

It all points to accumulated gas

Experts suspect 2 possible sources of gas after blast at 7-storey building left at least 20 dead, over 100 hurt; police file unnatural death case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Accumulated gas is the likely cause of Tuesday's explosion that left at least 20 people dead and over 100 injured on North South Road in the capital.

There were two possible sources of the gas that got trapped, experts in police said yesterday, requesting anonymity.

Seven days before the blast, a pipeline for cooking gas was repaired next to the seven-storey building in



Siddikbazar, they said after visiting the site, adding that gas might have escaped through a leak and accumulated in a confined space.

Another possible source of gas could be a poorly plugged gas pipeline to a restaurant on the ground floor of the building, said the experts. The gas supply to the restaurant was recently disconnected.

A leak from the plug could have created a gas chamber underneath the building, they said.

Rescuers also reported that after the explosion, members of the government's gas transmission authorities went there and replaced the blown-off plug.

Maj Moshir Rahman, chief of the Bomb Disposal Unit of Rab, also said this gas line could be a possible cause for the explosion.

However, Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited said there was no evidence that gas was the cause of the explosion.

"The gas riser device in the building is intact. The evidence we collected using a gas detector also does not indicate it was an explosion due to gas," said Salim Miah, director (operations) of the company.

The explosion rocked Siddikbazar, a major commercial area in the capital, around 4:45pm. It happened in the basement of the seven-storey building. The top four floors are residential while the rest are commercial.

Rabul Islam, president of Bangladesh Pipe and Tube Well Merchants Association, said that there



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Law enforcers and firefighters working in front of the building on North South Road at the capital's Siddikbazar which was rocked by a powerful blast on Tuesday. Left, firefighters leaving the scene with a body recovered nearly 24 hours after the explosion.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON, PALASH KHAN

BUILDING FIRE HAZARDS

A city strewn with ticking time bombs

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The risk of explosions and fires lurks everywhere in the megacity of over two crore due to unplanned urbanisation, blatant violations of building codes, and a lack of fire safety awareness.

Within a few weeks, three such incidents have claimed at least two dozen lives -- one fire in a posh area, one in a commercial area, and the latest in a crowded area in Old Dhaka -- suggesting that the problem is not confined to some neighbourhoods.

And things are getting worse.

In 2018, there were 19,642 fires. The number rose to 24,102 last year, fire service

data shows.

The recent incidents are similar to other cases seen over the years. The causes were electric short circuit, accumulation of gas in a confined space, and poorly maintained air conditioning units.

"We don't follow anything. We don't care about the rules and regulations. We just scream after every incident, yet we don't try to ensure that we never need to cry for the loss of our loved ones," Brig Gen Md Main Uddin, director general of Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We are only to blame for such tragedies -- from Rana Plaza to the FR Tower fire, from the Nimtoli inferno to Churhatta blaze, and the

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DMCH TEAM

Stepping up in the hour of need

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOUDDUD AHMED SUJAN

When ward master Riaz Uddin received the first three patients injured in the Siddikbazar explosion around 5:00pm on Tuesday, he had no idea that he was going to see over 100 more.

Within about 10 minutes, the corridor of the emergency and casualty ward at Dhaka Medical College Hospital was almost filled with 20-25 seriously injured patients, according to Riaz.

"It left us at a loss for

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Almost 24 hours after the explosion in Gulistan, firefighters at the site noticed a swarm of flies above a particular spot in the debris.

The rescuers sent in their K-9 unit to take a look. The cadaver dogs, who are exceptionally trained at sniffing out dead bodies, began madly pawing at the spot -- there was a body there.

Since the rescuers could not go in with any heavy machinery as the building was deemed too risky by the authorities, the body had to be dug out manually.

This was how the body of Md Robin Hossain was found yesterday evening.

It took a painstaking two hours for the firefighters to remove the debris before they reached two bodies buried in the basement.

Robin's body, which had borne the brunt of seven whole stories crashing down on it, was crushed beyond recognition.

The man, hailing from Shariatpur, had gotten married just two months ago and



"We have not lost hope," said brother of Mehedi Hasan Swapan, who is still missing after the Gulistan blast.

lived in Jurain with his new wife, while working at the sanitaryware shop as a salesperson.

The other body was that of Momin Uddin Sumon, Robin's colleague.

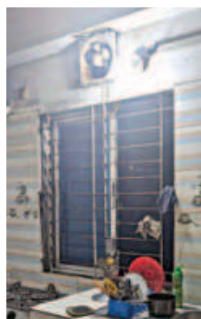
Momin's friend Mohammad Arif was found desperately looking for him in the morning. In late afternoon, he found his friend dead.

Speaking to The Daily Star before the bodies were found, Arif said, "After hearing the news of the explosion, I kept calling him [Momin]. The calls went through but he never picked up. The mobile phone kept ringing till 9:00pm yesterday [Tuesday]. Later, the rescuers found the phone. But

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HOW TO KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE

There could be an explosion if there is a gas leak or if gas has accumulated inside a closed space or room. Even 5 to 12 percent gas in the air of a confined space could be enough to cause an explosion, said experts from Fire Service and Civil Defence and law enforcement. They suggest:



Always keep doors and windows of kitchens open so that gas can dissipate.

After entering a home, unoccupied for a while, open doors and windows first.

In case of returning home after several days, do not switch anything on immediately.



Always keep a passage in septic tank and water tanks so that gas can escape.

Call authorities immediately if there is any sign of gas leakage.



Always check gas burners and properly switch it off, especially before going to bed.

Natural gas detectors can be installed at home, workplace.

Service air conditioners periodically, especially after it has not been used for a while.



Over Eight Hundred Marginal farmers get Krishi Loan via Smart Card from AB Bank at Rangunia



AB Bank Limited disbursed Krishi (agricultural) loans under own supervision to small and marginal farmers through smart cards at Rangunia, Chattogram.

The program was organized at Advocate Nurussafa Talukder

Auditorium, Rangunia. Honorable Minister of Information and Broadcasting Ministry Dr. Hasan Mahmud, MP joined the program through digital platform as chief guest. Dr. Prakash Kanti Chowdhury, Additional Divisional

Commissioner, Revenue, Chattogram, Great Freedom Fighter Swajan Kumar Talukder, Chairman, Rangunia Upazila Parishad were present as special guests. Mr. Ataul Goni Osmani, Upazila Executive Officer, Rangunia, Mr.

Sahjahan Sikder, Mayor, Rangunia Municipality, Mr. Shafiqul Islam, Vice Chairman, Rangunia Upazila Parishad and president of Bangladesh Krishok League, Northern District, Chattogram were present as special guests

over and above with Mr. Tarique Afzal, President and Managing Director of AB Bank Limited presiding. Senior officials of AB Bank and local dignitaries were also attended the program.

135 arrested so far over attacks on Ahmadiyyas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

Some 135 people have so far been arrested in Panchagarh in connection with the attacks on the Ahmadiyya community there.

Police, however, did not reveal the identities of the arrestees.

Thirteen cases -- 11 with Panchagarh Police Station and two with Boda Police Station -- have been filed over the attacks, said police.

The Daily Star could confirm the identities of at least seven arrestees after talking to locals and police sources.

The list includes Fazle Rabbi, 30, joint convener of Panchagarh municipal unit Jubo Dal, and Rahimul Islam, 43, a leader of the local BNP and former chairman of Sonahar union parishad.

Mohammad Nasiruddin, 30, president of Tentulia upazila unit of Chhatra Shibir, Rabbi Emon, 26, activist of Chhatra Shibir in Satmera area, and Sofiul Alam Shwapan, 24, activist of Chhatra Shibir in Bhajanpur area, said police sources.

The rest two are Ismail Hossain, 25, of South Rajnagar area, and Mohammad Rasel, 28, of Tulardanga area in Panchagarh town.

In primary interrogation, Ismail and Rasel admitted their involvement with the attacks, said police sources.

Jamaat Shibir men were the masterminds of the attacks and many of them wore face masks to hide their identities during the attack, said SM Sirajul Huda, superintendent of Panchagarh police.

"The law enforcers have been conducting raids to arrest the culprits. We are identifying the attackers by scrutinising the footage. No innocent person will be harassed," said Huda.

"As all the members of law enforcement agencies in our district are under huge workload right now, we could not provide you [journalists] the names of the arrestees," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

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Bangabandhu's grandson Radwan Mujib Siddiq places a wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the capital's Dhanmondi-32 on Tuesday, marking the historic March 7.

PHOTO: PID

Women first to suffer, last to be heard

UNSC hears on the eve of Int'l Women's Day

AFP, *United Nations*

Women are the primary victims of wars and conflict, yet they remain severely underrepresented at diplomatic negotiations, officials told the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday.

On the eve of International Women's Day yesterday, Sima Bahous, executive director of UN Women, called on the international community to do more to protect the lives, health and rights of women around the world.

"We must recall that we have neither significantly changed the composition of peace tables, nor the impunity enjoyed by those who commit atrocities against women and girls," Bahous told a UN Security Council debate on women, peace and security.

Bahous called out what she said was a "gender apartheid" in Afghanistan, where women have effectively been squeezed out of public life since the Taliban swept

back into power in August 2021, banning women from attending universities, going to parks and removing them from many jobs.

"Afghanistan is one of the most extreme examples of regression in women's rights, but it is far from being the only one," Bahous said.

Turning to Russia's war against Ukraine, which is now into its second year, Bahous said that women and their children represent about 90 percent of the 8 million Ukrainians who have had to flee the country, while women and girls constitute nearly 70 percent of the millions displaced within Ukraine.

"Peace is the only answer, with women's engagement in the process," Bahous said as she urged world leaders to do right by the landmark UN Security Council Resolution passed in 2000, which highlighted the role of women in preventing and resolving conflicts.

US Ambassador Linda Thomas-

Greenfield echoed that sentiment.

"I will call attention to the violence and oppression of women and girls around the world and what they are facing -- in Iran, in Afghanistan, in areas of Ukraine occupied by Russia, and in so many other places around the world," she said.

French official Marlene Schiappa, who formerly served as her country's equality minister, said women pay the highest price in wars and crises.

"In all conflict and crisis situations, and, to take current examples, in Ukraine, Yemen and Somalia, women are particularly affected, even deliberately targeted, by sexual and gender-based violence," Schiappa said. "Those responsible must answer for their actions."

Meanwhile, about 20 women held a rare demonstration in a Kabul street yesterday, calling on the international community to protect Afghans, AFP journalists witnessed.

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US announces \$26m in new aid for Rohingyas

AFP, *Washington*

The United States announced on Tuesday \$26 million in new humanitarian aid for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and elsewhere in that region of Asia.

Around one million members of the mostly Muslim Rohingya community live in squalid relief camps in Bangladesh, many after fleeing a 2017 military crackdown in neighboring Myanmar.

"This new funding allows our humanitarian partners to continue providing life saving assistance to affected communities on both sides of the Burma-Bangladesh border," State Department spokesman Ned Price said, using the old name for Myanmar.

He said the new money raises to \$2.1 billion the total of US aid provided to the Rohingya people since August 2017.

1 killed in bus accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, MYMENSINGH

A madrasa student was killed and 50 others were injured in a bus accident at Laxmipur Bazar area in Netrakona's Durgapur upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Himel Sheikh, 10, of Tangail's Bhuanpur upazila and a student of Nandibari Baitul Kuba Jame Mosque and Madrasa in Muktagacha of Mymensingh, police said.

Quoting locals, Shibirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Durgapur Police Station, said the bus, headed for a picnic in Durgapur, skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch, killing Himel on the spot and injuring some 50, including other students and their teachers, around 11:30am.

Man held over question paper leak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

Police have arrested a man for his alleged involvement in leaking question papers and faking admit cards for various recruitment and admission tests.

Immigration Police in Benapole arrested Nayan Islam, 25, on Monday, said police at a press conference at Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) headquarters yesterday afternoon.

The Detective Branch of RMP started investigating into a case in February last year and identified a fraud gang who were operating from the city.

Police issued a red alert against Nayan and several others across the country in late February.

Nayan, however, managed to flee to India before issuing of the alert on February 26, police said.

On Monday, when Nayan tried to enter Bangladesh from India, police arrested him and brought to Rajshahi.

UK cyber security firm warns over ChatGPT

AFP, *London*

British cyber security firm Darktrace yesterday warned that artificial intelligence bot ChatGPT may have increased the sophistication of phishing scams.

Content creation bot ChatGPT, Silicon Valley's latest app sensation, was launched by Microsoft-backed start-up OpenAI in November.

"Darktrace does not believe that ChatGPT has yet lowered barriers to entry for threat actors significantly," the firm said in a results statement.

"But it does believe that it may have helped increase the sophistication of phishing emails, enabling adversaries to create more targeted, personalised, and ultimately, successful attacks."

Generative AI, of which ChatGPT is an example, can upon request wade through reams of data to conjure up original content -- an image, a poem, a thousand-word essay -- in seconds.

ChatGPT had "ignited a conversation about the implications of generative AI for cyber security", Darktrace noted yesterday.

It added however that email attacks on its customers were "steady" despite the release of ChatGPT, with a decline in the number of those containing malicious links.

Yet it warned that the "linguistic complexity" of those emails -- including punctuation, sentence length and text volume -- had increased.

"This indicates that cyber-

criminals may be redirecting their focus to crafting more sophisticated social engineering scams that exploit user trust."

Darktrace also revealed yesterday that its net profit sank 86 percent to \$581 million in the first half of its financial year, or six months to December.

Its performance was slammed by surging costs and tax charges.

Darktrace shares rose 1.2 percent to 267.10 pence in London midday deals, but the stock is down 40 percent compared with the same stage last year.

The company, which uses cutting-edge artificial intelligence technology to combat cyber attacks, floated on the London stock market in 2021.

Stepping up in the hour of need

FROM PAGE 1

a while. I immediately informed the Rapid Response Team and the hospital director about the arriving patients. They reached the emergency ward in about five minutes," Riaz Uddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

With many of the injured unidentified, the ward master had to give his phone number for tickets to be issued to them.

The 60-member Rapid Response Team and other staffers at the emergency ward made heroic efforts on Tuesday to serve the injured.

The team, comprised of 25 doctors, 20 nurses, and 15 ward boys, is responsible for handling emergency situations in the event of any disaster.

After the explosion at a building in the capital's Siddikbazar, at least 120 injured were brought to the DMCH for treatment.

"The Rapid Response Team successfully managed the situation by providing primary treatment and moving them to the departments concerned for further care," DMCH Director Brig Gen Md Nazmul Haque told The Daily Star.

Nazmul as the head of the Rapid Response Team was also present at the emergency ward.

He said the team is connected via a WhatsApp group. It is alerted immediately after an emergency occurs, and the members respond as fast as possible.

Other physicians at the emergency ward also provided treatment to the injured, said Reaz Uddin.

"As a result, every patient received



The crowd gathered in front of DMCH on Tuesday night.

treatment on an urgent basis."

The ward master, who is himself a member of the Rapid Response Team, said the team has its own fund and stock of medical supplies, including medicines, blood, and equipment.

During an emergency, most of the injured brought to the hospital remain unidentified primarily and they don't have money either. The Rapid Response Team takes the responsibility of their treatment and pays for all necessary care, added Reaz Uddin.

The team transfers patients to other departments after providing primary care. For instance, if an injured needs ICU care, the patient would be sent to the ICU, and if another needs to undergo an operation, the patient would be moved to the OT, said

hospital officials.

"There was no shortage of human resources or other logistics on Tuesday. We were instructed to use necessary resources as per our needs," the ward master said.

The Rapid Response Team has received a special training on handling patients during crisis situations and carrying out duties under time constraints. They also receive training once a month, and hold frequent meetings to discuss how to improve services.

At least 20 people were killed and more than 100 injured in Tuesday's explosion at a building in the capital's Siddikbazar.

About 150 doctors and staffers worked at the DMCH emergency ward, said Reaz Uddin.

It all points to accumulated gas

FROM PAGE 1

were three sanitaryware shops on the first floor and one in the basement.

The blast destroyed almost everything on the first three floors and debris covered part of the street in front.

Glass windows and fittings of a five-storey building next to it were also damaged.

Safayet Hossain, a storekeeper in the area, said the explosion felt like an earthquake.

"I saw 20-25 people lying on the road. Most of them were bleeding. They were crying for help. Some people were running around in panic," he told The Daily Star.

This is the second such incident in the capital within a week. On Sunday, three people were killed in a blast at a building near the Science Lab intersection.

Law enforcers and army personnel ruled out the possibility of any subversive act as they did not find any evidence of explosives at the scenes.

The bodies of 16 were handed over to the families early yesterday.

On Tuesday, the authorities said 17 people had died in the explosion. Yesterday, firefighters recovered two more bodies from the basement and another person died of injuries at a hospital.

Ten of the injured were admitted to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery in critical condition. Twenty others are being treated at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Two people are reported missing. The rods inside a column of the damaged building were seen sticking out.

Firefighter suspended rescue operations at 8:00pm on Tuesday after noticing cracks in the

loadbearing columns. They resumed it on a small scale yesterday morning by removing debris and pumping out water from the basement as the blast caused a leak in a reservoir. They suspended operations around 7:15pm declaring the building highly risky.

Officials of the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha also labelled it highly risky.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq said experts from the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit (CTTC), Criminal Investigation Department, and the army visited the spot and found no evidence of explosives.

POSSIBLE REASONS

CTTC experts said gas might have accumulated in the underground water tank resulting in the explosion. Besides, too much biogas in the septic tank could also cause a blast, they added.

A leaky gas pipe could have created a channel underground and gas might have accumulated gradually. It was somehow ignited, causing the blast, they added.

There is also the likelihood that a leaky sewer pipe turned part of the building into a gas chamber, they said.

Rahmat Ullah Chowdhury, the in-charge of CTTC bomb disposal team, said, "The gas chamber exploded following a spark [that ignited it]."

He added, "No traces of explosives or fragments of IED circuits were found."

Besides, the smoke was not black or of any colour that would suggest an explosive attack, and the bodies recovered bore no splinter wounds, he added.

Rab Bomb Disposal Unit chief Maj Moshir Rahman also said gas was

the most likely cause.

"But we don't rule out other possibilities. It could be triggered by something else," he said.

Mohammad Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner of the Detective Branch, said the building was constructed in 1992. But the top floors were built years later.

"The garage is no longer a garage. Even the owner cannot say where the septic tank is," he told a press briefing.

He did not give a direct answer when asked whether the caretaker of the building was picked up.

The detectives are interrogating the owner, shop keepers, and others as they are conducting a shadow investigation, he said.

Family members of Abdul Motaleb Mintu, owner of a sanitaryware shop at the building, said DB officers picked him up from the Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 3:00am yesterday. He was at the hospital looking for a missing employee.

Mintu's cousin Anwar Hossain told The Daily Star that he was with Mintu when detectives took him.

But Mashiur Rahman, deputy commissioner (Lalbagh) of DB, said no one was picked up.

THE DECEASED

The deceased include: Mominul Islam, 38; Nodi Begum, 36; Mainuddin 50; Ismail, 42; Abdul Hasim, 34; Ishaq Mridha, 35; Rahat, 18; Al Amin, 23; Nazmul Hossain, 25; Obaidul Hossain Babul, 55; Abu Zafar Siddique, 34; Monsur Hossain, 40; Akriti Begum, 70; Idris Mir, 60; Hridoy, 20; Nurul Islam, 45; Momin Uddin Sumon, 48; Robin Hossain, 20; and Hafez Musa Haider, 46.

Police filed an unnatural death case with Bangshal Police Station, said Inspector Kamrul Hasan Kamal.

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Monitor septic tank, ventilation

Recommend experts to ensure safety of capital's buildings

HELEMUL ALAM

A lack of maintenance of septic tanks and buildings, coupled with blocked ventilation ways are putting the capital's buildings at huge risk of explosion. This newspaper yesterday reached out to multiple urban planning experts following the Gulistan explosion, who all echoed the same.

They suggested reducing dependency on air conditioning, ensuring a ventilation system in every septic tank and introducing a yearly inspection system by the authorities concerned to get rid of such risks.

According to the Bomb Disposal Unit of DMP's CTTC unit, the gas accumulated in an airtight room (underground), consequently making the room a gas chamber, which might have been the case with the March 7 explosion in Siddique Bazar.

The gas might be accumulated from the water tank, septic tank, concealed or disconnected gas lines, leaked sewerage pipelines or from a large generator, they observed.

The explosion on the second floor of a building in the capital's Science Lab area resulted in the death of three persons on March 5. This explosion was also due to accumulated gas, suspect two experts after primary investigation.

Rahmat Ullah Chowdhury, in charge of the Bomb Disposal Unit of DMP's CTTC unit, after the incident said the gas could have been accumulated from any concealed gas pipeline or sewerage system.

"An explosion may occur if there is 5-12 percent of the gas in the air of a confined space. There will be an

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Abdul Mannan was seen roaming the site of the devastating blast in the capital's Siddique Bazar yesterday, desperately trying to find his son-in-law Mehedi Hasan Swapan, who had a shop in one of the buildings. Meanwhile, officials were busy with their rescue efforts, after they cordoned off the site. Nearby, family members were visibly in anguish; some kept crying out for their loved ones, while others were lamenting in silence.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, PRABIR DAS

Historic March 7 observed

STAR REPORT

The nation yesterday observed the historic March 7, marking the landmark speech of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Marking the day, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid rich tributes to the architect of independence of Bangladesh.

Besides, Awami League and different socio-political and cultural organisations chalked out elaborate programmes on the occasion.

Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television as well as private television channels and radio stations aired special programmes while national dailies published special supplements marking the day.

National and Awami League party flags were hoisted marking the day at Bangabandhu Bhaban and party office in the morning.



Global leaders express 'deep concerns' for Dr Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty global leaders expressed their "deep concerns for the well-being" of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus in an open letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"It is painful to see Prof Yunus, a man of impeccable integrity, and his life's work unfairly attacked and repeatedly harassed and investigated by your government," they said in the letter that also appeared as a full-page ad in the Washington Post on March 7.

They said, "It is out of this deep respect for your country that we write to urge you to take positive steps to support and recognise the great contributions of one of your most notable citizens, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus."

"We have deep concerns for Professor Yunus' well-being and his ability to contribute to humanitarian advancement in Bangladesh and around the world. As we are sure you are aware, Muhammad Yunus' contributions to Bangladesh, especially to the very poor and the most vulnerable, and also to the world, are recognised and honored around the globe."

The letter mentioned that Prof Yunus is one of seven people in history to have received the Nobel Peace Prize, the US Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the US

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PRAYER TIMING				
MARCH 9				
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				

HAJJ REGISTRATION DEADLINE

Poor response leads to 'final' extension

RASHIDUL HASAN

Even after extending the registration deadline two times, the government is still not getting the expected response for performing hajj, making hajj agencies concerned about not fulfilling the quota of sending 1.27 lakh Bangladeshis for the pilgrimage this year.

According to officials at the city's Ashkona Hajj Camp, 64,699 people have registered as of yesterday.

Of the total, 9,253 registered under the government's hajj management and the rest 55,446 under private agencies.

Due to the poor response, the government on Tuesday extended the registration deadline for the third and final time till March 16, the religious affairs ministry said in a circular yesterday.

Leaders of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) and Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB) fear that due to the low numbers the quota will not be fulfilled.

Several officials at Ashkona camp also doubt whether Bangladesh will be able to meet the quota this year, because of the high cost of the hajj package.

"Our business will be affected severely if we cannot fulfil the quota. Besides, failure to fulfil it will also have a negative impact on our country," said Abdus Salam Aref, general secretary of ATAB.

HAAB and ATAB leaders said despite the huge interest to go for the pilgrimage, fewer people have registered due to the high costs.

A Bangladeshi will have to spend around Tk 7 lakh to perform the ritual under private

A Bangladeshi will have to spend around Tk 7 lakh to perform the ritual under private and government management this year, up by around Tk 1.61 lakh from the previous year.

and government management this year, up by around Tk 1.61 lakh from the previous year.

HAAB and ATAB leaders said a Bangladeshi pilgrim will have to spend around Tk 8 to 9 lakh on average to complete all formalities of hajj this year, for which many are finding it difficult to gather the money.

HAAB, a platform of around 1,500 private hajj agencies, said this year's airfare is high, for which the cost of the hajj package has increased significantly.

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

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

"In previous years, people thronged agencies for registration. But this year, we are running after people; we are not getting the due response," Md Khorshed Alam, managing partner of Al-Madina Travel & Hajj Kafela told The Daily Star.

"In most cases, people are telling us that they are finding it difficult to manage the huge amount of money fixed for the package," he added.

HAAB president Taslim said people from villages generally perform hajj in large numbers. "As the cost of the package has increased, village people in many cases are having trouble."

This year, the hajj will be held on June 27, depending on the sighting of the moon.

'Chhatra League gets impunity, while victims suffer'

Say speakers on sexual harassment in universities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sexual harassers from Chhatra League (BCL) in different universities are getting continuous impunity against their offences, as the university authorities don't take action against them. Rather, they oust the victims out of the halls, said speakers yesterday.

They made the remarks at a procession organised by Nari Sanghati, marking International Women's Day-2023, in front of Raju Memorial Sculpture in Dhaka University's TSC area.

Author and anthropologist Rahnuma Ahmed said, "Bangladesh's minister of education is a female. If sexual assaults occur in any other nation, the responsible minister resigns. Bangladesh has had a female-led government for around 35 years. Yet we are unable to provide a woman with a protected environment."

"Why does a female student need to enter

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TORTURE ON DU STUDENT HC upholds 3 years' jail of ex-Khilgaon OC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday upheld the lower court verdict that sentenced former OC of Khilgaon Police Station Md Helal Uddin to three years in jail for torturing former DU student Abdul Kadar in 2011.

The HC also ordered Helal, now on bail, to surrender to the trial court in three months.

The bench of Justice Fatema Najib delivered the verdict. Kadar, now a lecturer at the chemistry department of Cumilla Victoria Government College – expressed satisfaction at the judgement.

On July 16 in 2011, some plainclothesmen from the police station stopped Kadar at Segunbagicha while he was returning to his dorm from Eskaton. They beat Kadar, then a DU student, with sticks, as per a case filed by him in January 2012.

Later, police implicated Kadar in three false cases. But following media outcry, the HC on July 28, 2011, ordered police to probe into the incident. Kadar was acquitted of all charges in 2012.

WB GROUP PRESIDENCY Bangladesh endorses Ajay Banga

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has endorsed the US nominee Ajay Banga for the position of World Bank Group president, in the context of the long-standing friendship and cooperation between Bangladesh and the US.

"Bangladesh believes that Mr Banga's vast experience would positively contribute to the works and the future of the World Bank Group," said foreign ministry in a statement yesterday.

Indian-American executive Ajay Banga has been

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PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Joy Bangla Concert made a comeback after a two-year hiatus with performances from bands like Karnival, Meghdol, Lalon, Chirkutt, Cryptic Fate and Artcell. The standout rendition was Cryptic Fate's interpretation of "Teer Hara Ei Dheuer Shagor". The concert is usually arranged every year to commemorate the country's independence and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historic March 7 speech.

JOY BANGLA CONCERT

An energetic comeback

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youthful, vociferous crowd was in attendance at the much-awaited Joy Bangla Concert 2023 yesterday. The flagship event could take place after a two-year hiatus at Army Stadium in the capital.

The concert started after paying respects to the lives lost to the explosion at a commercial building in Gulistan on March 7.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended the event.

After the concert started, the renewed vigour was immediately evident in young bands like Arekta Rock Band and Karnival, the latter being a much-awaited addition to the line-up.

On the other hand, Meghdol provided a much-appreciated calm before the storm that was brewed by hard-hitting bands that came after it. Avoid Rafa, Lalon, Chirkutt, Cryptic Fate and Artcell serenaded the crowd with their signature tunes, as well as their own renditions of patriotic songs.

The standout rendition was Cryptic Fate's interpretation of "Teer Hara Ei Dheuer Shagor". The

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Monitor septic tank Global leaders express

FROM PAGE 3
 explosion if a flame or a spark causes the ignition," said the official.

He suggested opening the windows and turning on electric fans can help avoid such explosions.

Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said a vent is a must for a safety tank from where the gas goes out.

"When we construct buildings haphazardly, many building owners shut the vent to get rid of the bad odour. In the process, they activate a ticking time bomb," he said.

Habib also suggested keeping gas cylinders in a place where air can pass properly and ensuring their monthly monitoring.

"A practice of providing occupancy certificates after yearly inspection of all the buildings of Dhaka will have to be introduced under the councillors or mayors, involving Wasa, Desa, Rajuk, and the fire service. This team will check whether kitchens are

being constructed properly, the gas connection of the kitchen and the condition of the septic tank is alright, elevators are functioning and electric lines are in a good state," he said.

Adil Mohammad Khan, former general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said the lack of maintenance works in buildings, especially high-rises, is one of the main causes of such accidents.

"In Dhaka, organisations like Wasa, Desa, Rajuk and city corporations are only doing their paper works, without ensuring proper monitoring. For example, Rajuk approves the construction of a building but doesn't provide occupancy certificates after checking whether the buildings were constructed complying with the approved plans," said Adil.

However, contacted, Dhaka Wasa Director (technical) AKM Shahid Uddin said they carry out their maintenance work in sewerage lines every year.

BRTA numbers way

FROM PAGE 5
 that motorcycles were involved in the highest number of crashes and deaths on roads last month.

BRTA started publishing accident reports from last month, just a month after the road secretary and transport leaders came down heavily on road safety platforms for publishing what they claimed to be "fabricated" reports on road crashes.

Over the last five years, the country has witnessed three movements, including a mass one in July-August 2018, demanding safe roads. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul

Quader on many occasions admitted his failure to bring discipline on roads.

At least three road-safety platforms in early January published their reports, saying that the numbers of road crashes and deaths went up last year compared to 2021.

But Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri on January 15 blasted the road safety campaigners for publishing "fabricated" reports.

BRTA and Jatri Kalyan Samity published reports on Tuesday, while Road Safety Foundation did so yesterday.

FROM PAGE 3
 Congressional Gold Medal, a group that includes Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr, Mother Theresa, and Elie Wiesel.

He founded Grameen Bank in 1976 grew it to a world-renowned poverty-fighting institution of 9 million borrowers, 97 percent of them women, that has lifted millions out of poverty and been a model for other microcredit programs around the world.

The letter also said Yunus has not benefited financially from his involvement in Grameen Telecom or GrameenPhone. Rather, he has devoted himself to the poverty-fighting missions of the many organisations he has established and lives modestly in Dhaka.

"We believe one of the most important roles of government is to create an environment where traditional and social entrepreneurs can flourish. We hope that Bangladesh will return to its role as a model for other developing nations of how a vibrant civil society can be nurtured to ensure sustainable progress. A good first step would be to recognize Professor Yunus' achievements and allow him to focus his energy on doing more good for your country and for the world, rather than on defending himself," said the global leaders.

Signatories to the letter are:

Bono, musician and activist; Sir Richard Branson, founder, Virgin Group; Lord Mark Malloch Brown, president, Open Society Foundations; Hillary Rodham Clinton, former US Secretary of State; Sam Daley-Harris, founder, RESULTS and Civic Courage; Lt Gen (ret'd) Romeo Dallaire, founder, Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security; Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president emerita, Children's Defense Fund; Vicente Fox, former president of Mexico; Peter Gabriel, musician; Ron Garan, former Nasa astronaut, and Kul Gautam, former deputy executive director of Unicef and assistant secretary general of the UN.

Pamela Gillies, former vice chancellor and professor emerita, Glasgow Caledonian University; Peter C Goldmark, Jr, former CEO, Rockefeller Foundation and Int'l Herald Tribune; Jane Goodall, primatologist and activist; Al Gore, former vice president of the US; John Hewko, CEO, Rotary International; Mo Ibrahim, entrepreneur and philanthropist; Baroness Helena Kennedy, KC Member of the House of Lords UK; Kerry Kennedy, president, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights;

Ted Kennedy Jr; Vinod Khosla, venture capitalist, and Ban Ki-moon, 8th secretary general of the UN.

Annie Lennox, singer, songwriter, and activist; Arthur Levitt, former chair of the US Securities and Exchange Commission; Gene Ludwig, founder and CEO, Springharbor Holdings & Former US Comptroller of the Currency; Paul Maritz, former CEO of VMware; Michael H Moskow, former president and CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago; Narayana Murthy, founder, Infosys; Sir Robin Niblett, former chief executive, Chatham House; Jan Piercy, advisor, Southern Bancorporation, former US board director, World Bank; Robert Post, sterling professor of Law, Yale Law School; Donald Riegle, former US Senator from Michigan, former chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Development, and Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland.

Ellen Seidman; Yeadley Smith, actress; Sharon Stone, mother; Dr David Suzuki, prof emeritus, University of British Columbia; Peter Tufano, former dean, Saïd School of Business, Oxford University; Melanne Verwee, former US Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, and Jimmy Wales, founder, Wikipedia.

to execute the HC verdict.

He also said his life has been damaged due to the activities of the university authorities.

Contacted, late Zil Hossain's son Noor Mohammad Kiron, who just completed his masters in political science from Sirajganj Government College, expressed satisfaction at the HC verdict. He, however, said his father has died with pain of not getting justice. "We are now waiting for implementation of the High Court verdict."

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 3
 nominated by US President Joe Biden to become the new president of the World Bank. His election to the position will be a mere formality since the presidency has traditionally been held by the US.

All 13 presidents of the World Bank so far have been US citizens; the only exception being Bulgarian national Kristalina Georgieva, who served as the acting president in 2019. The new president is likely to be in place by early May.

An energetic

FROM PAGE 3
 night reached a crescendo with fans chanting for Artcell throughout the concert. Marking International Women's Day, special registration was made available for women.

Every year, Centre for Research & Information (CRI) and its youth secretariat Young Bangla organise this event to commemorate the country's independence, and Bangabandhu's March 7 speech.

Chhatra

FROM PAGE 3
 university dorms before 8:00pm? If these rules exist only for women, where is the freedom we deem so precious?" said Nusrat Haque of Student Federation of Bangladesh's Dhaka Mohanagar unit.

Shemoli Shil, president of Nari Shonghoti; Aparajita Chando, general secretary of the organisation; Prof Gitara Nasreen of DU, also expressed their solidarity with the procession.

প্লট বিক্রয়
 ধানমন্ডিতে ১৫.৫ কাঠা, বনানীতে ৬ কাঠার (আবাসিক), গ্রীনরোডে ৭.৫ কাঠা (কমার্শিয়াল) প্লট বিক্রয় হইবে।
 যোগাযোগ: ০১৯১২৮১৯৩৭৮

Coastal men break traditional

FROM PAGE 5
 current practices, and obtains promises of cooperation from men. The promises are then checked the following year to ensure they had been kept.

Now, the attitudes of those who had previously ridiculed Mokbul started to shift and a good number of men in the five coastal upazilas started sharing household responsibilities.

"I believe that if there is a division of labour between husband and wife, the family can easily prosper," Mokbul said.

Rahim Sana, a day labourer of Khulna's

Dacope upazila, also set a similar example in his village, despite working outside most of the time. Rahim still finds time to fetch water from the tube well, gives food to the ducks and chickens, collects firewood for cooking and helps his wife Chhobi with other household chores.

Mohammad Iftekhar Hossain, project coordination specialist at GCA, said to achieve SDG-5, men need to participate more in household work and create a cooperative atmosphere between genders. "Initially, we have been trying to bring about

a change in mindset and attitude among the families and people of the areas, so that anyone in the family can fetch water, regardless of gender," he said.

"We have been facing many challenges in breaking social stigmas, but we are working with religious leaders, local administrators, teachers and community members to bring about sustainable change in sharing unpaid care work," he said.

"But we still have a long way to go, and a cooperative effort is necessary to bring about this change," he added.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)



International Labour Organization (ILO) invites proposals from interested firm/organization for **Consultancy Services for Value Chain Analysis for Productive Employment Opportunities of Women and Vulnerable Groups in Bangladesh.** The bidding documents can be downloaded from the ILO website at:

https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Aboutus/WCMS_870873/lang-en/index.htm

The deadline for submission of proposal is **Sunday, April 09, 2023, by 04:30 PM (BST time).**

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Pubali Bank Limited, the largest online commercial Bank in Bangladesh is hereby inviting sealed Tenders from the eligible Tenderers who can participate in the following Tender as defined in the tender documents of the under mentioned work as stated below:

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Please visit <https://www.pubalibangla.com/tender.asp> for more details, interested parties must submit their Tender documents up to **15 March 2023 by 11:00 AM.** duly filled up all requirements.

(Ashim Kumar Roy)
 GM & Division Head



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NOTICE

RELOCATION OF OFFICE ACTIVITIES

This is to inform all of our valued clients, stakeholders, well-wishers and all concerned parties that due to unavoidable circumstances all activities of the Phoenix Insurance Company Ltd's **New Market** branch has now been shifted to: 1/A Dilkusha, Commercial Area, 1st floor, Dhaka 1000. This has been in effect since March 6, 2023 and the activities of **New Market** branch: Shirin Mansion, 2nd Floor, 34 Mirpur Road has been closed from March 5, 2023.

We sincerely apologize for all the inconveniences that might arise because of this.

For any business queries related to our **New Market** branch, we would like to request to contact of us at the number: 01819-450553

Thank you so much for your constant support.

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বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘর

শাহবাগ, ঢাকা-১০০০

১৯৭১: গণহত্যা-নির্যাতন আর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরের ভবন নির্মাণ (১ম সংশোধিত) প্রকল্প
পুনঃআগ্রহব্যক্তকরণ বিজ্ঞাপন

বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘরের বাস্তবায়নায়ী ১৯৭১: গণহত্যা-নির্যাতন আর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরের ভবন নির্মাণ (১ম সংশোধিত) প্রকল্পের আওতাতে:

(১) মুক্তিযুদ্ধের ওপর ডিওরোমা নির্মাণ কাজ।

(২) গণহত্যার ওপর ডিওরোমা নির্মাণ কাজ।

এর জন্য প্রকৃত ও অভিজ্ঞ প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট পৃথক বা একক আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণ প্রস্তাব আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠানের আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণপত্র ও তালিকাভুক্তিকরণের জন্য আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণ অনুরোধের বিস্তারিত তথ্য ও শর্ত সম্বলিত বিজ্ঞাপন বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘরের নিজস্ব ওয়েবসাইটে (www.bangladeshmuseum.gov.bd) পাওয়া যাবে। আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তির শর্ত মোতাবেক আগামী ০৮/০৩/২০২৩ থেকে ২০/০৩/২০২৩ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে এবং সর্বশেষ ২১/০৩/২০২৩ তারিখ বেলা ১৪:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘরের রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বাস্তবে আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণ পত্র দাখিল করতে হবে। ক্রয়কারী কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণপত্র/ক্রয় কার্যক্রম বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।

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 ১৯৭১ঃ গণহত্যা-নির্যাতন আর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরের
 ভবন নির্মাণ (১ম সংশোধিত) শীর্ষক প্রকল্প

জিডি-৪২৪

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e-GP Tender Id No.

799702, 799713, 799714, 799716, 799717, 799718, 799719, 799720, 799721, 799722, 799723, 799724, 799725

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 Must have completed HSC or Equivalent in 2022 or 2021
 Must have completed SSC or Equivalent in 2019 or later

BSc Engineering and BBA Programmes	Eligibility	Postgraduate Programmes in Engineering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BSc in Mechanical Engineering (ME) BSc in Industrial and Production Engineering (IPE) BSc in Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) BSc in Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) BSc in Software Engineering (SWE) BSc in Civil Engineering (CE) BBA in Technology Management (TM) 	<p>SSC/HSC or Equivalent</p> <p>Minimum GPA 4.5 (both) SSC and HSC/Equivalent; A+ in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Minimum A in English in HSC</p> <p>O/A Level or Equivalent</p> <p>O Level: Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and English with Minimum grade B</p> <p>A Level: Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry with Minimum grade A</p> <p>ADMISSION TEST (For BSc Engg. and BBA Programmes) Friday, 26th May 2023 at 10:00 AM</p> <p>Only short-listed applicants will be allowed to sit for the admission test.</p>	<p>MSc / MEng / PhD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanical Engineering Electrical and Electronic Engineering Computer Science and Engineering Computer Science and Application Civil Engineering <p>Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes in Technical Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DTE BSCTE [1- Yr and 2-Yr] PGDTE MSCTE PhD <p>Only short-listed applicants will be notified.</p>

Application Process : Apply through IUT admission website

For details of selection criteria, scholarship policy, number of seats and other information : visit the admission portal. admission.iutoic-dhaka.edu

Scan To Visit IUT Admission Website

A year too late

After 48 years, HC orders univ to compensate family of deceased man who didn't get his deserved certificate

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

After a series of legal battles lasting 48 years, Zil Hossain from Chigachha village in Sirajganj has gotten justice from the High Court. The tragedy is that he died a year ago at the age of 72.

The HC on Tuesday ordered the authorities of Bangladesh Agriculture University to give Tk 2 crore to late Hossain's family as compensation for destroying his career by not granting him a honours certificate.

The court also asked them to give 10 percent interest on Tk 2 crore since 2008.

The HC, however, said Tk 25 lakh, deposited by the university authorities to the lower court concerned during the case proceedings, will be deducted from the total amount.

Following the HC verdict, the family will get around Tk 4 crore as compensation, his lawyer Chanchal Kumar Biswas told The Daily Star.

The HC bench of Justice Bhishmadev Chakraborty and Justice Md Ali Reza delivered the verdict after dismissing an appeal filed by the university authorities, challenging a lower court verdict that in 2008 ordered the university to give Hossain Tk 2 crore.

Details of the HC verdict could not be known as its full text has not

been released yet.

According to the case statement, Zil Hossain was born on January 7, 1950. He appeared for honours final examination at Bangladesh Agriculture University in 1971-72 academic session.

The university authorities had declared that Hossain failed in the



On December 28, 1986, Bangladesh Agriculture University accepted an application from Hossain and gave him a certificate. At that time, he was 47 years old and was way over the age limit of getting any government jobs. Hossain, on October 18, 2000, filed a compensation suit with the subordinate court concerned, saying that it took the university authorities 14 years and nine months to execute the HC verdict.

exam held in 1973. He applied to the university's academic council seeking review of his result, but the council rejected his application. He

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Coastal men break traditional gender roles

They are sharing burden of women's unpaid care work in 5 upazilas of Khulna, Satkhira

NILEMA JAHAN

While many urban millennial men continue to view unpaid domestic work as something women do, a lot of men in the coastal areas of Khulna and Satkhira are taking up the job and sharing responsibilities with their wives. This small but significant change is having a positive impact on society, as it challenges traditional gender roles and promotes equality within households.

Take the case of Mokbul Hossain, a 50-year-old fisherman from Gabura union in Satkhira's Shyamnagar upazila. The biggest problem in his village Dumuria is water scarcity, which requires them to fetch water from far away for drinking and cooking.

"My wife used to take care of the task of fetching water, which caused her pain and discomfort all over her body," said Mokbul.

"Currently, I collect water for most of our household needs. However, UNDP provided us with a 2,000-litre water tank under a project this year to harvest rainwater for drinking purposes."

Mokbul also takes care of the goats and hens, cleans the house, cuts fish and vegetables,



bathes the children, washes clothes, and much more.

His wife, Asiya Khatun, 45, is delighted with her husband's sense of responsibility towards the family, as he willingly shares the household chores and takes her opinion into account when making any decisions related to the family.

"If all male members of the family support women in their work, then the women in the family can get rest and participate in development activities," she said.

In the beginning, Mokbul faced mockery and ridicule from others in his village as they would call him "hen-pecked" for sharing the burden of unpaid care work with his wife.

Fortunately, the Gender

Responsive Coastal Adaptation (GCA) project has been a powerful force for bringing such transformation in the attitude of men in the five upazilas of Khulna and Satkhira districts, where it is being implemented with the joint funding of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the government, with technical support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

An important part of the GCA project is to ease the workload of females of the coastal belt by shifting the responsibility of fetching water.

Every year on International Women's Day, a field facilitator visits houses, learns about

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

ROAD CRASHES, DEATHS BRTA numbers way lower than road-safety platforms'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has said that at least 303 people were killed and 416 injured in 308 road crashes last month.

But the numbers are significantly lower than those reported by two road-safety platforms.

According to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, at least 467 people were killed and 761 injured in 447 crashes in February this year.

Road Safety Foundation said 487 people were killed and 712 injured in 439 road crashes during the same time.

BRTA has prepared its report with its own workforce, while the two non-government organisations prepared their reports following published news.

All three organisations, however, pointed out

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Four killed, 17 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed and 17 injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Rajshahi, a rickshaw-van puller and his passenger were killed after being hit by an auto-rickshaw in Katakhal area around 10:00am.

The deceased are rickshaw-van puller Rahat Ali, 45, and Rina Begum, 50, said Jahangir Alam, officer-in-charge of Katakhal Police Station.

They were declared dead at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

In Dinajpur, a college student was killed after a speeding truck hit her in Chirirbandar upazila.

Priti Rani, 22, was a 12th-grader at Dinajpur Government College. Dashmile Highway Police Outpost OC Md Saiful Islam said Priti was going to Bhushirbandar Bazar by a van. As she arrived near Atrai river bridge around 11:00am, a truck hit the vehicle. She died on the spot.

In Patuakhali, Rosa, a 10-year-old girl, was killed and 17 were injured as a passenger bus plunged into a ditch beside Dhaka-Patuakhali highway.

The accident took place on the northern side of the Patuakhali Bridge around 4:00am.

The injured -- including the girl's parents -- were admitted to Patuakhali Medical College Hospital, said Patuakhali Police Station OC Moniruzzan.

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ

১৪/৬-১৪/২৩, পল্লবী, মিরপুর-১২, ঢাকা-১২১৬

ফোন- ০১৭৬৯-৭২১০১০, ফ্যাক্স-০২-৫৮০৫১০১০

ই-মেইল: regoffice@bsmrmu.edu.bd, ওয়েব: www.bsmrmu.edu.bd

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর: বিএসএমআরএমইউ/রেজি-০৩৬/২৩/০৩ তারিখ: ০৭/০৩/২০২৩

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের ২০১৩ সনের ৪৭ নং আইন দ্বারা প্রতিষ্ঠিত বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ-এর জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত পদে শিক্ষক নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হইতে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে:

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম ও পদ সংখ্যা	গ্রেড ও বেতনস্কেল	বয়স	মন্তব্য
ক।	প্রভাষক ইংরেজি-০১ জন	(গ্রেড-০৯, বেতনস্কেল-২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/-)		১। শিক্ষাপত্র যোগ্যতা এবং আবেদনের শর্তাবলি সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত তথ্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটে (www.bsmrmu.edu.bd) দেখুন। ২। আবেদনপত্র জমাদানের শেষ তারিখ ১৩ এপ্রিল ২০২৩। ৩। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের স্থায়ী ক্যাম্পাস চট্টগ্রাম (৫নং মোহরা ওয়ার্ডের হামিদচর এলাকার মৌজা চর রাস্তামাটিয়া ও বাকলিয়া, থানা: বন্দর, জেলা চট্টগ্রাম)-এ নির্মাণাধীন। ৪। বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত পদের সংখ্যা/হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধি পাইতে পারে।
খ।	প্রভাষক মেরিটাইম ল' এন্ড পলিসি-০১ জন	(গ্রেড-০৯, বেতনস্কেল-২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/-)	সর্বোচ্চ ৩০ বছর	
গ।	প্রভাষক ইনসিটিউট অব প্রফেশনাল ল্যাংগুয়েজ-০১ জন	(গ্রেড-০৯, বেতনস্কেল-২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/-)		

রেজিস্ট্রার
বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ

GD- 425

Chittagong College
Chawkbazar, Chattogram
www.ctgcollege.gov.bd

Memo No.:cedp/ctgcol/e-tender-1.01.001/2023 Date: 07/03/2023

e-Tender Notice

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Invitation Reference No.	Name of Package	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	798039	CEDP/CTGCOL (IDG-1045)/2022-23/02(05)	Procurement of Furniture & Fixtures for Classrooms, Library, Auditorium, ICT Lab and Female Common Room in Chittagong College, Chattogram.	23-March-2023 3:00 PM	23-March-2023 3:30 PM
2.	798040	CEDP/CTGCOL (IDG-1045)/2022-23/01(05)	College Campus Networking of Chittagong College, Chattogram	23-March-2023 1:00 PM	23-March-2023 2:00 PM
3.	798761	CEDP/CTGCOL (IDG-1045)/2022-23/03(05)	Procurement of Air Conditioner, Electric Fan and the related services for Chittagong College, Chattogram.	23-March-2023 1:30 PM	23-March-2023 2:30 PM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks' Branches up to 22-March-2023 till 4.00 PM.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Professor Mohammed Mozahidul Islam Chowdhury
Principal & Manager
CEDP Sub-project
Chittagong College, Chattogram
Phone: 02 3333 65007
e-mail: ctgcollege@yahoo.com

রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
জেনেটিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এন্ড বায়োটেকনোলজি বিভাগ

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জেনেটিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এন্ড বায়োটেকনোলজি বিভাগের ২০২২-২০২৩ অর্থ বছরের পরবেশা সরঞ্জামাদি ক্রয় খাত থেকে “জিইবি সেন্ট্রাল ল্যাবরেটরির” জন্য বৈজ্ঞানিক যন্ত্রপাতি ও রাসায়নিক দ্রব্যাদি সরবরাহের নিমিত্তে প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে সিলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। আগামী ২৭-০৩-২০২৩ তারিখ দুপুর ২.০০টার মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অফিস থেকে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে, সিডিউল মূল্য ২,০০০.০০ (দুই হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য)। দরপত্রের সাথে জামানত বাবদ উল্লেখিত দরের ৩% অর্থ (ফেরতযোগ্য) নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অনুকূলে ব্যাংক ড্রাফটের মাধ্যমে জমা দিতে হবে। ক্রটিপূর্ণ ও অসম্পূর্ণ দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। দরপত্র আগামী ২৮-০৩-২০২৩ তারিখ দুপুর ১২টার মধ্যে রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কোষাধ্যক্ষ দপ্তরে রক্ষিত বাগে জমা দিতে হবে। দরপত্র বাতিল একই দিন দুপুর ১২.১৫ মিনিটে দরপত্রদাতাদের (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) উপস্থিতিতে খোলা হবে। কর্তৃপক্ষ সর্বনিম্ন দর গ্রহণে বাধ্য নয় এবং কোনো কারণ না দর্শিয়ে যে কোন অথবা সমস্ত দরপত্র বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন। উল্লেখ্য যে, দরপত্র সম্পর্কে কর্তৃপক্ষের যে কোন সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে বিবেচিত হবে।

সভাপতি
জেনেটিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এন্ড বায়োটেকনোলজি বিভাগ
রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
রাজশাহী

জিডি-৪২৬

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of Superintendent
Lakshmipur District Jail
www.prison.lakshmipur.gov.bd

Memo No. 58.04.5100.123.04.001.23-847 Date: 08/03/2023

e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal:

SL	Tender ID No.	Name of work	Publishing, closing date & time
1.	792239	Supply of Unnatamaner Masur Dal (Mota) for the period of April/2023 to September/2023	07-Mar-2023 19:00 23-Mar-2023 12:00
2.	792240	Supply of Unnatamaner Masur Dal (Saru) for the period of April/2023 to September/2023	07-Mar-2023 19:00 23-Mar-2023 12:15
3.	792242	Supply of Unnatamaner Cholar Dal for the period of April/2023 to September/2023	07-Mar-2023 19:00 23-Mar-2023 12:30

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) and also from Lakshmipur District Jail office.

Md. Nazrul Islam
Jail Super
BJ-02709900206
Lakshmipur District Jail

GD-429

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Jail Super; Patuakhali District Jail
www.prison.patuakhali.gov.bd

Memo No-58.04.5000.145.01.013.23- 884 Date-05.03.2023

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the national e-GP portal;

Sl No	Tender ID No.	Name of work	Publishing date & time	Closing Date & Time
1	797963	Supply of Unnotamaner Mashur Dal Mota to Patuakhali District Jail for the period of April/2023 to September/2023.	05-Mar-2023 13:00	20- Mar-2023 14:00
2	797966	Supply of Unnotamaner Cholar Dal to Patuakhali District Jail for the period of April/2023 to September/2023.	05-Mar-2023 13:00	20- Mar-2023 14:00
3	798007	Supply of Unnotamaner Mashur Dal Soru to Patuakhali District Jail for the period of April/2023 to September/2023.	05-Mar-2023 13:00	20- Mar-2023 14:00

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

MD.MAHBUBUL ALAM
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GD- 427



The Daily Star

WORLD KIDNEY DAY 2023

Kidney patients are at higher risk of unexpected disasters

On March 4, 2023, the Kidney Awareness Monitoring & Prevention Society (KAMPS), with the support of Eskayef Pharmaceuticals Limited, organised a roundtable titled “Kidney patients are at higher risk of unexpected disasters”. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.



Dr M.A.Samad,
President KAMPS, Professor and Head, Department of Nephrology, Anwar Khan Modern Medical College and Hospital

The overwhelming majority of dialysis facilities in Bangladesh, precisely 95% of the total 215 centers, are located in urban regions. Consequently, residents of Cox's Bazar face the daunting task of travelling 90km to Chittagong to receive vital dialysis treatment. This distance becomes insurmountable during disasters when transportation is disrupted, leading to dire consequences. Similar picture is seen throughout our country. To ensure kidney health for all during emergencies, we need to take proactive measures.

Treatment of kidney failure is highly expensive. Therefore, let's raise the slogan “Kidney Health for All”. Dialysis and Transplant service must be provided free of cost under universal health care.

One solution is for policymakers to introduce mobile dialysis centres, making the service more widely available during disasters. Additionally, doctors must take on responsibilities such as preparing patients mentally, creating emergency kits, and ensuring medicine and other essentials are available. Chronic patients should be registered

unstable land should receive special attention to ensure their safety.



Dr Abdul Latif Hilali,
Director of Program, Urban Resilience Program, RAJUK

We should start working on field-level projects to minimize the risk of earthquakes. The Bangladesh Urban Earthquake Resilience project, in collaboration with the World Bank, is a proactive government project aimed at achieving this goal. As part of the Earthquake Disaster Risk Reduction, a total of 3,252 buildings, including schools, colleges, and hospitals, were assessed on a priority basis. Of these, 42 buildings need to be demolished, while the rest remain vulnerable.

We have also developed a risk-sensitive land-use plan for Dhaka and a filled and sandy soil area map. Another project we initiated is the electronic construction permitting system, which enables floor-by-floor supervision without deviation, placing utmost importance on structural design. Additionally, we provided earthquake training to 1,200 engineers through 12 national and international professors.

To further minimize earthquake risk, we must be more vigilant in constructing and retrofitting buildings to withstand at least eight magnitudes of earthquakes. New constructions

disease. Additionally, more non-governmental organizations like KAMPS need to be established to provide low-cost testing and treatment for kidney failure. Creating awareness among the public is also crucial.



Brigadier General Engineer Ali Ahmed Khan,
Former Director General, Department of Fire Service and Civil Defense

An effective emergency response plan is crucial in preparing for natural disasters. To ensure that we can save lives, we need open spaces, well-stocked blood banks, and mobile hospitals set up in and outside of Dhaka, in collaboration with stakeholders such as medical associations. Adequate preparation is necessary, and doctors must receive better training to support emergency response efforts.

The role of nearby hospitals, like Enam Medical College & Hospital, was critical during the Rana Plaza tragedy. In addition, a National Emergency Medical Center should be established. Hospitals require an emergency response plan, properly trained medical staff, and well-equipped facilities to provide assistance during crises. With the support of the Disaster Ministry, doctors and nurses must play a vital role in providing aid during medical rescue operations.



Engineer Iqbal Habib,
Joint Secretary, BAPA

Dhaka and other urban cities in Bangladesh are at a higher risk of natural disasters compared to countries like Turkey and Syria, which have recently experienced large-scale disasters.

A recent survey revealed that 187 hospitals, schools, and colleges are at extreme risk, with Dhaka National Medical College being the most vulnerable. Urgent assessments of high-risk buildings in Dhaka city should be conducted within the next 3-5 years, as most buildings in Dhaka are at risk of collapse if an earthquake above 4 or 5 on the Richter scale occurs. Only 23% of these buildings have been constructed by engineers.

To ensure the safety of the public, it is imperative for the government to assess whether the buildings at risk in Dhaka were constructed in accordance with the Bangladesh National Building Code. If a building is found to be non-compliant, it should be marked with an orange label to indicate that it is not environmentally friendly and with a red label if it poses a danger to the occupants. This will allow for better identification of potentially hazardous buildings and enable necessary actions to be taken to mitigate the risk of disasters.

The public must be educated on how to respond during emergencies such as fires and earthquakes, and every area should have a non-vulnerable refuge center stocked with food and equipment to provide safety during disasters.



Dr Mohammad Kamrul Islam,
Kidney Transplant Surgeon & MD, CKDU Hospital

Although patients undergoing dialysis are deemed to have a greater susceptibility to contracting the COVID-19 virus, over 300 kidney transplants were successfully performed during the pandemic. In Bangladesh, only a handful of hospitals, including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Kidney Foundation, Center for Kidney Disease & Urology Hospital, and Birdem Hospital, regularly conduct kidney transplants. The pandemic posed significant challenges for dialysis patients, who could not travel to hospitals for their treatment or import their medications from abroad. To overcome these obstacles, we implemented a home delivery system for medication and established a separate dialysis floor in the hospital. The success

rate of the transplants remained high at over 96%, with less than 3% failure rate recorded last year.



Professor Dr Nizamuddin Chowdhury,
President, Bangladesh Renal Association

The impact of kidney dysfunction extends beyond just the patient, affecting their family members socially, financially, and psychologically. However, early detection of the condition can significantly improve the prognosis of kidney disease. Unfortunately, most patients are diagnosed in the final stages of the disease, leaving no chance for recovery. Due to the lack of visible symptoms, kidney disease often goes undiagnosed until it's too late.

Acute kidney dysfunction, often caused by excessive painkillers and antibiotics, requires early dialysis for a higher chance of recovery. In preparation for natural calamities, it's essential to have functional resources available for kidney patients. Recognizing chronic kidney disease as a Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) at the government level would allow for special attention to be given to kidney patients and doctors, ultimately improving the management and treatment of this debilitating condition.



Professor Dr Anwar Hossain Khan,
President, Pediatric Nephrology Society of Bangladesh

Kidney-related complications often arise in childhood or even before birth. To investigate hypertension in school-going children, we conducted a survey of 3267 students and found that 4.38% of them were suffering from the condition. Alarming, 30% of the students were obese, putting them at a higher risk of developing hypertension, which can persist into adulthood.

Furthermore, with 25% of babies now born premature, their reduced number of nephrons (the basic units of the kidney) puts them at risk of developing Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) at an early stage of adulthood. If this trend continues, we can expect a “tsunami” of CKD patients in the future, making it crucial to prioritize preventing preterm births through maternal care and planned pregnancies. We must also monitor the food quality of children, as those who consume fast food and salty snacks are more likely to develop hypertension.

To mitigate these issues, it's essential to address them seriously, as it not only saves our children's health but also a significant amount of revenue for the government in the future.



Dr Harisul Haq,
Professor, Department of Cardiology, BSMMU

It is surprising that Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) has not yet been recognized as a Non-Communicable Disease (NCD). Our body is like an orchestra, where each organ is critically linked with the others. Cardiorenal syndrome, which can cause acute or chronic problems in the heart or kidneys, can result in a corresponding problem in the other organ. Acute chronic heart failure can lead to and worsen CKD.

In light of this, it is crucial to be prepared for natural calamities by keeping emergency kits and dry food supplies for three to four days.

Additionally, CKD and heart failure patients must limit their water intake to avoid complications.



Rezwan Salehin,
Executive Director, KAMPS

The primary objective of KAMPS is to raise awareness about kidney

diseases and promote knowledge about their symptoms. We aim to provide education and resources to help people stay safe from this dangerous disease. Additionally, we provide life-saving dialysis and testing services to patients in need.

In times of disaster, transportation and communication may be disrupted, and the supply chain for medicine and treatment may be unavailable. Kidney patients, who require ongoing care, are particularly vulnerable in these situations. Collecting a sufficient amount of medication in advance may be the only solution for these patients. However, to better prepare for disasters, we advocate for the creation of better infrastructure and the establishment of more disaster-proof treatment centers. This would help ensure that kidney patients receive the care they need during and after emergencies.



Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu,
Former Captain, National Cricket Team of Bangladesh

Including disaster preparedness in the curriculum can equip students with the knowledge needed to respond effectively in times of crisis. By widely disseminating information about which foods are detrimental to kidney and heart health, students are more likely to retain this knowledge for life.

With only 300 nephrologists in our country, it is essential to address this scarcity appropriately. We also need to establish a comprehensive database that includes the names of doctors and technicians, which can be activated quickly during emergencies. Rather than solely focusing on constructing large buildings and infrastructure, we must prioritize the inclusion of necessary safety measures to ensure preparedness for any disaster. Our outlook needs to shift to emphasize safety and risk mitigation.



Md Mijanur Rahman,
Director General, Department of Disaster Management

The recent earthquake in Turkey serves as a stark reminder of the importance of disaster preparedness. It is imperative that we learn from this event and take necessary steps to safeguard the lives of our citizens. To this end, we must prioritize disaster prevention and response strategies, and make concerted efforts to raise public awareness of disaster preparedness.

In our efforts to protect the most vulnerable members of our society, particularly those with pre-existing medical conditions such as kidney disease, we must take special care. By investing in comprehensive disaster management plans and ensuring that everyone is well-informed and equipped to deal with emergencies, we can effectively minimize the impact of disasters and save countless lives.

The government has a plan to construct a national emergency operation centre. Fortunately, the Chinese government has agreed to provide funding for this crucial project. We have successfully acquired the required land for the centre from the Food Department. Moreover, we are actively searching for suitable land to establish a humanitarian staging area, which will significantly enhance our emergency preparedness capacity.

The Fire Brigade and Meteorology are two vital government bodies that play a crucial role in combating disasters. While the former falls under the purview of the Home Ministry, the latter is overseen by the Defense Ministry. If these agencies were brought under one umbrella, our disaster preparedness could have been further improved.

Considering the vulnerability of volunteers residing in Dhaka city during a disaster, it is imperative to train individuals from neighboring areas. This approach would ensure that volunteers can come forward to aid during crises, instead of being affected by the calamity themselves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A comprehensive emergency response plan needs to be formulated to prepare for natural disasters effectively.
- Proactive measures must be taken by the government to assess the safety of all buildings, particularly medical and dialysis centers, in anticipation of earthquakes.
- Establish mobile dialysis centres to improve accessibility of dialysis services during disasters.
- More kidney hospitals with disaster-proof infrastructures should be established across the country.
- Train more nephrologists, renal-care physicians, and nurses who can deliver quality kidney care services.
- Public awareness campaigns should be launched to educate people on how to detect kidney diseases early.
- Chronic kidney diseases must be declared as Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD).
- Healthcare professionals, including doctors and nurses, should receive better training to support emergency response efforts in the event of a disaster.
- After proper assessment, the most vulnerable buildings should be demolished, and at-risk ones should be retrofitted.
- The government must ensure that all buildings follow the Bangladesh National Building Code.

to receive necessary treatments in emergencies. Journalists can also play a crucial role in raising awareness among patients, so they can make necessary preparations.

At-risk patients can prepare their emergency kits and gather information about alternative dialysis centres in advance. They should also establish a network of supportive individuals, including friends and family, who can assist them during times of need. Finally, patients should be informed about dos and don'ts during emergencies to prevent complications.



Dr Mehedi Ahmed Ansari,
Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, BUET

It is imperative that the government takes proactive measures to assess the safety of all buildings, particularly medical and dialysis centers, in preparation for earthquakes. Those identified as at-risk should be strengthened accordingly. Earthquake signals often provide little time to evacuate, making strong and sturdy buildings crucial in providing protection for occupants.

In this regard, preparedness is paramount, with ensuring medical centers are earthquake resistant taking priority. Anchoring medical equipment to the floor is also crucial as part of preparatory measures.

The northeast region of Bangladesh is particularly vulnerable to earthquakes, and hospitals built on

should adhere to the Bangladesh National Building Code, while older buildings should undergo retrofits following proper assessment. With gradual interventions, we can effectively mitigate the risk of earthquakes.



Professor Dr. Harun Ur Rashid,
President, Kidney Foundation

The cure for acute kidney failure lies in providing immediate treatment, which can cure 80% of the disease. However, for those who suffer from gradual kidney damage, creating awareness is crucial. As chronic kidney disease often goes undetected, with no symptoms 80% of the time, 50% of patients are unaware they have the disease until it's too late. It is recommended that individuals over the age of 40-45 get their urine tested by a doctor every year, regardless of whether they have symptoms or not. Additionally, monitoring blood pressure, weight, and glucose at home can be beneficial. With blood pressure monitors costing only 150 BDT, testing blood pressure at home is affordable and easy. Individuals with blood pressure exceeding 140/90 must visit a healthcare center for a serum creatinine test and consult a nephrologist if the result is close to 1.2 ml.

Unfortunately, Bangladesh does not have enough nephrologists to treat everyone. To combat this issue, governmental and non-governmental organizations need to train more nephrologists, renal-care physicians, and nurses to test and treat kidney

Antarctic sea ice cover at record low Says EU monitor

AFP, Paris

Sea ice in Antarctica shrank to the smallest area on record in February for the second year in a row, continuing a decade-long decline, the European Union's climate monitoring service said Tuesday.

On February 16, the ocean surface covered by ice around the frozen continent shrank to 2.09 million square kilometres (nearly 800,000 square miles), the lowest level since satellite records began, according to figures provided to AFP by the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S).

"Antarctic sea ice reached its lowest extent in the 45-year satellite data record," said Samantha Burgess, Deputy Director of C3S.

US government scientists confirmed a new record last month but indicated an even lower figure of 1.79 million sq km, a difference Copernicus attributed to "different sea ice retrieval algorithms".

Sea ice concentrations during the



southern hemisphere summer were well below average in all sectors of the Southern Ocean.

Startlingly, the record lows this year and in 2022 are about 30 percent below the 1981-2010 average.

"These low sea ice conditions may have important implications for the stability of Antarctic ice shelves and ultimately for global sea level rise," said Burgess.

"Polar ice caps are a sensitive indicator of the climate crisis."

Melting sea ice has no discernible impact on sea levels because the ice is already in ocean water.

But diminished ice cover is nonetheless a major concern because it helps accelerate global warming, including in the Arctic region.



Anti-government demonstrators shout slogans during a protest organised by the "Women for Rights" group on the occasion of International Women's Day against the proposed tax reforms and the country's economic crisis, near the parliament building in Colombo, Sri Lanka yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Less than 1pc of world breathes clean air

Says study; Asian countries have the worst air quality

AGENCIES

Less than one percent of the world's population breathes pollution-free air – and Asian countries face some of the most severe health risks, according to a new study.

About 99.82 percent of the global land area is exposed to dangerous levels of particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) that are above the safety limit recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO), according to the research published in The Lancet Planetary Health.

Only 0.001 percent of the world's population breathes air considered acceptable, it found. PM2.5 are tiny particles in the air that have been linked to

serious illnesses such as lung cancer and heart disease.

The study, conducted by scientists in Australia and China, used more than 5,000 monitoring stations worldwide and machine learning simulations, meteorological data and geographical factors to estimate global daily PM2.5 concentrations.

They found that on a global level, more than 70 percent of days in 2019 had daily PM2.5 concentrations exceeding 15 micrograms of gaseous pollutants per cubic metre, the WHO-recommended daily limit.

The study found that air quality is particularly worrisome in regions such as south Asia and east Asia, where more

than 90 percent of days had PM2.5 concentrations above the 15 microgram threshold, reports Independent.co.uk.

Short-term exposure, particularly a sudden increase, to PM2.5 is a leading contributor to the global burden of diseases and mortality, the study notes.

"I hope our study can change the minds of scientists and policymakers for the daily PM2.5 exposure. If we can make every day with clean air, of course, the long-term exposure of air pollution would be improved," said Yuming Guo, lead researcher and environmental health professor at Monash University.

The researchers also examined how air pollution changed over two decades up to 2019.

Hasina, Modi

FROM PAGE 12

face problems in transporting oil to the northern part of the country.

In the first year, 2.5 lakh tonnes of refined diesel will be imported, with the quantity progressively getting higher, said BPC officials.

It will be possible to supply 1,000 tonnes of diesel per day to 16 districts of the northern region.

Given the pipeline's 10-inch diameter, 10 lakh tonnes of diesel can be flown in annually, they said.

Fuel supply and management through the pipeline will be modern, up-to-date and easier. There will be cost and time savings and the supply will be uninterrupted even in adverse conditions, they said.

Currently, fuel oil imported by Bangladesh is first unloaded from ships at Chattogram or Mongla ports and then transported to other parts of the country by tankers, which is time-consuming and costlier.

And in transit, oil spills from the wagons, which is harmful to the environment.

Of the pipeline's total length of 131.57 km, 126.57 km is in Bangladesh part and 5 km is in India.

Smiley, dimpled

FROM PAGE 12

Saulnier had blasted it out of the temple. Egypt wants it back.

The country has unveiled major archaeological discoveries in recent months, primarily in the Saqqara necropolis south of Cairo but also in Giza, home of the only surviving structure of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

Russians claim

FROM PAGE 12

meeting, he said Russia was throwing more troops into the battle.

"They have suffered big losses, but at the same time we cannot rule out that Bakhtmut may eventually fall in the coming days," Stoltenberg said.

Ukraine's president and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres yesterday called for the extension of a deal with Moscow that has allowed Kyiv to export grain via Black Sea ports during Russia's invasion.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said after talks with Guterres in Kyiv that the Black Sea Grain Initiative was necessary for the world, and the UN chief underlined the importance of the deal to global food security and food prices.

DSA should

FROM PAGE 12

special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

"The government would like to seek clarification as to what is actually being referred to as 'smear campaign'," said the letter sent by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in Geneva.

The letter addressed the government's decision to deregister the NGO "Odhikar" and stated that the special procedure mechanism should not regard the legal position of the government about the NGO Odhikar as a 'smear campaign'.

"If the WGEID continues to accept allegations from Odhikar without assessing credibility, political motivation, evidentiary

Bangladesh, int'l partners

FROM PAGE 12

The UN Refugee Agency and partners called on the international community to redouble efforts for sustained support for the Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi host communities.

In a statement, UNHCR said, "They [the Rohingyas] are desperate to return to their homes in Myanmar, which are currently out of reach, and instead live in extremely overcrowded, and sometimes dangerous conditions in refugee camps, relying almost entirely on humanitarian assistance for their survival."

Women and children, who make up more than 75 percent of the targeted refugee population, face higher risks of abuse, exploitation, and gender-based violence, it added.

Since the onset of this humanitarian crisis in 2017, the Bangladesh government and local communities, with aid agencies, have

135 arrested

FROM PAGE 2

Meanwhile, a BNP delegation, led by the party's Vice chairman Maj (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed, yesterday visited the affected area in Panchagarh and demanded an impartial investigation into the violence to find out the culprits.

Besides, the situation is slowly becoming normal in the panic-stricken Panchagarh town. Many shops and business institutions, which were kept shut after Friday's violence, resumed functioning yesterday.

The Ahmadiyya community people, however, said they are still passing days amid panic and fear of

standards and without considering the 'minimum elements' required for consideration of cases, it would only lead the WG to do injustice to their own valuable work for the protection of human rights that the member states entrusted them on," said the government's reply.

The letter urged the UN bodies "to understand the motive of its source which they are receiving the information from," stating that in absence of that, the government will assume that the UN "wishes to prejudice the accuracy and veracity of the allegations".

"Indeed, Mr Adilur Rahman Khan is inherently biased towards a political party – BNP. Does it then suggest that Mr Adilur Rahman Khan's criminal activities should have been overlooked only because he has a political background?" the letter asked.

been quick to respond to arriving refugees in what remains the world's largest refugee camp, it said.

"However, as global displacement continues to rise, so does the risk that the needs of Rohingya refugees and surrounding host communities will be forgotten."

With decreased funding, refugees stand to face even more challenges in their daily lives, the UNHCR said.

The lack of funds has already forced the World Food Programme to cut its lifesaving food assistance to all Rohingyas living in the camps; despite concerted humanitarian efforts, 45 percent of Rohingya families are not eating a sufficiently healthy diet, and malnutrition is widespread.

"These ration cuts are likely to result in higher malnutrition rates, deteriorating health, school dropouts, increased incidents of child marriage, child labour and gender-based violence."

further attacks by fundamentalists.

On March 3, two people were killed and at least 30 others, including seven policemen, injured in a clash between law enforcers and supporters of Islamist organisations demonstrating against the Ahmadiyya community demanding cancellation of the three-day-long Jalsa Salana, an annual gathering of the members of the Ahmadiyya community.

The agitators set fire to many houses and four shops belonging to the members of the community. They also attacked a local police station, vehicles of law enforcers and a traffic police office.

Govt looking into whether BNP had

FROM PAGE 12

statement by BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir that such successive incidents is suspicious, the minister said, "We agree with him. Such incidents are mysterious. We have to find out what is there ..."

Fakhrul in a statement on Tuesday said, "Suspicion in people's mind is growing as the nature of these explosions is almost same. So, it is necessary to investigate whether these incidents are planned."

Expressing deep sorrow at the death of people in the explosions in the capital's Siddikbazar and

Chattogram's Sitakunda, and at the damages in the massive fire at a Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar, Quader yesterday said the government was investigating to ascertain whether any person, organisation or group was behind those.

"The home minister said they are also investigating to find out whether those incidents were acts of sabotage," he added.

Reiterating that the AL would continue to hold programmes, the party general secretary said, "The opposition is saying that these are counter-programmes. But we are holding peace rallies as we are worried

that the BNP may cause an unrest.

"Since we are in power, it is our duty to protect the lives of the people. That's why we are standing by the people," he added.

Quader said the BNP previously "resorted to arson" after failing with its movement and that's why the AL is on alert now.

AL presidium members Kazi Zafarullah, Abdur Rahman, Quamrul Islam, and Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, joint general secretaries Mahbub-ul-Alam Hanif, and AFM Bahauddin Nasim, and Office Secretary Biplab Barua were present at the meeting.

Myanmar not willing to take Rohingyas back

FROM PAGE 12

Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh gave shelter to Rohingyas – the victims of persecution, murder and rape in Myanmar – on humanitarian grounds.

Replying to a question about improving the situation of Rohingyas, the prime minister said: "When the Rohingya persecution started in Myanmar, Rohingyas were subjected to torture, murder and rape... we felt sorry for the Rohingyas... we opened the border... we allowed them to come. Besides, we provide shelter and treatment for all of them from the

humanitarian ground."

Asked about resolving the crisis, the PM said her government has taken initiatives to engage in dialogue with Myanmar, insisting the Rohingyas should be allowed to go back in their homeland.

"Unfortunately, they are not responding positively. These people should go back to their own land," the PM said.

The prime minister said: "The international community is exerting pressure on Myanmar. But it is really difficult. We arranged accommodation for them in a

separate place. Bhasan Char is a good place, a good place to live... We have arranged good accommodation and excellent facilities for children there."

On living conditions in the Rohingya camps and the loss of shelter of more than 12,000 Rohingyas in the fire, she said infighting among Rohingya groups has worsened the condition in the camps.

"They (Rohingyas) are fighting each other. They engaged in different types of activities that include drugs, arms and human trafficking. They have conflicts among themselves," the PM added.

Of buzzing flies, a raised hand

FROM PAGE 1

not my friend."

Arif further said they were hoping Momin would be rescued alive the night before, but their hopes faded when Rajuk imposed restrictions citing the building was risky.

Meanwhile, the family of Mehedi Hasan Swapan still holds out hope. The man from Sonaimuri in Noakhali has two children aged eight and four, who traveled all the way to Dhaka to look for their father yesterday.

"We have not lost hope," said his brother.

The only reason that Ariful Haque Sunny, an employee at a shop of the ill-fated building, could be spotted and rescued is because he managed to free one arm and raise it above the debris.

He is currently being treated at DMCH with 19 others who were injured in the blast.

"Around 4:45pm, the ceiling and the walls began to collapse following a big blast. I can't remember much of what happened afterwards," Sunny

said.

Another victim, Md Tuhin, who is receiving treatment in the same ward, worked at a shoe-making shop in a building next to the one where the explosion took place.

"I heard a loud bang and suddenly the room went dark. Debris fell on my head, and I tried to make my way to the stairs. But I broke my leg as I stumbled."

Saiful Islam was working for a Sundarban Courier Service's outlet in the building's basement, when he heard a loud noise.

He initially feared that his computer had exploded.

Saiful recounted how he managed to climb over the wall and escape the building, only to see two bodies beside him when he fell to the floor.

Expressing gratitude for his survival, he felt as though he had been given a new lease of life.

Currently undergoing treatment in Ward 103 of DMCH, Saiful was taken to the hospital by his colleagues.

Jahangir Hossain and his brother

'FOREIGN AGENT' BILL PROTESTS

Georgia police detain dozens

AFP, Tbilisi

Georgian opposition and civil society groups yesterday called for new protests against government plans to introduce controversial "foreign agent" legislation, reminiscent of Russian legislation to pressure critics. The calls came after sixty-six people were detained and dozens of police officers wounded in violent clashes that broke out in the capital Tbilisi late Tuesday, amid fears of democratic backsliding in Georgia.

"Starting from 3:00 pm (1100 GMT), Georgians will start to gather on Rustaveli Avenue and that will continue every day," politician Nika Melia said.

Civil society groups called for protests outside parliament later yesterday. They are opposing a bill on the "transparency of foreign funding", which critics say resembles a Russian law against "foreign agents". In Russia, the

foreign agent label, which recalls the term "enemies of the people" of the Soviet era,

has been used extensively by the authorities against political opponents, journalists and human rights activists accused of conducting foreign-funded political activities.

Pak police, ex-PM's supporters clash

REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistani police lobbed tear gas shells and baton-charged supporters of former prime minister Imran Khan in clashes which injured several on both sides yesterday, a government minister and his party said. The clashes erupted in the eastern city of Lahore ahead of a Khan's planned rally to kick-start his election campaign, but which the government then banned. The former premier has been demanding snap polls since he was ousted in a parliament vote of confidence last year. His successor has rejected the demand and stated elections would be held as scheduled later this year. Khan was shot and wounded at one of his own political rallies last year. Yesterday's rally was banned owing to a threat to the law and order situation as there were International Women's Day gatherings in the area, provincial information minister Amir Mir said, adding supporters attacked the police when they were ordered to disperse.



Blast after blast in Dhaka

Thorough investigations and better building safety are a must

Our deepest sympathy goes out to the victims of Tuesday's deadly blast in Gulistan which led to the death of at least 19 people so far, and injured over a hundred. Some of the injured, we are told, are in critical condition, so the death toll may rise further. The frequency with which such explosion or fire-related incidents have been occurring in recent times is really worrying. Just over a span of four days, there have been three such incidents. On Saturday, an oxygen plant in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila was rocked by an explosion that blew its entire roof off, killing at least seven people. The next day, there was an explosion at Dhaka's Science Lab area, which killed at least three and injured 40 others. The Gulistan explosion comes only two days after that.

According to those present there during the time of the blast, the whole neighbourhood apparently shook as if there was an earthquake. The windowpanes of the building where the blast occurred even fell onto the nearby street injuring pedestrians. What could have led to such a powerful explosion? Investigators so far have found no evidence of sabotage either in the Gulistan explosion or the Science Lab blast. Although their causes are yet to be fully determined, the chief of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) did suggest that accumulated gas may have caused the explosion at the Gulistan building.

Given that there is no option but to wait for the investigators to determine what caused the two explosions, we do not wish to speculate on them further. However, given the frequency of such cases and the damage they have caused – particularly in terms of lost lives – can they truly be called coincidences? Even if they were not the result of sabotage, the lack of focus given to building safety – which will become clear to anyone visiting the blast sites – is an issue that has long plagued Dhaka.

There is also the factor of efficiently conducting rescue operations, which deserves scrutiny. Reportedly, complications in getting clearance had delayed the resumption of rescue efforts at the Gulistan building on Tuesday night. Even though the fire service was ready to carry out their operation, they couldn't enter the building without clearance from the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk). Whatever the issue for the delay was, during emergencies, those precious moments that are lost due to various reasons/delays could make the difference between whether someone gets to live or not. Hence, the fire service and other first responders need to have all the support from every government agency to carry on their important duties during emergencies. This message must be sent to every agency, and clear channels of urgent communications should be set up.

We hope that thorough and independent investigations will be able to clear up the confusion surrounding what caused the two explosions in Dhaka. At the same time, we urge the authorities to take the matter of building safety seriously, and improve our disaster preparedness and responsiveness.

We need more women at the helm

Male-dominated ministries tell a worrying tale of gender equity

Although there have been positive changes in terms of women's empowerment in Bangladesh, the gender gap at the administration is still quite concerning. As a report by this daily has shown, based on a 2021 estimate from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the percentage of female officials was 19.62 percent in public administration, while it was 22.64 percent in field administration. Moreover, out of the 6,310 secretary-level posts under the public administration ministry, 5,072 were held by men while only 1,238 were held by women. The higher the positions, the fewer were women occupying them.

As per another report by the finance division from 2019-2020, the highest percentage of women officials was in the fisheries and livestock ministry – at only 27.59 percent!

These distressing statistics overshadow the fact that, despite the rise witnessed in school/college dropouts and consequently in child marriages since the outbreak of the pandemic, female students have outperformed their male counterparts every exam season for many years now. Why are there so few women in the public and field administrations then? Where do the successful female graduates go? Why are so many still failing to complete graduation, or embark on a profession of their choosing? And why are ministries that impact every aspect of women's lives have so few of them on their staff?

Experts think that lack of gender equity plays the most significant role behind the massive difference between male and female participations in our workforce. For one, female students often have to endure the scourge of early marriage as well as the stress of child-bearing without adequate support from their close ones. Some don't even make it to the tertiary level of education before they are forced to prioritise marriage over education. With the dominant social narrative being that it is more important for men to build their careers, women also do not receive much encouragement from their families to keep aiming high with their studies or work. And even when women do earn a place in the administration, their progress up the ladder is slowed down by various factors.

We call for a higher participation of women in administration – not to fulfil some arbitrary quota, but because it is crucial for women to hold as many of these offices as men. Only that can ensure gender equity at the local level. When citizens see women performing administrative roles which impact the management of a locality, the prevailing gender norms will inevitably shift towards being more women-friendly. As such, the onus is on the government to make space for more women officials by ensuring a safe, flexible, and supportive working environment for them. Introducing proper transport services and day-care facilities has been suggested by a few experts. It is also important to highlight the achievements of existing women officials so as to encourage more aspirants to aim higher.

Is dual citizenship to blame for money laundering?



OPEN SKY

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BIRUPAKSHA PAUL

"Is Bangladesh a place of looters?" – this question was raised by the High Court last month. The court asked this question referring to a recent Bangla report, whose headline roughly translates to "Festival of purchasing properties abroad." The court's question is indicative of what is going on in the financial sector of Bangladesh right now. But to blame "dual citizenship" for the ever-growing culture of looting as well as money laundering may be inappropriate.

The act of earning a second citizenship in another country has never been a main contributor to trafficking funds overseas. While investigating the main reasons or avenues of illicit outflows of funds, not a single report of the US-based think tank Global Financial Integrity has blamed dual citizenship as a vital reason. Rather, dual citizenship has proven to be a boon to remittance

Hundreds of cases on defaulted loans are pending with legal institutions, and there has been no exemplary punishment for those who plundered public money.

inflows in Bangladesh, and those inflows rescued the economy from sliding into a full-scale disaster emerging from the dollar crisis.

As reports in February unveiled, the US is the top source of remittances to Bangladesh, surpassing Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The US requires residency or citizenship to allow Bangladeshi people to earn and send dollars to their home country. Other European countries that award citizenship to Bangladeshi people are gradually turning out to be increasingly reliable sources of remittance income. In contrast, Middle-Eastern countries are gradually losing their oil-based revenue because of the rise in green substitutes. These nations are comparatively restrictive in offering their citizenship to Bangladeshi workers. As a result, the relative share of remittance from these countries is dwindling.

The court's direction in framing causality may be mistaken. Dual citizenship is not the root factor for looting wealth from the country. It is



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

the very "Bangladeshi style of rewarding for looting banks" that is to blame for the financial haemorrhage that Bangladesh is facing now. In the name of loan rescheduling, the general amnesty conferred upon the big defaulters by the central bank is a major reason why the act of looting has triggered a renaissance of stashing funds overseas of late. Recently, a former central bank governor commented that the concessions given to defaulters in this country have no parallel in any country or in history.

Of course, the looters are sometimes seeking dual citizenship under the "investment residency" quota in different countries by showing their enormous wealth, which they gained through the loose banking rules approved by the government. Getting citizenship in developed countries is hard and problematic for them, because those countries will ask for evidence of valid sources. These looters prefer parking their funds in countries where there are less queries. In the end, they park their ill-gotten money in the Swiss Bank which does not ask anything. Thus, allowing these looters to steal and get away with it in the first place is the root cause of looting, not dual citizenship.

Hundreds of cases on defaulted loans are pending with legal institutions, and there has been no exemplary punishment for those who plundered public money. That

siblings and cronies, and largely ruined the corporate culture. These institutional changes and privileges to the tycoons are at the root of money laundering. The tardiest legal system has refuelled the culture of looting. A former caretaker government adviser recently blamed court stay orders on big default cases – a process that has made the wound even worse.

The justices commented that dual citizenship holders have less responsibility towards the country as their hearts are divided. Thousands of students migrate to developed nations every year for higher studies. When they earn citizenship after getting jobs, they send money back to their families. They also enrich their birthplace by delivering their ideas, technology, and expertise – which economists define as trickle-down benefits. Many Bangladeshis migrate overseas through lotteries or family visas. They struggle a lot, but still send money back to their home country. By any means, these are not any instances of either less responsibility or divided hearts.

Forty-nine percent of all countries now allow dual citizenship and most of them are developed or middle-income countries. After understanding how beneficial dual citizenship can be for Bangladesh in an increasingly globalised world, the government on February 27 added another 44 countries on top of the existing 57

is no less than that from Bangladesh. The 2021 Global Financial Integrity Report shows that Bangladesh lost the third highest quantity of trade-related outflows (\$8.3 billion) after Pakistan (\$8.5 billion) and India (\$67.5 billion) annually over 2009-2018. The revenue loss was 17 percent for Bangladesh, 19 percent for Pakistan, and 20 percent for India. The nature of citizenship seems to have played no role in their case.

Poor governance in the financial sector, politicised interventions into banking affairs, allowing massive clemency to habitual defaulters, rewarding money launderers in the national budget and, finally, not punishing any big defaulters or stock market scammers are the main reasons why money laundering and buying properties abroad by a handful of bandits have skyrocketed. On February 6, the agriculture minister acknowledged the evolution of *Begum Paras* in Canada, US and Dubai. It has nothing to do with dual citizenship, which has been in place among nations for decades.

If anyone is politically pampered and plots to be a wilful defaulter, they needn't be overseas to remain safe. They are much safer in what the court labels as a "place of looters." If they can somehow manage a nomination for the next election, this place will turn into a "paradise of plundering" for them. Why would anyone care about dual citizenship then?

Global loss and damage initiative launched in Dhaka



POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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SALEEMUL HUQ

This week, the UK-based International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), together with the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), launched a global initiative in Dhaka to address loss and damage from human-induced climate change. The initiative, called the Alliance for Locally-Led Approaches for Transformative Action on Loss and Damage (ALL ACT on LnD), is aimed at supporting vulnerable developing countries to build knowledge and capacity to address impacts of climate change and the consequent losses and damages in those countries.

The global launch was held with online participation from small island developing states (SIDS) as well as Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and also by representatives from developed countries such as the UK, Germany, the US, Ireland, New Zealand, along

with UN agencies and others.

This new initiative aims to support both governments and civil societies in the vulnerable countries to enhance their knowledge of and responses to the adverse impacts of human-induced climate change, which have now become a reality around the world.

These efforts to enhance understanding and build capacity in each country are complementary to the ongoing discussion under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to implement the ground-breaking decision to establish a funding mechanism to address loss and damage, agreed upon at the annual climate conference (COP27) last year.

The process under the UNFCCC is moving forward with the creation of the Transitional Committee on loss and damage funding, which will meet

three times before COP28 this year and provide advice to the negotiators on how to operationalise the funding mechanism.

At the same time, the second Glasgow Dialogue on loss and damage is due to be held in June in Bonn, Germany, which will allow governments and experts to share ideas on the issues that need to be

The initiative, called the Alliance for Locally-Led Approaches for Transformative Action on Loss and Damage (ALL ACT on LnD), is aimed at supporting vulnerable developing countries to build knowledge and capacity to address impacts of climate change and the consequent losses and damages in those countries.

addressed at COP28. These include where the funds will come from, how much money is needed, who will manage the funds, who will be eligible to receive the funds, etc.

While all these questions are indeed legitimate and need to be discussed, debated and agreed upon in good

faith, the highest priority, in my view, must be given to delivering outcomes rapidly and helping the poorest victims who are already suffering losses and damages now.

At the launch of ALL ACT, we were reminded of this urgency by the representative of Vanuatu, who described the devastation caused by two successive typhoons that hit the country a few days ago.

Thus, the challenge for the Transitional Committee members as well as the negotiators ahead of COP28 is to deliver outcomes at a speed never seen before. They also need to provide funds proactively to the victims in cash and not require project proposals to be submitted, which take too long to process. One important source of expertise and knowledge is the humanitarian sector, which has developed many ways to bring support to vulnerable communities in vulnerable developing countries.

It is therefore essential that the initiative under UNFCCC be coordinated with the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). A special envoy for loss and damage should be appointed to connect the UNFCCC with UNOCHA as well as the vulnerable communities/countries. The new ALL ACT initiative can provide support to this end going forward.



A CLOSER
LOOK
Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for
The Daily Star. Her Twitter handle is
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TASNEEM TAYEB

Shady deals, plundering public money, nepotism, flouting rules, risking passenger safety, incompetence, non-compliance – Biman Bangladesh Airlines has its own culture of corruption and dangerously reckless wilfulness. It seems to have a complete disregard for the system under which it ideally should operate, or for the safety of the people that it is supposed to serve.

Unsurprisingly, Biman is constantly in the limelight for one or the other of its misadventures.

Can Biman alone be blamed for its irregularities and gross mismanagement? Certainly not. It is the entire system that allows Biman to operate at its reckless will, which has empowered the airline authorities to indulge in indiscriminate corruption and irregularities, drive a culture of nepotism and under-the-table dealings, leading to the gradual degeneration of the national flag carrier.

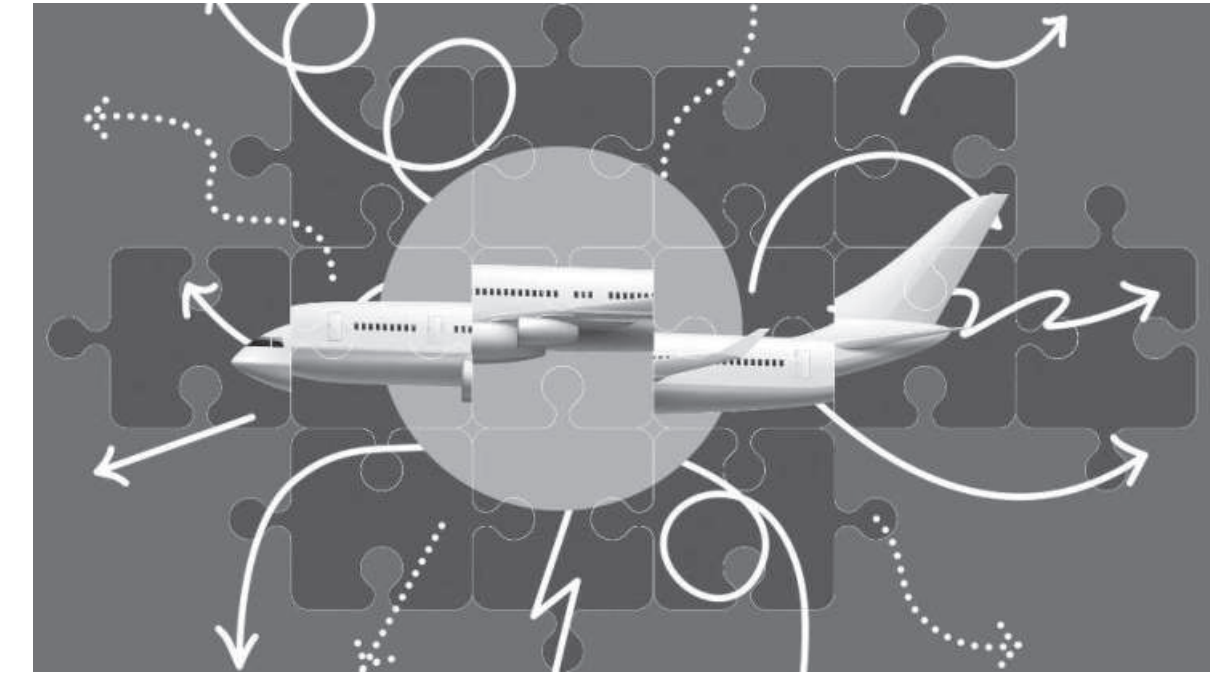
Most recently, it was the carrier's unprofessional handling of an in-flight medical emergency that led to a fatality in a Boeing 777-300ER flight from Jeddah. The captain on duty was sleeping in the crew rest area – although it was only a six-hour flight, and as per rules captains are only allowed to nap in flights longer than eight hours, when relief crew is on standby – leaving the

to the hospital, he had breathed his last.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time passenger safety has been compromised by Biman. A previous report by this daily revealed that two Biman pilots had knowingly concealed information about serious damage sustained by an aircraft's engine – a Dash 8 – as the captain improperly managed and operated

aircraft to a trainee and his assessor, neither of whom had valid licence to fly the aircraft.

The victim fell ill an hour into the flight, but it was not before the last leg of the six-hour flight (around 30 minutes to landing in Dhaka) that a medical emergency was announced. Even after the flight had landed in Dhaka, it took about 40 minutes to get the victim out of the aircraft due to a lack of awareness and preparedness as no medical emergency had been declared. By the time the victim had been taken



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

the aircraft mid-air. Concealing the information put the lives of more than 500 passengers at risk as the aircraft continued to fly on seven domestic routes in the damaged condition. One of the captains even got a promotion, which was revoked in the face of media revelations.

Coming back to the first incident, the trainee pilot in the Boeing 777-300ER flight from Jeddah failed his initial route check (IRC) test, although he was a part of a very expensive recruitment process, through which Biman recruited 14 pilots – who had either been fired from their previous workplaces or not deemed fit for promotion – with hefty salaries and perks last year, citing a shortage of pilots. It was later revealed that the shortage cited to justify the recruitment had been man-made and the recruitment was made without considering the talents in Biman's existing human resource pool for promotion. There were around 30 qualified Biman pilots who were in line for promotion, but had been denied

their right to accommodate the new recruitment.

Of the 14, only five pilots could take to the air. The rest could not qualify – they either submitted forged documents, provided false information, or repeatedly failed tests, despite some of the Biman high-ups going out of their way to give them multiple chances. One of these controversial recruits is the spouse of Biman's training chief Captain Sazid Ahmed, who first of all provided forged documents but failed the IRC test despite multiple attempts due to "difficulty in understanding route training, especially taxi instructions, in a busy airport. She must continue additional six sectors of route training to improve her overall handling and management of the flight."

Although this issue of irregular and irrational recruitment had been in the news since last year – State Minister for Civil Aviation M Mahbub Ali also told the media in September 2022 that several of the pilots would be dropped – it took several months for the authorities to

take action.

But can Biman alone be blamed for its irregularities and gross mismanagement? Certainly not. It is the entire system that allows Biman to operate at its reckless will, which has empowered the airline authorities to indulge in indiscriminate corruption and irregularities, drive a culture of nepotism and under-the-table dealings, leading to the gradual degeneration of the national flag carrier.

From operating an "experimental commercial" flight on the Dhaka-Toronto-Dhaka route – despite advice otherwise from aviation experts and at a high cost – carrying around 40 government officials and two MPs free of cost, to leasing two Boeing 777 aircrafts from Egyptair, for which Biman had to count Tk 1,223 crore in losses, to doing a shoddy job of operating Hajj flights on a regular basis, to its high officials being implicated in underhand dealings – Biman has been mired in controversies since

time immemorial. Its misadventures are so many and the details so dramatic that one could easily write a script for a nail-biting thriller.

Biman is in need of a thorough business process reengineering. It cannot be allowed to do as it pleases.

First of all, this highly inefficient organisation is currently running in government-office mode, which is rendering it ineffective in operating against international players, or even create a level playing field for itself in the international marketplace. There is no drive, no vision, no goal and no ambition, and no competent leadership to steer it in the right direction.

Moreover, Biman's ad hoc and corrupt activities, like the irregular recruitment of so many contractual pilots with hefty salaries, is taking a toll on national resources, which cannot be allowed to continue. It is with the taxpayers' money that the incompetent pilots – including the spouse of Biman's training head – have been paid for the service that they have failed to render.

And Biman is able to pull off all these stunts because it seems to enjoy political protection; its incompetent officials and corrupt board members seem to be above all accountabilities. No one is holding Biman to account for its misdeeds. Who will answer for the death of the passenger on the Boeing 777-300ER flight from Jeddah?

Every time the media raises these issues and asks relevant government officials or even the responsible ministers for a way forward, the answer is restricted to "looking into the situation." But the outcome is almost always the same: nothing.

It's high time Biman was overhauled and corporate governance and a stringent code of conduct was introduced and strongly implemented to turn the airline around. If not, it should be privatised so that a competent conglomerate can take over and turn Biman into a professional and profitable venture.

Invest more to accelerate gender equality



MACRO
MIRROR
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expressed in the article are the
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FAHMIDA KHATUN

The theme for this year's International Women's Day carries a lot of significance for women in Bangladesh as well as around the world. Gender equality is an issue that needs to be addressed with priority by all global stakeholders. Bangladesh has been able to make some progress in this regard, but the country still has a long way to go.

In terms of women's participation in the labour force, Bangladesh has come a long way. In 1974, only four percent of women were working, which has increased to 38.5 percent now. This growth has been taking place faster than that of male participation in the labour force. Women are not only working in traditional sectors like agriculture and the export-oriented RMG production, but also in emerging sectors such as hotel and restaurant, transport, real estate services, telecommunications, and banking and insurance. Access to higher education has enabled women to secure high-value jobs.

However, despite the progress, the gender gap in managerial positions in these sectors remains high.

There are several reasons behind that. Higher education and skills are important requirements for better jobs irrespective of gender. Though the number of educated women has increased over the years, there is still a low supply of highly educated and technologically skilled women compared to men. Women's participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) is much less than men. Unless women can catch up in this area, they will be lagging behind in terms of career and income.

There are only a small number of women occupying managerial or senior positions, because there are substantial impediments to the progression of women's

careers. These obstacles include gender prejudice and inequity, inadequate access to mentorship and networking opportunities, and limited family-friendly policies such as flexible working arrangements. The underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions is a complex issue that is influenced by economic, social, and cultural factors. These factors include gender-based discrimination, societal expectations, and systemic barriers that prevent women from accessing the same opportunities as men.

The patriarchal system is the most significant obstacle to women's advancement. In patriarchal societies, women are viewed as inferior and less competent than men, regardless of their education and experience. Men tend to undermine women to maintain their dominance, perpetuating gender inequality in all spheres, including the workplace, home, and society. As a result, women face a constant struggle to demonstrate their worth and competence, particularly in decision-making positions. They are often subjected to gender-based discrimination, which manifests in the form of unequal pay, limited opportunities for advancement, and a lack of support for work-life balance.

Another crucial issue is how a lot of women are forced to choose between motherhood and their careers. While many young university graduates enter the workforce with great enthusiasm, this enthusiasm sometimes declines as they start families. Consequently, many female executives leave their positions mid-career, reducing the number of capable women in senior positions. When these women want to return to the workforce after a while, their knowledge may be outdated, and they do not get the desired job due to their prolonged

absence from employment. In a job market that is already challenging for fresh graduates, women must persevere and acquire new skills to remain competitive.

To recruit and retain more women in the job market, employers and policymakers should implement family-friendly policies, such as flexible work arrangement and affordable childcare. These policies can help women maintain their careers while also fulfilling their caregiving responsibilities.

Furthermore, employers can provide training and development programmes that cater to the needs of women who have taken career breaks, to help them refresh their knowledge and skills and stay competitive in the job market. This can also help address the issue of women's underrepresentation in senior positions as it enables more women to re-enter the workforce and advance in their careers.

Another crucial issue is the pay gap, which exists in many countries around the world. It is a manifestation of deep-seated gender inequality in society, which is perpetuated by cultural norms and biases that undervalue women's work and contribution to the economy. This can be achieved through a combination of policy interventions, such as implementing equal pay legislation and increasing transparency around pay, as well as through awareness-raising campaigns and education programmes to promote gender equality and to empower women to negotiate for better pay.

Achieving gender equality is indeed a long and challenging journey, and it requires collective effort from all members of society to make significant progress. While there have been many positive steps taken by policymakers and organisations to address gender inequality, there is still much work to be done. This includes challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes, promoting equal opportunities for women in all fields, and ensuring that women have access to education, technology and innovation that can help them achieve their full potential. The government and the private sector have to invest in these areas to accelerate gender equality.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার					
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ অধিনায়কের কার্যালয় ব্র্যাপিড এ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৭ পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম					
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"The Public Procurement Act-2006" and "Regulation-2008" এর বিধি মোতাবেক ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বৎসরের জন্য হাফ-৭, উত্তর পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম কোর্সের গ্রুপ বিভিন্ন সরবরাহের পৃথক পৃথক টিকাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী ব্যবসায়ী/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে নীলসম্বোধকৃত খামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। এতদসম্বন্ধে বিস্তারিত বিবরণ নিম্নে প্রদত্ত হলো।					
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৪।	কি ক্লাবের দরপত্র আহ্বান	৮।	এক "ক" টাটকা রেশন সামগ্রী সরবরাহ। এক "খ" জ্বালানী কাঠ সরবরাহ। এক "গ" গম পিছাই। এক "ঘ" বুলি (কেন্দ্র রেশন সামগ্রী পাণ্ডিতে উঠানো/নামানোর জন্য)। এক "ঙ" ছোট দানার উগ্রহমানের দেশী ডাল সরবরাহ। এক "চ" কোজা তৈল (সয়াবিন) সরবরাহ। এক "ছ" রেশন স্টোরের মজুদ খালি হট্ট/গ্রান্টিকের বজা নিলামে বিক্রয়।	৯।	দরপত্র সূত্র নং
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BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

A legacy of women’s freedom in art

‘After Sappho’ by Selby Wynn Schwartz (Picador, 2022)



COLLAGE: SARAH ANJUM BARI

was beginning to disappear as more and more women wrote and read it. In one of the most triumphant moments in the book, the narrator then recounts, “Those of us who read the English papers in January 1905 were treated to the extraordinary spectacle of Virginia Stephen raising her eyebrows in print. [...] If there were faults with women writers, Virginia pointed out, these merely demonstrated the dire need to educate girls as rigorously as the boys of Cambridge; if our novels were to be judged, let the critics wait a century before pouncing. Lastly, as proof that women writers might range freely from poignant details to the vastness of truth and tragic form, Virginia offered the indisputable example of Sappho.”

And so these women, each in their own realms, took after Sappho to battle for suffrage, for autonomy of body, mind, and artistic expression, for a fluid identity marked by self-invented labels and aesthetic choices.

Some flaws then emerge in this collage of women’s movements being formed. As the narrator describes some of them as volatile, alchemical, violent, luminous waves, one wonders if a woman of agency is always meant to come across as an exotic creature of fantasies. Must we always inspire such awe? And, while there is nothing wrong with choosing to situate a particular history within the Western canon, there is something to be said when that narrative tries to speak for an all-inclusive “we”, while reflecting only the struggles of women of the white race. There are no women of colour handpicked for this garland of solidarity, and no mention of the issues of class, race, and power imbalances that intersect their feminisms.

Despite its stories being drawn from reality, Schwartz asserts in her bibliographic note that *After Sappho* is a work of fiction. As a reader, you don’t feel the need to question this. The text echoes and mutates the same approaches to storytelling as the real-life subjects of this novel once took, melding images, facts, movements and memories to produce narratives that would turn into mythology, into history, ripe with all its power and convenient forgetfulness. Fiction doesn’t just mean made up stories, it means stories that we choose to believe in—and Schwartz’s wispy, musical prose and her decision to fragment history into intimate, diary entry-like selections of memory make the reader reevaluate whatever recognition we find in this choral call.

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Like discovering lost scraps floating through time, the story flits back and forth between their years. We learn that the degrees of violence they encountered differed. For instance, according to Article 544 of the Penal Code of Italian law in 1893, young girls could be given in marriage by their fathers to the men who raped them.

SARAH ANJUM BARI

There is an immobilising power in mirrors. Dorian Gray fell prey to it, as did Snow White’s Evil Queen, as did Narcissus, all obsessed with their reflections. In the chase scenes in action movies, too, it is usually inside a hall of mirrors that the predator is momentarily stumped, colliding into their own repetitions.

But it isn’t the reflection that knocks them down. They’re usually defeated by an incapacity for perception, an inability to recognise what is in front of them.

Selby Wynn Schwartz’s debut novel is one such hall of mirrors, though it can move as much as it can immobilise.

The novel’s beginning may be in 1885 Italy, which is where it opens, or in 1928 England, which is where it ends, or it may even be in 630 BCE, which is where, in the first page of a prologue, a narrator speaking in the first person plural changes their names to Sappho. In antiquity, Sappho was the great Poetess who lived on the island of Lesbos, born circa 620 BCE, authoring historic verses depicting love, desire, and passion for the self. Sappho’s poems survive only in numbered fragments, and that is how Schwartz’s Booker longlisted *After Sappho* is structured—in numbered, dated fragments that peak into (real) women’s lives across the 19th to 20th centuries.

Lina Poletti, Italian writer, painter,

feminist. Sibilla Aleramo, who would produce autobiographical representations of women’s lives in 19th century Italy. Anna Kuliscioff, Ukrainian-born feminist, anarchist. Romaine Brooks, the American artist who profiled bohemian American and European faces. Eva Palmer, the famed performer and director who would revive ancient Greek life for the stage. Virginia Woolf, who wove power and grace into her stories of people’s dance across gender, as England evolved in the background.

Schwartz’s narrator speaks in the choral “we”, and like a daisy chain, they connect all these women’s shared yet individual experiences of feeling closed in, being violated, feeling misunderstood by society, until they all shed their names and managed to “escape” the century.”

Like discovering lost scraps floating through time, the story flits back and forth between their years. We learn that the degrees of violence they encountered differed. For instance, according to Article 544 of the Penal Code of Italian law in 1893, young girls could be given in marriage by their fathers to the men who raped them. Rina Faccio, who would later become Sibilla Aleramo, met this fate, followed by a bloody miscarriage and a suicide attempt, until she shed that history, shed her family, and her name. Later, in 1905, a book called *The Feminine Note in Fiction* written by a man claimed that the novel as an artform

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

Why Iceland is a masterclass in equality

‘Secrets of the Sprakkar: Iceland’s Extraordinary Women and How They Are Changing the World’ by Eliza Reid (Simon & Schuster, 2022)

ABAK HUSSAIN

If the Nordic nation of Iceland did not already exist, we might just have had to dream up such a place.

It is consistently ranked as one of the cleanest, greenest, happiest, healthiest, most peaceful, most educated countries in the world. But as we learn from Eliza Reid’s joyful book, Iceland’s most remarkable achievement yet might be achieving that most elusive of things: the gold standard for gender equality.

This is no mere opinion: Year after year, Iceland takes top spot in the Gender Gap Index, and it is all part of a deeply egalitarian and evolving culture that makes up Icelandic society.

The ancient Icelandic word ‘sprakkar’ refers to extraordinary women, and the Icelandic sagas and folklore are full of them. In putting together a picture of modern-day Iceland, Reid interviews numerous Icelandic women across all fields—politics, business, sports, the arts, and other professions thought of as traditionally masculine, such as search and rescue operations—and highlights the lives and achievements of these individuals on a very personal, human level while at the same time painting a broader picture of Icelandic society and where it is headed.

The book feels like a seamless blend of memoir, feature journalism, extended op-ed, and treatise on gender, and manages to be more than all those things. The interviews bring out individual stories on a micro level, while the narrative deftly switches to the macro level to shed light on Icelandic culture and policy that make it possible for women to flourish in this way. Reid writes with candour, humility, and a sense of humour (I laughed out loud at least twice) which makes *Sprakkar* a fast and entertaining read, and manages to avoid sounding didactic or condescending. I burned through it in one weekend.

At the heart of all these stories is Eliza Reid’s own improbable journey. Raised in rural Ontario, she met Gudni Th. Johannesson while studying modern history at Oxford University in the UK. The two became a couple, moved to Iceland, got married. Reid worked as a journalist and freelancer for various publications, including Icelandair’s in-house magazine, and co-founded the Iceland Writers Retreat, an annual writers’ conference held in Reykjavik (for which yours truly is an IWR Alumni Award Winner).

Meanwhile, though Johannesson’s



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

primary interests seemed to be academic rather than political, as fate would have it, he ended up entering the presidential election and winning. This is how in 2016, Eliza Reid, who immigrated to Iceland for a reason as simple as love, found herself First Lady of her adopted country.

Secrets of the Sprakkar is a part of her attempt to use this platform to influence positive change.

Before diving into the story of various sprakki, we learn of Reid’s own journey, her challenges as an outsider in a new land, as a writer and journalist, as an entrepreneur, as a mother of

four. Then we meet a series of Icelandic women, all trailblazers in their own way, all examples of what is possible if the playing field is levelled.

There is Ragnhildur Agustsdottir, entrepreneur and co-creator of the immersive Icelandic Lava Show, who also worked in the tech sector and became a CEO at age 25, a fact that shows that it is possible not only for women, but young women, to be taken seriously in fields largely gate-kept by men. There is Halldora Kristin Unnarsdottir, captain of the fishing vessel Andri, who shows that achieving expertise at running fishing vessels in harsh waters and sub-zero temperatures, where the waterproof suits have not been designed keeping women in mind, is not exclusively male territory. There is soccer player Margret Lara Vidarsdottir, one of the biggest names in sports in Iceland, one of the rare countries where the excitement and importance surrounding women’s soccer is on par with the men’s game.

Heroes aside, we also learn about, for example, Iceland’s permissive culture. There is virtually no stigma attached to casual sex, and no outmoded expectations for men to make the first move in the dating scene. Babies born outside of marriage are quite common, and the government is better than any other nation in supporting single mothers. Parental leave is generous, and the choices and decisions by all are respected. Consent is paramount, and on the legal level there is absolutely no tolerance for sexual assault, harassment, or abuse of any kind.

As a Bangladeshi, I have always thought of Iceland as a kind of conceptual opposite of Bangladesh. My capital city, Dhaka, boasts a lot of superlatives, none of them desirable. Our air and water are the most polluted, our cities are the most densely populated and our traffic congestion the worst in the world. My country is a

hotbed of crime and violence.

In terms of gender equality too, Bangladesh has performed disastrously. The political field here is far from participatory or inclusive. Child marriage is still rampant, our conjugal laws are stuck in the Penal Code of 1860, and the understanding of the concept of consent is appallingly low among young boys and men. The Covid-19 pandemic only dealt another blow to an already bad situation.

The process of reading Reid’s book then, was simultaneously uplifting and depressing for me: Uplifting because it showed what was possible, depressing because it made the contrast with my own country all the more glaring.

One should not fall into the trap, though, of thinking Iceland is some sort of perfect world. Even in Iceland, misogyny still exists, abuse does happen. At the end of the day, a nation is made of its people—imperfect human beings trying to do their best.

I shuddered with recognition at Reid’s account: “Gudni and I had been a couple for five years when I moved to Iceland in my late twenties. From the outset, there were nudges, winks, and often outright questions from well-meaning in-laws and new Icelandic friends about when we would get on with it (since Gudni already had a daughter, it was clear to them that any delay in our procreation must be entirely my doing). When we got married a year later, the pressure only increased [...] Someone asked me if perhaps I was simply scared of having children.”

Ah, nosy in-laws! It is strangely comforting to know that, Iceland or Bangladesh, some things just never change...

Abak Hussain is a journalist and Contributing Editor at MW Bangladesh. He is a winner of the Iceland Writers Retreat Alumni Award.

THE SHELF: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY 2023

4 nonfiction books that unpack South Asian feminism with nuance

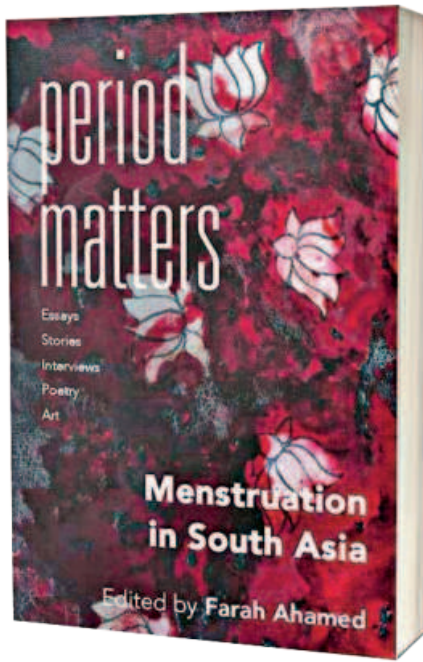
STAR BOOKS REPORT

PERIOD MATTERS: MENSTRUATION IN SOUTH ASIA

Ed. Farah Ahmed
Macmillan, 2022

A writer, editor and human rights lawyer based in Lahore and London, Farah Ahmed began the *Period Matters* project with the aim of unpacking the diverse experiences of menstruation—which differ across communities, cultures, classes, professions, and across the gender spectrum.

The collection comprises essays, poetry, short fiction, feature pieces, interviews, research reports, and photographs and artwork that explore the physical, psychological and political experiences of menstruation across South Asia. Among other pieces, Tashi Zangmo writes about menstrual health in the Buddhist nunneries of Bhutan. Radha Paudel writes about preserving menstrual dignity as a human right in Nepal. Shashi Tharoor comments on the Menstrual Rights Bill tabled in India’s Lok Sabha. And Farah Ahmed interviews women in Bangladesh’s RMG sector, who reveal the need for period-friendly workplaces in the country.



WOMEN, VEILING AND POLITICS: THE SOUTH ASIAN CONUNDRUM

Ed. Imtiaz Ahmed
University Press Limited, 2019

“In recent times, the territoriality of societies in the name of ‘modern state’ and the power of both patriarchy and masculinity reinforcing it made the veiling of women, in one form or another, an exercise in patriarchy, masculinity or gender politics, often crisscrossing national, ethnic, racial and religious boundaries, with women as its main victims”, writes Imtiaz Ahmed, the book’s editor and Professor of International Relations and Director, Centre for Genocide Studies at the University of Dhaka.

His book tries to address the instances in which “ignorance” surrounds the subject of women wearing the veil. In this effort, the volume includes Anastasia Telesetsky exploring how Taliban rules of law impact contemporary Afghanistan; Amina Mohsin addressing the politics of knowledge and the veil in Bangladesh, alongside Dina M Siddiqi’s unpacking of Muslim bodies as seen through feminist and imperialist lenses. Sreeradha Datta and Nandini Bhattacharya Panda writing about food, faith, and the body as it relates to the veil in West Bengal, among other chapters focusing on Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, and India.

RUMOURS OF SPRING: A GIRLHOOD IN KASHMIR

Farah Bashir
HarperCollins 2021

A former photojournalist for Reuters currently working as a communications consultant, Farah Bashir was born and raised in Kashmir. Her memoir—a debut book—explores her experience of growing up in Srinagar in the 1990s, when militants and Indian troops were sweeping the city streets. Farah found simple acts such as combing her hair, falling asleep, and walking to the bus stop transformed into fatally risky activities. Against this backdrop of fear and anxiety, Farah grew up going to the cinema, listening to pop music on a banned radio station, writing her first love letter.

Though the book isn’t written from a specifically feminist perspective, the memoir unpacks the little and powerful ways in which a young girl retained a sense of freedom in a landscape imprisoned by terror.

WE SINFUL WOMEN: CONTEMPORARY URDU FEMINIST POETRY

Ed. and trans. Rukhsana Ahmad
Woman’s Press, 1991

Rukhsana Ahmad is a writer, journalist and teacher of English literature, and the verses she curates for this collection record the history of women’s movements in 1990s Pakistan. Courtly Urdu love poetry has long been a male literary tradition. In this seminal collection of verses, Pakistani women poets challenge the forms of oppression imposed upon their right to education and bodily autonomy. They “refuse to conform to the notion of the ideal woman, they set out to defy it and to claim a new identity.”

Read more about similar books on Daily Star Books’ Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages.

A heightened sense of ownership

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

“Watch it” and “ball” were some of the calls that went around the western gallery as reporters looked out for incoming stray balls during a range hitting session yesterday at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram.

Shakib Al Hasan was leading the pack, ‘his’ pack, and played coach. It became clear that he felt more of a sense of ownership with regards to the team than ever.

In the morning a day ahead of the opening T20I against England, the Tigers found an exuberant Shakib giving youngsters tips and tactical information in his own way.

He was seen working with spinners Nasum Ahmed and Tanvir Islam, showing them grips and steps to the bowling crease.

When he crossed paths with all-rounder Afif Hossain, known mainly for his batting, Shakib said: “Mama, you will be bowling tomorrow.”

As head coach Chandika Hathurusingha watched intently at the nets, Liton Das and Rony Talukdar finished their sessions and joined Shakib at one of the wickets out in the centre.

The premier all-rounder brought to attention the movement of the back leg, opining it would help Rony and Liton get under deliveries better.

Soon, a competition began in the centre with six batters lining up, playing one delivery each and rotating.

Najmul Hossain Shanto, Rony, Liton, Towhid Hridoy and Afif had one mission under Shakib: to hit the ball over the boundary ropes.

Only completing the task allowed them to stay on and play another delivery.

Shakib was vibrant, joking around with the batters who might all feature tomorrow.

When a hit from Shakib barely reached over the ropes, the others started arguing whether it was not a six. To that, Shakib comically retorted to raucous laughter: “It’s a six. Shanto said so at first.”

Shanto and Liton got the skipper off strike, but Shakib soon cleared the ropes, celebrating with hands up in the air.

From talking to Afif about the job he may have to do to instructing Rony and Liton, it was a vibrant session. It was a show of confidence in a way that a young squad enjoys.

There is no Mahmudullah Riyad or Mushfiqur Rahim in the side any more and the keys are firmly in Shakib’s hands.

He is the top gun with inspiring performances, even in the third ODI against England.

With Hathurusingha still in observation mode, it is also time to ‘watch it’ in terms of Shakib’s leadership with his pack and a new beginning.



Shakib Al Hasan was leading from the front, quite literally, as he gave his young teammates a few tips of hitting the ball and then in bowling during a practice session at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium where Bangladesh will take on world champions England (bottom) in the first match of a three-match T20I series today.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

T20 series first step in journey towards 2024 WC

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Chattogram

England were looking forward to a challenge but for newly-arrived Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, it will be the first step on a journey to the 2024 World Cup in the West Indies and USA.

Bangladesh will take on England in the first of the three-match T20I series at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram today after the three-match ODI series ended 2-1 in the visitors’ favour. The series will move to Dhaka for the second and third T20Is.

While the Tigers have played five bilateral ODI series against the current world champions, the T20I series will be the first series between the two nations in the shortest format.

It will also be the first series both teams will feature in since the T20 World Cup last year in Australia. Overall, it will only be the second meeting between the sides in the T20I format.

Hathurusingha came to the press conference yesterday, although T20I skipper Shakib Al Hasan was expected. With the practice session preceding the press conference being the first official T20I practice session for the Sri Lankan coach, he felt some of the personnel was still new to him.



“I have only seen the T20 team today [Wednesday]. It is just the start of a journey to the 2024 World Cup. A lot of water will go under the bridge between now and then. This is again an observation to see what we have, what areas the players can improve on, and play to our strengths,” Hathurusingha said yesterday.

There are a few newcomers in the Bangladesh squad. Towhid Hridoy and Tanvir Islam impressed selectors with their BPL performances this season. Hridoy struck over 400 runs and finished as the third-highest run-getter in the tournament while Tanvir bagged 17 wickets.

Rony Talukdar too was rewarded for his BPL performances. He has been away from the national set-up for eight years, having played a

sole T20I in 2015, that too batting at No. 7.

Shamim Hossain is another inclusion. He last played in November 2021, before being dropped.

Apart from getting a feel for the talent in the side, the series for Hathurusingha will be about shedding light on the gap between England and the Bangladesh side.

“I look forward to seeing them in match situations. I am impressed with what I have seen in the nets,” Hathurusingha said of the new faces.

“I have seen Rony before. I remember he played one game against South Africa. I can’t remember if he got injured or some other people started doing well. I am actually very interested to see what he can do. They have done well in domestic cricket so it is an

opportunity for them to put their hands up. I think they will get a lot of opportunities to show what they can do. My message to them today was to do what they normally do on the international stage,” he said of giving them a license to express themselves.

“We are in the entertainment business so we want runs. That’s why people come to watch cricket. I know the public wants to see runs and for us to win games in the 20th over. We get a lot of TV viewers. Sponsors like that too,” he added on whether big runs were expected in T20Is.

For England’s Chris Woakes, the conditions in Bangladesh were a challenge he was excited to take on.

“Relatively slow surface, I’d imagine,” Woakes said of the wicket. Hathurusingha, meanwhile, expected the wicket to behave similarly to the third ODI.

Bangladesh have found the T20 format the hardest to deal with. Asked how difficult it becomes to prepare with a World Cup every year, the Sri Lankan said: “I don’t think it is difficult. We have toured the West Indies more than the other teams. So preparing for that in the mind, try to get the right combinations. There’s opportunities for a lot of players.”

Pitch in focus in Ahmedabad finale

REUTERS, Ahmedabad

Pitch talk has been a constant feature of India’s four-Test series against Australia and the trend continued on the eve of the final match in Ahmedabad which is likely to draw a record crowd on Thursday.

After rank turners were rolled out for the first three matches of the series, curiosity abounded about the possible nature of the surface in Ahmedabad.

With the groundstaff yet to confirm which of the two prepared pitches would be used, Australia’s stand-in captain Steve Smith decided to delay naming their playing XI.

“We’ll have a look (at the pitch on Wednesday) and we’ll reassess, but it could be we name the team at the toss,” Smith told reporters on Wednesday.

Smith will lead Australia again in the absence of regular skipper Pat Cummins who flew home after the second match in Delhi to be with his ailing mother in Sydney.

India retained the Border-Gavaskar trophy with back-to-back wins in Nagpur and Delhi but Smith says drawing the series would be no mean feat for his side.

“It’d be a huge achievement for the group, or any touring team that comes here to India and wins two Test matches,” Smith said.

India, who are 2-1 ahead in the series, would need to win the match to seal their place in the final of the World Test Championship in June.

Betis in good hands against Man United

AFP, Barcelona

Real Betis were dealt a tough Europa League last 16 draw against Erik ten Hag’s Manchester United but the Spanish side are in good hands when it comes to facing the Red Devils.

Former Manchester City coach Manuel Pellegrini has curated an impressive record against the Premier League giants and will believe he can mastermind another victory over Barcelona’s conquerors in the play-off round.

Pellegrini and Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti exchanged words after their sides shared a 0-0 draw on Sunday in La Liga, joking about Liverpool’s emphatic 7-0 victory over Manchester United at Anfield earlier on.

The Chilean will be the happier of the two, ahead of Thursday’s first leg visit to Old Trafford, while Ancelotti’s Madrid must now host a Liverpool side with a newfound spring in their step in the Champions League next week.

Pellegrini, at Manchester City between 2013-2016, and later at West Ham, has only suffered defeat three times in 13 clashes with United, and will look to capitalise on their shock defeat and dented confidence.

Despite United’s humiliation at Anfield, Ten Hag’s side are still favourites against Betis, littered with stars including Marcus Rashford, Bruno Fernandes and Casemiro.

Pellegrini believes the Madrid draw shows Betis can compete with any team, even if most of his squad by contrast is unknown outside of Spain.

“The team is always working to improve, there are always players missing for different reasons and those who are fit have to push on,” said the coach. “For a long time this team has been (competitive), no matter who they are playing against. Today Madrid did a lot, it was a fair draw -- but the best chances were ours.”

‘There is no scope to be complacent’

Jaker Ali Anik clinched the player of the tournament award as he topped the run-getters’ charts with 492 runs in the six innings he played averaging 98.40. The wicket-keeper batter scored a fifty and three centuries this season and also had the most dismissals in the tournament. The Daily Star’s Ekush Tapader caught up with the 25-year-old who discussed his goals and ambitions having scored runs regularly for the past two years.

The Daily Star (DS): How does it feel to have become the player of the tournament?

Jaker Ali (JA): This is my first player of the tournament award in professional cricket. It’s a different feeling. You can say that I reaped the rewards of my hard work.

DS: How challenging was it?

JA: I scored three centuries on three different wickets. One was on a slow bouncy wicket, and one was on a turning wicket, a tricky wicket. The other one in Bogura was a completely grassy wicket where the pacers got a lot of movement. I scored a century there too. You can understand how challenging it was to have scored three centuries on three types of wickets. I had to maintain my focus. Every domestic match is important for youngsters like us, there is no scope to be complacent.

DS: You have been scoring runs for some time now. What did you do to improve your batting?

JA: I am much more serious about my batting now. I have been training a lot. But most importantly, I have been playing

a lot of matches. In the last 15-16 months, I have played around 26 four-day matches. There was the A Team tour followed by matches against the India A team and West Indies ‘A’ team. The domestic matches feel a little easier now after playing those high-intensity matches. I’ll have to give credit to



the coaches. Jamie Siddons was in the ‘A’ team, and Babul Sir was there (Mizanur Rahman).

DS: After two rounds of BCL, there was BPL, and then BCL again. You’ve got runs after that break. How difficult was this switch?

JA: It was a bit difficult. Whenever you go from Test cricket (first class) to T20, it is difficult to adapt. When I went to prepare for the T20s after finishing the first two BCL matches, it took me a day or two to settle down. Similarly, when I came back to Tests after finishing the T20s, it took me some time to adapt to the practice sessions.

DS: What are your strengths?

JA: You have to keep your temperament, patience, and mental toughness all the time. This is because, in the longer version game, the nature of the pitch changes every hour. The ball changes and the bowlers replenish their energy levels after breaks. A lot of attention has to be paid. I was very focused in this tournament. That’s probably it.

DS: The latest season of the national league was played with the Dukes ball. Has it had any effect?

JA: The BCL was played with the Kookaburra ball. But I must say that playing against Kookaburra has become much easier after

playing against the Dukes ball in the national league. I had to suffer against the Dukes ball as it aided swing and bounce. But when you get used to it, playing against the Kookaburra seems a little easier as there isn’t much swing with it. There has been an improvement due to the introduction of the Dukes ball.

DS: After such a performance, how hopeful are you to get called-up to the national side?

JA: There is always hope if you play well. This means I have to keep playing well. I will get called up when my time comes. My only thought right now is to keep performing.

DS: Which format do you want to prepare yourself for?

JA: Earlier, I used to bat at number seven. Recently, I have been given chances up the order, which is also a reason for my big scores. I don’t think the batting position will be a problem for me. If you stay focused, pick your bowlers, and stay at the crease, then you can score runs anywhere.



Chelsea’s Denis Zakaria and Kai Havertz celebrate their 2-0 victory on the night, 2-1 on aggregate, against Borussia Dortmund in their Champions League Last 16 fixture at Stamford Bridge in London on Tuesday. Havertz scored the second goal after Raheem Sterling’s opener as the English outfit saw off the Bundesliga outfit, who had come to London with a 11-game winning streak.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Myanmar not willing to take Rohingyas back

PM says in interview with Al Jazeera

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the war in Ukraine and its refugees have shifted global attention from the Rohingya crisis, making the situation on the ground more difficult.

“The war (in Ukraine) has made the situation more difficult. The whole focus is now on the war and the refugees from Ukraine,” she said.

The prime minister, in an interview with Al Jazeera, said that Myanmar is not showing any intent in taking their nationals back to their country despite Dhaka’s repeated attempts to resolve the issue through dialogue.

The premier spoke to the Qatar-based media outlet on a number of issues that include the situation in the Rohingya camps in Cox’s Bazar and the future of the Rohingyas living there on the sidelines of the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) in Doha, Qatar.

Sheikh Hasina, who arrived in Qatar on March 4 to attend the conference, arrived in Dhaka this afternoon.

Al Jazeera journalist Nick Clarke interviewed the prime minister. A short part of the interview has been broadcast while the full part will be aired on Al Jazeera at 4:30 GMT on March 11 (10:30am, Saturday, Bangladesh time).

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RAINBOW SMILES ... A group of children gathered at a window, lying in wait to splash some colours on their friends during the celebration of Holi at Malnichhara tea garden in Sylhet yesterday. Known as the festival of colours or spring, Holi is one of the most popular and significant festivals in Hinduism. While people of all ages take part in it, it’s the children who find the most joy smearing each other with coloured water or powder.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

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DSA should be amended

Says UN rights chief; Dhaka writes to UN in response to allegations of harassing rights defenders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk stated that the Digital Security Act should be amended.

“I urge that it [the DSA] be amended, as criminal sentences continue to be handed down against those exercising their rights to free expression and belief,” he said on Tuesday while outlining the human rights situations in 40 countries at the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council.

“I regret the increasing incidents of political violence, coupled with arbitrary arrests of political activists, and ongoing harassment of human rights defenders and media personnel in the build up to the elections ...”

“I am alarmed by the number and range of countries in which I must report steps that undercut institutions of justice, media freedoms, and the space for fundamental civic freedoms,” he pointed out.

Türk added, “If I have one message to deliver to every head of state or government it is this: listen to the people – and in particular, to victims and defenders of human rights.”

Earlier on February 22, Bangladesh had sent a letter to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, responding to allegations of continuous harassment of human rights defenders.

The letter was also directed to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID), the

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Russians claim control over Bakhmut’s east

Ukrainians defiant; UN, Kyiv call for grain deal extension

REUTERS, Kyiv

The head of Russia’s Wagner mercenary group yesterday said his forces had taken full control of the eastern part of the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, and Nato’s secretary general said it could all fall to the invading army in the next few days.

If Wagner boss Yevgeny Prigozhin’s claim is true, it would mean Russian forces now control nearly half the city in their costly push to secure their first big victory in several months.

But as one of the bloodiest battles of the year-long war ground on amid the ruins, Ukrainian defenders remained defiant.

Last week they appeared to be preparing for a tactical retreat from Bakhmut, but Ukrainian military and political leaders now speak of hanging on to positions and inflicting as many

casualties as possible on the Russians.

The General Staff of Ukraine’s armed forces said in its morning report: “The enemy, despite significant losses, continues to storm the town of Bakhmut.”

Prigozhin said his fighters, who have been spearheading the Russian assault on Bakhmut, had now captured the city’s east.

“Everything east of the Bakhmutka River is completely under the control of Wagner,” Prigozhin said on Telegram.

The river bisects Bakhmut, which sits on the edge of a swathe of Donetsk province that is already largely under Russian occupation. The city centre is on the west side of the river.

But in Stockholm, Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg struck a pessimistic note. Speaking before a European Union defence ministers’

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RECENT BLASTS, FIRE

Govt looking into whether BNP had any role in those

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A w a m i League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the government was looking into the recent incidents of explosion and fire to ascertain whether the BNP had committed those after failing with its movement.

“The government upon instructions of the prime minister is looking deep into those incidents to find out whether those were acts of sabotage or accidents,” he said.

Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, made the remarks while talking to journalists before joining a meeting of the AL with its associate bodies at the party’s central office on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Referring to the



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Smiley, dimpled sphinx statue found in Egypt

AFP, Cairo

Archaeologists in Egypt have unearthed a sphinx statue “with a smiley face and two dimples” near the Hathor Temple, one of the country’s best preserved ancient sites, the tourism and antiquities ministry said.

It is the latest in a series of discoveries revealed over the past few months.

The limestone artefact, believed to be a stylised representation of an ancient Roman emperor, was found inside a two-level tomb near the temple in southern Egypt, the ministry said in a statement on Monday.

Next to the “beautifully and accurately carved” sphinx, researchers had found “a Roman stele written in demotic and hieroglyphic” scripts, the statement said. Once fully deciphered, the stele may shed light on the identity of the sculpted ruler, who the Egyptian research team said could be Emperor Claudius.

Hathor Temple, about 500 kilometres (310 miles) south of the capital Cairo, was home to the Dendera Zodiac, a celestial map which has been displayed at the Louvre in Paris since 1922, more than a century after Frenchman Sebastian Louis

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Rohingya leader shot dead at Cox’s Bazar camp

UNB, Cox’s Bazar

A Rohingya leader was shot dead by unidentified criminals at a refugee camp in Ukhiya of Cox’s Bazar yesterday morning.

The dead is Syed Hossain, aka Kala Bodda, resident and head majhi of Ukhiya’s Kutupalong 2-east camp, said police.

Syed Harunur Rashid, deputy inspector general of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn), said, Syed was shot dead when he came out of his house in the morning.

Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Arsa) members might have shot him, he suspected.

The body was sent to the district sadar hospital after recovery, the DIG said, adding, “Efforts are on to arrest those involved in the murder.”

On Monday, miscreants killed another community leader Nur Habib alias Doctor Wakkes, 51, pulling him out of his house in camp-9, block 3/c at Balukhali Rohingya camp in Ukhiya.



Workers building a scaffolding at the construction site of a highrise of Sarkari Karmachari Hospital in the capital’s Fulbaria. They appear to be not tethered to anything and a slip could be fatal. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

INDIA-BANGLADESH PIPELINE

Hasina, Modi to inaugurate it March 18

2.5 lakh tonnes of diesel will be brought in first year

MD NAZRUL ISLAM, Ctg

The 130-kilometre India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline is set to be inaugurated on March 18, in a development that will ensure quicker and smoother supply of fuel to the northern part of the country.

The construction of the pipeline, which starts at the Numaligarh Refinery in the Indian oil and gas-rich state of Assam and ends at Parbatipur depot in Dinajpur, is complete, according to Tipu Sultan, project director of the ‘India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline’.

“All preparations are complete for transporting fuel through this pipeline – we are now waiting for the inauguration,” he told The Daily Star.

The prime ministers of the two countries are scheduled to officially commission the pipeline on March 18, said ABM Azad, chairman of the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation.

The Indian government has built the infrastructure of the pipeline, whose construction began on September 18, 2018. “And we have allocated land for the pipeline and constructed the receiving tank,” Azad said.

Once the pipeline is operational, BPC will no longer

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