroom as they are in their books?


Having taught both in Bangladesh and the US for three decades, I am haunted and stimulated by questions such as, what traits make a university professor great? Great for whom? Students? Colleagues? University? Humanity? Is the notion of “great” culture-specific or universal? Does it hinge on their capacity to expand the boundaries of what we can know? How do we mediate between the intellectual “greatness” and classroom “effectiveness” of a university professor?

Let’s picture the characteristics of an “ideal” university professor (we will call him The Professor) in Bangladesh’s current higher education landscape, often plagued by an uninspiring learning environment. First, The Professor is comfortable with self-scrutiny and adept at crossing disciplinary boundaries. While an expert in her/his subject areas, s/he is relentlessly up-to-date on disciplinary challenges in that area. The Professor creates a vibrant classroom by inspiring students on how to think, not what to think. S/he makes students aware that they not only need to master the basics of their discipline, but also develop an inquisitive mind.

The Professor comes to class prepared, organised, and humble, and makes course contents interesting, delivered with depth, clarity, and humour. S/he treats all students respectfully irrespective of their backgrounds, does not tolerate any academic cronyism, and is gender-sensitive. S/he understands the zeitgeist, peculiarities, and the minds of current generations of social-media-conscious learners, who are often more tech-savvy than her/him.

The Professor refutes the false binary of teaching and research, and views them as mutually necessary for academic growth. S/he is collegial and willing to collaborate with colleagues even if they represent different pedagogical orientations. “My teachers at Trinity were very fine economists and each original and inspiring – in their distinct ways. But they did not agree with each other,” wrote Amartya Sen in his autobiography *Home in the World* (2021). This type of “disagreement” drives a university’s intellectual health.

The Professor explains politics to students without being political and partisan. S/he knows how to choreograph the much valorised “inspiration factor” in the classroom. The American thinker William A Ward wrote, “The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.” Given the commodification of education in Bangladeshi universities, are “inspired” students enough? Inspired to do what? Accumulate wealth in dogmatic self-interest or try to make the world a better place? A great professor makes the latter an effortlessly obvious choice.



Dr Syed Saad Andaleeb is distinguished professor emeritus at Pennsylvania State University in the US, former faculty member of the IBA, Dhaka University, and former vice-chancellor of Brac University.


SYED SAAD ANDALEEB

An ideal teacher is an agent of change, transforming all who come into her/his ambit. As a sensei or guru, this “mystery” person is depicted by a long list of characteristics based on personality, knowledgeability, philosophy, professionalism, imitability, and the like.

The ideal teacher is ultimately one’s own creation, based on experiences, personal fancy, or even fantasy. For a fair number of students, interestingly, such a teacher is the one who gives good grades! This is indeed misdirected, calling for a need to recalibrate.

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, philosopher, and advocate of critical pedagogy, observed, “The teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, but one who is him/herself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.” According to Albert Einstein, “It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.”

While the two views focus on what a great teacher “does,” it is also important to reflect on what s/he “is” – a person who spans three concentric spheres expressing her/his essence, enhancements, and the extras: the 3Es. It is the “is” that fortifies, energises, and enables the “does.” “Essence” is reflected in a



Dr Halimur R Khan is a university professor and can be reached at halimurkhan@post.harvard.edu

HALIMUR R KHAN

If you’re reading this, you’re probably also thinking: *Who was my favourite teacher?* If you were really lucky, your heart must be warming at the thought of this great teacher!

A great teacher inspires her/his students, builds confidence in their abilities and often lights a fire in their hearts such that it brightens the entire world.

A teacher is a lot of things: organised yet flexible, disciplined yet empathic, a mentor yet a friend; s/he has the knowledge, yet s/he challenges the pupil to seek it for themselves; s/he is fluent in and uses educational technology, and yet alerts students that the technology is as good as the learner her/himself. A teacher is all these and a lot more.

Les Brown is a world-renowned American motivational speaker, mesmerising in his ability to inspire millions into action and to help overcome odds. Born in an abandoned house, he struggled to survive and was a mediocre student at school. He had an exceptionally bright twin brother; so, the classmates nicknamed

teacher’s expertise, intention, authenticity, engaging spirit, a sense of fairness, respect for the learner, and creativity.

“Enhancements” are embodied in preparedness, friendliness and empathy, clarity in communications, listening skills, entertaining deportment, enthusiasm, effective classroom management skills, and feedback quality.

The “extras” make it all come together through one’s credentials, appearance, cleanliness, good personal hygiene, ease of making eye contact, and a clear and easy-to-follow voice. When absent, they are considerable distractors.

Interestingly, there’s an intrinsic dynamism we found in a study on what students seek in their teachers as they mature. In their freshman year, the teacher’s *friendliness* and ability to *entertain*, with *good communication skills* and *enthusiasm*, stand out as students prepare for a long academic journey. Sophomores

value *clarity*, *organisation*, and a *thought-provoking time* in the classroom and beyond. Juniors seek a guide who allows *freedom* to *explore*, *create*, and *express* new ideas as they begin to strike out on their own. They also expect *fairness* – to be justly rewarded for their creative exploits. Seniors are looking for their lighthouse, their guru: one who is *authentic* and *knowledgeable* in her/his field, *inspiring* their imagination and *instilling* in them a desire to become trailblazers. In a profession that demands high integrity, enormous responsibility, and sustained hard work, I have tried to emulate some of my best and most inspiring teachers. In so doing, I have become a work-in-progress – learning, probing, questioning, discovering, innovating, and evolving. Along the way, I have also learnt to teach less, reach more – reach the mind, the heart, and the soul of the learner. The journey is an arduous one, sometimes thankless. For me, that journey and the inherent struggle continues.

him “DT” – the “dumb twin.”

One day, a teacher asked Les to come to the board and solve a problem. Les refused. “I can’t,” he said. The teacher encouragingly said, “Of course you can.” “But I can’t,” Les insisted. “I’m mentally handicapped.” The classmates erupted in laughter, but the teacher walked over, looked him straight in the eye and said, “Don’t ever say that again.” Something moved inside the boy and he never forgot those words. Throughout the rest of his life, Les overcame incredible odds, thanks to the trust and inspiration of that teacher, and embodied the phrase he became famous for: *You have greatness within you!*

Actress Emily Blunt stuttered as a child; Maya Angelou was mute after being abused as a child, and in fourth grade, Bill Gates couldn’t say a word in the class. Each was encouraged to

become who they are today by an encouraging teacher.

While there are some excellent teachers in our country, the majority are no good primarily because they lack training. Great teachers are trained and not always born. All teachers, especially primary level ones, must be trained to become inspiring and challenging.

Great teachers inspire like no one else. They are special because they stand guard between the safe space of home and the brutal outside world. Great teachers see potential in us that others, even we ourselves, can’t see. They seem to come along at just the right moment when we need them the most. Above all, great teachers give us the courage to find our own way to realise that nothing is impossible, if we just put our minds to it.

And that’s a *great* teacher.

‘The team didn’t click’

SPORTS REPORTER

Compared to the first ODI, Bangladesh were hardly able to put up a fight in the second match as the hosts were blown away by some clinical cricket from England, who sealed the three-match series with a game to spare in Mirpur yesterday.

Nothing seemed to go right for Bangladesh since skipper Tamim Iqbal opted to field, a decision that raise some eyebrows, as England piled on 326 for seven courtesy of a brilliant Jason Roy hundred. In reply, the Tigers surrendered helplessly and were bundled out for 194.

According to Tamim, the decision to bowl first on a comparatively better Mirpur surface was a collective call from the team. He also admitted that the reason for their downfall was an inability to play as a unit.

“I think it was disappointing how we started with the ball. There was some swing for the first 4-5 overs and we had a few opportunities with run-outs but we couldn’t take them. When you lose a game like this, you can point fingers at a lot of people. But I think we didn’t do well as a team; we didn’t click,” Tamim said at the post-match presentation.

Concerns regarding batting also continued to rise during head coach Chandika Hathurusingha first assignment. Chasing a huge target, Bangladesh were reeling on nine for three inside three overs before Tamim and half-centurion Shakib Al Hasan tried to reduce arrears. But the Tigers eventually succumbed to the pressure of the required run-rate.

“When you lose three wickets in the first two-three overs, it becomes very difficult. Shakib and I tried to give ourselves time. My shots didn’t come out today, but I felt that was the right approach when chasing over 300. The intent Shakib showed was good, but sadly it didn’t work out. We will try to finish the series on a high now,” he said.

The defeat not only snapped Bangladesh’s seven-series win streak in ODIs at home but was also a reality check for Tamim and Co. as they look ahead to the 2023 ODI World Cup in India.

From ‘Bazball’ to baseball

AFP, Miami

England cricketers Harry Brook and Issy Wong have been named Major League Baseball Europe ‘ambassadors’ ahead of June’s games at London. Brook is to join the St.Louis Cardinals for their spring training in Florida.

“I’m really excited for this partnership and can’t wait to try my hand at hitting some home runs,” Brook said in an MLB press release.

“I’m intrigued to see how different it is to cricket and what similarities there are too - will a home run feel as good as hitting a six?” he said.



Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal and all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan tried to rebuild the innings following (bottom) an early three-wicket burst from England pacer Sam Curran. But the departure of the two stalwarts left the home side a mountain to climb as the Tigers suffered a ...run defeat and a rare home series defeat.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Tigers lack solutions as they step out of comfort zone

SPORTS REPORTER

England are a side hardened by battles in many different conditions, forged through extraordinary defeats and dazzling success. Bangladesh have a new-found confidence in ODIs and they had gone seven consecutive series without losing at home.

When England came, Bangladesh knew they were up against a different kind of team. Usually against such battle-hardened opponents, especially if they are from outside the subcontinent, Bangladesh’s go-to strategy had been to resort to low and slow wickets that befuddle teams.

This time, they wanted to test themselves and it was one of the biggest risks they had taken at home in recent years.

margin – on a flat track at Chattogram and that they needed improvements on these kinds of surfaces was also suggestive of that performance.

“We have been discussing about playing better on true wickets. You will see a



reflection of our thinking, starting from this series,” skipper Tamim Iqbal had said before the start of the series. He had been open to short-term failures in favour of long-term gains with the World Cup to come and felt success would follow in two-three months’ time.

“When I spoke about true wickets, I said that we couldn’t be result oriented all the time. When we win games in Bangladesh, it doesn’t mean that we have won on bad wickets; we have also won on true wickets. When you are trying to change these things, many things will happen – you will win and lose –and you have to take it as part of the process,” the skipper said yesterday after England won the series with 132-run victory in the second ODI.

That a big part of Tigers’ improvement must now come from individual improvements in particular areas was apparent. Chattogram will host the third

and final ODI of the series and only a constructive effort in all three departments will help avoid a series whitewash.

The bowlers have done well in the first ODI but were made to toil under the sweltering sun by Jason Roy and Jos Buttler. Taskin Ahmed held up his end of the bargain with early wickets but the bowlers all ended up on the expensive side. Performances from key pacer Mustafizur Rahman were abysmal. He lacked threat with the ball and while his defensive abilities were once again key to his selection, he too ended up on the expensive side.

The spinners will have a role to play at the World Cup, but on sporting tracks, they are not expected to hold the sway they have in Mirpur. Adil Rashid picked up four wickets and the Tigers team management must answer to the puzzle of how to handle leg spinners better on surfaces where turn is available.

Pace was not a problem during the tour of South Africa, but swing has always been a thorn for the top-order, and that was once again emphasised by Sam Curran’s devastating early spell. The England pacer bagged three early wickets to peg Bangladesh back and he used the new ball to his advantage, getting the ball to move.

The biggest task is perhaps reserved for Bangladesh’s top-order, with Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim not been amongst the runs lately while Mahmudullah Riyad and Afif Hossain amble on with scores in the 20s and 30s.

When the task was to chase down a considerably big total, Bangladesh showed there are gaps they need to plug to be ready for subcontinental tracks.

Smith savours rare Aus win in India

REUTERS, Indore

Steve Smith knows how difficult it is to win a Test in India so Australia’s stand-in captain was thrilled to bits after guiding his team to a nine-wicket victory in the third Test in Indore on Friday.

Outplayed in Nagpur and Delhi, Australia bounced back in the four-Test series with a comprehensive victory well inside three days of the spin-dominated low-scoring contest.

Leading the side as regular skipper Pat Cummins flew home to be with his ailing mother, Smith marshalled his bowlers well and took a stunning catch to dismiss Cheteshwar Pujara whose second



innings 59 was the only half-century by an Indian in the low-scoring match.

“They are pretty hard to come by,” Smith told reporters, referring to wins in India, after only the second Australia has notched up in their last 18 attempts.

“For us to get on top in this game, particularly after losing the toss ... it shows the talent in this group and the belief we’ve got in ourselves.”

Arsenal look to pull clear

AFP, London

Arsenal aim to pull further clear of Manchester City in the Premier League title race this weekend. The Gunners are hot favourites to see off Bournemouth at the Emirates, while City face a Newcastle side hoping to put the bitter disappointment of their League Cup final defeat behind them.

Tottenham must bounce back quickly from an FA Cup exit to maintain their advantage over Newcastle and Liverpool in the race for a top-four finish.

Arsenal’s bid for a first league title in 19 years looked to be on shaky ground last month when they took just one point from three games, including a 3-1 home defeat to City.

But Mikel Arteta’s side have responded in style with three straight wins to carve out a five-point lead at the top of the table.

More of the same will be expected from Arsenal against a relegation-threatened Bournemouth side.

City face a tougher test on paper with the visit of Newcastle, but there is little for the champions to fear in the Magpies’ form of late.

Newcastle have slipped outside the top four after winning just once in the Premier League in 2023 so far.

A big week for Tottenham got off to the worst possible start with defeat in their FA fifth-round match against Championship side Sheffield United.

Spurs, who have not won a trophy since 2008, have to overturn a 1-0 first-leg deficit when they host AC Milan in the Champions League last 16 next week.

World aquatics boss promises support

SPORTS REPORTER

World Aquatics president Husain Al Musallam promised to support Bangladesh in their efforts to develop swimming after the Qatari organiser watched a few events and distributed prizes among swimmers during the Sheikh Kamal 2nd Bangladesh Youth Games at the Syed Nazrul Islam Swimming Complex in Mirpur yesterday.

Al Musallam and Vinod Kumar Tiwari, the president of International Kabaddi Federation, paid a short visit to Bangladesh to grace the Bangladesh Youth Games upon invitation from the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA).

Vinod attended the closing ceremony of the Kabaddi event on Thursday while Al Musallam attend the closing ceremony

following the swim events after meeting with BOA president and Army Chief SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, BOA secretary general Syed Shahed Reza and Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) president and Navy chief Admiral M Shaheen Iqbal.

“I feel at my home in these amiable surroundings. Bangladesh has a deep legacy in sports and we are here to extend our full support to Bangladesh” Al Musallam told reporters in Mirpur.

“I can say that World Aquatics will support Bangladesh through three steps. The first will

be in expanding the sport at the grassroots level. Secondly, we will help swimmers develop technically and tactically with advanced training. Another priority is to raise the standards of coaches and the judges,” Al Musallam, also the director general of the Olympic Council of Asia and secretary general of the Kuwait Olympic Committee, said.

BSF general secretary BM Saif added that the World Aquatics president had also promised to provide them with a 25-meter pool as well as arrange a coach for the national swimmers.

Around 16 swimming events concluded, with Dhaka Division topping the medals table with 13 gold medals followed by Khulna and Chattogram, who won three and two gold medals respectively after the boy’s 50m breaststroke was shared

by two swimmers.

The multi-sport extravaganza is set to conclude today and the e boys’ and girls’ 100m sprints are scheduled to be completed during the closing ceremony at the Army Stadium in Banani.

When this report was filed, defending champions Dhaka Division were leading the table, featuring eight divisions, with 46 gold medals, followed by Chattogram Division and Khulna Division, who were second and third with 39 and 35 gold medals respectively.

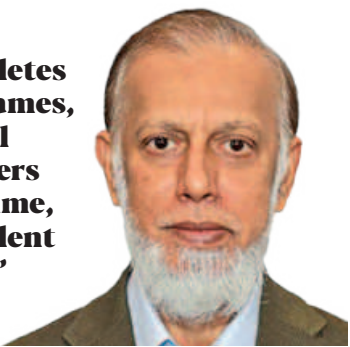


Paris Saint-Germain forward Kylian Mbappe (R) tries to juggle the ball as Lionel Messi and Gianluigi Donnarumma look on during a training session in Saint-Germain-en-Laye on Friday, on the eve of their L1 fixture against Nantes. Mbappe will be looking for the goal that will put him out on his own as the club’s all-time top scorer.

PHOTO: AFP

“The inaugural edition of the Youth Games produced a lot of talented athletes who later shone in the Bangladesh Games, thus making their way to the national squad. We have also provided 36 players with further training at BKSP. This time, we are determined to continue the talent hunt and provide advanced training.”

BOA vice-president
BASHIR AHMED



Little more than an empty gesture

“Although the federations have financial limitations, I think they should come forward and take the responsibility of grooming players and bringing talented players into training. We will definitely help them continue training.”

ANISUR RAHMAN

Despite the introduction of the Bangladesh Youth Games, the nation is still apparently dwelling in the “something is better than nothing” era when it comes to forging a proper pipeline for athletes.

While neighbouring India has been staging the ‘Khelo India Youth Games’ every year at the cost of hundreds of crores since 2018, Bangladesh, which staged its first Youth Games in the same year, remains light years behind.

On the surface, the two crore taka that has been allocated to the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) for the ongoing 2nd Bangladesh Youth Games – against an estimated budget of 40 crore, later revised to 22.25 crore – simply pales in comparison to the 1,045 crore rupees allotted for the sixth edition of the Khelo India Youth Games 2023.

But whereas the BOA has to be satisfied by providing a one-off long-term training programme to the best players from each discipline, India has been providing the top two players from each discipline in the Khelo India Youth Games with an eight year scholarship amounting to Rs 5 lakh annually.

Through such incentives, India has been encouraging world-class athletes and winning medals from the biggest multi-sports extravaganza such as the Olympics, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. Bangladesh,



the federations have financial limitations, I think they should come forward and take the responsibility of grooming players and bringing talented players into training. We will definitely help them continue training.”

He added: “We also need infrastructure to facilitate training and build up coaches who can train the athletes at a higher level. We will try to bring high-performance coaches from abroad to train athletes or send athletes with the potential to China, Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia or India for training ahead of big international competitions.”

But it remains questionable whether the Youth Games has been serving its purpose.

The BOA introduced the Youth Games in 2018, five years after bringing back the Bangladesh Games which had been on hiatus for 12 years, in an attempt to increase the youth’s interest towards sports and provide a rare platform for young athletes since most national federations do not have age-group level competitions.

Although the move was hailed, the first edition drew plenty of criticism from the sports fraternity due to messy arrangements, especially at the district level, where oddities included athletes running barefoot with jerseys draped over their day-to-day outfits.

“Last time we did not know how to start and how to finish because there was no example to follow. So, there were many problems during the first edition. But this time around we took those aspects into consideration and rectified the mistakes before holding the 2nd edition of the Games,” Reza said.

Reza also pointed out some positives, such

as the increasing number of participants. The first edition featured over 27,000 athletes and officials, which has grown to 60,000 for the second edition.

“Representatives from districts, divisions and federations were very cordial this time. Besides, we also disbursed money before the start of the Games at the district level,” Reza said. “I don’t want to claim that everything is going perfectly, but I want to say that this time it is being held in a much more organised way compared to the first edition.”

Reza also claimed that the event was creating organisers, not just athletes.

“An organiser is recognised when he produces a good player and brings good results. This time there was a competition among organisers, which was absent in the previous edition, because organisers were very keen to deliver results from their own districts.”

Reza also opined that holding the Bangladesh Games and Youth Games simultaneously every two years would have a more significant impact in grooming players.

Yet, with 4,000 athletes coming into Dhaka for the final phase to contest 195 events across 24 disciplines, things have been no smoother. Federation officials remain unhappy after being asked to complete their respective events in Dhaka inside three days as they felt it compromised standards.

The BOA, however, maintained that constraints in the budget left no other option, leaving many to wonder how long the BOA can hope to take things forward in lieu of significant financial involvement from the government in sports development.

Urmi’s trajectory verifies Youth Games’ importance

After grabbing the spotlight in the 2018 Youth Games, shuttler Urmi Akter went on to become the country’s number one-ranked female badminton star. In an exclusive interview with Sabbir Hossain of The Daily Star, Urmi addressed the impact the Youth Games competition had to set her professional career in motion. She also revisited her successful journey so far, including the obstacles faced along the way and more. The excerpts are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): Could you recall your feelings after bagging two gold medals in the inaugural Youth games in 2018?

Urmi Akter (UA): Participating in the very prestigious Youth Games alone was a big breakthrough for me, and earning two golds made it more pleasant as many of the participants didn’t quite achieve desired results. I expected a good result there but what I accomplished was beyond my expectation. Back then, I was happy to describe my feelings in words. But looking back now, when reminded of that event, it feels like a dream.

DS: What was the after-effect of that success?

UA: Having passed through the age-level badminton competitions successfully, I became a senior national player before the 2018 Youth Games, where the badminton competition was a U-17 one. There I told my coach that I wanted to achieve further glory at senior level, and afterwards I began playing with the determination to become a professional player while putting extra effort during practice.

DS: Tell us about your achievements at senior level.

UA: I won gold three times in a row in women’s singles and doubles categories in the Ranking Championship, and in the mixed doubles category of the tournament, I was champion once and runners-up twice. I was also crowned champion of the women’s singles badminton event in the [Bangabandhu 9th] Bangladesh Games in 2021. Before that, I secured bronze in the mixed doubles category in the 2019 South Asian Games.

DS: Did you face obstacles in your early days?

UA: For every successful sportsperson in Bangladesh, I think the backstory of struggle is quite mandatory. And if the player is a girl, it becomes even tougher. To reach a certain level, she must overcome a lot of obstacles. When I started playing alongside the boys, people used to say negative things, like calling me “shameless”, but the support of my parents was always there. However, my district association in Khulna did not provide much for me. So, I moved to Pabna in 2017 to get better facilities. I’m currently an employee of the Bangladesh Army.

DS: What is your future goal?

UA: I want to step up and win gold in the 2024 South Asian Games as I couldn’t do so in its previous editions. I hope the Bangladesh Badminton Federation will arrange more camps, provide us with more facilities and the necessary financial support, to raise our performance level.



Youth Games: Poor input leads to ‘almost zero output’

MOSTAFA SHABUJ from Bogura

The final round of the Sheikh Kamal 2nd Bangladesh Youth Games was inaugurated on 26th February by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, but those engaged with the event expressed concern about being able to unearth true talents from the grassroots level due to indiscipline and the poor quality of provided facilities.

In Bogura, the Youth Games featured a total of 600 participants from 12 upazila participating across six events, including football, kabaddi, swimming, wushu, taekwondo and athletics. Of those 600, 14 made it to the final stage in Dhaka on behalf of Rajshahi division, according to data provided by Bogura District Sports Association (DSA).

When asked about the selection of participants, a member of the Bogura DSA, wishing to remain anonymous, said: “There was pressure to organise the event. The participants were selected from different schools and colleges randomly, without being given minimum training or knowledge about national-level sports competitions. So, the positive output is almost zero per cent at the national level.”

Expanding on what he meant, he added: “Some participants who came to play football had never played 90-minute games before. Others, who came for swimming, athletics, ushu and taekwondo meets, did not know the rules of the games. A few of them were even selected for the final phase but they cannot compete with players from



urban institutions or institutions like BKSP. The youth games is an eyewash for the grassroots level games,” he lamented.

“Aside from that, there has been no follow-up for the kids who participated in the Youth Games. There are no facilities nor equipment, training or trainers for participants,” he added.

When asked about the selection process, Md. Masud Rana, district sports officer of Bogura, said: “We asked the UNO (Upazila Nirbahi Officer) and upazila sports associations to find participants. They selected participants from different educational institutions. Those institutions should also have provided training because they take a yearly charge for equipment. They have teacher too.”

When asked the budgetary

constraints at the district level, Masud Rana added that simply relying on the government to provide all the funds would be remiss, so they managed some local sponsors.

He added that he believed there should be residential accommodations and training during the events in order to get better results. When asked about the lack of facilities, Rana said: “If we want better outcomes, the allocation should be increased. School-college level sports should be monitored properly. We need to provide equipment at the grassroots level and arrange regular competitions or events at the upazila and district levels.”

If these areas are improved, then the aim of the Youth Games will be fulfilled, he opined.



WILDLIFE TRADE

Ctg, CHT major hubs, Dhaka key destination

Says study published in Cambridge Univ journal

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Chattogram and the three hill districts are the main hubs of wildlife trade in Bangladesh, according to a recent study.

The study titled “Exploring market-based wildlife trade dynamics in Bangladesh” surveyed 13 wildlife markets across the country.

Of all the species collected for trading, half of them are sent to Dhaka, the study found.

Chattogram and Khulna are the two other major destinations, said the study published in a Cambridge University Press journal in November last year.

Outside the country, Thailand, Singapore, China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar have a demand for Bangladeshi wildlife, it added.

Ranked as the fourth most lucrative crime globally, wildlife trade is valued at \$320 billion annually.

“Dhaka is the main destination for traded wildlife from seven divisions [in Bangladesh]. More than one-third of these come from the Chattogram division and approximately half of those remain within the division,” the study reads.

Wet and winter seasons were the peak time for wildlife trading.

The study, conducted in 2019, aimed to assess the extent of wildlife

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Mindless garbage dumping and release of industrial effluents have made the Buriganga water dark and smelly. The river looks cleaner only after heavy rains in monsoon. The photo was taken from Babubazar bridge in the capital yesterday.

DEMOCRACY INDEX

Bangladesh slips one notch

Shows Swedish think-tank report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The democracy situation in Bangladesh has deteriorated further as the country slipped by one rank to the 147th spot in the Liberal Democracy Index, according to the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute of Sweden.

A report styled “Defiance in the face of autocratization” placed Bangladesh in the “Electoral Autocracies” category along with 55 other countries, including India, Pakistan, Russia and Turkey.

Bangladesh was placed in the same category in the last year’s report.

The country scored 0.11 on Liberal Democracy Index, down by 0.02 from

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

JP timid inside JS, critical of govt outside

RASHIDUL HASAN

Jatiya Party in parliament criticises the government lightly for its mistakes. But outside, the party is highly critical of the government.

JP leaders, particularly Chairman GM Quader, at different programmes came down heavily on the Awami League government for “widespread corruption, misrule and absence of good governance in the country”.

He, however, at the Jatiya Sangsad spoke softly on other issues.

Political analysts and parliamentary experts said the JP, which took part in the 2018 national election under the AL-led grand alliance, does not want to embarrass Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by making sharp criticism of her government as the next election equation is still not clear.

Addressing the House on the thanksgiving motion on the president’s speech on February 8, Quader, also the deputy leader of the opposition, mainly focused on road accidents and air pollution.

He also urged the prime minister to give the Rangpur City Corporation mayor the status of a state minister. Towards the end of his speech, he however spoke on a serious issue like phone-tapping.

In his concluding speed at that parliament session the following day, Quader mostly talked about air pollution.

During the concluding sitting of the 20th session of the current parliament on November 6 last year, the JP chief in his 30-minute speech also didn’t talk about any issues that could embarrass the government.

Instead, he spoke about the country’s falling forex reserves, increasing unemployment and dengue outbreak.

Quader at a views exchange meeting with the JP leaders in the capital recently lambasted the government.

“Our government does not stand by the poor and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

HAJJ EXPENSE THIS YEAR

Biman blamed for costliest package ever

RASHIDUL HASAN

This year’s hajj package is the most expensive in Bangladesh’s history, thanks mainly to what travel agents and hajj agents say is Biman’s unusually high fare.

The fare of the national flag carrier has been fixed at Tk 1.98 lakh, a rise by about Tk 60,000 from last year, driving up the hajj package cost to nearly Tk 7 lakh.

The actual expense, however, will exceed Tk 8 lakh to Tk 8.5 lakh with sacrificial animal, food and other miscellaneous costs included.

In terms of the cost of hajj package, Bangladesh has surpassed neighbouring India and Pakistan.

Pakistan has not yet made any official announcement. The Pakistan Today newspaper previously reported quoting the country’s religious affairs ministry that it would be announced in early March.

The estimated price could be around one million Pakistani rupees, which is equivalent to around Tk 4

lakh, according to the report.

The hajj package that India announced in 2018, fixing 3.99 lakh rupees as the cost, remained unchanged till 2022, according to the website of Hajj Committee of India.

Indian Ministry of Minority Affairs in a notice this year said a subsidy of 1 lakh rupees would be given to each pilgrim. So, an Indian would be able to perform hajj paying not more than 3 lakh rupees, which amounts to around Tk 4 lakh.

In both India and Pakistan, the cost of airfare is between Tk 1 lakh and 1.2 lakh, sources in ATAB said.

The cost of performing hajj from Bangladesh this year under a private agency will be at least Tk 6.72 lakh, about Tk 1.5 lakh more than the minimum cost last year.

Besides, a pilgrim will have to pay an additional sum to the Islamic Development Bank in Saudi Arabia for a sacrificial animal, said the Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) last month.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Scrap power deal with Adani Group 2 environmental groups urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Bangladesh Environment Network (Ben) demanded yesterday that the government scrap its deal with India’s Adani Group to import electricity.

In a joint statement, the green organisations said importing electricity spending foreign currency will be “illogical”, noting that, nearly half of the country’s power production capacity currently remains unused.

They said the conditions set for purchasing electricity from the Adani Group are “adverse” for Bangladesh and blamed the government’s present “power development plan” for this.

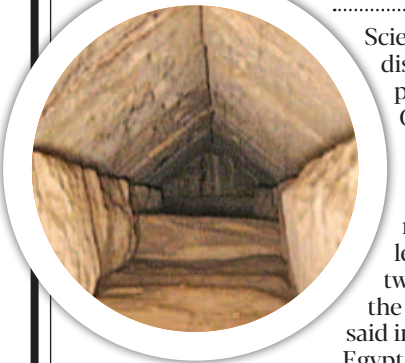
The organisations said as per media reports Bangladesh is likely to start importing electricity from Adani’s 1,600MW coal-based power plant in India’s Jharkhand this week.

Under the deal,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

Egypt unveils hidden corridor in Giza pyramid

AFP, Cairo



Scientists have discovered a hidden passage inside Egypt’s Great Pyramid, the authorities have announced.

The passage is nine metres (30 feet) in length and more than two metres in width, the antiquities ministry said in a statement.

Egypt’s Tourism and Antiquities Minister Ahmed Issa told reporters on Thursday at the ancient site in Giza also known as the Khufu, or Cheops, pyramid, that the “gabled corridor” with a triangular ceiling “was found on the northern face of the Great Pyramid of King Khufu”.

The discovery was part of the ScanPyramids project, launched in 2015 as a collaboration between major universities in France, Germany, Canada and Japan and a group of Egyptian experts.

Archaeologist Zahi Hawass, Egypt’s former antiquities minister, heads the committee supervising the project, which uses advanced technology to visualise hidden parts of the pyramid’s interior without having to excavate it.

The technology is a mix of infrared thermography, muon radiography imaging and 3D reconstruction -- all of which the researchers say are non-invasive and non-destructive techniques.

Tigers’ home dominance ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh’s home dominance in the fifty-over format was finally broken as England clinched the three-match series with a game in hand with a comprehensive 132-run victory in the second ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Chasing a mammoth target of 327 runs set by the reigning world champions, courtesy of a brilliant hundred from Jason Roy, Bangladesh fell apart in reply and were bundled out for 194 runs in 44.4 overs to suffer their second-highest defeat by margin of runs in Mirpur. Bangladesh eventually lost their first ODI home series since 2016, and it was England who had inflicted the same fate back then as the Tigers’ streak of seven consecutive bilateral home series wins came to a stop.

It was always going to be a tough ask for Tamim Iqbal and his troops as they arrived to chase a huge

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



England opener Jason Roy gestures to the dressing room after reaching his century against Bangladesh in the second ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Roy’s 132 helped the visitors to a series-clinching 132-run win.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SECURITY FORUM IN DELHI

Blinken and Lavrov exchange diplomatic swipes

REUTERS, New Delhi

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused the United States of hypocrisy after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Russia cannot be allowed to wage war in Ukraine with impunity, during a security forum they attended in New Delhi yesterday.

The top diplomats from Moscow and Washington had both attended the Group of 20 foreign ministers gathering in the Indian capital on Thursday, and met in person for the first time since Russian forces invaded Ukraine a year ago.

“If we allow with impunity Russia to do what it’s doing in Ukraine, then that’s a message to would-be aggressors everywhere that they may be able to get away with it too,” Blinken told the Raisina Dialogue strategic affairs forum.

Speaking at the same strategic affairs forum after Blinken, Lavrov said it was “double standards” to question Russia’s action in Ukraine when the United States cited a “threat to its national interest” to justify military intervention in various parts of the world, including the war in Iraq, air strikes on Libya, and the bombing of Yugoslavia during the Kosovo conflict in 1999.

Lavrov also said the question of when Russia will negotiate an end to the war should be put to Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky.

“Everybody is asking when Russia is going to negotiate...

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Blinken

Lavrov



Kendriya Chhatra Sangram Parishad protesting the postponement of national assembly session on March 1, 1971 at Dhaka University.

PHOTO: RASHID TALUKDER



Protesting the postponement, agitated people of the then East Pakistan took to the streets of Dhaka on March 1, 1971. They also burned a Pakistan flag in protest.

PHOTO: AFTAB AHMED

Those turbulent first days of '71 March

“We shall continue our fight until we achieve the people’s demand for autonomy. The struggle for freedom must not stop even if I’m not here. Even if I die, 70 million people must see a truly independent Bangladesh,” declared Bangabandhu.

AHMAD ISTIAK

It was a tumultuous month when the inception of a new nation was taking shape, changing the course of the subcontinent’s history forever. In March 1971, Bangladesh’s masses joined the nation’s final struggle for freedom. In the first week of the month, it became apparent that Bangladesh would emerge as an independent nation. However, questions remained as to how and when it would happen.

On March 1, General Yahya Khan suddenly postponed the national assembly session that was scheduled to take place on March 3.

About a month earlier, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, chairman of Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), had a meeting with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, president of Awami League (January 27-28), where Bangabandhu demanded to formulate the state ordinance – based on the historic six-point demand – within February 15.

However, Bhutto wanted to continue the discussions and negotiations further. Against



On March 3, a huge mass gathering was organised by the student leaders of all parties at Paltan Maidan.

will not be possible for us to join the assembly.”

When President Yahya Khan postponed the assembly indefinitely, agitated masses of the then East Pakistan took to the streets of Dhaka. All shops, businesses and offices were shut down. At that time a cricket match of BCCP was taking place at Dhaka stadium. Agitated audience stopped the match and protested the decision. All of a sudden, Dhaka became a city of protests, procession and demonstration – the air of which had been looming over the city for months. Even government officials participated in those processions.

Political leaders expressed their disappointment over the announcement and stated that the decision was completely against the people’s mandate. It was taken to sabotage the process of transferring the power to the elected representatives of the country’s citizens.

At one point, a mass procession reached Hotel Purbani at Motijheel, where members of Awami League’s parliamentary committee were writing the draft ordinance based on the six-point demand.

During a press conference after the meeting, AL President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman harshly criticised Yahya’s decision and said the assembly session was postponed just to appease a certain party. “We cannot accept this. The democratic process has almost been foiled by this decision,” he said.

He went on to say the people of Bengal have refused this Yahya’s decision. Mujib declared an all-out shutdown on March 2 in Dhaka and a half day (till 2:00pm) shutdown in the entire East Pakistan on March 3. He also announced that a mass gathering will be held on March 7 at the Racecourse Maidan, where he will declare the next course of action.

On March 1, Bangabandhu sent a delegation to discuss the matters with Maulana Bhashani. That night, political leaders met Bangabandhu at his Dhanmondi residence. Meanwhile, Abdul Qayyum Khan, leader of Pakistan Muslim League (Qayyum), declared his support for Yahya’s decision of postponing the assembly. In protest of this support, Khan A Sabur, general secretary of the party, announced his resignation from the party.

On that very night, Yahya appointed Lieutenant General Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, the then martial law administrator of zone B, as the governor of East Pakistan.

In the later hours of the night, Yaqub banned the publication or broadcasting of any news, opinion and photographs that are

directly or indirectly against the “interest and sovereignty” of Pakistan according to the Martial Law Ordinance 110. According to the law, any individual alleged of violating this order could be served with a maximum of 10 years of imprisonment with hard labour.

Amid such a situation, students of all parties organised a demonstration in front of the arts building at Dhaka University. At 11:00am on March 2, while ASM Abdur Rob, the then vice president of Dhaka University Central Students’ Union (Ducusu), was speaking at the demonstration, Sheikh Zahid Hossain, a leader of Chhatra League (BCL), brought a flagpole and Rob hoisted the first flag of Bangladesh.

Abdul Kuddus Makhon, Tofail Ahmed and Nur-e-Alam Siddique accompanied Rob at the gathering.

Many popular student leaders such as Makhon and Shahjahan Siraj delivered speeches at the demonstration where they proposed that Bangabandhu read out the manifesto for independence during the upcoming mass gathering on March 7. The student leaders pledged to continue their struggle until achieving independence and autonomy. They brought out a massive procession from Dhaka University that ended at Baitul Mukarram mosque.

On the same day, National Awami Party (NAP) and Jatiya League organised two demonstrations around 11:00am at Central Shaheed Minar and around 3:00pm at Baitul Mukarram respectively. After the demonstrations, protestors tried to form a procession, when police fired at the crowd and three students of Teigaon Polytechnic School – Aziz, Morshed and Mamun – were killed. Around 50 others were wounded.

Although Bangabandhu called for a strike at Dhaka on March 2, the strike was observed all over the country. Most of the major streets were controlled by the army at that time. On that night, the newly appointed governor of East Pakistan declared a curfew. Bangabandhu vehemently opposed the announcement and called for a nationwide strike on March 3-6.

At one stage, students and the people broke the curfew and brought out processions all over the country. They installed barricades in every major street of the city. When a procession was heading to the governor’s residence around 9:00pm, the army fired at the procession at the DIT intersection in front of the office of the Morning News newspaper.

On March 3, a half-day strike was observed all over the country and a huge mass gathering was organised by the student leaders of all parties at Paltan Maidan. The gathering was chaired by the then BCL president Nur-e-Alam Siddique.

Shahjahan Siraj read out the manifesto for independence in presence of Bangabandhu in front of the crowd. At that time, Bangabandhu was declared the supreme leader of free and independent Bangladesh. Paltan Maidan was bursting with crowds and their slogans. Bangabandhu called for a non-cooperation movement from that gathering.

“We shall continue our fight until we achieve the people’s demand for autonomy. The struggle for freedom must not stop even if I’m not here. Even if I die, 70 million people must see a truly independent Bangladesh,” declared the supreme leader.

During that gathering, ASM Abdur Rob, the then VP of Ducusu; then general secretary Abdul Kuddus Makhon and then BCL president Nur-e-Alam Siddique and then general secretary Shahjahan Siraj pledged to commence the fight for independence.

The manifesto for independence

Bangladesh is the name of an independent and sovereign state comprising 54,506 square miles of land, which is home to 70 million people. Three under-mentioned goals have to be achieved by forming this state:

- Through forming a free and sovereign Bangladesh, a strong, powerful Bangalee nation has to emerge and its language, literature and culture have to be established in the world
- Socialist economy and politics of farmers and workers have to be established in all the districts to eradicate discrimination
- Freedom of speech, personal freedom, freedom of media and unadulterated democracy has to be established

Action plan to conduct fight for independence

- “Committee for the struggle for independence” has to be formed in every village, locality, thana, sub-district, town and district
- Cooperation of people from all walks of life has to be sought and people have to be united for the cause
- Liberation force has to be formed by organising workers and farmers in rural areas
- Communal sentiment between Hindu-Muslim and Bangalee-non Bangalee must be abolished and harmony has to be ensured
- Communication must be maintained and any anti-social, vindictive activity has to be stopped to move the struggle for independence forward

Action plan for the struggle for independence

- All laws promulgated by this foreign, colonial government have to be proclaimed unlawful
- West Pakistani, non-Bangalee army deployed by this regime has to be identified as an occupation force and must be eliminated
- Giving tax to this current foreign and colonial regime must be stopped
- Preparation of armed resistance and counter-attack must be taken to counter the forces deployed by this colonial regime
- All organisations have to be formed with scientific and democratic ideology
- “Amar Sonar Bangla, Ami Tomay Bhalobashi”, authored by Rabindranath Tagore, will be regarded as the national anthem of Bangladesh.
- All products of West Pakistan must be boycotted and an all-out non-cooperation movement has to be organised all over the country
- All flags of Pakistan must be burnt and those have to be replaced by the national flag of Bangladesh
- People must help the freedom fighters and cooperate with them to continue the struggle for independence



Shahjahan Shiraj reading out the manifesto for independence in presence of Bangabandhu on March 3, 1971.

Sources:

Books

Jatiya Rajniti 1945-1975 (author: Oli Ahad)
Bangladesher Shadhinota Juddho: Dalil Patra (part 2)

Newspapers

The Daily Ittefaq
The Daily People
The Daily Jugantor (Kolkata)
The Daily Azad



PHOTO: RASHID TALUKDER

this backdrop, Yahya announced March 3 as the date of the national assembly session when the power would be handed over to Bangabandhu’s democratically elected government.

Things changed when on February 15, Bhutto declared that PPP cannot participate in the assembly unless Awami League compromises on its six-point demand. When Yahya asked him about the next course of action on February 19, Bhutto clearly stated, “If Mujib does not comply with our conditions, it

FICTION

The long dinner table

When the alarm hadn't gone off yet, she spontaneously decided to change the plates. Bengalis were notoriously known for storing away expensive plates for 'when the guests arrive.' But somehow, the guests never seemed to arrive. Nijhum had a euphoric realisation that using these new plates could ensue in a banter between herself and her parents—and she waited for it in quiet anticipation.

TASNIM NAZ

Nijhum felt the water trickling down from the grains of rice she washed over the kitchen sink. She had never prepared rice before, which surprised her. You would think something as staple as rice in a Bengali household would demand the knowledge of every single one of its consumers. It surprised Nijhum to think of the disrespect their nation showed to the rice they ate. She wanted to wash them properly, to discard the starch and bring from within the pearls of almost translucent rice grains. She looked into the murky water before discarding it all down the drain. Nijhum put the bowl of rice on the stove and put the lid on, unaware of whether or not the lid is necessary. If anything, it adds to the aesthetic.

She set down the dinner table, an uninformed anticipation on her chest. Running a damp rag over the table, Nijhum made sure to clean every speckle of food stains. She put down the plates, spoons, glasses of water, bone plate—with as much care as can be put into arranging utensils. Nijhum wished she could put down a label with every utensil put on the table: "this utensil right here, was placed with great care. Love, your daughter."

Nearing her phone, she set an alarm for 30 minutes, a safe time period for cooking most things, or atleast for up on them. As she waited, the tangled thoughts began to peek into her brain again, and to push them out, she rearranged the utensils. When that too was done, but the alarm hadn't gone off yet, she spontaneously decided to change the plates. Bengalis were notoriously known for storing away expensive plates for 'when the guests arrive.' But somehow, the guests never seemed to arrive. Nijhum had a euphoric realisation that using these new plates could ensue in a banter between herself and her parents—and she waited for it in quiet anticipation.

Carefully she took the teal coloured plates off the showcase and washed



DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI

them by hand, admiring their uneven decorative surfaces. You always treated new things with so much respect. Drying them off, Nijhum put the plates down at the dinner table, adjusting and readjusting them, all the while thinking about that invisible label. Her alarm hadn't gone off yet, surprisingly. How bizarre is time? It seems the most lethargic at the most inconvenient of times.

But then again, Nijhum thought about how most concepts confused her, and she decided to forgive time then and there. As the alarm finally went off, she put her cooked rice—all the

while admiring its simple elegance—in a ceramic bowl, the best they had. She put the rice in the middle of the dinner table, but not before she had wiped the center clean once again with a damp cloth. And thus the feast was prepared. Nijhum laughed in her own head, "Feast, you say? More like an ordinary dinner."

But it wasn't ordinary. How could it be? She had cooked the rice with her bare hands after all. With the feast on display, Nijhum played the waiting game once more. Only this time, she didn't set an alarm. Sometimes, you just cannot measure time.

As the sun stretched overhead, and showed the faintest signs of mellowing out, Nijhum sat at the dinner table, with her bowl of cooked rice in front of her. She heard a lizard croaking in any one of the rooms of her house, letting her know of its presence. She heard faint crows outside with their harsh tunes and the faint whistling of winds through the window cracks. She ate her cooked rice, relishing each of the grains that she hand washed, all the while desperately wishing to stick that invisible label that would say "I cooked this" on each of the grains. On either side of the long dinner table

sat Nijhum's parents—lost inside their little cosmos, unaware of each other's universe. The lumps of rice that she had cooked seemed to lodge themselves in her throat, and she couldn't speak. In many ways, the lizard, the crows and the wind outside were more within reach for Nijhum—more accessible than her parents' vast cosmos.

And Nijhum sat in the middle, with the croaking, the whistling, and the grains of rice between her fingertips.

Tasnim Naz has an endless love of literature, both inside and outside the classroom in which she teaches.



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

POETRY

King of current affairs

SAYMA BINTE SHAJAHAN

You do not read Plath,
Nor Milton.
Or Wordsworth.
Or Shakespeare.
What do you read?
Newspapers, current affairs,
How to be great when
you're good.
How to be king when
You're already a prince.
Selfish brute.
Your TBR makes me feel old.
As if I were 40, not 20.
It drains the excitement of my youth.
Makes me feel small.
Immature.

Sad.
So very sad.
Why won't you read Plath?
You'd like how she described life.
How she described love—
One sided.
Insecure.
Lonely.
Painful.
Disillusioning.
—Like me.
Why would you need to feel bigger
than you already are?
When you already tower over me.
Do you really, that desperately need to look
down at me—and everyone else?
Do you really, really need to
italicise your views through books?

When I already, perilously cling
to every word that comes
out of your mouth?
Your choice of fiction
makes me want to cry.
There's no love in there, you know?
Just greatness.
How to pave the way for majesty.
Is your panache not enough?
Why would you need more?
Why won't you read my romances?
Because they won't make you great?
Well you're not that great, are you?
You make me cry.

Sayma Binte Shajahan is a third semester student of the department of English and Modern Languages, International University of Business Agriculture and Technology.

POETRY

Chance encounter

SNATA BASU

Soundless on my flaking wall, you
rest like a sniper in frigid fear,
I remember the last of your semblance,
Your teething temptation grows moss.
You melt into a cardboard box,
peeling by the rims bit by bit,
like an old man's torch
you flicker in the dark, then blacken away,
scintillating into some disposed echo
soaring like vapor—up and gone.
You take with you fractions of my ailing youth;
you weld with the years I have left behind.
Nobody remembers your silence but I
grow weary of your taunting summons.
I am only a ripple of who I used to be,
delicately seeping through the soils of my becoming;
weightless in my conceived aura,
I step into a cautious light.

Snata Basu is an aspiring poet from Dhaka, Bangladesh. Her work mostly centers on passionate, personal bindings. She is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature at North South University.

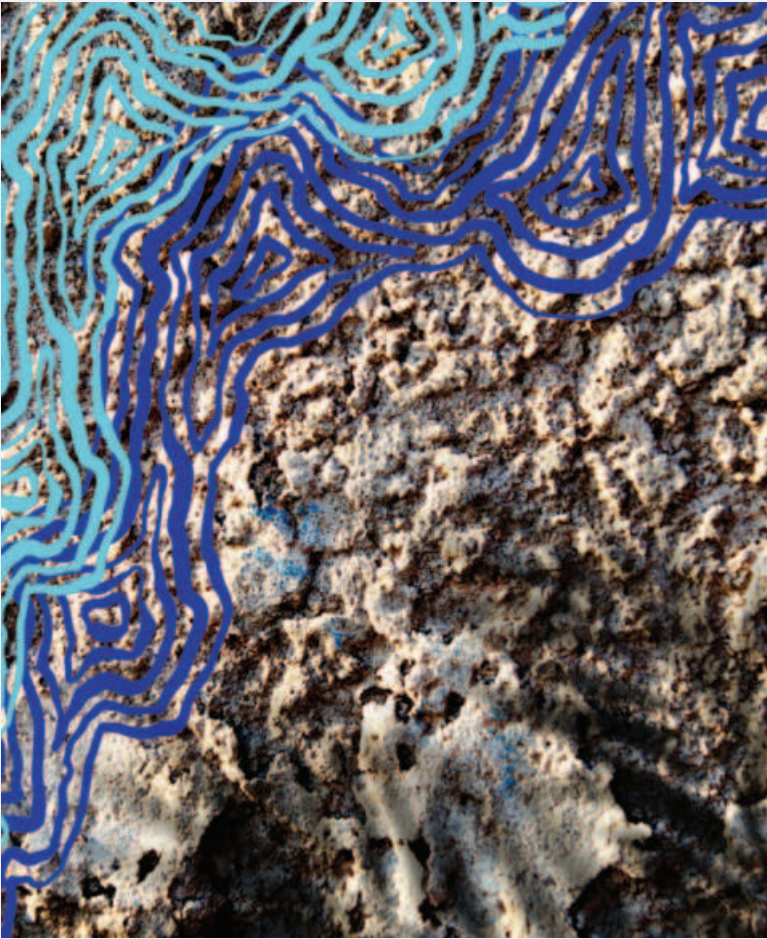


ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA



Giant tortoises on Isabela, marine iguanas on Fernandina, blue-footed boobies nesting on North Seymour, and 17 other land, marine, and avian species not found anywhere else in the world are the major reasons for the Galapagos Islands' fame.

Marine life in the Galapagos is unlike anywhere else in the world, since 20pc of marine species found there are endemic to the Galapagos.

All flights to the Galapagos Islands must go through Ecuador main land (Quito or Guayaquil). After immigration, a mandatory registration is required to visit Galapagos. From Ecuador mainland, next stop is Baltra Island, which has the sole airport in the archipelago. Here you would need to pay national park fees. From here, we took a short bus ride followed by a short boat trip to arrive at Santa Cruz. We stayed in here for two nights in Airbnb and explored the island.

From Santa Cruz, we explored 4 more islands of the Galapagos. Planning ahead is very important: we booked our all-inclusive cruise 3 months earlier, fully paid in advance. Most of the cruises have to be booked via travel agencies. We used GreenGo.com.

Our cruise was on a catamaran that can host 16 guests in 8 separate cabins, 9 crew members and a guide. There are different categories when it comes selecting a cruise. Ours' was Archipell, a mid-range catamaran. We were happy to have had exceptional service, food, on/off shore excursions.



The Galapagos

The land of evolution



Sarmin Shahariath and Rejaul Bahar, married since 2005, are avid travellers. So far they have travelled 90 countries across seven continents.

REJAUL BAHAR

They say the beauty of the Galapagos can't be explained. It can only be experienced. When, in November, 2018, my wife Sarmin and I visited these wonderful islands in a 4-day cruise package, I understood it.

The Galapagos Islands is a chain of volcanic islands that sit in the Pacific Ocean about 500 miles off the coast of Ecuador. The islands are uniquely located on both sides of the equator.



The islands' unique ecosystem and endemic animal species draw wildlife lovers from across the globe. These are some of the same species that intrigued Charles Darwin, the noted naturalist, who developed his theory of evolution, in part, by studying the unique fauna of the islands when he visited in 1835.



It's the living laboratory of evolution. As a person, who knows the basic of science, visiting the Galapagos was like a pilgrimage to me.

Thirteen major islands make up the Galapagos chain: Isabela, the largest island; Santa Cruz; San Cristobal, the first island Darwin explored; Fernandina; Santiago; Floreana; Espanola; Marchena; Pinta; Santa Fe; Genovesa; Baltra (South Seymour); and Pinzon (Duncan).

Smaller islands include North Seymour, Rabida (Jervis), Bartolome, and Daphne Major.

Only five of the islands have human populations: Isabela, Santa Cruz, San Cristobal, Baltra, and Floreana. The remaining islands are inhabited only by animals and can only be accessed on guided tours.

The islands are situated at a point

in the Pacific Ocean where three ocean currents collide, creating a unique area in the sea where warm and varying degrees of cold water meet. This natural phenomenon creates crystal-clear turquoise water that surrounds the islands and fosters rich marine ecosystems.

In addition, the islands are far enough away from each other that both plant and animal species could not easily migrate, and over time adapted to their environment, with several becoming endemic to a specific island.

The islands are far enough away from each other that both plant and animal species could not easily migrate, and over time adapted to their environment, with several becoming endemic to a specific island.



Although it was a small boat with 16 guests, this may be the best way to explore Galapagos Islands. Downside is the rough sea at night. For those who have seasickness, the Galapagos can be a tough place to visit. However, there are bigger, more comfortable ships available.

Visiting this unique corner of the world, which changed our understanding about the world, will remain as a highlight in my memory lane.





This picture courtesy of a one-way intellectual property exchange with Shout.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

TOP DIGITAL MARKETER SHARES SECRET

I know almost nothing

“Content marketing isn’t really about content. It’s about identifying your market. And then writing exactly what corporate pays you to write. But it’s also about having the right strategy.”

LUBNAN KHALEESI

Kaiser Farooqi had a thousand things on his plate.

But you couldn’t tell at first glance. Decked out in a custom-made suit, he kept glancing at his watch and then phone.

Apparently, he had to wait 15 more minutes before he could make a new farm or something on this mobile game he was playing. In between he would take a few selfies and trawl social media for content to steal from those with far fewer followers.

Kaiser was one of the most sought-after digital marketers in the country. Like most other digital marketers, he had no idea what he was doing. But it was nothing a little Google search couldn’t solve.

“Content marketing isn’t really about content. It’s about identifying your market. And then writing exactly what corporate pays you to write. But it’s also about having the right strategy,” he says.

What does that mean, we ask him. Can you please elaborate on the strategy part?

“Well,” he says, taking in a deep breath and

pausing for a minute, looking profound. “See, what I did there? I paused before I answered and took a long breath. It helps you look profound.”

Yes, indeed. But what about the strategy?

At this question, Kaiser broke out in his trademark full-toothed smile, one he uses every time he talks to anyone at all.

“See that thousand taka smile? That makes me relatable and approachable,” he replies with vigorous hand movements.

“The strategy is simple: solve an existing problem,” he replies.

But isn’t that literally the most generic reply ever? Also, what existing problem did Kaiser solve?

“Well, I saw a model used in America. I applied the same model here, but also brought in celebrities to talk about what they aren’t the most proficient at,” he declares.

But isn’t that, like, theft?

“No, it’s not. It’s innovation. Look around at most of our innovation. It’s using a foreign model to create a local solution. That’s how business works, dummy,” he says, the smile back, turning creepier the longer you look at

it.

Can you not smile like that?

“No, I must,” he replies, the smile now looking like a Joker scar across his face.

Changing topics, because this is getting weird, we ask about digital marketing and what it means.

“Listen, I don’t want to talk to you about this actually. We reserve our lessons for children and those not exposed to the scene as much. This way we can preserve our image of looking like we know what we are talking about. Like, I wouldn’t really impart economics lesson to an economics professor. I’d rather stick to schoolchildren and university freshers who don’t know better.”

With that he smiles, again.

Can you leave us with something helpful?

“Yes. If all fails, motivate others. And I will leave you with this so you remember: When the sheep sleep, the tiger awakens. Be the sun.”

Lubnan Khaleesi knows she can be a bitter at times, but nothing bothers her more than incompetence cloaked in copyright violations.

It’s me, hi, I’m the problem, it’s me, says BCB boss

Dreams a cricket fan

INCEPTION CORRESPONDENT

The following is an excerpt from a dream journal of a Bangladesh cricket fan, also a Taylor Swift fan. This is a dream, and any resemblance to any person living or dead is purely subconscious. We have not changed any names to be faithful to the dream of one cricket crazy individual, who we shall not name.

Night had fallen over the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on March 14, after England won the T20I series 3-0, which followed a 3-0 win in the ODI series for the tourists, bringing an end to the one excuse of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) – that Bangladesh are a formidable team at home.

BCB President Nazmul Hassan Papon took to the microphone at the post match press conference, instead of the defeated captain or the prodigal son-cum-coach Chandika Hathurusingha.

At this point a brinjal, or eggplant, jumped across the table and landed on Hassan’s face, and like magic, I could not see the brinjal or eggplant anymore.

“I have a confession to make,” Papon said. “It’s me, hi, I’m the problem, it’s me. At teatime, lunchtime, all the players actually agree.”

Taylor Swift then took a seat beside the BCB supreme, the head honcho, the big begun bhaja [in the words of the dream journal, our “legal department” advised us to reiterate].



Papon continued, “I have a condition where if I am not shown on television and I am not the centre of attention, I get really sick.

“When I talked about the rift between Tamim and Shakib, of course I didn’t need to, but I kinda had to. You see, if things run smoothly, the public will ask why they need me around. So, while everyone knew about the relationship not being the best between the two biggest stalwarts of the country, I was compelled to bring it up before the series against the team that was the last to beat us in a bilateral ODI series at home, in 2016.

“That,” Papon said with a big smile, “is my real function as BCB president. I like to interfere and mix things up. Like you said, I am interferer in chief. I am all that is wrong with Bangladesh cricket.”

Then, as fireworks decorated the Mirpur sky, Papon and Taylor Swift merged and Swift said, “I polish up real, I polish up real... Nice!”

Satireday bears no responsibility for someone else’s dreams

Unable to deal with mosquito menace, Fashundhara resident starts adopting them as pets

NAZIEA RAIDAH

It was late at night. After what was an excruciatingly exhausting day, Armana dragged her body to bed, eager to put the day, and herself, to rest.

But just as her face hit the pillow, she realised she wasn’t alone in the room.

Even though she could feel the faint flutter of wings for a bit, she thought that it was all in her head, so exhausted was she. Just a few minutes into the process of drifting off into blissful nothingness, a hum passes by her ear. Confident in her ability to swat the being with her eyes closed, she ends up hitting her face.

She’s wide awake. And as soon as she turns on her lamp, her face turns faint as her reflection hits the mirror.

A swarm of mosquitoes, hovering over her head like thought squiggles. Armana looks at the image flabbergasted. She runs over to the corner of her room where the BCI aerosol can stands.

She lifts it up and says, “No I mosquito repellent my foot!” and throws the can in the bin. Things have been pretty rough for Fashundhara

On Sunday, Fashundhara authorities proposed a unique solution. It was announced that mosquitoes have claimed their space in the area and, given their sheer number, it is difficult to get rid of them. Therefore, authorities will be distributing instruction manuals on befriending mosquitoes.

residents. Despite locals’ complaints, the drains stay clogged. During monsoon, it’s easy to tell that this area was once a river since despite modernisation, residents have to travel by boat. This also in turn brought the area much tourism, since during heavy downpour, the area is marketed as “Discount Venice”, where couples often gather for a romantic outing.

This made one thing obvious –

nothing would be done about the clogged drain, which meant that nothing would be done about the mosquitoes.

On Sunday, Fashundhara authorities proposed a unique solution. It was announced that mosquitoes have claimed their space in the area and, given their sheer number, it is difficult to get rid of them. Therefore, authorities will be distributing instruction manuals on befriending mosquitoes. “The best way to deal with a problem is to act like it doesn’t exist. You know what they say these days – ‘Fake it, till you make it,’” said Most Fashunuddin, chairman of the Fashundhara Oikya Kalyan Samity.

“I believe that if we all treated mosquitoes with a bit more dignity and love, like pets and not pests, we will be able to reduce the severity of this problem – through the power of collective endurance,” he added. And so, Armana sat on her bed, with her eyes red – parched from some lack of sweet slumber. She let the mosquitoes make her their prey. Her eyes twitched as she kept telling herself over and over again, “Pets not Pests.”

