



YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

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“Together with our partners, the United States stands in solidarity with Muslims who continue to face oppression, including Uyghurs in the People’s Republic of China...”



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ADB, partners to give \$2b by June

Budget support will shore up foreign currency reserves ahead of IMF review

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh is poised to get about \$2 billion in budget support this fiscal year in a co-funding initiative led by the Asian Development Bank, in a development that would ease the continued pressure on the foreign currency reserves.

The fund would come in two phases: \$1.05 billion in April and about \$1 billion more in June, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

Of the sum, the Manila-based multilateral lender would be providing as much as \$750 million.

The government would have to implement at least 14 reforms in return for the funds, which would come from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency and Korea among others.

The other donors are not coming up with separate conditions; they are going along with the reform programme drafted by the ADB.

Should the government ensure budget support under the ADB-led co-financing programme, it would help it to meet one of the mandatory conditions for the \$4.7 billion loan programme from the International Monetary Fund: the floor on foreign currency reserves.

As of March 22, reserves stood at \$31.3 billion, enough to secure about three and a half months’ import.

The government has already implemented some of the conditions under the ADB-designed co-financing programme and is working earnestly on implementing the remaining reform actions, said a finance ministry official on the condition of anonymity.

One of the conditions is getting the amendment to the Income Tax Ordinance 1984 approved by the parliament.

The amendment would make income tax return submission mandatory for those who have spent Tk 4 lakh when travelling abroad in the previous income year; Hajj spending is excluded from this.

In so doing, the government would be able to expand the taxpayer base for income tax through expenditure tracking.

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Should the government ensure budget support under the ADB-led co-financing programme, it would help it to meet one of the mandatory conditions for the \$4.7 billion loan programme from the International Monetary Fund: the floor on foreign currency reserves.



Sand traders encroach upon the Turag in Goran Chatbari area near the Birulia-Dhour Beribadh road in Savar. They even allegedly moved some demarcation pillars to facilitate their operations. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Arav Khan under watch in Dubai

Says foreign ministry spokesperson

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign ministry spokesperson Sheli Sabrin yesterday said Rabiul Islam alias Arav Khan is under watch in the United Arab Emirates.

The home ministry and Bangladesh’s mission in the United Arab Emirates are working on issues related to Arav, a fugitive accused in a police officer murder case.

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Not road accidents, but ‘murder’ by neglect

MAHFUZ ANAM

A death is an accident only when it occurs in spite of all logical, scientific and experience-based steps taken to prevent it. But if the possibility for it to occur exists in every turn of the system, and no step is taken to prevent it in spite of official findings, public outcry and media reports over the years, then it is no longer an “accident,” but “murder” by neglect, committed by the authorities whose responsibility it is, by law, to prevent that. The people in charge should be held culpable for gross negligence and

charged as such. That would happen if we had the rule of law operating independently of power.

THE THIRD VIEW

The bus that killed 19 people and injured at least 25 others on March 19 had killed three others and injured many only four months back, in November, for which its registration and route permit had been suspended. The bus should have been off the road months ago and in

police custody, as all vehicles involved in fatal accidents are. But not only was the bus returned to its owner, but they were allowed to run it on a regular basis.

According to the survivors, the bus was speeding from the start and passengers were heard shouting at the driver to slow down. Instead, the driver further accelerated when he got on to the expressway, because his higher pay depended on the number of trips he could make. Who cared about the passengers’ lives? Bribe would solve everything.

SEE PAGE 8



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Bangladesh’s pacers put on a show against Ireland in the third ODI yesterday, accounting for all 10 of the visitors’ wickets for the first time in Sylhet. Hasan Mahmud led the charge with his maiden five-wicket haul in the format to set the platform for the Tigers’ first 10-wicket ODI triumph, which wrapped up the three-match series 2-0.

Tigers script more history

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

Bangladesh challenged Ireland to a game of conditions in the ODI series, hoping to gauge their own strengths in Sylhet with bounce and carry for pacers and an equal opportunity for batters to put up big scores.

One of Ireland’s assistant coaches had joked about the conditions being ‘Irish’ due to the conditions and the way the ball was moving. But the Tigers excelled in such conditions with the pace attack leading the way yesterday as they clinched a convincing clean-sweep with a 10-wicket victory at Sylhet.

The 10-wicket win was the first of its kind in Bangladesh’s ODI history. It was all the more impressive considering that the pace attack was on the rise and pacers on the prowl. Bangladesh had been waiting for such a win and it was a statement made not in a different part of the world, but at home, where spin has dominated for so long.

A day earlier, pace-bowling coach Allan Donald had mentioned that his work involved taking the fear of making mistakes out of the crop of pacers in order to get them into the right mindset to be

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Hackers want \$5m for Biman data

Threaten to make public 100GB of info on passengers, staffers, flights

ZYMA ISLAM and RASHIDUL HASAN

Hackers are demanding \$5 million in ransom for restoring Biman’s access to its server.

The national carrier has approximately four days’ to comply or else the hackers would make public about 100GB of data, which include passport details of passengers, employees, and reports on other carriers.

The data the hackers are threatening to make public also includes flight, cargo, and crew information of all flights.

Biman and aviation insiders furnished this paper with documents stating these.

The ransomware continuously changes its identifiable traits which made IT experts unable to isolate it or find out the people behind the attack, sources said.

The attackers also have claimed to have access to Biman’s software for human resource management, financial resource management, and enterprise resource planning. The software are integrated into other systems, including planning, finance, and inventory keeping, they added.

The hackers also claimed to have access to “Bimanprod, BGDBF, and Ctrain” databases, the natures of which this newspaper could

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Man shot dead trying to save neighbour

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A man was shot dead when he tried to stop robbers from breaking into his neighbour's house in Savar's Ashulia around 3:00am yesterday.

The dead is Mofizul Mollah, 32, a readymade garment worker, said police.

Robbers tried to break into one Shakil Munshi's house in Ashulia's Kathgora Nayapara area, said locals.

"We started screaming for help when the robbers started cutting our grille. Mofizul responded to our call and got out of his home. He even caught one of the robbers but then we heard gunshots," said Shakil.

Robbers shot Mofizul and fled the scene immediately. He was rushed to Centre for Woman and Child Health in Savar where doctors declared him dead, said Mohammad Ali, member of local union parishad, quoting witnesses.

Harun-or-Rashid, manager (operation) of the hospital, said the man was brought dead to the hospital with multiple bullet wounds.

SM Kamruzzaman, officer in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said, "A man was shot dead but we cannot yet confirm whether it was during a robbery incident... We are investigating the matter."

BAU students 'assault' scientist on campus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A group of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) students have allegedly assaulted a scientist of Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA) on campus.

Shams Al Mahmud, a scientific officer of BINA, along with his wife, a master's student at the BAU, and his brother-in-law, went to Jobbar Mor on campus to have dinner around 10:00pm on Wednesday.

While they were on their way to a restaurant, BAU Proctor Prof Azharul Islam stopped them and asked for their identities, reports our local correspondent quoting the Shams.

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People buying groceries as part of preparation for Ramadan beginning today. Among the items, sugar, edible oil, chickpea, and pulse are in high demand. The photo was taken at the capital's Karwan Bazar yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

ASSAULT ON BAKHMUT

Russia 'running out of steam'

Says Ukraine; situation at Zaporizhzhia plant 'perilous'

AGENCIES

Ukrainian troops, on the defensive for four months, will launch a long-awaited counterassault "very soon" now that Russia's huge winter offensive is losing steam without taking Bakhmut, Ukraine's top ground forces commander said yesterday.

The remarks were the strongest indication yet from Kyiv that it is close to shifting tactics, having absorbed Russia's onslaught through a brutal winter and prevented Moscow from claiming its first victory since last August.

Russia's Wagner mercenaries, trying to capture Bakhmut in the longest and bloodiest battle of the war, "are losing considerable strength and are running out of steam", Kyiv's ground forces commander Oleksandr Syrskiy said in a social media post.

"Very soon, we will take advantage of this opportunity, as we did in the past near Kyiv, Kharkiv, Balakliya and Kupiansk," he said, listing Ukrainian counteroffensives last year that proved turning points in the war, recapturing swathes of land.

President Volodymyr Zelensky continued a tour of frontline provinces yesterday, visiting the Kherson region in the south a day after meeting troops near Bakhmut. He posted a video showing him meeting residents in Posad Pokrovske.

"We will restore everything, we will rebuild everything. Just like with every city and village that suffered because of the occupiers," he wrote.

The UN nuclear agency's chief, meanwhile, said that the situation at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia power plant "remains perilous" following a Russian missile strike this month that disconnected the plant from the grid, reports AFP.

Europe's largest nuclear power plant needs a reliable electricity supply to operate pumps that circulate water to cool reactors and pools holding nuclear fuel.

A slow-down in Russia's assault on Bakhmut could be in part a consequence of Moscow diverting its troops and resources to other areas.

Britain said yesterday that Russian troops had been making gains further north this month, partially regaining control over the approaches to the town of Kreminna, a Ukrainian target. Intense battles were also under way further south, reports Reuters.

But any shift in momentum in Bakhmut, if confirmed, would be remarkable given the city's symbolic importance as the focus of Russia's offensive, and the scale of the losses on both sides there in Europe's bloodiest infantry battle since World War Two.

SUED UNDER DSA

JnU student moved to condemned cell for 'misbehaviour'

She has been in jail for 8 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jagannath University student, who has been languishing in jail since August last year after being sued under the DSA, has been shifted to a condemned cell, where inmates waiting execution are kept in solitary confinement.

The student, Khadijatul Kubra, was arrested in two cases under the Digital Security Act on August 27 and has since been denied bail five times.

She is only being allowed out of her condemned cell for two hours every day, confirmed the jail superintendent.

At the age of 17, Khadija was sued as an adult in 2020 by Kalabagan and New Market police stations.

The Daily Star verified her age from her National ID card and academic documents.

Her crime was hosting a Facebook webinar, where a guest speaker made "contentious" remarks.

The guest speaker was Major (retired) Delwar Hossain, who lives abroad and has a large social media following for his shows where current events and politics are discussed.

Obaidur Rahman, superintendent of Kashimpur Women's Central Jail, said Khadija has been shifted to the condemned cell for seven days for "misbehaviour".

"She was taken to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital for a health

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Gold bars worth Tk 2.5cr seized at Ctg airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate yesterday seized 23 gold bars worth Tk 2.5 crore from Shah Amanat International Airport in Chattogram.

Ziauddin, a passenger of flight BG-146 of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, brought the gold bars from Dubai under his clothes, said CIID Joint Director Saifur Rahman.

After seizing the gold bars, he was sent to a local hospital as CIID had information that he was carrying more gold in his rectum, he added.

A case will be filed with Patenga Police Station and the gold bars will be submitted to Bangladesh Bank as per the rules, the official further said.

Tigers script more history

FROM PAGE 1

'fiercely competitive' at this level. They may still be a little way off, but the pacers' inspiration has been telling since last year.

This time against Ireland, the three pacers in the form of Taskin Ahmed, Hasan Mahmud and Ebadot Hossain bagged all 10 wickets – the first time in Bangladesh's history that all 10 wickets came courtesy of pace.

The early morning rain had made for pretty good conditions for seamers as Hasan bagged the first fiver of his career, keeping things simple and finding joys in the little movements off the seam and in the air. He struck the first blow, getting Stephen Doherty's outside edge with one that held its line slightly. Two in-dippers then accounted for Paul Stirling and Harry Tector as he ended his first spell with three wickets.

Taskin got pace and movement along with extra bounce as Andy Balbirnie tried to force one through off side but was caught at slip. A 42-run stand between Lorcan Tucker and Curtis Campher of 42 saw Ireland weather a bit of the early losses but Ebadot Hossain, who bowled the fastest delivery this series at 146 km/h, rattled at pace with wickets off back-back deliveries – Tucker out leg-before off a yorker and a full-length in-swing accounting for George Dockrell.

Taskin got two more to finish with three wickets while Hasan completed a fiver as the Ireland innings lasted just 137 minutes and produced 101 runs in 28.1 overs.

Early wickets were needed to rattle Bangladesh during their chase, but opener Tamim Iqbal and Liton Das made short work of the chase, completing it in 13.1 overs.

Liton hit fifty off 38 balls and Tamim Iqbal got a run-a-ball 41 as the Tigers got their first 10-wicket win in ODI cricket. History made in style and pacers were at the heart of it.

Arav Khan

FROM PAGE 1

She said the foreign ministry will extend assistance if the home ministry needs it.

Earlier, Bangladesh police sent a letter asking Interpol to issue a red notice for Arav, who owns Arav Jewellers in Dubai.

On March 16, a senior Detective Branch official said cricketer Shakib Al Hasan and content creator Hero Alam, who participated in the inauguration of Arav Jewellers, may get questioned during the investigation.

ADB, partners to give \$2b by June

FROM PAGE 1

The government must also consolidate and revise the law on income taxes and secure cabinet approval for the new Income Tax Code with the view to making its administration robust to new and emerging issues such as base erosion and profit shifting by global internet-based entities, transfer pricing and so on.

The Manila-based multilateral has also called for the withdrawal of selected income tax exemptions by amending the income tax ordinance in the parliament or issuing an SRO with the view to reducing unproductive income tax exemptions.

The National Board of Revenue will have to issue an order for information exchange between the large taxpayer units of VAT and income tax as well as introduce risk-based VAT audits. A risk-based audit manual must be adopted too.

It must also expand the electronic deduction of income tax at source system.

Chinese firm keen to invest

FROM PAGE 12

government initiative. China is providing a loan of Tk 21,036 crore for the project.

Two more rail projects were expected to be implemented with Chinese loans. Beijing even selected two Chinese contractors for those projects, but implementation of those is uncertain now as China pulled out from funding one while the selected Chinese contractor declined to work for the other project after the negotiated price was cut by the Prime Minister's Office.

Different Chinese companies are also involved in at least five major ongoing railway infrastructure projects, including two fast-track schemes – Padma Bridge Rail Link and Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Rail Link.

BHANGA-PAYRA RAIL LINE

The BR was willing to construct the rail line from Faridpur's Bhangra Payra via Madaripur and Barishal. The BR authorities expect that the direct link between the sea port and the capital would boost its revenue through freight train operations.

It completed feasibility studies and detailed designs for the line in 2021. The line, which will have 19 stations, will cost around Tk 41,797.60 crore (\$4.93 billion).

The estimate was made when US dollar exchange rate against taka was 85. If the current exchange rate (Tk

ADB has also stipulated mandating online payment of VAT for amounts exceeding Tk 20 lakh and piloting online personal income tax return filing by taxpayers with income exceeding Tk 70 lakh.

This would improve tax collection efficiency, tax assessment and avoidance of fraudulent transactions.

The government will merge the budgets for the annual development programme and non-development programme from the next fiscal year.

Under the co-financing programme, the government will close down loss-making sugar mills under the Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation.

The government must also secure cabinet approval for the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority bill for the establishment of an autonomous public procurement body.

The electronic contract management system of e-GP must be rolled out with the view to establishing direct linkages between procurement

value, budget and actual expenditure, facilitating real-time capturing of procurement budget utilisation, procurement commitment and expenditure data, and monitoring and tracking of payments.

This would help avoid cost escalations and enable efficient monitoring of contract performance.

The government must use key public investment management tools for all development project proposals submitted for approval from the next fiscal year.

Thanks to the steps taken by December 2024, the country's revenue to GDP would increase to at least 10.4 percent from the existing 9.7 percent and tax to GDP ratio to 8.8 percent from 8.1 percent at present, according to ADB's estimation.

The Bangladesh Bank must also introduce innovative financing options for CMSMEs.

The government must also submit to the cabinet the Collateral Protection Bill to promote the use of movable assets as collateral.

operation, keeping the income and profit generated from passenger and freight transport, and paying back the investors, read the letter.

Powerchina wanted to sign an MoU with the BR immediately to start updating the feasibility study of the project and other preparatory works.

Belarus jails reporter for three years for article on KGB

AFP, Moscow

Belarus yesterday sentenced a journalist who worked for a Russian newspaper to three years in prison for an article that mentioned the reclusive country's powerful KGB secret police, state-run media reported.

Moscow-aligned Belarus, ruled by President Alexander Lukashenko since 1994, has forced most of the media to flee and jailed remaining independent journalists.

Reporter Gennady Mozheyko was found guilty of insulting Lukashenko, as well as inciting national and social discord, state news agency BELTA reported.

Hackers want \$5m

FROM PAGE 1

not verify, they said.

The attackers said they would provide the key to decrypt all data once they are paid, highly-placed sources in the aviation industry told The Daily Star.

However, Biman's Managing Director Shafiul Azam said no data has been stolen and that the hackers have not demanded any ransom.

Biman sent a press release yesterday claiming that the media has been publishing "confusing" information about the hacking.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines was declared a critical information infrastructure in October of last year.

"The malware used for attacking Biman's email server is called zero-day attack, which the IT officials and investigating officials of Digital Security Agency have not seen before," a Biman official told The Daily Star.

A "zero-day" attack refers to an attack taking advantage of a

vulnerability that was not known before, leaving IT engineers and experts zero days to prepare.

However, sources in a government agency told The Daily Star that Biman had been asked to patch this vulnerability twice in 2022.

Biman was attacked by malware in 2022.

Biman in its press statement yesterday claimed that email IDs related to aircraft operations were restored via Microsoft cloud services and alternative arrangements.

It said on Saturday that a number of computers and servers were attacked the servers concerned were isolated and email service was halted.

It also said steps were being taken in light of the technical guidelines issued by the Digital Security Agency as Biman is a critical infrastructure.

After the hack, the national carrier could not correspond with any domestic or international outposts with its official email.

EC invites BNP to talks

FROM PAGE 1

Habib Khan confirmed this to The Daily Star.

According to a top EC official, the CEC in the letter wrote that the commission thinks an official or unofficial discussion or a views-exchange meeting with the BNP can take place on the 12th parliamentary election.

If the BNP agrees, the date of the meeting can be fixed, read the letter.

Contacted last night, Fakhruul said talks with the incumbent EC over the next election is "meaningless".

"We opposed the formation of this Election Commission. So we don't think there is a necessity for holding talks with the commission."

The EC issued the letter at a time when the BNP and some other political parties have announced that they would not join the next parliamentary polls if held under the incumbent government.

The BNP and its like-minded political parties have been pressing for 10-point demand that includes formation of an impartial caretaker or interim government which would form a neutral EC to ensure a level-playing field for all parties.

The BNP and eight opposition political parties skipped the talks organised in July last year regarding the next general election. They said they don't believe the commission

would be able to hold a free, fair, and participatory national election.

The BNP and several others parties also skipped another dialogue organised by the EC in June 2022 to discuss the use of EVMs.

Besides, the BNP late last year did not join President Abdul Hamid's initiative on formation of the Election Commission.

Sweden to seek explanation from Hungary on Nato delay

AFP, Stockholm

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said yesterday he would seek an explanation from Hungary about why it is delaying its parliament's ratification of Sweden's Nato bid but not Finland's.

"I'm going to ask why they are now separating Sweden from Finland. These are signals we have not received before, so I'm absolutely going to raise this with (Viktor) Orban today," Kristersson told public broadcaster Sveriges Radio.

Orban and Kristersson are both attending an EU summit in Brussels yesterday.

'Stop arresting our people without a warrant'

BNP urges DMP

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday requested Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) not to arrest the party's leaders and activists without any warrant.

A five-member BNP delegation made the request during its meeting with DMP Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq at his Minto Road office.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, BNP Dhaka north city unit convener Amanullah Aman said the leaders and activists of BNP and its associate bodies are being arrested in the capital without any warrant.

"We saw that our party leaders and activists have been arrested, harassed, and implicated in false and ghost cases in the same way ahead of the national election in 2018 and 2014. We told them such arrests

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A portion of the Ashrayan-2 housing project site in Gazipur's Nayapara. Inset, one of the 142 families moving into the new home on Wednesday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

An address for everyone

PM hands houses over to beneficiaries of Ashrayan-2

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU, back from Gazipur

"Maa, by your grace I got a house... I don't have any more worries. I don't have to beg anymore," Mohammad Hanif, a beneficiary of the Ashrayan-2 project, told Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina when she virtually handed houses over to the beneficiaries of the project in Gazipur's Nayapara on Wednesday.

Like Hanif, as many as 39,365 landless and homeless families were handed over a semi-pucca house and two decimals of land in the fourth phase of the project.

The premier also spoke with the beneficiaries of the Uttarpar housing project of Barishal's Banaripara upazila and the Nawagaon project in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila.

"I will open a small shop and spend the rest of my life here," said Hanif, who could not hold back his tears of joy.

At the ceremony, Hasina declared that there will be no homeless or landless people in seven more districts of the country.

While addressing the event, the premier said, "The government is also providing employment opportunities for the marginalised people. Putting a smile on their face is a big achievement."

"Awami League is a pro-people party. This party stands by the people and works for them. Our only goal is that no one will remain without an address in Bangabandhu's country. We want everyone in the country to have houses," she said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Just promoting renewables won't cut it

Says CPD on sustainable development

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Promoting renewable energy will not be sufficient enough for sustainable development, rather there should be a policy on discouraging fossil fuel use, said Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) at a media briefing yesterday.

The think tank, at a media briefing, yesterday said policies regarding renewable energy and fossil fuel are discriminatory as they unfairly favour the investors of gas or coal-based power plants.

"The Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply Act, 2010 should be repealed immediately. With this act, there is no competitive space for renewable energy. There are grey areas in the bidding process and power purchase agreements," said CPD Research Director Khondaker Golam Moazzem, while presenting the keynote paper in the briefing, titled "Rethinking Renewable Energy Policy (Draft): A Comprehensive Assessments".

"We are wondering how the prices of electricity produced in coal-based power plants like Payra and Adani increased despite the government's promises to make them cheaper. The deals should be made clear and open to all," said Moazzem.

"The government provides a lot more fiscal incentives for nonrenewable fuels. Unless these supports are removed, it will not be possible to convince investors and consumers to shift to renewables."

He also mentioned that the high subsidies in the power sector are the result of the government's wrong decisions, such as providing "extra benefits" to power plants owners in the name of capacity charges.

"One of the main conditions of the

IMF's loan programme is to reduce the subsidy in the power sector. The government is reducing it by only increasing prices."

"If the subsidies are withdrawn from the power sector, then the price of electricity produced in fossil fuel-based power plants will be much higher than those based on renewable sources. Why does such a contrast exist?" asked Moazzem, demanding an open tender process.

"Introduce a process where the fittest companies can get the contracts to generate electricity at lower costs," he urged.

We are wondering how the prices of electricity produced in coal-based power plants like Payra and Adani increased despite the government's promises to make them cheaper. The deals should be made clear and open to all.

KHONDAKER GOLAM MOAZZEM
CPD Research Director

The briefing appreciated the new renewable energy policy draft and termed it a "good initiative". However, CPD also demanded some inclusions.

"Though the revised draft is much more detailed than the original one, the policy has the potential to be more accurate -- the focus should be on renewable energy," said Moazzem.

"Compared to other countries, Bangladesh is far behind in terms of policy-making on renewable energy. A carbon cap should be introduced for all industries and eventually (the country

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LNG imports likely to increase

Says Petrobangla chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's energy mix will be dominated by liquefied natural gas (LNG) in the future, according to the plan of Petrobangla, the flagship organisation for supplying the primary fuel.

Petrobangla Chairman Zanendra Nath Sarker yesterday said they have plans to increase LNG imports.

"The demand for gas is increasing every day. We have planned to increase gas production from local sources, but it will not be sufficient to meet the demand," he said at a views-exchange programme with reporters at his office.

Petrobangla had the plan to explore and work

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US HUMAN-RIGHTS REPORT Claims about Jamaat worrying Says Nirmul Committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Slamming the recently published US human-rights report on Bangladesh, Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday said the report's "untrue" claims about Jamaat-e-Islam will instigate Jamaat-led "fundamentalism and terrorism" in the entire subcontinent, including Bangladesh.

"Being in an alliance with BNP and with connivance of the US State Department, Jamaat is still engaged in various forms of evil conspiracy against democracy and sovereignty of the country through their sponsored militant, terrorist organisations," reads a statement of the pro-liberation platform.

In response to the State Department reporting that Jamaat candidates are not being able to

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MY DHAKA



EXPERIENCING IFTAR in Old Dhaka other than Chawk

RBR

The first day's iftar menu is an elaborate one in almost every household. Even when iftar preparation goes on in full swing at home, your mind oscillates between iftar bazaars, restaurant offers, and home-made dishes.

For many, getting food from Chawkbazar is a Ramadan family ritual. Old Dhaka is always bustling with food thrills; it has a rich unknown gem in almost every nook and cranny. However, many argue that the iftar hub of Chawk is highly overrated. Rather, the food available in various eateries of Dholaikhal, Dhoopkhola, Narinda, Laxmibazar, Nazirabazar and Nazimuddin Road is

Restaurant in Lalbagh comes to mind.

The roller ice-cream in Laxmibazar is also a notable offering. Shakib, the owner, took inspiration from Delhi street food and tried to introduce it in Dhaka. A plate of this soft ice cream, made from a blend of fruit juices rolled over ice in a roller and sprinkled with nuts, is sweet enough to be your light iftar.

The options for the main course are of course aplenty.

There is a new favourite to Old Dhaka's palate — nihari from Babubazar Mazar Lane. A nihari is generally cooked as a stew with shanks and marrow; in this dish, a whole mutton head is slow cooked and it is one rich stew to chew on.

"The kachchi market is in high



also worth a shot.

"During Ramadan, people who do not have a shop will open one to sell iftar. Iftar throughout the old town is a grand affair, and there is a lot of variation in places other than Chawk," says Abed Ali Khan, a food connoisseur and principal of Old Dhaka International School.

You can start with the classic Beauty Lassi and Lemonade. The refreshing drinks available there can quench thirst and be gulped at one go after you break your fast. A tall glass of almond-pistachio milk shake or badam shorbot with crushed ice, or a goblet of salty whey or matta of Royal

demand during Ramadan, and places like Kolkata Kacchi, Nawab's, Sultan's Dine, which were not in the scene 10 years ago, will be buzzing with special orders.

"You are spoilt for choice when it comes to kababs: shutli kabab, boti kabab, beef sheekh, and chicken tikkas are to be eaten with soft naans or chapati, and rumali rotis. The special ghee-fried thin and crunchy jilapi of Ananda Confectionery is to die for," says Abed.

So, think beyond the usual. If you simply take a rickshaw ride and visit the hidden gems of Old Dhaka food scene, you will have a far better iftar experience.



For as far as the eye can see, vehicles, one behind another, wait for the light to go green. Owing to the last workday and possibly to prepare for the first day of Ramadan, the city saw gridlocks throughout the day. This photo was taken on Mirpur Road yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

An address for everyone LNG imports likely to increase

FROM PAGE 3
During a visit to the Nayapara project site, this correspondent talked to the beneficiaries, who expressed their gratitude to the premier.

A total of 142 families have been accommodated in the Nayapara site, built on eight acres of government khas land. The house allotted to each family has a kitchen, toilet and a place for raising poultry and growing vegetables in the yard.

A mosque, primary school and community centre are also being constructed at the Nayapara site. The supply of clean drinking water and solar power has also been arranged.

The beneficiaries of the project, who were either living under the open sky or on others' land, did not have to spend a single penny for the utilities that came with the house.

"I couldn't even afford

to lay a single brick. Now, I have a house," 76-year-old Mohammad Ali told this correspondent.

60-year-old Jamila Khatun said, "I used to stay in others' kitchens or cowsheds. No chairman or members gave us anything. Only Sheikh Hasina stood by us."

A total of 1,817 houses have been constructed in five upazilas of Gazipur in three phases, Deputy Commissioner of Gazipur Anisur Rahman told reporters during a visit to the site.

Earlier on January 23, 2021, the government provided 63,999 houses in the first phase, and 53,330 houses on June 20, 2021, in the second phase under the Ashrayan-2 project. In the first stage of the third phase, 32,904 houses were handed over on April 26 last year, while 26,229 more were handed over in the second stage on July 21.

Arrest, try perpetrators

FROM PAGE 5
their injuries at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal.

At the protest yesterday, their classmates were seen mourning the loss.

A 10th grader said he was also injured in the attack carried out due to a quarrel over senior-junior issues.

The victims' classmate Md Shihab Uddin said, "Both the two [the deceased] were brilliant students. Their deaths cannot be accepted in any way."

Another classmate

Rabeya Bashri said their protest will continue until the attackers are arrested.

The school head-teacher Mizanur Rahman expressed anger at police for not being able to arrest any of the attackers.

Parents and locals also participated in the protest, demanding the attackers' speedy arrest and trial.

Contacted, Baufal Police Station Officer-in-Charge Al Mamun said operations are on to arrest them. "Hopefully we will be successful within a short time."

FROM PAGE 3
on a total of 46 gas wells in three years.

"We have reduced the duration and decided to drill those wells within the next two years. But if we find gas in any of those wells, it will need at least three years to supply gas from these sources after building the process plant. If we find gas in offshore sources [below the ocean floors], it will take at least 8 to 10 years," said the Petrobangla chair.

Sarker also mentioned that they have plans to build three LNG terminals

as well. The country has two floating re-gasification terminals in Cox's Bazar's Moheshkhali, which are being operated by Summit Group and Excelerate Energy.

"We are in talks with Excelerate Energy to build another floating terminal in Patuakhali's Payra and with Summit to build another in Moheshkhali. The country's first land-based re-gasification terminal will be built in Moheshkhali, which is waiting for PDB's consent."

"We have long term

contracts with Qatar and Oman and are trying to sign two new deals," added the Petrobangla chair.

Due to the hike in LNG prices, the government suspended LNG purchases for seven months last year, which resumed in February. "We will purchase at least 12 LNG cargo from the spot market till June."

Currently, the gas demand in the country is around 4,000 million cubic feet a day (mmcf), out of which, Petrobangla can supply around 2,900 mmcf from local sources and imports.

Perfume

FROM PAGE 5
Halim, who was arrested on Wednesday night over the explosion, to jail.

Halim claimed that there was a body-spray bottle in his bag, not any explosive substance, said Md Shahidul Islam, Noakhali Police superintendent.

Halim was assigned to take care of the mosque, and he used to reside in it.

On Tuesday night, an explosion took place on the first floor of a model mosque at Begumganj upazila's Alipur. However, none was hurt.

Meanwhile, the district administration yesterday formed a five-member probe body to investigate the explosion and submit a report by three working days, said Dewan Mahbubur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Noakhali.

[Our Noakhali correspondent contributed to the report]

Stop arresting our

FROM PAGE 3
commissioner talked to them very sincerely and assured them of taking steps as per their request.

About the arrest, Aman said the DMP chief told them that they will take measures so that no one is arrested without a warrant in the future.

The other members of the delegation are BNP Dhaka south city convener Abdus Salam, publicity secretary Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Anee, Dhaka south city unit member secretary Rafiqul Alam Moju and north city unit member secretary Aminul Haq.

He said they also talked to the DMP boss about their programmes taken to celebrate Independence Day.

Aman said the DMP

Claims about Jamaat

FROM PAGE 3
The signatories to the statement include Justice Shamsul Huda; former Supreme Court justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik; Barrister Shafique Ahmed; Prof Anupam Sen; eminent thespian Ramendu Majumdar; noted artists Hashem Khan and Rafiqun Nabi; writer, historian and war-crimes researcher Shahriar Kabir; Prof Muntasir Mamun; Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal.

"Jamaat is an anti-democratic fascist party which does not obey the constitution. That's why the High Court scrapped its registration, not the government," added the statement.

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PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Financial Result (Un-Audited)
2nd Quarter (Q2) for the period ended 31 December 2022

Particulars	01 Jul 2022 to 31 Dec 2022		01 Jul 2021 to 31 Dec 2021	
	to	to	to	to
Earning Per Share	0.99	1.35	0.37	0.80
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS)	1.17		2.26	
Net Asset Value Per Share (NAV)	15.42		14.58	

By order of the Board of Directors
Date: March 23, 2023
The detail of the published quarterly financial statements is available at the website. The address of the website is www.salvochemical.com.

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Pubali Bank Limited, the largest Private commercial Bank in Bangladesh is hereby inviting sealed Tenders from the eligible Tenderers, who can participate in any or all of the following tenders, but in separate envelope as defined in the tender documents of the under mentioned works as per terms & conditions stated below:

- Civil & Electrical works** for Exterior Design of new premises (4th, 5th & 6th floor, at BIWTC Habban, 5 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka) for our **different Divisions and Training Institute.**
- Civil works (Unit-01/A:** Window shutter, Painting & Plaster) of Building No-01 of our **Officers' Quarter, 681/A, Bara Moghbazar, Dhaka-1217.**
- Civil works (Unit-02/B:** Window shutter, Painting & Plaster) of Building No-01 of our **Officers' Quarter, 681/A, Bara Moghbazar, Dhaka-1217.**

Please visit our web site, <https://www.pubalibangla.com/tender.asp> for details. Interested Parties may purchase the Tender document by **30 March, 2023** duly filled up all requirements and submit their offer by **02 April 2023** at 11.00 AM.

Dilip Kumar Paul
General Manager & Division Head
ESTT. AND GENERAL SERVICES DIVISION
Head office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.



M. M. ISPAHANI LIMITED
ISPAHANI BUILDING, AGRABAD C/AREA, CHATTOGRAM

NOTICE OF MEETING OF CREDITORS OF M. M. ISPAHANI LIMITED

Pursuant to the order dated 02.03.2023 passed by the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh in Company Matter No. 79 of 2023 as filed in consequence of the requirement of Bangladesh Bank, notice is hereby given to all creditors that the Meeting of the Creditors of the Company shall be held at the registered office of the Company at Ispahani Building, Agrabad Commercial Area, Chattogram on **17 April, 2023, Monday at 11:00 a.m.** to consider the proposal for demerger/spitting of M. M. Ispahani Limited into 3 (three) separate legal entities under section 228 read with section 229 of the Companies Act 1994 and to transact the following businesses:

- To approve the Scheme (as annexed hereto) of Demerger/Spitting of M. M. Ispahani Limited into 3 (three) separate legal entities namely M. M. Ispahani Limited (Demerged Company) and (i) Pahartali Textiles Limited (Proposed) or such other name as is available (Resulting Company 1) & (ii) Neptune Tea Estates Limited (Proposed) or such other name as is available (Resulting Company 2)

To consider and if thought fit, to pass with or without modification(s), the following resolution by a majority in number representing three-fourth in value of the creditors:

"RESOLVED THAT pursuant to the provisions of Section 228 read with section 229 of the Companies Act, 1994 read with Rule 48 of the Companies Rules, 2009 and subject to such conditions and modifications as may be prescribed or imposed by the Hon'ble High Court Division while sanctioning the Scheme and subject to the approval of the members at their respective meetings, consent/approval of the creditors be and is hereby accorded for Demerger/Spitting of M. M. Ispahani Limited into 3 (three) separate legal entities namely M. M. Ispahani Limited (Demerged Company) and (i) Pahartali Textiles Limited (Proposed) or such other name as is available (Resulting Company 1) & (ii) Neptune Tea Estates Limited (Proposed) or such other name as is available (Resulting Company 2), and the Scheme of Demerger for the same be and is hereby approved and shall become effective from the date stated in the said Scheme of Demerger."

"RESOLVED FURTHER THAT the Board of M. M. Ispahani Limited be and is hereby authorized to do all such acts, deeds, matters and things, as it may, in its absolute discretion deem requisite, desirable, appropriate or necessary to give effect to this resolution and effectively implement the Scheme of Demerger and to accept such modifications, amendments, limitations and/or conditions, if any, which may be required and/or imposed by the Hon'ble High Court Division, if and when applicable while sanctioning the Scheme of Demerger and to delegate such powers as the Board may deem fit and proper."

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD
Dated, CHATTOGRAM
21 March, 2023.
MOHAMMAD ANISUZZAMAN
COMPANY SECRETARY

M. M. ISPAHANI LIMITED
ISPAHANI BUILDING, AGRABAD C/AREA, CHATTOGRAM

NOTICE OF MEETING OF MEMBERS OF M. M. ISPAHANI LIMITED

Pursuant to the order dated 02.03.2023 passed by the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh in Company Matter No. 79 of 2023 as filed in consequence of the requirement of Bangladesh Bank, notice is hereby given to all members that the Meeting of the Members of the Company shall be held at the registered office of the Company at Ispahani Building, Agrabad Commercial Area, Chattogram on **16 April, 2023, Sunday at 2:00 p.m.** to consider the proposal for demerger/spitting of M. M. Ispahani Limited into 3 (three) separate legal entities under section 228 read with section 229 of the Companies Act 1994 and to transact the following businesses:

- To approve the Scheme (as annexed hereto) of Demerger/Spitting of M. M. Ispahani Limited into 3 (three) separate legal entities namely M. M. Ispahani Limited (Demerged Company) and (i) Pahartali Textiles Limited (Proposed) or such other name as is available (Resulting Company 1) & (ii) Neptune Tea Estates Limited (Proposed) or such other name as is available (Resulting Company 2)

To consider and if thought fit, to pass with or without modification(s), the following resolution by a majority in number representing three-fourth in value of the members:

"RESOLVED THAT pursuant to the provisions of Section 228 read with section 229 of the Companies Act, 1994 read with Rule 48 of the Companies Rules, 2009 and subject to such conditions and modifications as may be prescribed or imposed by the Hon'ble High Court Division while sanctioning the Scheme and subject to the approval of the creditors at their respective meetings, consent/approval of the members be and is hereby accorded for Demerger/Spitting of M. M. Ispahani Limited into 3 (three) separate legal entities namely M. M. Ispahani Limited (Demerged Company) and (i) Pahartali Textiles Limited (Proposed) or such other name as is available (Resulting Company 1) & (ii) Neptune Tea Estates Limited (Proposed) or such other name as is available (Resulting Company 2), and the Scheme of Demerger for the same be and is hereby approved and shall become effective from the date stated in the said Scheme of Demerger."

"RESOLVED FURTHER THAT the Board of M. M. Ispahani Limited be and is hereby authorized to do all such acts, deeds, matters and things, as it may, in its absolute discretion deem requisite, desirable, appropriate or necessary to give effect to this resolution and effectively implement the Scheme of Demerger and to accept such modifications, amendments, limitations and/or conditions, if any, which may be required and/or imposed by the Hon'ble High Court Division, if and when applicable while sanctioning the Scheme of Demerger and to delegate such powers as the Board may deem fit and proper."

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD
Dated, CHATTOGRAM
21 March, 2023.
MOHAMMAD ANISUZZAMAN
COMPANY SECRETARY

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 79 OF 2023
IN THE MATTER OF:**

Application under section 228 read with section 229 of the Companies Act, 1994

AND IN THE MATTER OF:
M. M. Ispahani Ltd. **Petitioner**
Vs
Registrar of Joint Stock Companies & Firms and others **Respondents**

Notice is hereby given that a petition for demerger of M. M. Ispahani Ltd under section 228 read with section 229 of the Companies Act 1994 was presented to the High Court Division by the above petitioner and that on 02.03.2023 the Hon'ble Court presided over by Mr. Justice Khizr Ahmed Choudhury was pleased to admit the said petition and the said petition is directed to be heard before the Hon'ble Court; and any one else interested in the matter may appear before the Hon'ble Court on the date fixed for hearing either personally or through duly appointed Advocate. Copy of the petition may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed fees.

Morshed Ahmed Khan, Barrister-at-Law
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Tropical Park View, Flat # C-3, 9/1 Free School Street, Kathalbagan, Dhaka
Mobile: 01973013634

বাণিজ্যিক জমি বিক্রয়
মালাবাগ ১০০ ফুট ভিআইটি
রোডের সাথে ৫ (পাঁচ) কাঠা
করার বাণিজ্যিক জমি বিক্রয়।
০৯৬৬৬৭৬৪৪০০

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সুবিধাসহ দক্ষিণমুখী ৩৪৪০ বর্গফুটের
ডুপ্লেক্স রেডি অ্যাপার্টমেন্ট বিক্রয় হবে।
০১৭১৩০২৭৯৭, ০১৭১৫৭২৪৪৮

ADB
ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
www.adb.org

Social Development Officer (Gender)

Asian Development Bank (ADB) is an international development finance institution headquartered in Manila, Philippines and is composed of 68 members, 49 of which are from the Asia and Pacific region. ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. ADB combines finance, knowledge, and partnerships to fulfill its expanded vision under its Strategy 2030.

The position is assigned to the Gender Equality Thematic Group (SDTC-GEN) within the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC) and will be strategically placed in the Bangladesh Resident Mission (BRM) within the South Asia Department (SARD).

SDCC is the focal point for sector and thematic work related to ADB operations in its Developing Member Countries (DMCs). SARD is responsible for maintaining client relations and delivering ADB assistance to countries in South Asia. BRM assists in the project implementation of loans, grants, and technical assistance (TA) projects and supports ADB headquarter in processing new ones in Bangladesh.

The incumbent will be strategically placed in BRM for an initial period of 3 years and will receive technical guidance and support from designated International Staff from BRM, Regional Department Front Office (SAOD) GESI Unit/Team and SDTC-GEN.

Description of Responsibilities

The Social Development Officer (Gender) will support, monitor, and report on gender equality, women's empowerment, and social inclusion outcomes in SARD operations in Bangladesh.

The position will support the implementation and administration of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)-related and relevant loans, grants, and technical assistance (TA); provide inputs to project design; and support in project completion reporting.

The position will contribute to GESI-related policy dialogue and assist the Government of Bangladesh in reducing poverty, gender inequalities, promoting women's empowerment and improving social inclusiveness and accountability.

The position will also carry out GESI-related research and analysis; engage with government agencies relevant to ADB operations in Bangladesh in policy dialogue and capacity development; coordinate closely with development partners on GESI issues; and provide inputs to ADB's activities to support the adequate integration of gender equality, women's empowerment, and social inclusion aspects in operations.

Reporting Arrangement

Designated International Staff from SAOD and/or BRM and the Chief of Gender Equality Thematic Group, SDTC-GEN will provide supervisory inputs to the incumbent's annual workplan and performance review.

Selection Criteria

- Bachelor's degree in social sciences (e.g., sociology, anthropology), social and/or economic development, gender and development, public policy, or related fields, with demonstrated professional, field, and operational experience in adapting GESI concepts to operations. Preferably with advanced training.

- At least 8 years of relevant professional experience in project management and implementation, in sectors relevant to ADB operations.

- Experience and knowledge of stages of project cycle (project planning, feasibility analysis, detailed design, project implementation and completion, construction supervision and contract management).

- Good understanding of ADB's guidelines and policies and programs of the Government of Bangladesh on gender equality, women's empowerment and social inclusion is critical.

- Effective technical report-writing and oral communication skills in English, with ability to communicate in Bangla is essential.

- Demonstrated ability to engage effectively with counterpart governments as well as a range of multilateral and bilateral donors.

- Solid analytical, organizational, and negotiation skills.

- Strong planning and organizing skills to handle a multitude of tasks withing given timeframes

- Strong leadership qualities and interpersonal skills.

This vacancy is a local staff position. It is open only to nationals and residents of Bangladesh.

The selected candidate, if new to ADB, is appointed for an initial term of 3 years.

ADB offers competitive remuneration and a comprehensive benefits package. Actual appointment salary will be based on ADB's standards and computation, considering the selected individual's qualifications and experience.

ADB seeks to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and given equal opportunities to work in an inclusive environment. ADB encourages all qualified candidates to apply regardless of their racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, or disabilities. Women are highly encouraged to apply.

Please note that the actual level and salary will be based on qualifications of the selected candidate.

To apply, visit:
<https://www.adb.org/careers/230085>
Deadline for applications is on 3 April 2023.

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Arrest, try perpetrators at once Demand two slain schoolboys' fellows in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Patuakhali

Students of Indrakul Secondary School in Patuakhali demonstrated on campus yesterday, demanding immediate arrest and trial of those who killed two of their fellows the day before.

The two schoolboys – Nafis and Siam, 10th-graders – were stabbed to death during a feud with their juniors in Patuakhali's Baulal on Wednesday.

After their classes were over around 4:00pm that day, they started heading home. On the way, they locked into an altercation with some junior students, said police.

At one point, they were stabbed allegedly by some students of ninth grade. Later, they succumbed to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

PRAYER TIMING				
MARCH 24				
Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-55	12-30	4-45	6-16	7-45
JAMAAT 5-30	1-15	5-00	6-20	8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

People suffer for delay in roadwork

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Mymensingh

The alleged delay in the construction of Kali Shankar Guha Road in Mymensingh's Panditbari is causing untold suffering to hundreds of city dwellers, especially office-goers and students, for over a month now.

This important road connects several schools, colleges, district judge courts and divisional government offices.

The construction work of the road started a month ago, but due to the slow pace of the work, it would take another month to be complete, said workers' supervisor Abdul Jalil.

Jalil said now they are setting up pipelines to connect it with the main drain of the city.

Locals, however, alleged that



This road has been in this state for around a month now. Due to delay in construction, locals and passersby are having a hard time reaching their destination.

PHOTO: STAR

Faridpur Jannat Construction, who got the work order, has been doing the work as per their will as there is no proper monitoring.

Mohammad Ali, a guardian, said hundreds of students, guardians and teachers have to face immense trouble while crossing the under-construction road.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent saw only a few labourers were engaged by the contractor concerned.

An employee at Mymensingh Department of Environment (DoE), preferring not to be named, said hundreds of service seekers at different government

offices have been facing untold sufferings since the start of the pipeline installation work.

As there is no alternative way, people have to cross the area using the damaged footpaths, taking on serious risk, he added.

Rabindranath Pal, a local journalist, said household wastes are being dumped beside the road as garbage trucks are unable to enter the area due to the construction work.

Another local Subinoy Das said schoolgoing children are the worst sufferers as the road has turned too risky for them to walk.

Contacted, Mohammad Azaharul Haque, assistant engineer at Mymensingh City Corporation, said they are putting pressure on the construction firm to complete the road work as soon as possible to mitigate people's sufferings.

An employee at Mymensingh Department of Environment (DoE), preferring not to be named, said hundreds of service seekers at different government offices have been facing untold sufferings since the start of the pipeline installation work.

13 vultures, 3 dogs found dead in Moulvibazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen vultures and three dogs were found dead in a field at Barakapan in Moulvibazar Sadar yesterday.

Shyamal Kumar Mitra, assistant conservator of forests at the Wildlife and Nature Conservation Department, confirmed this information to our Moulvibazar correspondent.

He said, "We came here after receiving the news. It is not yet known why the incident happened. I'm still trying to find the reason."

The animals might have been given poisonous food, the official suspected. Locals informed him about more dog deaths, he added.

Moulvibazar District Livestock Officer Md Abdus Samad, said they found most of the dead vultures decomposed.

"These dead vultures look like they died at least 10 days ago. We have sent them over to the Sylhet lab to find out the cause of death," he added.

TIB elects new trustee board members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) elected two new trustee-board members during the board's 115th meeting held last month.

The new trustees are Monsur Ahmed Chowdhury and Philip Gain, TIB said in a press release yesterday. They have been elected for the next three years.

Monsur is the founder-trustee of Impact Foundation Bangladesh, while Philip is the founder-director of Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD).

Monsur is one of the initiators of "Jibon Tori", a floating hospital that aims to provide treatment to underprivileged people.

Philip is an environmentalist and rights activist, who primarily works for underprivileged people in the country's indigenous communities.

Just promoting

FROM PAGE 3
should) shift to a carbon tax. All the exemptions of taxes and duties would be highly appreciated if it becomes reality as per mentioned in the draft," he added.

Moazzem also mentioned that there are hundreds of deviations in the government policies, including the Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan, the SREDA Act, the Mujib Climate Prooperatory Plan, Nationally Determined Contributions etc.

"All these policies should be aligned. Any other energy-related policies in the future should be taken based on the renewable energy policy."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer
Netrokona PWD Division, Netrokona
Phone: 02-996651677, Fax: 02-996651956
ওয়েবসাইট: www.pwd.netrokona.gov.bd

Memo No. 25.36.7200.130.17.001.21.2072

Date: 23/03/2023

e-Tender Notice

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Name of the work	Tender opening & closing date
1	805683	Establishment of Two Agriculture Training Institute (ATI) at Jogonathpur and Mohonganj Upazila. Sub-Head: Construction of 04-storied Academic Building with 04-storied foundation including Civil, Sanitary and Internal Electrification Works at Mohonganj Upazila in Netrokona District.	26/04/2023

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. 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 according to tender notice. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Executive Engineer

Netrokona PWD Division, Netrokona
E-mail: ee_netro@pwd.gov.bd

GD-548

Jashore Govt. City College

Narail Road, Jashore
www.jgcc.gov.bd

Memo No. CEDP/JGCC/2022-23/11

Date: 23/03/2023

e-Tender Notice 01/2022-2023

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of Supply	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	802703	Refurbishment of Class rooms, departments and Conference room	10-April-2023 11:00	10-April-2023 12:00
2.	802700	Supply of Furniture and related goods for lab, classroom and conference room	10-April-2023 11:30	10-April-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 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 09 April, 2023 at 14:30. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Professor Md. Jamshed Ali Sardar)
Principal
E-mail: govcitycollegejessore@gmail.com

GD-547

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer
Lakshmipur PWD Division, Lakshmipur
Phone: 0381-55328, Fax: 0381-62292
Email: ee_laxmi@pwd.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender closing date & time
01.	803625	APP/circuit/house/salutingdias/22_23	Marble works in saluting dias, repairing walkway along with ancillary works at circuit house, Lakshmipur.	09-Apr-2023 12:00
02.	806620	APP/AD/SP/civil/22_23	Repair and renovation of guard shed and internal boundary wall at residence of Additional Police Super, Lakshmipur.	09-Apr-2023 12:00
03.	803617	APP/DC office/civil1/22_23	Thai works, fixation of collapsible gate at corridor, ancillary works with painting and repair works at waiting room of Deputy Commissioner's Office, Lakshmipur	09-Apr-2023 12:00
04.	803607	APP/Bagbari/civil3/22_23	Repair of doors and windows, painting along with emergency civil and sanitary works at various dilapidated bhaban of government residential area Bagbari, Lakshmipur.	09-Apr-2023 12:00
05.	802481	FTC/raipur/cumil memo: 1124 date: 1.3.23	Remaining work including civil works and boundary wall under the project of Farmers Training centre at upazila level for transfer of technology (3rd phase) one at Raipur, Lakshmipur.	09-Apr-2023 12:00

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 System 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).

Labannya Barua
Executive Engineer

Lakshmipur PWD Division, Lakshmipur

GD-549

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Inspector General
Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka.

Invitation for International Tender

Memo No-44.01.0000.058.07.142.22/522

Date: 23/03/2023.

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the Manufacturers/suppliers in their official pad for supply of following items as required by Bangladesh Police in FY 2022-2023.

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs.
2.	Agency	Bangladesh Police.
3.	Procuring Entity Name	AIG (Arms & Ammunition), Bangladesh Police.
4.	Invitation for	To Purchase (i) 38 mm Tear Gas Shell (Long Range) (ii) 38 mm Tear Gas Shell (03 Munition) (iii) 12 Bore Shot Gun Cartridge (Lead Ball) (iv) 12 Bore Shot Gun Cartridge (Rubber Ball) For Bangladesh Police
5.	Invitation Ref. No.	44.01.0000.058.07.142.22/25(2022-2023)
6.	Date	23/03/2023

Key Information

7. Procurement Method: One Stage Two Envelope (International Tender)

Funding Information

8. Budget and source of funds: Revenue Budget (GOB)

Particular Information

9. Tender Publication date: 24 March 2023

10. Tender last selling date: 07 May 2023

11. Tender closing date and time: 08 May 2023 at 12:00 hrs

12. Tender opening date and time (Technical offer only): 08 May 2023 at 12:30 hrs

Name & address of the office

13. Name & address of the office: Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, 6 Phoenix Road, Fulbaria, Dhaka.

Selling tender document: AIG (Arms & Ammunition), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.

Receiving tender document: AIG (Arms & Ammunition), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.

Opening tender document: NCCOM Building (Mini Conference Room 5th Floor), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.

14. Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional): 04 April 2023, at 11:00 hrs. NCCOM Building (Mini Conference Room 5th Floor), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

15. Eligibility of Tenderer: 1) Up to date Export license 2) Written confirmation authorizing the signatory of the tender in accordance with the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of the Principal 3) Affidavit confirming the legal capacity and financial capability 4) Other requirements described in the standard tender document (PG 5A).

Brief description of goods.

Sl. No.	Description of Good	Quantity	Price of tender document (Non-refundable)	Tender security in (USD)	Completion time
1.	38 mm Tear Gas Shell (Long Range)	90,000 Pcs	5,000/-	24,200.00 USD	120 days
2.	38 mm Tear Gas Shell (03 Munition)	60,000 Pcs	5,000/-	16,800.00 USD	120 days
3.	12 Bore Shot Gun Cartridge (Lead Ball)	7,000,000 Pcs	5,000/-	10,600.00 USD	120 days
4.	12 Bore Shot Gun Cartridge (Rubber Ball)	15,000,000 Pcs	5,000/-	16,800.00 USD	120 days

Procuring Entity Details

17. Name of official inviting tender: Md. Moniruzzaman

18. Designation of the official inviting tender: Assistant Inspector General (Arms & Ammunition)

19. Address of official inviting tender: Assistant Inspector General (Arms & Ammunition), Room No-306 (2nd Floor) 6 Phoenix Road, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.

20. Contact details of official inviting the tender: Phone: 02-47120270, Fax: 02-55101641, E-mail: ajga_a@police.gov.bd & ajgarmsbd@gmail.com

21. The tenderers shall submit their Technical and Financial offer in separate sealed envelope. Furthermore both envelopes shall be covered by an outer envelope which is sealed.

Special Instructions

22. a) No tender will be received after the deadline of submission time & date.

b) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender process without assigning any reason.

c) The Procuring entity also reserves the right to omit, increase and/or decrease the quantity of any item(s) of the tender.

d) If not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstance, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time & same venue.

e) Evaluation will be on item by item basis.

f) Date of financial offer opening will be duly informed to the Technically Responsive Tenderers and their local agents.

g) The Tenderer must comply with all requirements as per the tender data sheet provided with the tender schedule.

h) The Tender Security shall be in the form of an irrevocable bank guarantee issued by an internationally reputable bank and shall require to be endorsed by its any correspondent bank located in Bangladesh.

i) The Procurement will be performed according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 and Public Procurement Regulation 2008.

(Md. Moniruzzaman)
BP-7806119738

Assistant Inspector General (Arms & Ammunition)

For Inspector General, Bangladesh Police

Police Headquarters, Dhaka.

Phone: 02-47120270, Fax: 02-55101641

E-mail: ajga_a@police.gov.bd & ajgarmsbd@gmail.com

GD-552



PHOTOS: COURTESY

Scenes from the shoot of an Eid 'Natok'

This scene features Apurba and Keya Payel. The director explains the scene to the two, telling them it is an emotional one, which might take a while to finish.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

The Laboni Shooting House of Dhaka is quite famous amongst the entertainment industry, often graced by the presence of celebrities or crowded by shooting crews. This time, the location is occupied by a new production for this coming Eid-ul-Fitr.

Directed by Saikat Reza, the new tele-fiction pairs Ziaul Faruq Apurba and Keya Payel in the lead roles. Also starring in the project are Mili Basher, Wahida Mollick Jolly, and Rahmat Ullah, amongst many others.

Just as you enter the shooting house, one can see Apurba in the makeup room, having the finishing touches added to his look. Meanwhile, Mili Basher is sitting on the sofa, while Wahida Mollick is reading the script.

The director is standing beside Apurba, explaining a scene to him, where Apurba will go to the roof—with a look of anxiety on his

face, as if he is troubled by something—where he will walk around and mumble something to himself. Lastly, the actor is instructed to come down from the rooftop with a look of sadness on his face.

After Apurba's makeup is finished, the director, assistant director, and others take him to the rooftop and begin shooting the scene. A group of people get busy readying the lighting, while the director sits in front of the monitor, overseeing the shoot.

"Action," shouts the director. Shooting begins and everyone gets busy. The character seems to come to life as soon as Apurba is in front of the camera—as his expression morphs into a look of anxiety.

Apurba strolls around the rooftop, going from one side to the other. His presence seems to elude a troubled vibe. After a few moments, he looks up to the sky before going down the stairs.

Soon, the scene ends, concluding with the director saying, "Good shot."

The scene was completed in just one take. Meanwhile, a crowd of fans have already gathered before the house to see the shooting. Many of the fans seem eager to take a selfie with the stars.

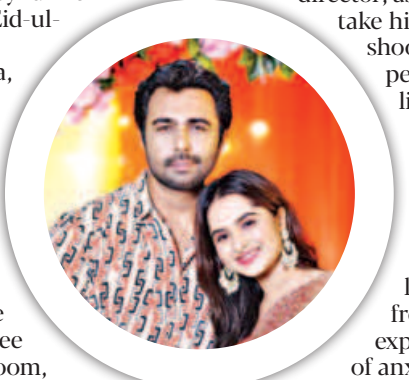
The second scene takes place indoors, featuring Apurba and Rahmat Ullah together. The two artistes rehearse for a while, before starting the shoot. This time, the scene takes a total of two takes before being completed.

Just like that, one after another, scenes are being completed. Now, it is the afternoon and the crew busied themselves preparing for the final scene. The rooftop is gorgeously decorated into a marriage venue.

This scene features Apurba and Keya Payel. The director explains the scene to the two, telling them it is an emotional one, which might take a while to finish.

Speaking about the tele-fiction with The Daily Star, the director shared, "The project is titled *Pre-Honeymoon*. It has a good story. I am sure the audience will like it as well."

Apurba also shared his thoughts, saying, "We are working on an amazing tele-fiction for this Eid. The audience will hopefully have something worthwhile to watch this Eid."



Shakib Khan sues film producer Rahmat Ullah for extortion



Actor Shakib Khan filed a case with a Dhaka court against film producer Rahmat Ullah on charge of demanding 100,000 Australian Dollars as extortion.

Following a hearing, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Arafatul Rakib recorded Shakib's statement after taking the charges against the producer into cognisance.

The magistrate also summoned Rahmat Ullah to appear before it on April 26. The news was confirmed to The Daily Star by Dhaka Bar Association President, Mizanur Rahman Mamun.

Shilpa Shetty returns to Kannada cinema after 18 years



Although being a Karnataka native, Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra has only appeared in a small number of Sandalwood movies. She made her Kannada debut with the Tamil film, *Mr Romeo* in 1996, after being a well-known figure in Bollywood. She will soon make her comeback to Kannada cinema with Dhruva Sarja's next movie *KD-The Devil*, also known as *KingDom-The Devil*, after a hiatus of 18 years.

Shilpa shared the film's poster, where she is seen in a retro look. While specifics are still being kept under wraps, the historical action entertainer is reported to be based on actual events that occurred in Bangalore in the 1970s. The movie will also star Sanjay Dutt and V Ravichandran, in addition to Druva Sarja as the lead.

Directed by Prem, *KD-The Devil*, is all set to release in Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and Hindi.

NEWS

4 firms to sell

FROM PAGE 12

not exceed Tk 200 at retail, because the production cost at large farms is Tk 135-140 even after the increase in the prices of feed.

For small farms, the production cost is Tk 150-160, it added. Abu Luthfi Fazle Rahim Khan, managing director of Aftab Bahumukhi Farms Ltd, said his company will follow the new rates even though it will incur losses.

Meanwhile, at a views-exchange discussion at the office of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), its president Jasim Uddin said the price of broiler chicken increased by Tk 100 in a month because the poultry industry people were taking advantage of the people.

He added that the government banned the import of broiler chicken, beef, and eggs to protect the local industry.

If the prices do not come down, the FBCCI will request the commerce ministry to allow the import of chicken and beef to keep the prices under control, he said.

At present, a kg of beef is sold for Tk 750-800.

Bogura judge

FROM PAGE 12

According to school rules, all students are supposed to clean their classrooms by turn, but the judge's daughter never complied it.

On Monday, it was her turn along with three other students. As she refused to sweep the classroom, the other three also declined to do the work in protest, said school sources.

On Monday night, the girl reportedly took to social media and wrote a post boasting that she was the daughter of a judge, and ridiculed the social status of other students.

The other three students took screenshots of her post and shared those in their Facebook group.

On Tuesday, the judge went to the school and asked the class teacher to call in the three students and their parents.

When they came to the school with their mothers, the judge threatened to file a cybercrime case against them, claiming that they wrote "derogatory words" on Facebook insulting her and her daughter.

The judge, in presence of teachers, also compelled the mother of one student to touch her feet and beg pardon for "insulting" her on social media.

BAU students 'assault'

FROM PAGE 2

"When the proctor approached us, he inquired about the woman accompanying me. I informed him that she is my wife and also a student at this university. The proctor asked if we knew him. When we replied in the negative, he became agitated and began to behave rudely," Shams claimed.

Later, a group of BAU students appeared at the scene and demanded that Shams and his family apologise to the proctor, Shams also said.

"As we refused, they assaulted us. We had to leave," Shams said, adding that he later informed BINA Director General Mofazzol Islam about the incident. He also demanded a proper

JnU student moved

FROM PAGE 2

checkup [on March 15] upon the [law] ministry's instruction, but she refused to cooperate with the medical authorities."

Apart from those two hours that she is allowed outside, Khadija spends the whole day inside the cell with two inmates keeping guard to ensure she does not self-harm, he added.

Khadija's family says she has kidney stones, for which she has chronic pain in her abdomen.

"It is because of her health that she was taken to the hospital for a checkup," said Khadija's sister Sirajum Monira.

She denied the claims of Khadija being uncooperative with the medical authorities.

"She is being accused of mixing water with the urine sample she had to give... That is why they sent her to the condemned cell."

"The day of her checkup, she was fasting and the jail authorities too did not give her anything to eat from 6:00am, when she was taken to hospital, to 4:00pm, when my mother met her and gave her some food."

Khadija, whose father is a domestic worker in Kuwait, has been denied bail at least three times by a lower court and once by the High Court.

Much to the relief of her family, she was granted bail by the High Court on February 17 this year.

Their joy, however, was short-lived. Within a day, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court stayed

investigation into the matter, Shams said.

When contacted, BAU Proctor Prof Azharul Islam stated, "I just questioned Shams to know about him and the woman with him as there is restriction on the movement of females on campus at night."

He claimed that they refused to provide their identity. He also mentioned that later, some students who were nearby at the time of the incident, appeared at the scene.

"I did not know what happened next as I left the scene in my car," the proctor said.

He added that he could not identify if the alleged students were members of Bangladesh Chhatra League.

her bail order -- leaving the girl in jail again.

According to a forensic laboratory report prepared by the Criminal Investigation Department of police, the main issue was with her guest speaker's responses. However, there were no remarks about Khadija.

The cases accuse Khadija of "trying to cloud the existing political situation", "involve the general public in anti-government activities", and "impact the reputation of Bangladesh in the international world".

Asked why a kidney patient was being kept in solitary confinement, jail superintendent Rahman claimed, "Her health is absolutely fine."

Holy month

FROM PAGE 12

Ummah observes the month with due religious fervor to attain self-restraint, self-rectification and forgiveness, he said fasting plays a vital role in establishing sympathy, amity and brotherhood among all, including the rich and the poor.

In her message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said this holy month creates an opportunity of self-rectification through self-restraint.

"Let's be inspired by the teachings of the Ramadan and protect the holiness of the Ramadan, showing modesty, patience and restraint at all levels of life and shunning all forms of pleasure, hatred, merriment and conflict," Hasina said.

Continued democracy key factor

FROM PAGE 12

country was halted several times after 1975.

"The democratic process could not continue smoothly, and there was no sustainable democratic process. As a result, Bangladesh could not march forward at its desired pace."

The PM also raised question about the way of thinking of the rulers of that period (after 1975).

She said the sacrifices of the martyrs of Liberation War can't go in vain.

Hasina urged all to work unitedly to establish a developed and smart Bangladesh through implementing the long-term perspective plan.

"Bangladesh has witnessed desired development as the Awami League government has been working with a proper plan," she said.

The premier noted that her government has been able to establish Bangladesh as a developing country in the golden jubilee year of the country's independence in 2021.

Hasina said that the poverty rate in the country has already dropped to 20 percent from over 40 percent.

"The nation would soon get a good news on further reduction of poverty as the collection of information and data is progressing."

Talking about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war, the PM said her government is doing everything possible to ease people's sufferings.

On behalf of the award winners, icddr Senior Director Firdausi Qadri expressed her feelings.

Freedom fighter Colonel Shamsul Alam (retired), Lieutenant AG

Mohammad Khurshid (posthumous), Khwaja Nizamuddin Bhuiyan (posthumous), and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya received the Independence Award for their contributions to Bangladesh's independence and Liberation War.

Begum Nadira Jahan (Surma Zahid) and Firdausi Qadri received the award for their contributions to research and training.

Mohammad Moinuddin Ahmed (Selim Al Deen) was given the award posthumously for his contribution to literature.

Pabitra Mohan Dey and ASM Raquibul Hasan were recognised for their contributions to culture and sports respectively.

The Department of Fire Service and Civil Defence was awarded in the public service category.

Rahul gets 2 yrs in jail

FROM PAGE 12

which gave him bail immediately and suspended the sentence for a month.

"Accused Rahul Gandhi is held guilty... and sentenced to two years simple imprisonment," Harish Varma, the chief judicial magistrate of Surat, said in his order.

Ketan Reshamwala, an advocate for complainant Purnesh Modi, said the court had found Gandhi's comment defamatory.

An adviser to the federal government, Kanchan Gupta, said Gandhi could face immediate disqualification from parliament following the conviction, in line with a 2013 order of the country's highest court.

Congress spokesperson and top lawyer Abhishek Singhvi told a news conference that the party feared Gandhi could be disqualified.

"The disqualification issue is dependent on the stay of conviction," he said.

"Any reasonable system, any reasonable, fair, non-oppressive, non-biased system would give sufficient time to a person to take some legal steps to stay the conviction," he said.

The case stemmed from a remark made during the 2019 election campaign in which the 52-year-old had asked why "all thieves have Modi as (their) common surname".

Members of the government also said the remark was a smear against all those sharing the Modi surname, which is associated with the lower rungs of India's traditional caste hierarchy.

Yesterday, Gandhi, a former Congress president who is currently an influential MP, told the court that his comment was not against any community.

Congress members rallied behind Gandhi, with many state units planning protests later in the day and today.

Unlike in many countries, where defamation is a civil offence, Indian law also has provisions which classify it as a criminal offence punishable with a jail term of up to two years.

"The Modi government is a victim of political bankruptcy", Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said on Twitter. "We will appeal in the higher court."

Gandhi also received support from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) that rules Delhi and two of whose top leaders are in jail on what they call trumped-up charges.

DoE eases curbs

FROM PAGE 12

of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said the new ECR is more elaborate and clearer on some issues than the previous one.

"However, there are some major flaws in it. I think those have been kept in it to accommodate the government's development narrative, which is not sensitive to environment," she told The Daily Star.

Rizwana said she found no reason for recategorising power plants.

"All power plants must be in the red category regardless of their production capacity. Hoping that power plants would comply with laws is surely an unreasonable expectation. The rules could have been stronger if the public grievances were redressed," she observed.

Prof Kamruzzaman Majumder, chairman of the Department of Environmental Science at Stamford University, said that mitigative measures are stronger for businesses in the red category, but those in the orange category enjoy a less stringent regulation.

The down-gradation of certain power plants' category would lower the emission standard, he added.

He said the DoE itself is reducing its power through formulating such rules, which would harm its effort to conserve the environment.

Saudi, Iran FM's hold Ramadan call

Vow to meet 'soon'

AFP, Riyadh

The Saudi and Iranian foreign ministers spoke by phone to mark the beginning of Ramadan, vowing to meet "soon" to implement a landmark bilateral reconciliation deal, Riyadh said yesterday.

The Saudi minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, called Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and the pair "exchanged congratulations on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan", which began in both countries yesterday, the Saudi foreign ministry said in a statement posted on Twitter.

"The two ministers agreed to hold a bilateral meeting soon in order to pave the way for the reopening of embassies and consulates between the two countries," the statement said.

Officials said the ministers' expected meeting is the next step in a Chinese-brokered rapprochement announced on March 10 intended to fully restore ties seven years after they were severed.



French protestors walk during a demonstration, a week after the government pushed a pensions reform through parliament without a vote, using the article 49.3 of the constitution, in Nantes, western France, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

POPULATION IN CANADA

Immigration fuels record growth

AFP, Ottawa

Canada saw record-high population growth last year due to a surge in immigrants and temporary residents, the government statistical agency said Wednesday, adding that if the trend continues the nation will double its population in 26 years.

As of January 1, the country's population hit 39,566,248 after adding 1,050,110 people over the previous 12 months - a sizeable gain the likes of which has not been seen since the post-war baby boom of the 1950s.

In the present day, however, international migration accounted for nearly all of the growth (95.9 percent) as Ottawa sought to bring in more and more immigrants to fill a labor shortage.

"This marks the first 12-month period in Canada's history where population grew by over 1 million people," Statistics Canada said in a statement.

'Warned' US warship to leave S China Sea

Says Beijing; US military denies claims, says vessel 'conducting routine operations'

AFP, Beijing

The Chinese military said it warned a US warship to "leave" waters in the disputed South China Sea yesterday, claims swiftly denied as "false" by American forces.

China claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea - a strategic waterway through which trillions of dollars in trade pass annually - despite an international court ruling that the assertion has no legal basis.

The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei all have overlapping claims in the sea, while the United States sends naval vessels through it to assert freedom of navigation in international waters.

The Southern Theater Command of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) said the USS Milius, a guided missile destroyer, yesterday entered waters around the Paracel Islands, which are also claimed by Vietnam.

The vessel "made an illegal incursion into Chinese territorial waters... without permission from the Chinese government, harming peace and stability" in the region, he said.

The PLA "organised sea and air forces to track and monitor (the ship) in accordance with the law" and "warned it to leave", spokesman Tian Junli said.

The US military swiftly denied the claims, telling AFP that "the PRC's statement is false", using the acronym for the People's Republic of China.

The vessel "is conducting routine operations in the South China Sea and was not expelled", said a spokesperson for US Indo-Pacific Command.

"The United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows," the spokesperson said.



WEST BANK RAID

Israeli forces kill Palestinian

AFP, Tulkarm

Israeli forces shot dead a Palestinian man yesterday, the Palestinian health ministry said, the first killing in the occupied West Bank during Ramadan as the army said it targeted an armed suspect.

Amir Imad Abu Khadija, 25, was killed by "the Israeli occupation bullets during their aggression on Tulkarm," the ministry said in a statement.

The Israeli military said forces raided the village of Shufa, in pursuit of Abu Khadija who was allegedly involved in multiple shootings targeting Israelis. The killing is the first fatality in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which started yesterday.

Attempt to arrest Putin amounts to 'declaration of war'



REUTERS, Moscow

Any attempt to arrest President Vladimir Putin after the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant for the Kremlin chief would amount to a declaration of war against Russia, his ally Dmitry Medvedev said yesterday. The ICC issued an arrest warrant last Friday, accusing Putin of the war crime of illegally deporting hundreds of children from Ukraine. It said there are reasonable grounds to believe that Putin bears individual criminal responsibility.

Former President Dmitry Medvedev told Russian media that the ICC, which countries including Russia, China and the United States do not recognise, was a "legal nonentity" that had never done anything significant. Any attempt to detain Putin, though, would be a declaration of war, said Medvedev, who serves as deputy chairman of Putin's powerful security council. "Let's imagine - obviously this situation which will never be realised - but nevertheless lets imagine that it was realised: The current head of the nuclear state went to a territory, say Germany, and was arrested," Medvedev said.

5 migrants drown off Tunisia coast

28 people missing

AFP, Tunis

Five migrants from sub-Saharan Africa drowned and another 28 were missing Wednesday after their boat capsized off Tunisia, a rights group said. "Five migrants' bodies were recovered and five other migrants were rescued, but 28 are still missing," said Romdhane Ben Amor of the Tunisian Forum for social and economic rights (FTDES). He said it had sunk "because it was overloaded" with 38 people, mostly from the Ivory Coast. The boat had set off from the coastal region of Sfax in the direction of the Italian island of Lampedusa, a popular launchpad for people from people escaping war and persecution across Africa to try to reach safety in Europe. The sinking is the latest such tragedy on the central Mediterranean, known as the world's deadliest migration route. It comes a month after President Kais Saied made an incendiary speech accusing migrants from sub-Saharan Africa of representing a "plot" against Tunisia and causing a wave of crime. His comments sparked a wave of violence against black migrants, and landlords fearing fines evicted hundreds of people who are now camping in the streets of Tunis.

We are close to the tipping point. We need dramatic action... we count on the leadership of the European Union in this regard.

UN chief **Antonio Guterres** on fighting climate change



বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক

(সেন্ট্রাল ব্যাংক অব বাংলাদেশ)
প্রধান কার্যালয়
ঢাকা

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-২৮/২০২৩ তারিখঃ ০৯ চৈত্র ১৪২৯
২৩ মার্চ ২০২৩

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়ের অন্তর্ভুক্ত ০৯টি ব্যাংক/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে ২০২০ সাল ভিত্তিক 'অফিসার (জেনারেল)-১০ম গ্রেড' (JOB ID-10147) এর ১৭৬৩টি শূন্য পদে নিয়োগের উদ্দেশ্যে প্রিলিমিনারী পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের লিখিত পরীক্ষা গ্রহণের সময়সূচি এবং পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্র সংক্রান্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ব্যাংকার্স সিলেকশন কমিটি সচিবালয়ের তত্ত্বাবধানে ০৯টি ব্যাংক/আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানে ২০২০ সাল ভিত্তিক 'অফিসার (জেনারেল)-১০ম গ্রেড' (JOB ID-10147) এর ১৭৬৩টি শূন্য পদে সরাসরি নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে ২১/১২/২০২১ তারিখের নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-১৮৫/২০২১ এর প্রেক্ষিতে এবং বিগত ২১/০৩/২০২৩ তারিখের বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-২৭/২০২৩ এর অন্তর্ভুক্ত প্রিলিমিনারী পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের লিখিত পরীক্ষা আগামী ৩১/০৩/২০২৩ তারিখ শুক্রবার সকাল ১০:০০টা হতে দুপুর ১২:০০টা পর্যন্ত ঢাকা সিটি কর্পোরেশন অফিসের মধ্যে অবস্থিত নিম্নোক্ত কেন্দ্রসমূহে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে:

ক্রমিক নং	শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	ঠিকানা	উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের রোল নম্বর বন্ডন		প্রার্থী সংখ্যা
			গ্রন্থক রোল	শেষ রোল	
১.	বিএএফ শাহিন কলেজ	কুমিল্লা, ঢাকা ক্যান্টনমেন্ট, ঢাকা।	৩০০০০৩	৩৪৩৩১৪	৪০০০
২.	সিডিল এডভান্সড স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ	পুরাতন এয়ারপোর্ট রোড, তেজগাঁও, ঢাকা।	৩৪৩৩১৭	৩৬৪১৭০	২০০০
৩.	ইন্ডিয়ান ইন্ডিয়ান ইন্ডিয়ান স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ	বুয়েট ক্যাম্পাস, ঢাকা	৩৬৪১৭৪	৩৯০৮৪৭	২৫০০
৪.	উদয়ন উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক বিদ্যালয়	৩, ফুলার রোড, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা।	৩৯০৮৪৯	৪০৬৯৩১	১৫০০
৫.	ইউনিভার্সিটি ল্যাবরেটরি স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ক্যাম্পাস, ঢাকা।	৪০৬৯৪৪	৪১৯৪১৬	১২০০
৬.	নিউ মডেল বহুমুখী হাইস্কুল	তক্তাবাদ, ঢাকা।	৪১৯৪১৭	৪২৬০৬৫	৫৯২
৭.	ধানমন্ডি গভঃ বয়েজ হাইস্কুল	ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা	৪২৬০৭৯	৪৪৬৯৫৯	১৮০০
৮.	মডেল একাডেমি	পাইকপাড়া সরকারি (ডি-টাইপ) কলেজ, মিরপুর-১, ঢাকা।	৪৪৬৯৭৩	৪৬৭১২৭	১৯০০
৯.	ঢাকা শিক্ষা বোর্ড ল্যাবরেটরি স্কুল এন্ড কলেজ	মিরপুর-১, ঢাকা।	৪৬৭১২৮	৪৮২২২৮	১৪০০
			মোট-		১৬৮৯২

২. লিখিত পরীক্ষার জন্য উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের রোল নম্বর বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের ওয়েবসাইটে (<https://erecruitment.bb.org.bd>) ইতোমধ্যে আপলোড করা হয়েছে।

৩. লিখিত পরীক্ষার জন্য পৃথক কোনো প্রবেশপত্র ইস্যু করা হবে না। প্রিলিমিনারী পরীক্ষার প্রবেশপত্র লিখিত পরীক্ষার প্রবেশপত্র হিসেবে গণ্য হবে। প্রবেশপত্র ব্যতিরেকে কোনো প্রার্থী পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবে না।

৪. সামাজিক দূরত্ব মেনে সারিবদ্ধভাবে কেন্দ্রের অভ্যন্তরে প্রবেশ এবং চেকিং কার্যক্রম সম্পন্ন করার জন্য পরীক্ষা শুরু কমপক্ষে ০১ (এক) ঘণ্টা পূর্বে পরীক্ষার্থীকে পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রে উপস্থিত হতে হবে। পরীক্ষা আরম্ভের পর কোনো প্রার্থী কোনক্রমেই পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রে প্রবেশ করতে পারবে না।

৫. প্রবেশপত্র (০১ কপি) ব্যতীত কোন ধরনের কাগজ, বই, মানিব্যাগ, মোবাইল ফোন, ক্যালকুলেটর, ইলেকট্রনিক কার্ড (স্মার্ট কার্ড, ডেবিট কার্ড, ক্রেডিট কার্ড বা অনুরূপ অন্য কোন কার্ড), স্মার্ট ওয়াচ বা অন্য কোনো ইলেকট্রনিক ডিভাইস নিয়ে পরীক্ষার কেন্দ্রে প্রবেশ করা যাবে না। উল্লিখিত কোন কিছু পরীক্ষা চলাকালীন পাওয়া গেলে কিংবা অসদুপায় অবলম্বনের কোন চেষ্টা করলে উক্ত পরীক্ষার্থীর পরীক্ষা বাতিল করা হবে। প্রবেশপত্রে কোন কিছুই লেখা যাবে না।


মাস্ক পরিধান ব্যতিরেকে পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রে প্রবেশ করা যাবে না এবং কোভিড-১৯ সংক্রান্ত স্বাস্থ্যবিধি মেনে চলতে হবে।

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হওয়ার শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অজিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

তারিখঃ ৪৮/২০২৩-৮০৮
তারিখঃ ২৩/০৩/২০২৩

স্বাক্ষরিত/-
মোঃ সাইদুর রহমান খান
পরিচালক (বিএসসিএস)
ও
সদস্য-সচিব, বিএসসি

ফোনঃ ৫৫১



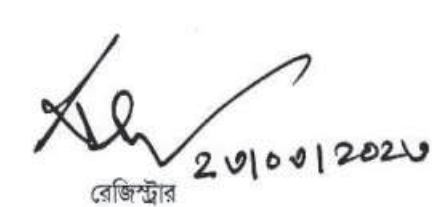
বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ

(বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র পাবলিক মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি)

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

২০২২-২০২৩ শিক্ষাবর্ষের স্নাতক (সম্মান) ১ম বর্ষ ভর্তি পরীক্ষা প্রসঙ্গে

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ-এর ২০২২-২০২৩ শিক্ষাবর্ষের স্নাতক (সম্মান) ১ম বর্ষ ভর্তি পরীক্ষার অনলাইনে আবেদনের সময়সীমা ভর্তিচ্ছু শিক্ষার্থীদের কথা বিবেচনা করে আগামী ৩০ মার্চ ২০২৩ তারিখ পর্যন্ত বর্ধিত করা হলো। উল্লেখ্য, ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে প্রকাশিত ভর্তি পরীক্ষা সংশ্লিষ্ট অন্যান্য সকল সময়সূচী অপরিবর্তিত থাকবে।



২৩/০৩/২০২৩
রেজিস্ট্রার

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ

GD-546

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Chief Controller of Stores
Bangladesh Railway
Pahartali, Chittagong-4202
Telephone: 031-659604 E-mail: ccspt@railway.gov.bd

No. CCS/eGP Notice/2023 Date: 23/03/2023

e-Tender Notice Notice No. 2023/03

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Chief Controller of Stores, Bangladesh Railway, Pahartali, Chattogram for the Procurement of Goods as stated below:

SL No.	Tender/Proposal ID	Tender/Proposal Package No. and description	Procurement nature, type & method	Tender/proposal closing date & time
1.	795585	54.01.1543.332.22.03.23 Procurement of S.M Sheet Black size: 8 ft x 4 ft x 3/16 inch etc.	Goods NCT OTM	13-Apr-2023 13:00

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

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.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 branches of any registered bank branches.

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

Md. Shariful Islam
Assistant Controller of Stores (P-2)
Phone: 01714229922
On the behalf of CCS/PHT

এস (২৩) (৯০)
GD-550

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Let there be restraint in Ramadan market

Increase monitoring to check manipulation of food prices

As we enter the holy month of Ramadan, there is a lingering concern writ large among ordinary consumers: will prices continue to remain unstable and soar higher? To expect a dramatic change from how things were pre-Ramadan would be unwise, despite assurances of "sufficient food supplies" which are expected to bring stability in the market. While talking to *The Daily Star*, a number of people from the low-income group have shared their frustration. For example, one woman described how she bought 250-gram dressed chicken at a staggering Tk 110 for her family of five. "I will store the chicken in a neighbour's fridge and cook it on the first day of Ramadan," she said, adding that buying beef, fish, milk or fruits is "out of the question" for them.

This is the story of most low-income households caught between their stagnant income and ever-increasing prices of essential items. According to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, sugar was Tk 80 a kg just before Ramadan last year; now it's Tk 115-120. The price of chickpeas rose from Tk 70 to Tk 85-90 a kg, and lentils from Tk 95-100 to Tk 135-140 a kg. The price of dates rose by 26 percent, eggs by 24.32 percent, broiler chicken by 62.5 percent and beef by 8.89 percent. How are the poor supposed to bear such expenses?

Sadly, there are at least three laws to check abnormal price hikes – namely, the Control of Essential Commodities Act-1956, Consumers' Right Protection Act-2009, and Agricultural Marketing Act-2018 – and as many government bodies to enforce them – namely, the Directorate General of Food, the Directorate of National Consumers Right Protection, and the Department of Agriculture Marketing. Apparently, the food ministry is working on amending the Control of Essential Commodities Act to incorporate a provision for capital punishment for hoarding. This marks a rather absurd turn of events at a time when it is evident that it is not lack of laws but their enforcement that is responsible for the total chaos in the market. Toughening up penalties, just like those periodic warnings/assurances issued by the government, minus visible results, are little more than ill-timed PR exercises that the public could do without right now.

While the effect of the Russia-Ukraine war is no doubt a big factor behind the high prices of essentials, the lack of market regulation is equally to blame for that, with corrupt traders taking advantage of the situation. It's been like "a cat and mouse game" between the regulators and traders, as a former food secretary claimed. Drives are carried out when prices of essentials are artificially raised, she said, but those only bring temporary relief and the problem persists. However, those drives are rarely carried out or followed up on, and hence rarely been effective. The question is, how long will the government try to deflect attention from its own failures?

As things stand, people's suffering may continue during this Ramadan as well. We, therefore, urge the authorities to take strong action to prevent any market manipulation. Unscrupulous businessmen must be restrained and brought under the law.

A step closer to ending homelessness

Govt should build on Ashrayan-2 project success to address plight of all homeless people

It is encouraging to see that the government's plan to ensure that no one remains homeless in the country is going strong. On Wednesday, in the fourth phase of the Ashrayan-2 project, 39,365 more houses (along with land documents) were handed over to beneficiaries from 493 upazilas. With this, the number of houses handed over under this project since January 2021 stands at 215,827. In total, there are now 211 upazilas that have been declared homeless-free. This is nothing short of remarkable, coming as it does at a time when the poor are struggling to meet their basic needs, including housing. Reportedly, the PM has asked all concerned to identify families that remain landless in areas already declared homeless-free, which we hope will be quickly followed up on. We must, however, convey some concerns that deserve appropriate attention.

One may recall that in July 2021, after houses were donated over the first six months of that year, multiple reports cited incidences of poor construction and corruption in the Ashrayan-2 project. For instance, in Pabna's Santhia upazila, over 100 houses under the project were found to be 1.5 feet shorter than what was in the construction plan. This allegedly happened due to the hastiness of workers and lack of monitoring by the implementing team. During the same period, seven such houses in Bogura's Sherpur upazila partially collapsed after a moderate rainfall. There have been also reports of families being forced to pay hefty sums of money to access houses that should have been given free, as well as instances of solvent landowners sneaking their way into lists of beneficiaries.

To the government's credit, however, there have been initiatives to rectify some of the irregularities. In the face of houses collapsing due to poor-quality construction, for instance, the government upped the budget for the construction of homes under Ashrayan-2 project beginning from its third phase last year. In August 2021, we saw the arrest of a union parishad member for illegally occupying three houses built under the project in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila. Efforts to address such loopholes and irregularities should continue. But the sincerity shown so far by the higher-ups is admirable. It gives us hope that the government's goal of zero homelessness is indeed achievable, if the present momentum is kept up.

By ensuring that one of the most basic human needs (housing) for all citizens is met, the government is also taking the country further in terms of achieving a number of Sustainable Development Goals related to reducing poverty, inequality, and improving life on land. We would encourage the authorities to expand their schemes to address the plight of the urban homeless/street population as well, and also address any irregularities in the Ashrayan-2 project as they appear. No one should have to suffer homelessness in a free country.

Not road accidents, but 'murder' by neglect



THE THIRD VIEW

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

MAHFUZ ANAM

FROM PAGE 1

Every time a tragedy occurs on our roads and highways, we report that most buses don't have the necessary papers for them to be in service – most vitally, no "fitness certificate" that proves their roadworthiness. We also report that the fitness-certificate-issuing personnel and machines are inadequate to meet the demand. At the moment, there is only one Vehicle Inspection Centre (VIC) in the whole country, inspecting about 100 buses and trucks daily out of 229,369 buses, trucks, and minibuses. Why its capacity is not increased and why more such centres are not set up all over the country is a question to which we have received no answer. It may not be inappropriate to conclude that the buses that ply on our roads are most likely unfit to carry passengers, and as such are potential "killing machines." But, of course, bribes can solve everything.

We have also reported over the last decade, if not even before, that most bus drivers are without licence. Many of them carry fake ones because they are faster and easier – not to mention cheaper – to get than the real ones. Again, why this situation is not addressed, with all the digitalisation that is going on, is a question that is never answered. Maybe we are forgetting the magic of bribes.

Most drivers have only a rudimentary knowledge of driving and perhaps no awareness or training about special conditions, such as driving in the rain when roads get slippery and traction of the tyres with the road surface is far weaker. Driving in tropical Bangladesh without this particular training is like asking for "accidents" to happen.

We import the chassis for our buses. The rest is built here – body, seats, and all the safety measures. It is a highly technical task given that a safe balance needs to be ensured between the strength of the material used, the weight it can support, the impact on the frame when on a curve (especially when the bus is full), the speed-weight ratio while driving, pressure on the tyres during a sudden brake with a full load of passengers, passengers being seated or standing, etc. All of these are vital elements to consider in preventing an accident. What are the compliance standards to be met when a bus is registered? Are those who monitor compliance appropriately trained?



The bus that crashed in Madaripur on March 19, 2023 had no fitness certificate.

PHOTO: SUZIT KUMAR DAS

There is nothing called a "health check" for bus drivers, especially their eyesight and whether they need glasses. This is especially true for those who drive at night. Random studies have revealed that about 60-70 percent of the drivers need glasses and suffer from degrees of night blindness.

Then there is the issue of working hours. There is hardly any mandatory rest time for bus drivers. Often they fall asleep while behind the steering wheel as owners prefer to pay "overtime" rather than hire an additional driver, which could save lives. We have seen cases where the accident occurred because the conductor was driving the vehicle instead of the driver.

Name the possible violations that can occur in any road transportation system, and we have it. And the main reason behind all this is the magic of bribes.

Above all the laws, regulations, practices, government directives – above everything – operates the "law of bribery." It is far more effective, fast and accountable than any law in our statute book. *The Daily Star* investigation has revealed that a mobile network is in operation that extracts monthly "fees" from buses and trucks proportionate to their size and the number of trips they make. Something like a "mobile app" exists that has numbers of all the buses and trucks on whom these "fees" are imposed. Payment is noted on the

app and can be verified by designated traffic officials in any part of the city. So, any defaulter is immediately identifiable and punishable. The collection is done digitally and is shared according to the hierarchy of the institution.

Widespread bribery destroys the whole legal edifice and is the main reason why, after decades of exposure

because we appear to be too nosy.

All this happens and has been happening over the years because those who rule us (meaning all governments) do not think much of our right to life.

According to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity (BJKS), a private body set up to protect passengers' rights, 39,522 people have been killed and 58,791 injured between 2018 and 2022

by government investigations and media reports, nothing has changed. The rationale is impregnable. The more bus owners break the law, the greater is the hold of the law enforcers on them and stronger is the need to pay bribes. As many owners have said to the media, albeit anonymously for fear of repercussions, "We have to pay bribes anyway, whether we have all the papers or not. So why get papers for which, again, we have to pay bribes on top of government fees, which have grown increasingly higher." This network of bribery is known to all. The power dynamics is such that the government prefers to look the other way.

The stark fact that stares us in the face is that, as passengers, when we board a bus, we have no guarantee of what should be our fundamental right – the right to a safe journey. We do not know if the bus we are boarding is registered or plying illegally. We do not know if the bus is fit for the road. (In the accident that killed 19 people, the media reported that the driver was told about a problem with the brake, and that it may fail. He decided to fix it upon return to Dhaka.) We do not know if the bus driver has a valid licence. We do not know about the state of his mind, health, eyesight and whether he was drunk – a fact that is vital for night-time driving. In fact, we know nothing and also cannot ask for fear that we may be bumped off

in 28,299 cases of road crashes. The figures were compiled from media reports. It needs to be added that not all road crashes are reported in the media, so the real death toll can be assumed to be much higher. Police say 20,413 people were killed in 21,625 accidents during the same period, based on the cases filed with them. Not all accident victims file cases with the police due to various reasons; hence their number is lower.

If we take the BJKS figures, we get an annual death figure of nearly 8,000 (as per police, it would be 4,000) due to road crashes. According to the UN human rights commissioner's office (OHCHR), the non-combatant deaths in the first year of the Russia-Ukraine war has been confirmed to be at least 8,000. Just the deaths on the roads of a country in peace becomes comparable to a country under regular bombardment by a foreign aggressor. What an irony. If we take the police figures, then the death toll is half. Even then, the irony remains just as striking.

Two things need to change: level of respect for human lives, and our government's accountability system. We know a lot of lip service will be paid for the former and an even greater volume for the latter. Thus, we will continue to live in our make-belief world while more Bangladeshis will die – not in any foreign land or due to any aggression, but on our roads.

A model election?

Golam Mortoza
is the editor of *The Daily Star*
Bangla.



GOLAM MORTOZA

With the next parliamentary election less than a year away, what unfolded at the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) election last week carries a lot of significance.

The SCBA election has a long-held tradition. Our lawyers are usually directly involved in national politics; they have played pivotal roles in all past movements, including the anti-autocratic movement. Many national-level politicians have come from this pool of lawyers. In the SCBA election, pro-Awami League and pro-BNP lawyers compete. Usually, SCBA elections are widely accepted and deemed fair.

This year, a seven-member subcommittee led by senior lawyer Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury was formed to conduct the election. Among the members, there were an equal number of pro-AL and pro-BNP lawyers. Munsurul is known to be a pro-AL lawyer and has contested under the AL banner in some previous elections. However, his political alignment did not clash with his electoral duties – he was equally accepted by both sides.

However, as the election day drew close, distrust and agitation grew between the two sides. Munsurul had disagreements with the pro-AL lawyers about conducting the

election, printing ballot papers, and counting votes. Allegedly, the pro-AL leaders openly called him biased and disrespected him. Munsurul wanted to use the electronic counting machine (ECM) to count the votes, and to take personal responsibility for printing the ballot papers. The pro-AL lawyers demanded that vote counting be manual, and that the current executive committee members should print the ballot papers. Amid such disagreement, Munsurul suddenly resigned just a day before the election. Crisis started unfolding then, and the election's overall mood shifted.

The electoral duty fell upon Md Moniruzzaman, a member of the convening committee. The pro-BNP lawyers complained that, as per rule, both sides needed to sit down and award the responsibility to a senior lawyer. Instead of that, pro-AL members took a unilateral decision ignoring the seniors and chose Moniruzzaman, a junior lawyer.

On the other hand, pro-AL lawyers claimed that the new convenor was chosen as per rules, alleging that the pro-BNP lawyers were complaining in order to bring the election under question.

The pro-BNP lawyers claimed that their AL counterparts had printed the

ballot papers on their own. Allegedly, 1,000 extra ballot papers were printed, and the pro-AL lawyers had stamped the ballot papers the night before the election, during which the pro-BNP lawyers arrived, and chaos ensued. Pro-AL lawyers denied any foul play.

The next day, pro-AL lawyers prepared to start vote-casting from 10am. However, lawyers from the other side intervened and a scuffle broke out.

At around 11:30am, police entered the fray and started mercilessly beating up the pro-BNP lawyers, who were forced to leave the election premises. Then, police started attacking the journalists who were there to cover the election.

Why were the journalists beaten up? They didn't stop the police as they were beating up the lawyers, nor did they impede the election in any way.

But they were there witnessing what was happening. They captured images and audio of lawyers who didn't commit any crimes being beaten up. The journalists were beaten and driven out so that they would not be able to observe the election.

Who is to be blamed? Who called in the police?

The chief justice told the pro-BNP lawyers that he did not call the police and didn't allow them to enter the premises, as per media reports. Senior lawyer ZI Khan Panna told *The Daily Star* that although there is no law in this regard, police cannot enter the Supreme Court premises without the chief justice's permission.

From the case that was filed with Shahbagh police station regarding this incident, we learnt that the pro-AL lawyer panel's chairman candidate Md Momtaz Uddin Fakir and secretary

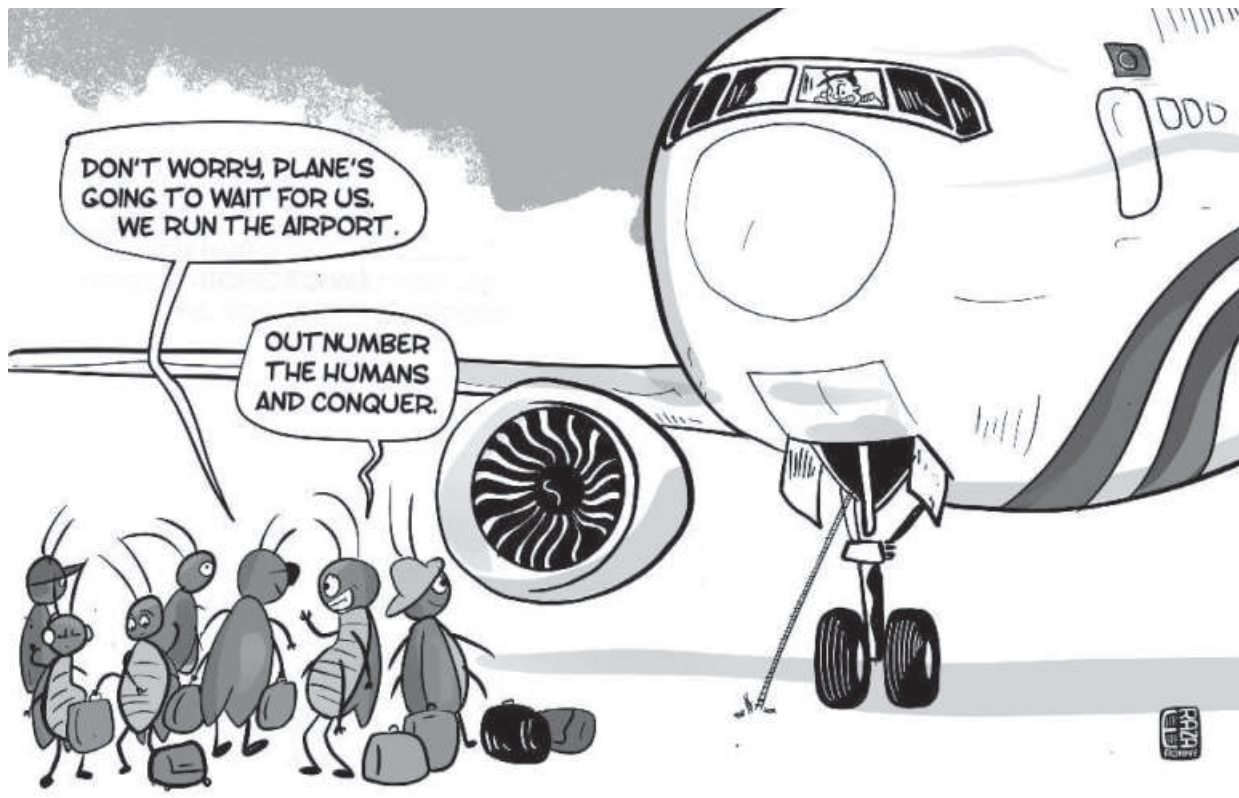
candidate Abdun Nur Dulal sought police cooperation. The top brass of police then discussed this issue with the law minister and the attorney general. It is also mentioned that each and every member of the election committee as well as the general lawyers sought help from police. The pro-BNP lawyers, however, said their three members did not seek police's help.

We can safely assume that Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury was disrespected and/or forced to resign. The night before the election, Munsurul's name on the ballot papers was replaced with the new convenor's name, who signed on them. The pro-BNP lawyers claim that votes were also cast at that time. Whatever the truth may be, the pro-BNP lawyers' claim of foul play does have some merit.

It is also evident that pro-AL lawyers had called in the police; the chief justice played no part in it. And why did they start the polling only after driving out the journalists?

The allegations raised by pro-BNP lawyers can be verified. Whether the election was properly conducted or not can also be probed. However, the most critical and debate-worthy question is: what example did this event create? In order to initiate vote-casting, one competing side and the journalists had to be removed via brutal beating. Seeing this, one cannot help but wonder about what may happen in the upcoming general election. If the SCBA election is considered a demonstration of a "model election," what can we expect in the future?

Translated by Mohammed Ishtiaque Khan.



VISUAL: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

DHAKA AIRPORT

A tale of grime and punishment



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

Before you decide to roll your eyes in derision of yet another airport rant by yours truly, let me explain why I can't stop cribbing about the shoddy state of Dhaka airport. It's because every time I come back from a trip, I realise yet again the level of apathy and neglect the airport authorities have maintained to be able to allow for the most unthinkable chaos to continue. And how this total disregard for passengers' comfort and disdain towards their own responsibilities as airport managers has blissfully gone on unabated for decades on end.

So this is how the story goes. Remember those days when you would get butterflies in the stomach as the wheels touched the tarmac and you realised you were finally home, your motherland, and soon would be greeted by your loved ones? Nowadays, it's more like an uncomfortable churning as I dread what I will have to face at our wonderful Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) in Dhaka.

The first beings to greet you most pointedly will be the persistent mosquitos on the bus that have actually divided themselves into two special SWAT teams: one for the outgoing passengers to give them a grand, itchy departure, and the other for the incoming humans so that they are assured of their destination – their homeland.

But the silent mosquito brigades are not what makes Dhaka airport stand out. It is more the absence of cleanliness that hits you like a tonne of bricks. It is a far, far cry from the airport during the Covid days, when the shine from the steel could blind you and the squeaky clean floors could require a hip replacement. Funnily enough, the floors are still

slippery – not because they are too clean, but due to the layers of sand accumulated while the cleaners are on their sabbatical. Only the brave will venture into the regular airport bathrooms (not the ones in the VIP lounges, obviously) where toilets have been left unflushed, floors left wet and muddy, and the toilet paper is a precious thing of the past.

This mysterious absence of hygiene can be easily spotted at the immigration booths (when you are leaving Dhaka) where various sizes of cockroaches can be seen crawling over the glass panels, happily coexisting and sharing snacks in this booth with the indifferent human occupant. If you are lucky to have found fairly manageable immigration lines and feel quite gleeful at how fast you have come out, wipe that smug smile off your face. The mayhem created by passengers from multiple flights trying to find their luggage after at least an hour since you reached the baggage carousel will bring you back on the ground with a painful thud. The selfish, boorish behaviour we see on our roads is replicated at the airport, with every passenger pushing their trolley forward because everyone wants to be the first to get out through that narrow opening and breeze through the Green Channel.

Unfortunately, just like our traffic, this causes impossible choking points that take forever to untangle, which is often accompanied by skirmishes and plenty of expletives being uttered in various dialects. There is also the possibility of getting your foot smashed when an overloaded trolley tilts with all the merry jostling and lands a big-sized box with a television inside right on your toes.

Ladies, please do not wear open-

toed sandals – closed, padded sneakers are the safest bet.

As you eye what resembles a battlefield, you may wonder why there isn't a single airport official at least attempting to bring some order to the mayhem; why you and hundreds of others have been left to figure it all out by yourselves – just like the constricting points on our city roads. Only when you come near customs will you see the bevy of enthusiastic uniformed personnel. Wonder why.

Then, finally, you are free from this surreal web and can go towards the car park where your vehicle is supposed to be waiting to allow you to escape this hell. This is where you will have the privilege of witnessing the different shades of green mould, thanks to months – perhaps years – of water dripping from the air conditioners onto the walls and ground and accumulating into a grimy puddle. The car park, in fact, is the place where garbage and grime are married and spread all over the dark corners. This is despite the fact that parking costs Tk 100 per car, so multiply that with the thousands parking EVERY DAY, and you will be left to wonder why at least a fraction of that astronomical sum is not used to clean up the car park of this "international airport."

If you ask an official about this, they will no doubt say it's because of the construction of the airport's new dream terminal and because the night flights have been suspended, so there are too many flights packed into the day. This would have been a valid argument if things had been any different before the construction of the new terminal even began. The griminess, in fact, was there long before the construction – it is just a characteristic of any public institution in our country.

The new terminal promises to be grander, shinier, and more efficient. But if you have the same people working there, with the same attitude, and the same level of oversight (which is zero), how long will it be before the Mosquito Brigade and Cockroach Colonies relocate to the posher side of town?

Coke Studio Bangla's 'Nahubo': A Case for Hybridity

Nafisa Tanjeem is associate professor at the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies in Worcester State University, U.S.

Muktasree Chakma is an Indigenous feminist working in the women and Indigenous rights sector internationally.

NAFISA TANJEEM and MUKTASREE CHAKMA

Coke Studio Bangla's latest offering, *Nahubo*, released on March 18 and featuring a Hajong song by a Hajong singer, sparked a series of debates in both Bangalee and Indigenous communities. The same Hajong singer wrote the song *Nasek Nasek*, which was released in February 2022 as the inaugural song of the very first season of Coke Studio Bangla, and was adored by Coke Studio followers in Bangladesh and abroad. What made *Nasek Nasek* so popular, whereas *Nahubo* received sceptical responses?

Some people would argue that it's because of the quality of music or the taste of individual listeners. Nevertheless, there is a larger politics of identity and nationalism undergirded in the responses that *Nasek Nasek* and *Nahubo* each received.

Coke Studio Bharat and Coke Studio Pakistan were named after the respective countries where they were established. However, Coke

mainstream Bangalee followers got uncomfortable for a variety of reasons. For example, in *Nahubo*, an Indigenous person appeared as the first repeat singer of Coke Studio Bangla, as opposed to other influential and popular Bangalee singers, singing a song written in an Indigenous language. The Indigenous song was combined with a rap verse by Sohana Rahaman (known by her stage name, Daughter of Coastal). The rap was performed not in standard Bangla, but in a Chattogram dialect that is not easily comprehensible by most Bangla speakers.

On top of that, the rap section – in the style of a traditionally hypermasculine and male-dominated genre in South Asia – was performed by a female singer wearing a hijab. She delivered a fierce and bold performance, claiming that she defied the oppressive gendered norms and did not care what society thought of her.

Nasek Nasek describes an Indigenous tradition of gathering in the village chief's house and sowing the first seeds of paddy. However, *Nahubo* presents something that goes beyond the representation of Indigenous culture and performance of indigeneity. It addresses universal feelings and emotions. The Bangalee nationalist

Bangalee audience not to mock his native language. He reflected on his experience of learning Hajong as a first language and then getting exposed to the fact that the state language of his country was different, and it was Bangla. He described his experience of mainly speaking Bangla in his day-to-day life. He claimed, "I am also Bangalee, Bangladeshi." He lamented the fact that the Hajong language does not have an alphabet or a written form. Through his songs, as he mentioned, he tried to preserve the Hajong language. *Nahubo* is an artistic creation through which he pays tribute to both the Hajong language and the diverse cultures and traditions in Bangladesh.

Animes' now-deleted post also stated, "...we [the Hajong community] know we are Bangalee," which made Indigenous communities deeply uncomfortable. His statements inadvertently exposed the systematic oppression and tremendous pressure that force Indigenous communities to mask their Indigenous identities and subscribe to the hegemonic "Bangaleeness." An Indigenous person must learn how to perform "Bangaleeness" as best as possible to be accepted in the mainstream community and to climb the ladder of professional success.



VISUAL: STAR

Studio Bangla was named after the Bangla language. It did not frame itself as Coke Studio Bangladesh. The focus on the language, on the one hand, offered the scope to invite guest artists from India and other countries. On the other hand, it strengthened the long-standing hegemony of Bangla that has historically subsided at least 44 languages spoken by various Indigenous and minoritised communities across the country.

Coke Studio Bangla devised an innovative response to the critique of the "Bangla" vs "Bangladesh" debate. Its first song, *Nasek Nasek*, featured the talented young, rising singer Animes Roy, who sang an original song written in his native Hajong language. Animes was accompanied by Pantha Kanai, who sang *Dol Dol Duluni* – a legendary Bangla folk song written and composed by Abdul Latif, who was also the initial composer of *Amar Bhaiyer Rokte Rangano Ekushey February*. Such a creative hybrid, which upheld the Bangalee tradition as well as gave recognition to the country's Indigenous tradition, unsurprisingly won love from all fronts.

It was interesting to see how the liberal Bangalee nationalist sentiment was happy to see a tokenistic, somewhat strategic representation of indigeneity in *Nasek Nasek*. This nationalist sentiment can accept indigeneity only to a certain extent, however.

It appreciated an Indigenous performance when it appeared in a non-threatening way, in combination with a traditional Bangla folk song. The tokenistic representation of indigeneity was needed to appease the "feel-good" liberal Bangalee nationalist sentiment against the backdrop of a painful national history of using token solidarity in the name of upholding diversity, harmony, and inclusivity since the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Accord was signed in 1997. The meaningful implementation of the CHT Accord is yet to come to fruition.

When Indigenous music appeared for the second time in the second season of Coke Studio Bangla through *Nahubo*,

sentiment appreciated an Indigenous performance as long as it performed indigeneity. When the Indigenous performance tried to play the "universal," the Bangalee nationalist sentiment got deeply uncomfortable.

Some raised concerns about the "discomfort" of having to read subtitles to understand a song from Coke Studio Bangla. Their underlying assumption was that Coke Studio Bangla would always feature songs in Bangla that would be easily comprehensible to standard Bangla speakers. Interestingly, Coke Studio's *Murir Tin* featured three different dialects and languages from Chattogram, Sylhet, and Khulna regions. People who were not familiar with these had to read the subtitles to understand the lyrics. Why did the complaint about having to read subtitles not arise after *Murir Tin* was released, and why did the subtitles make people uncomfortable specifically in the case of *Nahubo*? Is it because *Murir Tin* featured three cis-male Bangalee singers – two of whom performed Bangla rap in a hypermasculine style, and who did not threaten the hegemonic Bangalee nationalist sentiment?

The liberal Bangalee nationalist sentiment did not find it objectionable when Animes was performing as part of a group in *Prarthana* and singing *Nurer Putula Baba Maulana*, or when he sang *Ora Amar Mukher Kotha Kaira Nite Chay* as part of a group in *Hey Samalo*. A Hajong native singer subscribing to the spiritual or Bangalee nationalist performance, in fact, affirmed the dominance of Bangalee nationalism. Animes was a "good Indigenous person" to both the Bangalee and Indigenous communities because, until then, he fulfilled the need for token representation by the Bangalee community and the much-needed representation for Indigenous communities. Both Bangalee and Indigenous nationalist sentiments felt threatened when Animes claimed Indigenous and Bangalee traditions in a recent Facebook post (which is not available anymore).

In his post, Animes urged the

Nahubo and its singer Animes faced backlashes from two fronts. On the one hand, some Bangalee listeners threw a sea of racist and nationalist remarks at *Nahubo* on social media because they could not accept an Indigenous performance from an Indigenous singer. On the other hand, Animes' Facebook status attracted critics from some Indigenous communities who blamed him for claiming his "Bangalee" identity and for not recognising Indigenous struggles for self-determination. Since Animes became one of the very few Indigenous celebrities in Bangladesh, he suddenly turned into an object of extreme scrutiny by both communities. The huge burden of representing Indigenous traditions and upholding Indigenous struggles fell on his shoulders. Animes no longer remained a "good Indigenous person" as he could not fulfil the expectations of both Bangalee and Indigenous communities.

The reactions Animes received expose our deep discomfort with hyphenated, mixed, and complicated identities and experiences. We love to put people in rigid boxes without any space for hybridity. Why did Coke Studio Bangla describe Animes as a "Hajong rockstar" when his major area of specialisation is Bangla folk songs? Why did Animes have to feel the pressure to declare that he was also Bangalee? Animes grew up in the Hajong community, but he also learnt Bangla and was immersed in the Bangalee culture from an early age. It is perfectly natural that Animes will go back and forth between his Hajong and other identities, and that he will code-switch as needed. Why do the nationalist sentiments get upset when their strict borders and boundaries are challenged by someone like Animes and his performance?

Perhaps it's time to rethink how we can go beyond our nationalist sentiments and celebrate hyphenated identities, hybrid experiences, and complex struggles.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
1 Sleeve end
5 Tibetan monks
10 "The Tempest" sprite
12 Silly
13 Engaged in parliamentary procedure
15 Finish
16 Fellow
17 "My country – of thee"
18 Calmed down
20 Walking stick
21 Paris river
22 Wallops
23 Long look
25 Cavalry base
28 Artist inspirers
31 Major work
32 Main dish
34 Free (of) charge
5 Serengeti cat
6 Termite's kin
7 Rum drink
8 Sprinkle with oil
9 Detects
11 Bemoan
14 Was sloppy
19 Rosters
20 Heart's place
24 Prologues
25 Arrangement
26 Heroin, e.g.
27 Boat steerer
29 Gofers' job
30 Handles
33 Old anesthetic
35 Baby's call
38 Corn unit
39 Asian language



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LAW OPINION

Factors undermining the recognition of the Bangladesh genocide

Being the 'Nuremberg of Asia', the International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh is fraught with the potential of galvanising international, political, legal, and public opinions towards a formal international recognition of genocide committed in Bangladesh in 1971.

MRAFIQUL ISLAM

Civilian atrocities committed during the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971 seemingly bear the hallmarks of the crime of genocide prohibited and punished under the UN Genocide Convention, 1948. The international community has a curious habit of displaying its rhetorical reaction, 'never again', in the aftermath of every commission of genocide, unmatched by any decisive international action. This is attributable to the global geopolitical conflict of interests of states prevailing at the time of any genocidal incident, and the Bangladesh genocide has also been a victim of this politics of international inaction.

Following the physical liberation of Bangladesh on 16 December 1971, about 82,000 surrendered Pakistani troops, including the alleged 195 war criminals, were taken as POWs in the Indian army custody. Bangladesh was yet to be a member of the UN and the Geneva Conventions 1949. The UN required both India and Pakistan to strictly follow the Geneva Conventions for the treatment of POWs. India had the sole responsibility for their safety and welfare and surmised that it might not have full control over POWs' treatment once transferred to Bangladesh. India had an underlying strategic interest in repatriating POWs to Pakistan, which it did under the New Delhi Agreement with Pakistan in 1973 and the Shimla Pact in 1974. This repatriation deprived Bangladesh of any opportunity to prosecute these alleged war criminals for committing genocide.

The criminal responsibility for war crimes including genocide eclipsed around the geo-politics of Pakistan and India together with their allies the US, China, the USSR, and the Muslim world. During the 1971 liberation war, the US supported the unity of Pakistan in the UN bodies, supplied arms, and even sent its mighty Seventh Fleet to save the Pakistani occupation troops from the defeat in Bangladesh. The USSR supported India and Bangladesh and imposed successive vetoes on a cease-fire resolution in the UN Security Council to end the 1971 war between Pakistan and the joint forces of India and Bangladesh. The international community and the UN were too preoccupied with the

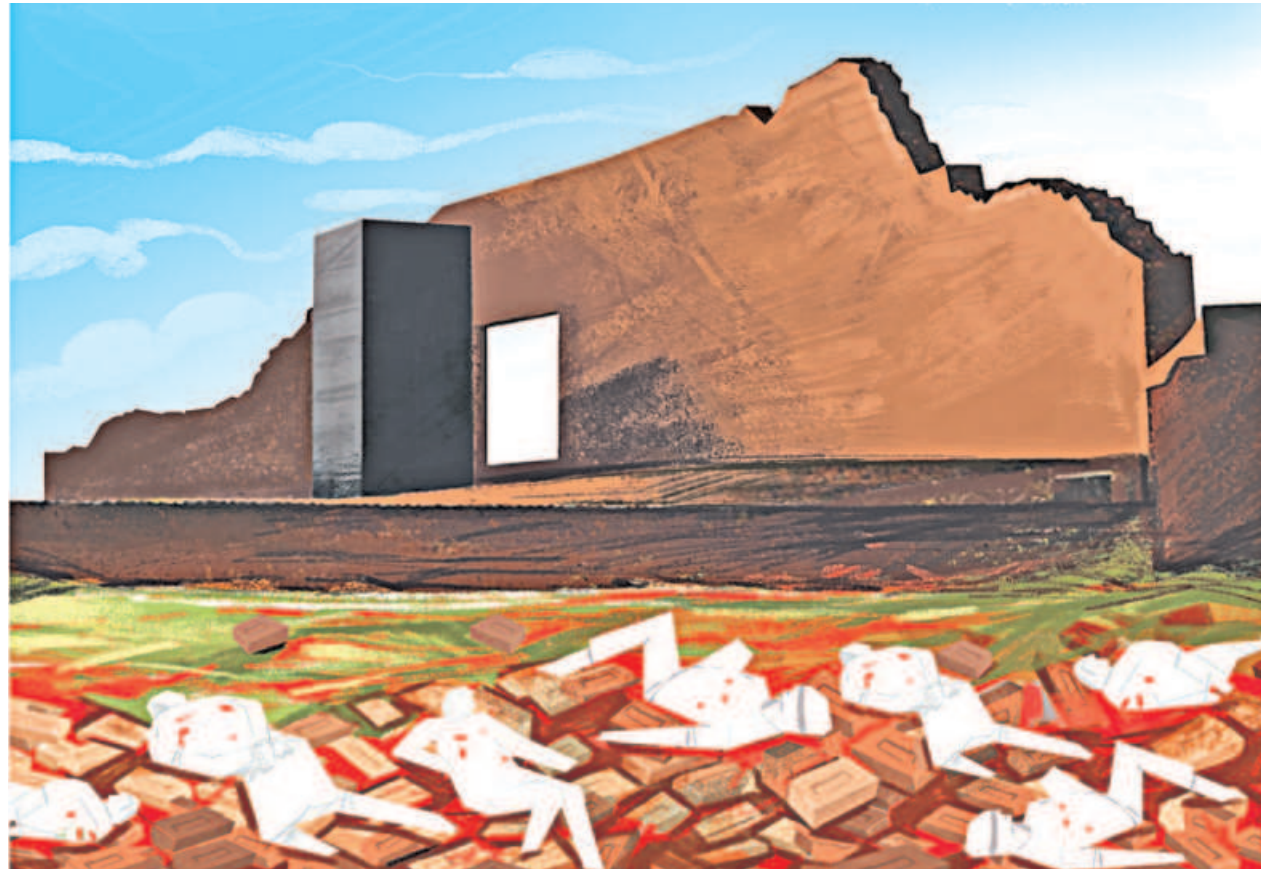


ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLO CHAKRABORTY

diplomacy of ending the war rather than the genocidal killings in Bangladesh.

After the war, Pakistan used its alliance with China to cast a veto in the UN Security Council on 25 August 1972 to prevent Bangladesh from getting the UN membership. All Muslim countries opposed Bangladesh for its breakaway from Pakistan, a Muslim country. Over 4000 Bangladeshis who lived in West Pakistan in 1971 were taken hostages in Pakistan as a bargaining chip. Bangladesh had to weigh the cost of these geopolitical interests of involved states against the urgency of releasing the Bangladeshis from Pakistani captivity, getting the UN membership, access to foreign aid, and the Arab labour market. These geo-political pressures and cost-benefit considerations denied Bangladesh any opportunity to wage a consciousness-raising campaign to internationalise the genocide perpetrated by the Pakistani occupation army and its auxiliary forces. Amid

intense cold-war rivalry between the two superpowers in 1971, the imperfect international community conveniently opted for silence over the recognition of genocide and for impunity of the perpetrators over justice to the victims of genocide.

Genocide is 'the crime of crimes', susceptible to divergent legal, emotive, and rhetorical understandings. Most judicial bodies regard genocide as the most serious yet highly politicised and polarised crime and impose on prosecution a very stringent burden of proof to establish its commission beyond any reasonable doubt. It is this heavy evidentiary burden that often becomes insurmountable, which is a discernible barrier to bringing charges of genocide. The genocidal acts stipulated in various international, regional, and national legal instruments do not constitute the commission of genocide automatically as a matter of fact and law. These acts may well be grave crimes but not

necessarily genocide. To constitute genocide, the alleged criminal acts must be committed as a part of a common policy and an intent to destroy, wholly or partially, the existence of any of the protected groups under the UN Genocide Convention.

It is comparatively easier to prove the physical perpetration of genocidal acts factually, but the specific intent to destroy a protected group is the hardest to prove before a court of law. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in *Bosnia/Herzegovina v Serbia/Montenegro* (Judgment of 26 February 2007) and *Croatia v Serbia* (Judgment of 3 February 2015) required the protected group to be defined positively. It rejected the Bosnian claim that Serbia targeted the Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica, which contained non-Serb and non-Muslims. There was ample evidence of physical commission of massacre in Srebrenica by Serb troops. Still, Serbia was not held

criminally responsible for genocide for want of the specific intent to destroy a protected Muslim religious group.

The indiscriminate extermination of the distinct national groups of civilian population, particularly the Hindus as a religious group and pro-independence people as a political group, has been the deliberate policy of the Pakistani occupation army during the Bangladesh liberation war. The physical commission of these acts has been established through tangible evidence as a matter of fact before the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) of Bangladesh, which has fulfilled the factual commission of genocide in its definition in the ICT Act 1973.

This historical fact of common knowledge was the least disputed issue in most ICT cases. However, the presence of the mental element (*mens rea*) of intention to destroy partially or fully a group, particularly the Hindus as a distinct targeted group, became a fiercely contested issue in every trial of the genocide charge. Proving beyond reasonable doubt the existence of the genocidal intent has been a daunting challenge for the ICT prosecution, which has noticeably been cautious in limiting the charge of genocide only in nearly half of the cases, albeit with limited success. Instead, the prosecution strategically preferred charging the factual account of atrocities under crimes against humanity with great success. These insurmountable prosecutorial challenges in proving the genocidal intent are not unique in the Bangladesh trials but common in most trials of the crime of genocide, which has also militated against the legal and judicial recognition of genocide in many instances.

Since the commencement of the national trials of international crimes in Bangladesh in 2010, the national, regional, and international awareness of the commission of genocide in 1971 has grown. Being the 'Nuremberg of Asia', this trial is fraught with the potential of galvanising international, political, legal, and public opinions towards a formal international recognition of genocide committed in Bangladesh in 1971.

The writer is an Emeritus Professor of Law, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

GLOBAL LAW UPDATE

The ICC's arrest warrant against VLADIMIR PUTIN

QUAZI OMAR FOYSAL

The arrest warrant against the incumbent Russian President Mr. Vladimir Putin issued by the International Criminal Court ("ICC" or "Court") dated 17 March 2023 came as a surprise, but it was not totally unexpected. The ICC, the first permanent international criminal court established by the Rome Statute 1998, became active in the current Ukraine situation on 2 March 2022 when the ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan KC declared the initiation of its investigation over the same.

The ICC derived its jurisdiction over the Ukrainian situation – a non-party state to the Rome Statute – following the Ukrainian declaration under article 12(3) of the Rome Statute accepting the ICC's jurisdiction on an *ad hoc* basis and state-party referrals of 43 states.

The contents of the arrest warrant demand some attention. In this arrest warrant, the ICC indicted Putin for the war crimes of unlawful deportation of children, and that of unlawful transfer of children from occupied areas of Ukraine to



the Russian Federation under articles 8(2)(a)(vii) and 8(2)(b)(viii) of the Rome Statute, respectively.

There are three issues to discuss. First, the commission of the alleged crimes in question commenced in the Ukrainian territory but was completed in the Russian territory. Hence, the ICC has clear jurisdiction over those alleged crimes under article 12(2)(a) of the Rome Statute, and Russia's status as a non-party State to the Rome Statute has no bearing with its jurisdiction.

Second, the war crimes of unlawful deportation of children, and unlawful transfer of children are not the most horrendous crimes allegedly committed in the Ukraine situation. And the same can be categorised as genocide and crimes against humanity. It is pertinent to note that the Independent

International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine established by the UN Human Rights Council released its first report on 16 March 2023, where it recorded several violations of international law, including "forced transfers and deportations of children" (§§95-102). The reports of the UN Commissions of Inquiry maintain certain evidentiary standards. Previously, the ICC accepted those reports as evidence, especially in the Bangladesh/Myanmar situation. Besides, it is technically less complex to prove deportation or transfer of population in the context of an international armed conflict, which has been indicated by the ICC Prosecutor in an interview given on CNN.

Finally, Putin has been indicted for both his individual criminal responsibility (article 25) and his command responsibility (article 28). It implies that he bears

responsibility for committing the alleged crimes individually and for failing to control his subordinates who allegedly committed those crimes. Though the ICC has dealt with several categories of individual criminal responsibility, it will be dealing with command responsibility for the first time. Notably, the ICC has issued an arrest warrant against a sitting head of state of a permanent member of the UN Security Council. This should be seen beyond symbolism.

Given that the ICC does not have any permanent police force, it depends on state parties' cooperation to arrest the accused. The state parties to the Rome Statute have a general obligation to cooperate with the ICC in respect of the arrest and transfer of the accused. The plain reading of the Rome Statute indicates that 123 states, including

Bangladesh, have the obligation to arrest Putin and transfer him to the ICC. However, the arrest warrant against former Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir attracted several attempts of the ICC to clarify the extent of such obligation to cooperate, given that the sitting head of state enjoys immunity from jurisdiction in international law. The jurisprudence developed by the ICC is not very consistent and well-appreciated by states. Presumably, the arrest warrant against Putin will revive this debate. At the same time, this concern will probably reduce Putin's diplomatic capacity in the coming days.

The Rome Statute does not allow trial *in absentia*. Consequently, ICC's proceedings related to Putin cannot advance without Putin's presence at the Court. But there is a non-legal perspective to assess the impact of an arrest warrant. Earlier, the arrest warrant issued by the ICC against Lord Resistance Army leaders in respect of the Northern Uganda Situation, or the arrest warrant issued by the ICTY against Radovan Karadžić in respect of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia changed the intensity of the situations. Though it will be premature to comment on the same, their possible impacts cannot be completely ruled out.

At this stage, it will be injudicious to predict whether Putin's future is vacillating towards Al-Bashir or Karadžić. But it is unquestionably evident that Putin's arrest warrant came with the strength of international law and international organisation. At the same time, this arrest warrant is a reminder for the ICC itself which is also investigating different situations involving powerful states. For example, the ICC has a moral obligation to reconsider the Rohingya situation and explore the possibility of issuing arrest warrants against potential accused individuals of committing alleged crimes against the Rohingyas among the Burmese leadership.

The writer teaches public international law at American International University, Bangladesh.

The ICC has a moral obligation to reconsider the Rohingya situation and explore the possibility of issuing arrest warrants against potential accused individuals of committing alleged crimes against the Rohingyas among the Burmese leadership.

The attitude adjustment that the Tigers needed

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh wrapped up the three-match ODI series against Ireland with an emphatic 10-wicket victory in the final game after a record-breaking display saw the fast bowlers take all 10 wickets in an innings for the first time in any format at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Pacer Hasan Mahmud started with his maiden five-wicket haul while Taskin Ahmed made the new ball talk and scalped three. Ebadot Hossain also impressed, bagging two wickets as the visitors folded for 101.

Skipper Tamim Iqbal and fellow opener Liton Das made little fuss as they led an authoritative charge and chased down the target in 13.1 overs as Bangladesh won by 10 wickets for the first time in history.

"The batting performances in the first two matches were something we haven't seen before," Tamim said in the post-match interview. "The way we chased down the runs with authority gives a very strong message to the opposition."

While a series win was always expected against Ireland, what set it apart was the attitude that the Tigers showed through the three matches.

The first match saw Tamim's side post their highest-ever total of 338, breaking their previous best of 333 against Australia at the 2019 World Cup. Within 48 hours, the Tigers managed to surpass that by putting on a record 349 in the second ODI thanks to Mushfiqur Rahim, who smashed an unbeaten 60-ball 100, the fastest century by a Bangladesh batter.

Bangladesh's batters also seemed to have left out any lingering baggage from the England series and purposefully edited out any negativity regarding off-field issues. Towhid Hridoy provided a breath of fresh air,



On a day Bangladesh pacers ruled the roost, youngster Hasan Mahmud was still able to set himself apart from the rest during the Tigers' maiden 10-wicket win in ODIs, against Ireland in Sylhet yesterday. Hasan's maiden fifer in the format saw the Tigers bundle out the visitors for 101 in just 28.1 overs.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Hasan's first underlines pacers' new statement

ABDULLAH AL MEHEDI from Sylhet

Firsts are always special. Most bowlers come on to the international stage having already bagged five wickets in a domestic game, but that was not the case for Hasan Mahmud. The 23-year-old bagged his first fifer, not just on the international stage, but overall, in the third ODI against Ireland.

He had not even scalped five wickets in a domestic first-class game before, but his presence was a gift that merited acknowledgement of 'the pack'.

Ebadot Hossain, flanked closely by Mehedi Hasan Miraz, came in for a handshake but Taskin Ahmed had gotten there first. The players congratulated Hasan one by one after the youngsters' first fifer. ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal was close by, patting his back.

Hasan may have been here only a short while, but he has been coming for a long time. He may not have many first-class domestic games under his belt, but he had been a constant in the U-19 team, the emerging side and always on the periphery of the national team when fit. His skills have not been overlooked since the U-19 World Cup in 2018, when injury troubles had sidelined him. Having returned, the 23-year-old is finally making his claim. A yorker to remove Jos Buttler and his death bowling proved key in the England T20Is.

Against Ireland yesterday, he turned up with the new ball, which swung both ways for him. First, he troubled them by creating uncertainty and threatening the outside edge, then he got them rooted to crease and trapped them leg-before with late in-dippers off the hand or the deck.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Ireland: 101 all out in 28.1 overs (Tucker 28, Campher 36; Hasan 5-32, Taskin 3-26, Ebadot 2-29)

Bangladesh: 102-0 in 13.1 overs (Tamim 41 not out, Liton 50 not out)

Result: Bangladesh won by ten wickets.

Player-of-the-match: Hasan Mahmud

Player-of-the-series: Mushfiqur Rahim

His first spell of six overs resulted in an Irish top-order struggle, one they never recovered from, and along with his last two, the pace attack bagged all 10 wickets.

"I was told that I would start with the new ball and I prepared for that over the past two days," Hasan said, indicating to his ability and willingness to adapt to new roles.

Allan Donald had narrowed things down the previous day, talking about the unit's pack mentality.

Hasan ushered praise back at his bowling coach. "The last few years, we have been working hard. We have a good connection with Allan Donald. He shared his experience and how he survived in cricket... how to handle situations and back yourself. His skill is unbelievable. He works really hard," he said. It turned out that the pack mentality also brought out healthy competition.

"We [pacers] all want to give our best and everyone wants to beat each other. Taskin bhai is a senior and always protects us. He plays up our good aspects and tells us to avoid the bad things," he said, adding that fitness and getting his bowling into a better shape was what he was keen to improve on.

Pacers like Hasan enabled Tigers to play on good sporting conditions this time around.

Skipper Tamim Iqbal added: "We don't normally play on grassy wickets a lot but thinking of the World Cup and series ahead, we played on these kinds of tracks. The contest became even at home on these kinds of tracks since their fast bowlers are used to such conditions. We accepted those challenges and the pacers reacted exceptionally well."

Hasan, however, was keen to remind: "It is my first five-wicket haul. I haven't gotten a five-wicket haul before in domestic games either." Bangladesh will be hoping it is the first of many.

RECORDS GALORE FOR TIGERS IN IRISH DEMOLITION

Bangladesh sealed their first-ever 10-wicket victory in ODIs when they thrashed Ireland in the final game of the three-match series in Sylhet yesterday. Bangladesh have won by nine wickets five times in the format.

It was also the first time that Bangladesh pacers accounted for all 10 wickets in an ODI.

338 for eight in the first ODI and 349 for six in the following game are the Tigers' two highest scores in ODIs.

Bangladesh cruised to victory with 221 balls to spare in Sylhet yesterday, their second-largest victory in terms of balls remaining. Bangladesh's biggest win in this regard was when they beat Zimbabwe by six wickets with 229 balls in hand in 2009 in Chattogram.

Young pacer Hasan Mahmud became only the 13th Bangladeshi bowler and ninth Bangladesh pacer to get a fifer in ODIs. He ended with figures of five for 32 in 8.1 overs, including a solitary maiden.

Both Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim reached the milestone of 7000 runs in ODIs in this series. The duo along with Tamim are the only players to achieve the feat.

Shakib also became only the third player, after Sanath Jayasuriya (13430 runs, 323 wickets) and Shahid Afridi (8064 runs, 395 wickets), to score 7000 runs and take 300 wickets in ODI cricket during the first ODI against Ireland.

ODI skipper Tamim became the first Bangladeshi and 40th overall to reach 15,000 international runs during his 23-run knock in the second ODI.

Mushfiqur Rahim smashed an unbeaten 60-ball 100 to become Bangladesh's fastest centurion in the format in the second ODI of the series.



rejuvenating the squad, and Shakib Al Hasan's urgency while trying to up the ante with the bat from good platforms was there for everyone to see.

It was almost reminiscent of Chandika Hathurusingha's first stint as a coach when, according to the players, the Sri Lankan had established a positive and fearless approach to the game, especially in the batting scheme of things.

The 54-year-old might just have been able to reignite that spark with a much-needed attitude adjustment, and this time with much better resources. The Tigers were able to build on their belief and looked to take a proactive approach as each game passed.

That much was evident from what Bangladesh's fast-bowling coach Allan Donald said on Wednesday. He opined Bangladesh could go for 400 if given the chance to bat first again.

The South African also praised Hathurusingha for propagating that aggressive approach amongst the group and giving them the license to play the fearless brand of cricket that helped the Tigers to a 3-0 T20I series win against England.

Such a clinical effort from the Tigers will bring them a load of confidence but it is important not to drum up a contest that was heavily one-sided, with the Tigers taking on a sub-par Ireland bowling line-up that could do little to challenge the Bangladesh batters.

But it is also important to dominate when the opportunity arrives. It is often a hallmark of a 'big' team or a team that wants to brush shoulders with the big guns to display strength against relatively weaker sides. Bangladesh did what was necessary and punished what Ireland offered with authority.



MBAPPE LEADS FRANCE'S FRESH START

Three months on from their agonising defeat in the World Cup final in Doha, France begin a new era as Les Blues start their Euro 2024 qualifying campaign without Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema, and with Kylian Mbappe leading the team against the Netherlands tonight. It seems like a new dawn for France with a new captain, new goalkeeper, new defence, new governance and major players retired. The two-time World Cup winners will then play Ireland in another Group B match in Dublin on Monday.

PHOTO: TWITTER

'Pirates now familiar foes'

SPORTS REPORTER

With all attention grabbed by the ODI series between Bangladesh and Ireland following a historic T20 series win over world champions England, sports lovers have hardly noticed the arrival of a certain foreign outfit in Seychelles, who are slated to play two friendly matches against hosts Bangladesh in Sylhet tomorrow and on Tuesday.

Seychelles, known as the Pirates, reached Sylhet on Wednesday night after landing in Dhaka earlier in the afternoon, and had their first training session at the BKSP ground yesterday.

"Seychelles are now a familiar opponent," said Bangladesh assistant coach Hasan Al Mamun yesterday. However, it's worth recalling how, as far as the country's football fans are concerned, Seychelles had been an almost completely unknown footballing entity until they were invited to play the 2020 Bangabandhu Gold Cup in Dhaka.

And expectedly, Seychelles could hardly impress the spectators with their performance in the aforementioned six-nation tournament but the Pirates moved into the last four from three-team group, courtesy of a superior goal-difference.

It was learned that most Seychelles footballers, hailing from a tiny nation

with around one-lakh population situated in the Indian Ocean, off East Africa, are amateurs and play football after managing their individual jobs. Despite being tagged an amateur side, Seychelles were organised and disciplined to give the ultimate champions Palestine a run for their money before suffering a narrow 1-0 defeat in the semi-finals.



Bangladesh could not face Seychelles in Dhaka as the two were drawn in different groups, but the men in red and green met Seychelles in a neutral venue in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo in 2021 during the Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa Trophy. In that encounter, despite their players suffering a lot of muscle cramps, Seychelles came from behind to play a 1-1 draw with Bangladesh. The islanders went on to leave Colombo by clinching the four-nation trophy, placing them ahead of finalists Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Bangladesh.

Similar to Bangladesh's glorious past in football, Seychelles had a good run as they won a silver medal in the first Indian Ocean Islanders Games in 1979 before they bagged bronze medals in the 1985, 1998, and 2003 editions. They also held teams like Zambia and Namibia and have beaten Zimbabwe during FIFA World Cup Qualifiers in early 2000s.

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) may anticipate an improvement in FIFA rankings after playing against the 199-ranked Seychelles, but the task is not going to be easy one for the charges of Spanish coach Javier Cabrera, who has been preparing the men in red and green for nearly two weeks at home and abroad.

Last year the physically superior Seychellois played nine international matches in which they could not taste a win, but they drew thrice against Mauritius, Lesotho, and San Marino, while defeats in home and away matches against Botswana, Angola, Comoros, and Madagascar showed their fighting character.

Bangladesh, however, tasted a win against Cambodia in eight international matches they played last year in which the men in red and green could draw against Mongolia and Indonesia. Now it remains to be seen who can win in a battle between two equally matched sides.

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Continued democracy key factor in country's dev

Says PM; hands over Swadhinata Padak

UNB, Dhaka
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Bangladesh's unprecedented development has been possible due to unhindered democratic process since 2008.

"The democratic process in the country continued unhindered after the Awami League came to power through winning the 2008 national election. The development that is being seen now has been possible for this," she said.

The PM was addressing the handover ceremony of Swadhinata Padak 2023 at the capital's Osmani Memorial Auditorium yesterday.

Nine individuals and one institution were given the highest civilian award in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the country.

Hasina said that democracy in the

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina poses for a photo with this year's Swadhinata Padak (Independence Award) recipients at the capital's Osmani Memorial Auditorium yesterday. Nine individuals and one institution got the award in recognition of their contributions to the country.

PHOTO: BSS

WHOLESALE MARKET 4 firms to sell chicken at Tk 190-195 a kg in Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four major chicken producers yesterday announced that they will sell broiler chicken for Tk 190-195 a kg at the gates of their farms during Ramadan.

The announcement came after the Directorate of National Consumers Right Protection (DNCRP) summoned representatives of the farms to explain why the prices of broiler chicken were "unreasonably high".

The four, Kazi Farms Ltd, CP Bangladesh, Aftab Bahumukhi Farms Ltd, and Paragon Poultry and Hatchery Ltd, have been selling broiler chicken at Tk 220 to Tk 230 a kg at the gates of their farms over the last two weeks.

At the kitchen markets of Dhaka over the last few days, each kg of broiler chicken was being sold for Tk 280-300.

AHM Shafiquzzaman, director general of DNCRP, said retail prices will fall by Tk 35-40 soon.

After attending a meeting at the DNCRP, Kazi Zahedul Hasan, managing director of the Kazi Farms, said broiler chicken will be sold at Tk 190-195 per kg at the gate of the farm during Ramadan.

According to a DNCRP report, the price of a kg of broiler chicken should

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POWER GENERATION UP TO 100MW DoE eases curbs on coal, gas-run plants

Environmentalists slam the decision

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

The Department of Environment in its new Environmental Conservation Rules has exempted small coal and gas power plants from Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), raising concerns among environmentalists.

Under the Environmental Conservation Rules (ECR)-2023, gazetted on March 5, coal-fired power plants having a capacity of up to 50MW and gas-fired plants having a capacity of up to 100MW will no longer require EIA.

These two types of power plants have been put under the orange category.

In the previous ECR of 1997, all power plants were placed under the red category, meaning there was a legal binding for all electricity producers to prepare an EIA and an Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

With the introduction of the new ECR, plants will no longer require to put such mechanism in place to check pollution from their operations.

Under the previous ECR, any business placed under the red category must prepare a Terms of Reference for conducting an EIA, take stakeholders' opinion in preparing the EIA, assess the quality of air, water, and soil of its location, and fill up the form-06 for

declaration that it will stick to its plan to check pollution.

Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, a Europe-based research platform which analysed pollution from coal based power plants in Bangladesh, found that coal combustion releases toxic substances like sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, mercury, and fly ash which can significantly harm the human respiratory system, trigger acid rain, and cause mercury deposition in the soil.

"All power plants must be in the red category regardless of their production capacity."

Syeda Rizwana Hasan
Chief Executive of BELA

Bangladesh already been enduring the worst air quality which is responsible for the deaths of 200,000 people every year, shows World Bank data.

DoE Director (environment clearance) Masud Iqbal Md

Shameem, who was involved in preparing the ECR-2023 draft, said that there was no difference between the large and small power plants in the previous ECR.

"Though they [small plants] will not require an Environmental Impact Assessment, they will have to follow the emissions standard stipulated in the new Environmental Conservation Rules. The emission standards will remain unchanged, but they won't have to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment report," he added.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive

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Holy month of Ramadan begins

BSS, Dhaka

The holy month of Ramadan of 1444 Hijri begins today in the country.

The decision was made at a meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee at the conference room of Islamic Foundation at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday, read an Islamic Foundation press release.

As per its decision, the holy Shabe-Qadr or Lailatul Qadr, the night when the first verses of the holy Quran were revealed to Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), will be observed on the night of April 18.

President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages greeting the countrymen and all Muslim Ummah across the world with the advent of the holy month of Ramadan.

President Abdul Hamid in his message said, "The holy month of Ramadan filled with blessings (Barkat) has come again after a year. This holy month brings a unique opportunity of getting closer to Allah and attaining taqwa (fear of Allah)".

Noting that the whole Muslim

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SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING			
RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IFTAR
1	24		6:14
2	25	4:38	6:15
3	26	4:36	6:15

Bogura judge withdrawn after school incident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Additional District and Sessions Judge Begum Rubaiya Yeasmin was withdrawn from Bogura yesterday and attached to the law ministry for forcing the mother of a student in the district to touch her feet and beg forgiveness.

The government took the step in consultation with Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique.

Law and Justice Division Secretary Md Golam Sarwar told The Daily Star that the ministry received an allegation against Rubaiya Yeasmin from its own capacity and media reports and took the decision.

He said Rubaiya Yeasmin now cannot carry out judicial functions or any work at the ministry though she will get her salary and other financial benefits. A notification has already been issued to this effect.

Supreme Court Registrar General Md Golam Rabbani told this correspondent that Rubaiya Yeasmin has been withdrawn from Bogura following an instruction from the chief justice.

The law ministry had sent a letter to the Supreme Court for a decision from the chief justice after receiving the allegation against the judge, he added.

Rubaiya Yeasmin's daughter is an eighth grader of Bogura Government Girls' High School.

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Oldest known Hebrew Bible displayed in Israel



AFP, Tel Aviv

The oldest known near-complete Hebrew Bible was presented to the press on Wednesday in Tel Aviv, where it will be displayed for a week before going under the hammer in New York.

The Codex Sassoon is one of only two codices, or manuscripts, containing all 24 books of the Hebrew Bible -- the Christian Old Testament -- to have survived into the modern era and is estimated to be 1,100 years old.

Sharon Mintz, a specialist in Jewish texts at Sotheby's, the auction house selling the codex in May, said carbon dating and other forms of analysis showed the Codex Sassoon "was written around the year 900, either in the land of Israel or Syria".

A deed shows the book was sold in 1000 AD, and the codex was then held in a synagogue in what is now northeastern Syria until around 1400, she said.

"The manuscript then disappears for about 500 years, and re-emerges in 1929 when it was offered for sale to David Solomon Sassoon, one of the greatest collectors of Hebrew manuscripts."

BHANGA-PAYRA PORT RAIL LINE Chinese firm keen to invest, build it

Sends proposal to railways ministry; its team to meet minister next week

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A state-run Chinese company has proposed investing and constructing the Bhangra-Payra Port rail line on a public-private partnership model.

Power Construction Corporation of China, also known as Powerchina, expressed its interest in signing a memorandum of understanding immediately so that it can start the preparatory work for the over 214km line which may cost more than Tk 50,000 crore.

Gong Youchen, director (transportation, housing and urban development division) of Powerchina Bangladesh, wrote to Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan early this month in this regard, said sources.

The railways ministry on Wednesday sought opinion from Bangladesh Railway. A Powerchina delegation is expected to hold a meeting with the minister next week, they added.

Confirming the development, BR Director General Quamrul Ahsan told The Daily Star yesterday that they were preparing their opinion.

Over the last two-three years, several state-run Chinese companies proposed either the railways ministry or the BR about investing in over a dozen projects, including high-speed rail between Dhaka and Chattogram.

But those proposals are yet to make any visible progress and a top BR official termed those "futile attempts".

The new Chinese proposal comes at a time when the BR is implementing its biggest ever project, Padma Bridge Rail Link, at a cost of Tk 39,246 crore under a Bangladesh-China government-to-

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THE CROWNED 'KING OF BIRDS' ... A Eurasian Hoopoe, also known as Hudhud, rummaging the ground for some grubs and insects to eat in Gangarampur of Khulna's Batiaghata upazila. This exotic looking bird is native to Europe, Asia and much of Africa, and winters in the northern part of its range. Known for its bright colours and distinctive head crown, the hoopoe generally has prerequisites when choosing its habitat – one is the need for vertical surfaces with cavities to nest in such as trees, cliffs, and even walls, and the second is the need for lightly vegetated grounds for them to forage. While many may think the hoopoe is just another attractive bird, it actually has historical significance in Islam. The word "Hudhud" is said to appear twice in the Holy Quran and is mentioned as the messenger and envoy of Hazrat Sulaiman (AS) in Surah Al-Naml. Known as an intelligent bird, it was also referred to in "The Conference of the Birds", a Persian poem by Attar of Nishapur, as the "king of birds", perhaps owing to its gorgeous crest.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Rahul gets 2 yrs in jail for Modi remark

AGENCIES

A lower court in India yesterday sentenced opposition leader Rahul Gandhi to two years in jail on charges of defamation for a 2019 speech in which he referred to thieves as having the surname Modi.

Gandhi will appeal against the order in a higher court, but any jailing for him or his disqualification from parliament would be a blow to his Congress party ahead of the 2024 general election, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party is widely expected to win.

The judgment was passed by a magistrate's court in the city of Surat, located in Modi's home state of Gujarat. The case was brought by a Gujarat lawmaker from Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Gandhi, the 52-year-old scion of the Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty, was present at the Surat court,

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