



"I'm stunned by this action and by its rapidity... This is politics with the gloves off and it bodes ill for our democracy."

Sr Congress MP Shashi Tharoor slams Rahul Gandhi's disqualification as MP



WR1
Genocide 1971:
Kushtia's tale of
unimaginable
brutality



P10
Booters
take on
Seychelles
today



P7
Sadia aims
for the
stars



P6
King Charles's
state visit to
France postponed
after protests

SHANKHARI BAZAR CARNAGE '71

DEATH KNOCKED

on their doors at sundown



NANDA DULAL



GAUR SUR



SADANANDA NAG

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Shankhari Bazar is a neighbourhood in the old part of Dhaka, largely inhabited by the Hindus.

The area is named after the Shankhari community whose ancestral profession is to produce hand-crafted conch shell bangles known as shankha, and various other types of jewellery mostly worn by Hindu women and used for decorating the statues of their deities.

On the night of March 25, 1971, the Pakistan army launched Operation Searchlight and attacked areas deemed as the centres of the Bangalee nationalist movement.

The Hindu-dominated

neighbourhoods of Old Dhaka were particularly targeted by the occupation force as they were considered pro-Awami League bastions.

Nanda Dulal Brahmachari, locally known as Dulal Sadhu, was then 19. He is one of the survivors of the massacre that befell Shankhari Bazar.

"In the election of 1970, we the inhabitants of Shankhari Bazar unanimously voted for the Awami League," recalled Dulal.

"It was one of the major reasons why Syed Khwaja Khairuddin of Dhaka's Nawab family got defeated in the election. So, he branded all of us as anti-Pakistan and invited the army to take retaliatory measures against us."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

PM, PRESIDENT ON GENOCIDE DAY - PAGE 2



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN
The Radhagobinda temple lies in ruins and abandoned in Shankhari Bazar of Old Dhaka. It was demolished by the Pakistan army on March 26, 1971.



Most streets in the capital become almost empty ahead of iftar, but Chawkbazar gets really busy with people gathering there for the tantalising mix of dishes that are a tradition of Old Dhaka. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

TALKS ON NAT'L POLLS BNP doubts EC's intention Analysts say the EC move aimed at improving image

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

BNP leaders think there is an ulterior motive behind the Election Commission's sudden invitation to the party for talks about the next general election.

Senior party leaders said that the invite could be an attempt to mislead the BNP's movement for an election-time government while political experts said that the commission wants to make it seem like it genuinely wants to hold a free and fair election.

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal in a demi-official letter invited BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir on Thursday night to discuss the coming national election.

Soon after receiving the letter, Fakhru said talks with the EC will be meaningless as the commission does not have the authority to discuss the election-time government that BNP has been demanding.

"The BNP is demonstrating to a caretaker government. The issue of an election-time government is very much political. The Election commission has nothing to do with the election-time government. That's why, the BNP has a reason not to join the talk," Prof Al Masud Hasanuzzaman of government and politics at Jahangirnagar University, told The Daily Star.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Improve safety at 2,000 level crossings

Suggests BR-LGED survey to prevent accidents

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

With more than two-thirds of the 3,111 level crossings in the country considered unsafe, a government survey has recommended improving safety features of around 2,000 rail crossings.

It also recommended building overpasses or underpasses at 47 level crossings, and introducing an automated system at 194 unmanned crossings so that a warning bell goes off when a train approaches.

Other recommendations include setting up gate barriers, putting in place electricity and telephone lines and other basic facilities at 1,436 more crossings.

The survey, jointly conducted by Bangladesh Railway (BR) and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) last year, also suggested shutting down 62 crossings located close to one another.

They surveyed 2,083 level crossings, of which 1,080 were unauthorised, BR sources said.

It recommended recruiting 5,772 people to ensure safety at level crossings, where many accidents occur.

After receiving the survey results, BR sent it to the railways ministry recently to take the necessary steps.

The development came as accidents at unmanned level crossings continue to claim lives, with around 70 percent of the crossings under the country's 3,093km railway network being either unauthorised or without

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Total number of level crossings
3,111
Authorised
1,886
Unauthorised and unmanned
1,225
Authorised but unmanned
948

ARAV KHAN

Dhaka wants cancellation of his Indian passport

Interpol issues red notice against him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is in talks with India to get fugitive accused Rabiul Islam's Indian passport cancelled, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said yesterday.

Rabiul, better known as Arav Khan, is an accused in a case filed over the murder of a police inspector in July 2018. He is currently living in Dubai.

"To bring him back, his Indian passport has to be cancelled. We have discussed the matter with India and work to that end is going on," the home minister told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, Interpol issued a red notice for Rabiul early yesterday.

He is the 63rd Bangladeshi to be in the international police organisation's wanted list.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Farmers are not getting irrigation water supply as the Katakhal canal has dried up. Locals say they won't face water crisis in the dry season if the canal is re-excavated and freed from encroachers. The photo was taken in Ghatail village of Khulna's Dakope upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

DEFAMATION CONVICTION Rahul Gandhi loses MP status Congress party members stage protests

AGENCIES

India's opposition Congress party suffered a major blow yesterday when parliament disqualified its leader, Rahul Gandhi, a day after

a court convicted him of defamation for comments that many deemed insulting to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Gandhi "stands disqualified from the membership of Lok Sabha from the date of his conviction", the lower house of parliament said in a notice, using its Indian name.

Gandhi, 52, was convicted and sentenced to prison for two years in the western state of Gujarat on Thursday after he was found guilty of defamation in connection with a 2019 speech in which he referred to thieves as having the surname Modi.

He is due to appeal against the verdict in a district court in Gujarat, also Modi's home state.

"I am fighting for the voice of India, I am ready to pay any cost," Gandhi

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1





Build a society free from discrimination, sectarianism

PM urges all on eve of Genocide Day

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon all to build a society based on equality and free from all kinds of discrimination and sectarianism.

She said this in a message yesterday on the eve of Genocide Day-2023.

Bangladesh will observe the day today to commemorate brutalities of the Pakistan army during "Operation Searchlight", launched on the night of March 25, 1971.

"Operation Searchlight" was a last resort of Pakistan to try and suppress the will of the Bangalees who would get an independent country in less than nine months.

During the operation, the Pakistan forces indiscriminately killed the Bangalee members of the East Pakistan Rifles and police, students, teachers and common people.

They also set fire to houses and looted business establishments, leaving a trail of destruction.

The night also witnessed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's proclamation of independence before he was arrested by the Pakistani troops and subsequently flown to West Pakistan.

The day is being observed as Genocide Day officially for the seventh time in the country since the parliament unanimously adopted a resolution on March 11, 2017.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



A BRTC bus was mangled after it hit an electricity pole and a tree in Jhalakathi's Rajapur yesterday morning. Two people died in the crash that took place on Barishal-Patharghata road after the driver lost control of the vehicle.

PHOTO: KM HABIBUR RAHMAN

Russia attacks along Ukraine front

3 killed in strike on shelter in Bakhmut

REUTERS, Near Kreminna

Russian forces attacked northern and southern stretches of the front in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region yesterday, pressing on with their offensive despite assertions from Kyiv that Moscow's assault was flagging near the city of Bakhmut.

Ukrainian military reports described heavy fighting in the northern sector along a stretch of front running from Lyman to Kupiansk, as well as in the south at Avdiivka on the outskirts of the Russian-held city of Donetsk.

Both are parts of the front that have been major Russian targets in a winter offensive campaign to fully capture Ukraine's industrialised Donbas region. The Russian offensive has so far yielded scant gains despite thousands of troops killed on both sides in the bloodiest fighting of the war.

At a Ukrainian artillery position in lush pine forests behind the northern stretch of the front, troops fired 155 mm rounds from a French TRF-1 howitzer towards a highway used as a supply road for the Russian-held stronghold of Kreminna.

For now, Ukrainian forces are still focused on preventing the Russians from advancing along more than 300 km of Donbas front, from Kupiansk in the north to Vuhledar in the south.

In Kostiantynivka, west of Bakhmut, a Russian missile slammed into a refuge offering a warm shelter for civilians, killing at least three women, local officials said.

In the northern Sumy region, an administrative building, a school building, and residential buildings were among those damaged from Russian shelling that killed two civilians, President Volodymyr Zelensky's office said.

US imposes fresh sanctions on Myanmar

Targets jet fuel suppliers

REUTERS, Washington

The United States yesterday announced further sanctions against Myanmar, targeting people and entities tied to Myanmar's military as Washington seeks to increase pressure on the ruling junta following the 2021 coup.

The US Treasury Department in a statement said it imposed sanctions on two people and six entities connected to Myanmar's military that Washington accused of enabling its continuing atrocities, including through the import, storage and distribution of jet fuel to the military.

Since a junta seized power in February 2021, Myanmar has been plunged into chaos, with a resistance movement fighting the military on multiple fronts following a bloody crackdown on opponents.

Ex-AL leader shot dead in Khulna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Unidentified miscreants shot dead a former Awami League leader in Khulna city yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Sheikh Ansar Ali, former cultural secretary of the district's Digholia upazila unit AL.

The miscreants shot him in front of the Linda Clinic in Shironani area around 2:00pm, said Md Kamal Hossain Khan, officer-in-charge of Khanjahan Ali Police Station.

Quoting locals, OC Kamal said Ansar Ali was returning home after Juma prayers. When he reached Linda Clinic around 2:00pm, some miscreants stopped and shot him, leaving him dead on the spot.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Khulna Medical College Hospital for autopsy, the OC added.

Police officer stabbed during raid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A police officer was stabbed allegedly by a drug trader during an anti-narcotics drive in Dhaka yesterday.

Shahinur Rahman, 45, sub-inspector of Turag Police Station, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said police.

Around 7:00pm, a police team, led by Shahinur, conducted a raid at a building in Fulbaria area, Moudut Hawlader, officer-in-charge of the police station.

One drug trader named Abdur Rouf stabbed the policeman in his chest. He was rushed to a local hospital and later referred to DMCH, said the OC.

Police are conducting drives to arrest Rouf and other drug traders, he further said.

2 teens arrested over murder of SSC candidates

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police early yesterday arrested two teenagers in a case filed over the murder of two schoolboys in Patuakhali's Baulal upazila.

Both accused, aged around 14 years, were arrested in a drive led by Saheed Ahmed, additional superintendent of police (Baulal Circle).

Law enforcers are trying to arrest the other accused, Nargis Begum, mother of Nafis, one of the victims, filed a murder case with Baulal Police Station accusing nine teenagers, including three unnamed ones.

On Wednesday, Maruf, Nafis and Siam -- all 15 years old and students of class 10 -- were on their way home around 4:30pm after a farewell ceremony of Indrakul Secondary School's SSC candidates.

Five ninth-grade students of the same school attacked them and, at one stage, stabbed them and fled.

KSA to re-establish ties with Syria

Say sources; both countries agree to reopen their embassies

REUTERS, Beirut/Riyadh

Syria and Saudi Arabia have agreed to reopen their embassies after cutting diplomatic ties more than a decade ago, three sources with knowledge of the matter said, a step that would mark a leap forward in Damascus's return to the Arab fold.

Contacts between Riyadh and Damascus had gathered momentum following a landmark agreement to re-establish ties between Saudi Arabia and Iran, a key ally of President Bashar al-Assad, a regional source

aligned with Damascus said.

The re-establishment of ties between Riyadh and Damascus would mark the most significant development yet in moves by Arab states to normalize ties with Assad, who was shunned by many Western and Arab states after Syria's civil war began in 2011.

The two governments were "preparing to reopen embassies after Eid al-Fitr", a Muslim holiday in the second half of April, a second regional source aligned with Damascus told Reuters.

Improve safety at 2,000 level crossings

FROM PAGE 1

dedicated manpower.

According to BR data from August, 2022, there are 3,111 level crossings in the country.

Of those, 1,886 are authorised, but 948 are unmanned.

A total of 1,225 level crossings are both unauthorised and unmanned. With the unmanned authorised crossings, there are 2,173 level crossings without dedicated manpower in the country.

Different government agencies have been involved in constructing unauthorised level crossings, with LGED having constructed 510, the highest, show BR documents.

According to the Road Safety Foundation, at least 37 people were killed in 36 rail-related accidents in the first two months of this year.

Last year, at least 326 people were killed and 113 were injured in 354

such accidents, the foundation said, adding that most of them had taken places at level crossings.

Safety issues at level crossings took centrestage after 11 people died as a train hit a microbus at a level crossing in Chattogram's Mirsharai upazila on July 29 last year. Two more succumbed to their injuries later.

After the incident, the railways ministry held an inter-ministerial meeting and asked both the BR and LGED to complete the survey as soon as possible.

The survey was completed last year but the report was given to BR headquarters last month, BR sources said.

Another recommendation made in the survey was to upgrade classes of 108 level crossings.

There are several grades of level crossings -- Special, A, B, C and D -- based on train movement frequency

The decision was the result of talks in Saudi Arabia with a senior Syrian intelligence official, according to one of the regional sources and a diplomat in the Gulf.

The Saudi government's communication office, the kingdom's foreign ministry and the Syrian government did not respond to requests for comment.

Saudi state television later confirmed that talks were ongoing with the Syrian foreign ministry to resume consular services, citing a Saudi foreign ministry official.

and locations; and staffers are deployed on the basis of the grade.

Contacted, BR Director General Quamrul Ahsan said they have sent the survey result to the railways ministry, which will send it to the LGED ministry.

As per the previous decision, LGED will take up projects to ensure safety at level crossings with the help of BR in terms of implementation.

He said BR will have to talk to the Roads and Highways Department about constructing the overpasses and underpasses at level crossings, because they will have to be made on roads built by RHD.

Replying to a question, Ahsan on March 16 told The Daily Star, "We have taken initiatives to establish automated level crossings. We are going to close some level crossings on insignificant roads."

"He will have to vacate his official residence but every MP gets 30 days to relocate," said one Congress lawmaker, adding that legal experts in the party were preparing to file an appeal in a higher court.

Several Congress lawmakers and leaders of regional opposition parties said Gandhi was being punished for speaking the truth and safeguarding democracy.

Shashi Tharoor, an MP from Gandhi's party, expressed his shock on Twitter, saying: "I'm stunned by this action and by its rapidity, within 24 hours of the court verdict and while an appeal was known to be in process. This is politics with the gloves off and it bodes ill for our democracy."

"We will fight against the injustice legally and politically," said Jairam Ramesh, a Congress lawmaker.

Death knocked on their doors at sundown

FROM PAGE 1

In the early hours of March 26, the Pakistan army started the systematic destruction of the neighbourhood. The soldiers started to fire arbitrarily at the doors and windows of the houses on both sides of the lane where Dulal Sadhu's family lived.

"We guessed what might happen to us, so we took shelter deep inside our two-storey home. However, one of the stray bullets hit our servant Harihar, a 10-year-old boy, who died instantly," he said.

The rest of the residents of the house, including Dulal, managed to escape later.

The soldiers also threw grenades and firebombs through the windows inside several houses, killing the inhabitants and setting fire to a large part of the locality, he recounted.

"Through the bullet holes, I tried to observe whether soldiers were going to set fire to our house. Then I saw that a team of five soldiers took position in front of a house just opposite ours. It was owned by the Saha family."

One of the soldiers smashed the door of that house by spraying it with machine gun shots and two other soldiers threw bombs inside. With massive explosions, the ground floor collapsed instantly and the house was ignited.

"The soldiers also fired at the burning wreck. I heard heart-wrenching screams and shrieks with the rattling of machine guns. All of the inhabitants of that house were killed by gunshots or were burnt alive," said Dulal Sadhu, narrating the horror.

Just a few metres away from Saha's house was the residence of renowned physician Nishikumar Nag. His son Sadananda Nag, who was in his early 20s then, shared his traumatic experience of how he witnessed his father's murder.

"We were horrified when soldiers started banging on our door. They were shouting and calling my father," said Sadananda.

"My father was a renowned physician and he was fluent in Urdu and English. He opened the door. As he tried to explain to the soldiers something in Urdu, one of the soldiers punched him and kicked him, and he fell to the floor.

"Pakistani soldiers surrounded the entire Shankhari Bazar neighbourhood in the evening before starting the raid. We were getting deafening sounds of explosions and gunfire from the nearby areas. Rattling sounds of burning wrecks

and screams of the victims pierced through our ears. We were trembling and awaiting our fate like a mouse caught in the trap."

Sadananda was watching it through a window blind and trying to calm his mother and siblings. The soldiers searched for him and other family members but could not find them as they were hiding in a secret storeroom.

Failing to catch them, the soldiers vandalised the entire house. They tortured Dr Nag to make him reveal the hiding place of his family members. He did not utter a word.

"Suddenly two of the soldiers held my father and made him stand up and another soldier charged a bayonet right into his abdomen. He charged the bayonet again into the chest of my father. Seeing the horror, we left our house through the backdoor."

Another group of soldiers attacked the temples of the neighbourhood and completely demolished them. Many of the priests had already fled. However, the army identified those who could not flee by their shaved head, clothing and pigtail.

Around 20 of them were crammed into a room and a soldier fired his machine gun at the crowd, finishing off all of them. Another soldier shot from his pistol at those who seemed still alive.

This terrifying scene was witnessed by Gaur Sur, whose 30 family members were killed in the massacre.

He said, "The Sur family was one of the wealthiest and most influential families in the neighbourhood. While the soldiers were destroying the temple, one of the officers of the Pakistan army told my uncle Chandan Sur and his brothers and sons to come down [from the first floor of the house] and talk to their senior officer.

"The officer assured us that they would not harm us at all and they only wanted to talk to my uncle. However, whenever Chandan and his brothers went down, they were killed instantly by machine gun fire. Then my brothers and cousins were also picked up from our home, lined up on the street and gunned down. Only a few lucky ones like me saved lives by hiding in the sewerage line.

"Pakistani soldiers also kidnapped many women from the neighbourhood, who could never be found."

Dulal Sadhu, Sadananda Nag and Gaur Sur are three of the last survivors of the carnage, still alive and still living in the area. Most of the witnesses of the horrific incident that

took place 53 years ago either passed away or left the country.

Sadananda, who now runs a shankha store in the area, never could get over the trauma.

"I could never forgive myself for not doing anything to save my father. I had to endure that nightmare just to save my mother and my younger siblings. Still, in my sleep, I can hear my father's scream and yelling of Pakistani soldiers," he said.

The carnage continued till March 28 and by that time, the entire Shankhari Bazar was abandoned. At least 212 Hindus were confirmed dead and many more went missing and they could never be found.

Gaur Sur said, "When we fled to India, many people who sheltered us told us not to return to Bangladesh. They said we would not be able to live harmoniously with the Muslims.

"However, we did not pay heed to them. We have been living here since the Mughal period. This is my ancestral land. I want to live here till my last breath."

Large liquor consignment seized at Ctg port

UNB, Ctg

The customs department seized a large consignment of foreign liquor from the Chittagong port on Thursday as the goods were imported under a false declaration.

Chattogram Customs House seized the container loaded with 16,840 litres of foreign liquor during a special drive, said Audit Investigation and Research (AIR) Unit Revenue Officer Nizam Uddin.

As the shipments contained foreign liquor with high duties, importer Bismillah Corporation tried to evade the government's revenue of Tk 149 million, he added.

"We had information that the 40ft container was loaded with foreign liquor," he added.

Dhaka wants

FROM PAGE 1

After he was accused in the murder case, Rabul fled to India and managed an Indian passport under the name Arav Khan. With that passport, he went to Dubai where he started jewellery business.

His criminal record came under the spotlight after he invited cricketer Shakib Al Hasan and several other celebrities to open his jewellery store in Dubai.

PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS

BNP goes for fresh agitation across country

STAR REPORT

BNP yesterday announced a fresh country-wide programme to protest the price hikes of daily essentials and utilities.

The programme will also press home the party's 10-point demand, including an election under a non-partisan interim government.

Party's secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir announced the programme yesterday in an iftar event at the capital's Ladies Club.

Under the programme, the party will observe sit-ins in all cities and district headquarters on April 1 from 2:00pm to 4:00pm and in all upazilas and thanas on April 8 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm.

The party will distribute leaflets and observe sit-ins from April 9 to April 13 in all unions. This programme will be observed division-wise, starting in Rangpur on April 9, Rajshahi and Sylhet on April 10, Khulna and Cumilla on April 11, Dhaka and Barishal on April 12, and Mymensingh and Faridpur on April 13.

From March 28 to April 20, BNP leaders and workers will participate in various mass-campaign programmes including meeting with people of different classes and professions, and providing assistance to the poor and helpless at all unit levels across the country.

The BNP leader, claiming the party was forced to announce programmes during Ramadan, hoped that people would participate and wage a tougher movement against the government.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Devotees perform the first Jumah prayers of the holy month of Ramadan at the premises of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday.

Fakhru has no freedom in BNP's politics

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir has no freedom of expression in BNP's internal politics.

"We understand the pain of Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir... Without any question, Fakhru and others [BNP leaders] are compelled to accept the messages coming from faraway London," he said in a statement.

He said BNP never believes in the people's freedom of speech and expression, as the party had been born by capturing the state power keeping "commoners at gun point".

The government has expanded the freedom of expression by giving registration to over 50 private television channels, FM and community radios and more than 100 newspapers, said Quader.

Journalist Zulkarnain's brother beaten up, case filed

US embassy wants thorough probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The brother of UK-based Bangladeshi journalist Zulkarnain Saer Khan Sami, who worked with Al Jazeera's Investigative Unit (I-Unit), was assaulted by a group in the capital's Mirpur area last week.

The victim Mahinur Ahmed Khan, 37, filed a case against the four unidentified men with Mirpur Police Station yesterday, Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station, told The Daily Star.

In the case statement, Mahinur, an entrepreneur, said four unknown men suddenly surrounded him at 8:00pm on March 17 when he went out for groceries beside his house in West Shewrapara area and started beating him with iron rods and sticks.

He was treated at a city hospital.

A family member of Mahinur said he had no enmity with anyone. They also believe that Mahinur was attacked because of his brother's reports against the government.

Meanwhile in a statement yesterday, the acting US embassy spokesperson Bryan Schiller said the embassy is aware that Mahinur Ahmed was attacked.

"We hope the case is thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators are brought to justice," he said.

Mahinur's brother Zulkarnain was one of the journalists who worked with Al Jazeera's Investigative Unit (I-Unit) on "All the Prime Minister's Men".

Besides, he also worked with the Haaretz, an Israeli newspaper and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), a global network of investigative journalists.

PRAYER TIMING MARCH 25

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:45	12:45	4:45	6:20	7:45
JAMAAT 5:20	1:15	5:00	6:25	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IF TAR TIMING

RAMADAN	MARCH	SEHRI	IF TAR
2	25		6:15
3	26	4:36	6:15
4	27	4:35	6:16

ANTI-LIBERATION ORGANISATIONS

Not even one tried till this day

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Not a single anti-liberation organisation has been brought to book for crimes against humanity and war crimes during the Liberation War, as the relevant law is yet to be amended.

There's no visible move from the government to amend the law for trying organisations that collaborated with the Pakistani occupation forces to commit one of the deadliest genocides in the last century.

However, a total of 135 individuals have been sentenced to death or imprisonment by the two International Crimes Tribunals (ICTs) in last 13 years, after the formation of ICT-1. The other one, ICT-2, has been dissolved.

Besides, Appellate Division of the Supreme Court hasn't been holding hearings of war-crime related appeals for more than three years due to different reasons, including Covid-19 and shortage of judges. Around 28 such appeals are now pending.

The last such appeal hearing took place at the Appellate Division on December 3, 2019. Convicted war criminal Syed Mohammad Qaisar filed it, challenging the death penalty handed to him by a war-crime

tribunal in 2014.

Two separate ICTs have so far delivered 51 verdicts, in which 96 war criminals have been sentenced to death, 26 to imprisonment till death, five to life imprisonment, and eight to imprisonment for different terms. Six of them have been executed, after the Appellate Division affirmed their death penalty, ICT sources said.

The Awami League government brought an amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973 in February 2013, incorporating

Delivering its verdict in the case against former Jamaat ameer Ghulam Azam on July 15, 2013, ICT-1 observed, "...Jamaat-e-Islami, as a political party under the leadership of accused Prof Ghulam Azam, intentionally functioned as a criminal organisation, especially during the War of Liberation of Bangladesh in 1971."

Eminent writer and war-crime researcher Shahriar Kabir said, "It's quite satisfactory that the individuals who were the big war criminals have been tried. At the same time, it's quite disappointing

increased to gear up the trials of war-crime cases and appeals. Only one ICT is now dealing with war-crime cases," he added. The demand for Jamaat's trial as an organisation got momentum after the Shahbagh movement in February 2013, demanding the highest punishment be handed down to war criminals and a ban on Jamaat and Shibir.

The law minister couldn't be reached for his comments on this issue as he is now abroad.

Contacted, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin, said that ICT



It's quite satisfactory that the individuals who were the big war criminals have been tried. At the same time, it's quite disappointing that no initiative has been taken to try the organisations -- including the then Pakistan army high command, Jamaat-e-Islami, Razakar, Al Badr, and Al Shams -- who were directly involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes in 1971.

Shahriar Kabir, Writer and war-crime researcher

provisions for trying individuals only. The government has been saying necessary amendments would be made to facilitate the trial of anti-liberation organisations.

The law ministry prepared a draft to amend the law in 2014, but over the last nine years, no visible steps have been taken to pass the amendment, leaving the demand for trial unfulfilled.

Law Minister Anisul Huq on many occasions said the government was working to amend the law.

that no initiative has been taken to try the organisations -- including the then Pakistan army high command, Jamaat-e-Islami, Razakar, Al Badr, and Al Shams -- who were directly involved in crimes against humanity and war crimes in 1971."

Shahriar said since 2014, the law minister has been saying that the government would amend the International Crimes Tribunal Act, but no initiative has been taken.

"The number of tribunal and apex court benches must be

condemned some political organisations for their crimes against humanity and war crimes in 1971. But they cannot be punished, because the required provision needs to be added to do so. The government will take a decision in this regard.

Expressing satisfaction at the progress of trying war crimes so far, the attorney general said the Appellate Division will soon start hearing of war-crime related appeals as the required number of benches are present now.

Corporates hiking prices amid lax monitoring

Claims Bangladesh Poultry Association

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Corporates have bagged Tk 936 crore in profits in the last 52 days by raising poultry prices amid lax government monitoring, alleged Bangladesh Poultry Association (BPA).

The retail price of broiler chicken was Tk 270 per kilo on Thursday, which was Tk 170 on February 1, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

BPA, in a press release issued on Thursday, said the total demand for broiler chicken in Bangladesh is 3,500 tonnes.

"The wholesale price of broiler chicken was Tk 230. The corporates have made a profit of at least Tk 60 per kilo," read the release.

The press release, signed by BPA President Sumoon Howlader, said the corporates supply

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Rajuk recovers 80 plot files from employees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk), during an internal drive, recovered 80 files related to the plots of a Purbachal project. The files were supposed to be in the record section, but instead, were found in the lockers of Rajuk employees.

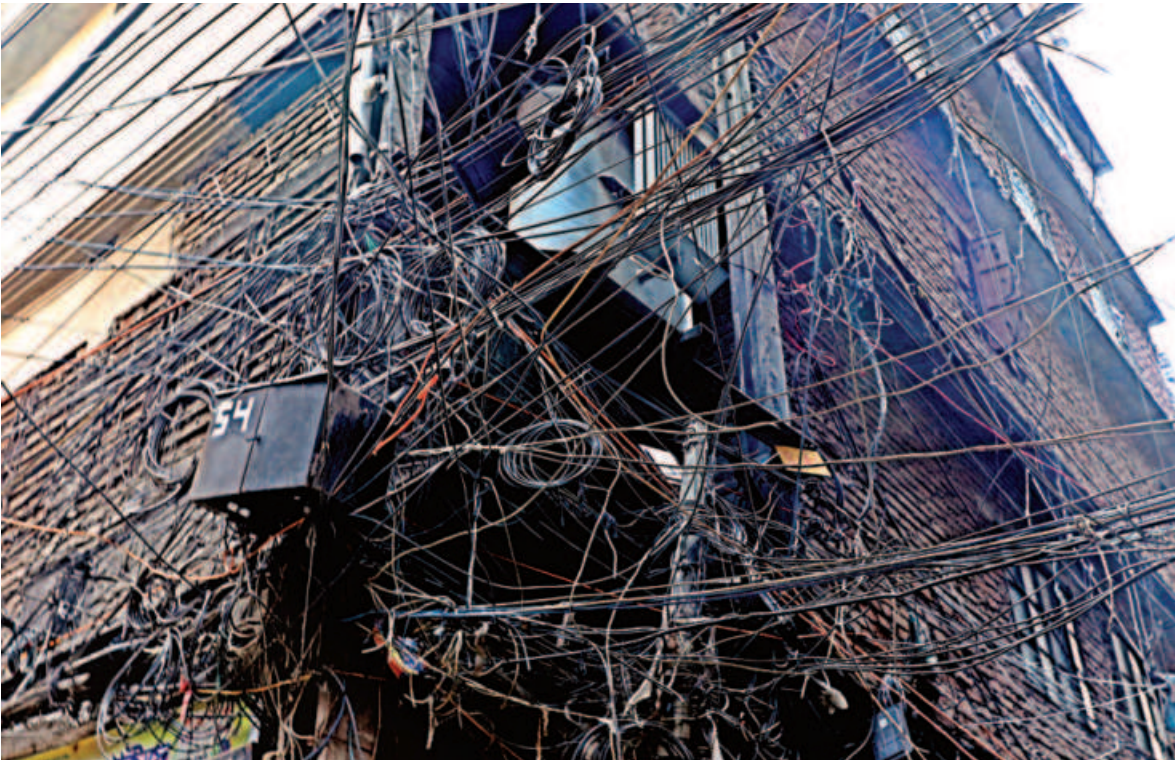
The files were recovered amid allegations against Rajuk employees of hiding files related to building designs and harassing the building and plot owners.

Mohammad Nurul Islam, Rajuk member (estate and land), led the drive and found the files inside the lockers.

He told The Daily Star that he primarily recovered 80 files related to the Purbachal plots. The employees have pledged to return 200 more such files within the next three working days.

"I had them open their lockers and found the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Electric wires, all tangled up, hang from a pole on Siddique Bazar road. At any point, a serious accident may occur if there is a short circuit or transformer blast, potentially injuring pedestrians who pass by. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Breaking fast with Chawkbazar delicacies

Dhaka dwellers flock to the popular iftar market on first Ramadan

HELEMUL ALAM

Rabin Bhuiyan, a 27-year-old resident of Narayanganj, arrived at the Chawkbazar iftar market around 11:00am to purchase traditional iftar items. However, the shops of the makeshift market were not set up at that time.

He performed juma prayers at the ancient Chawkbazar Shahi Jame Masjid next to the bazaar with his younger brother Miraz Hossain before making their purchases.

"I have come early as I did not want to miss out on the famous Boro Baper Polay Khay. It is now a tradition of our family to purchase iftar items from Chawkbazar on the first day of Ramadan," said Bhuiyan.

He said they have purchased half kilos of Boro Baper Polay Khay and two pieces of chicken roasts before catching the bus to Narayanganj.

In line with the 400-year-long tradition of Dhaka, over 100 makeshift shops were set up soon after Zohr prayers at the iftar market in Old Dhaka's Chawkbazar with tantalising iftar dishes on the first day of Ramadan.

Like every year, the traditional iftar market was abuzz with thousands of gourmands who came to buy special dishes which are available only here.

"It is a long time desire of mine to come to the market to purchase these traditional iftar items," said Tasnim

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Corporates hiking

FROM PAGE 3
about 2,000 tonnes of chicken every day and have made an extra profit of Tk 12 crore.

Between January 31 and March 23, the companies made a profit of Tk 624 crore, it claimed.

Meanwhile, they made a profit of Tk 312 crore from

selling one-day-old chicks. According to the association, the companies hatch 20 lakh chicks every day and its production cost is between Tk 28 and Tk 30 per chick.

“They sold each chick at Tk 80 to Tk 85. They made extra profit of Tk 30 from each one-day-old chicks,”

said the release.

According to BPA, the corporates are side-lining marginal farmers and taking over the total poultry sector. The association also blamed government negligence for the increasing price and demanded punishment of officials concerned.

Rajuk recovers

FROM PAGE 3
files kept hidden there. These employees used to hide the files and harass the building or plot owners,” said Nurul.

When asked if any action will be taken against the responsible employees, he said, “They have admitted to hiding the files and asked for forgiveness. I have also warned them not to repeat such actions in the future.”

During a similar drive in October 2019, led by then Rajuk chairman Sultan Ahmed, 70 files

were recovered from Rajuk employees. A case was filed with Anti-Corruption Commission against nine Rajuk employees involved with this offence.

A Purbachal plot owner, who recently went to Rajuk for the plot’s registration, told The Daily Star that Rajuk officials could not find his files.

“However, the responsible official brought my files after being bribed. This is what happens with most plot owners,” said the owner, wishing anonymity.

BNP goes for

FROM PAGE 3

“Today, the country and its people are facing severe crises. We have to be united and wage a movement to oust the government and to establish a people’s government through a free and fair election under a caretaker-government system.”

Apart from Fakhrul, BNP standing committee members Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain, Mirza Abbas, Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan, Nazrul Islam Khan, and Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury joined the iftar party.

Breaking fast

FROM PAGE 3

Rahman, a medical student who came to Chawkbazar along with her father Md Jalal Uddin, a resident of Dhaka cantonment.

She made a list of the market’s traditional items and bought Suti kebab, Doi-bora, and quail roast up until 2:30pm. She was waiting in a queue to buy Shahi Jilapi, Boro Baper Polay Khay and Halim.

“We do not cook any iftar item at home and purchase all of them from here as we are the Chawkbazar customers for generations,” said Mohammad Wasi, a Lalbagh resident.

“This market is 400 years old. If we do not get our iftar items from here, we don’t find any satisfaction,” said Wasi.

“The signature dish in the market is ‘Boro Baper Polay Khay,’ which is a mixture of chickpeas, finely chopped beef, chicken, potato, liver, brain, egg, hot spices, and ghee. The item

is being sold at Tk 800 per kilo, up by Tk 200 than last year,” said Md Hossain, a seller.

Apart from “Boro Baper Polay Khay,” other well-known dishes include roasted pigeon, quail, duck, chicken, mutton, keema paratha, Shahi paratha, borhani, doi bora, shami kebab, suti kebab, jaali kebab, Irani kebab, tikka kebab, mutton legs and Shahi Jilapi.

Malai cups, firmi, tana parathas, plain parathas, and faluda are also found in the market, besides different seasonal fruits.

Md Hossain, who has been in the business for the last 35 years, claimed that his family has been making “Boro Baper Polay Khay” since the British period.

“However, there are some other shops in the market who also claim to be the originators of the item. The prices of all the dishes are a bit higher this year,” he said.

বাণিজ্যিক জমি বিক্রয়

মালিবাগ ১০০ ফুট ডিআইটি রোডের সাথে ৫ (পাঁচ) কাঠা কর্পার বাণিজ্যিক জমি বিক্রয়।
০৯৬৬৬৭৬৪৪০০

বানিজ্যিক ফ্লোর বিক্রয় হবে

উত্তরা ৬ নং সেক্টর ঢাকা-এয়ারপোর্ট হাইওয়ের সাথে এবং ডানে ১০০ ফুট রাস্তা কর্পার প্লটের ৪র্থ ও ৫ম তলায় ৬০০০ স্কয়ার ফিট, ২টি কার্ব পার্কিংসহ বানিজ্যিক ফ্লোর বিক্রয় হবে। প্রকৃত ক্রেতা ও মালিক যোগাযোগ করুন: ০১৭২৯-৩৫২৪৮৭

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT



Servicing Change Managers

E-Zone HRM Limited is a management consulting group providing one-stop HR solutions. E-Zone HRM Limited has a formal agreement with one of the United Nations agency to provide outsourcing services under a third party contract.

E-Zone HRM Limited is now seeking applications for a UN Organization from Bangladeshis Nationals for the following vacancies under third party outsourcing contract modality. For detailed Job Description, please visit the following website link to apply for the post.

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Duty Station: Dhaka, Bangladesh. Field visits in 4 city corporations (DNCC, DSCC, Gazipur City Corporation and Narayanganj City Corporation), **Contract Duration:** 4 Months. **Number of Vacancies:** 01 (One), **Contract Type:** Contract with E-Zone.

Last Date of Application: 30 March, 2023

<https://hotjobs.bdjobs.com/jobs/ezone/un155.html>



Partners in Population and Development (PPD)

An Inter-Governmental Organization Promoting South-South Cooperation

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Partners in Population and Development (PPD) is an International Intergovernmental Alliance of 27 developing countries headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh. PPD has Permanent Observer Status at the United Nations and Diplomatic Status in Bangladesh. PPD is seeking experienced individuals in the related fields for the following vacancies:

1. Program Associate (Capacity Building & Strategic Partnership)
2. Program Associate (Advocacy, Communication & Knowledge Management)
3. Consultant for South-South Cooperation Assistant Fund (SSCAF) Project.

Required qualification and experience for the above-mentioned post are available at the following website of PPD: **www.partners-popdev.org**

Interested candidates matching the requirements are requested to submit their applications along with detailed CVs by **05 April 2023**, addressed to:

The Officer-in- Charge
Partners in Population and Development (PPD)
Plot- 17 B & C, Block- F, Agargaon Administrative Zone,
Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka- 1207, Email: **jobs@ppdsec.org**

PPD is an equal opportunity employer. Female candidates are encouraged to apply.

Only the short-listed candidates will be contacted for interview.



World Health Organization

Bangladesh

VACANCY NOTICE

World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following position under following contractual modality:

- International consultant - Information Management / External consultant

For further details on submission of applications including detailed post description please visit our websites:

<https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/employment>
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Qualified **female candidates** are highly encouraged to apply.

 **WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or other tobacco users.**


LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION (STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 110 OF 2023
IN THE MATTER OF:
An application under Section 43 of the Companies Act, 1994.
AND
IN THE MATTER OF:
Nasiruddin Akhter Rashid.Petitioners
-VERSUS-
United Enterprise Co. Ltd. and others.Respondents

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under Section 43 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed by the above-named petitioner before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh praying, amongst others, for rectification of share register of the United Enterprise Co. Ltd. That upon hearing the afore-stated application, the Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, presided over by His Lordship Mr. Justice Khazir Ahmed Choudhury by the Order dated 16.03.2023 has been pleased to admit the above application.

Any person interested in the said application may appear before the Hon'ble Court either personally or through his duly authorized Advocate. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of required cost.

(Yousuf Khan Rajib) Barrister-at-Law, Advocate,
Supreme Court of Bangladesh, For the Petitioners
Room No. 3029 & 3032 (Annex), Supreme Court Bar Association Building,
Ramna, Dhaka , Mobile: 01713201187



মাইক্রোক্রিডিট রেগুলেটরী অথরিটি

গুলফেশী গ্রান্ডা (৭ম তলা)
৮, শহীদ সাংবাদিক সেলিনা পারভীন সড়ক
বড় মগবাজার, রমনা, ঢাকা-১২১৭

স্মারক নং-এও.০৪.০০০০.০০১.১১.০০৮.২২২-৮২০

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

মাইক্রোক্রিডিট রেগুলেটরী অথরিটি (এমআরএ)-এর রাজস্ব খাতভুক্ত নিয়োগ শূন্য পদসমূহে অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে জনন নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে পদের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন কংগ্রেসনের স্বাক্ষরী নাগরিকপদের নিকট হতে অনলাইনে <http://mra.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে মাধ্যমে সরাসরি আবেদন করা যাবে:

ক্র.ম.	পদের নাম ও বেতনভেদ (ছাত্তীয় বেতনভেদ-২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)	পদের সংখ্যা	সর্বোচ্চ বয়সসীমা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা	যে সকল জেলার বাসিন্দা/নাগরিকপদ আবেদন করতে পারবেন না
২	কম্পিউটার অপারেটর সুপারভাইজার প্রো-৬ (৩০৪০০- ৬০১০০/-)	১(একটি)	৩৫ বৎসর	(১) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড ইলেকট্রনিক্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/ইনফরমেশন এন্ড কমিউনিকেশন টেকনোলজি সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে অনূদিত দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিলিপিএসহ যাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; (২) কোনো সরকারি/খাসরপালিস/আধ্যাতিক/পালিস/সংবিধিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে সিনিয়র কম্পিউটার অপারেটর/সহকারী প্রোগ্রামার/সহকারী রক্ষাব্যবস্থাপক প্রকৌশলী হিসেবে অনূদিত ৪ (চার) বৎসরের চাকুরি; (৩) অর্ধট্রিট কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত নিয়োগ পদ্ধতি অনুসরণপূর্বক গৃহীত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।	প্রযোজ্য নয়।
২	সহকারী পরিচালক প্রো-৬ (২২০০০- ৫০০০০/-)	৫(পাঁচটি)	৩০ বৎসর; তবে বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যা ও পারিবারিক প্রতিবন্ধীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ৩২ বছর।	(১) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে অনূদিত প্রথম শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিলিপিএসহ যাতকের বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি অথবা ৪ (চার) বৎসর মেয়াদি অনূদিত দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিলিপিএসহ যাতক বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; (২) শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার কোনো ক্ষেত্রে দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা বিভাগ বা সমমানের সিলিপিএ প্রদর্শনযোগ্য হইবে না।	প্রযোজ্য নয়।
৩	সহকারী প্রোগ্রামার প্রো-৬ (২২০০০- ৫০০০০/-)	১(একটি)	৩৫ বৎসর; তবে বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যা ও পারিবারিক প্রতিবন্ধীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ৩২ বছর।	(১) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড ইলেকট্রনিক্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/ইনফরমেশন এন্ড কমিউনিকেশন টেকনোলজি সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে অনূদিত দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিলিপিএসহ যাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; এবং (২) অর্ধট্রিট কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত নিয়োগ পদ্ধতি অনুসরণপূর্বক গৃহীত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।	প্রযোজ্য নয়।
৪	সিনিয়র কম্পিউটার অপারেটর প্রো-৬ (২২০০০- ৫০০০০/-)	১(একটি)		(১) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড ইলেকট্রনিক্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/ইনফরমেশন এন্ড কমিউনিকেশন টেকনোলজি সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে অনূদিত দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিলিপিএসহ যাতক বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; এবং (২) শিক্ষা জীবনের কোনো ক্ষেত্রে দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা বিভাগ বা সমমানের সিলিপিএ প্রদর্শনযোগ্য হইবে না।	প্রযোজ্য নয়।
৪	উপ সহকারী পরিচালক প্রো-৬ (২২০০০- ৬০০০০/-)	২(দুইটি)		(১) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে অনূদিত দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিলিপিএসহ যাতক বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; (২) শিক্ষা জীবনের কোনো ক্ষেত্রে দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা বিভাগ বা সমমানের সিলিপিএ প্রদর্শনযোগ্য হইবে না।	প্রযোজ্য নয়।
৬	ডাটা এন্ট্রি অপারেটর প্রো-৬ (২২০০০-২২৪০০/-)	২(দুইটি)	১৮-৩০ বৎসর; তবে বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যা ও পারিবারিক প্রতিবন্ধীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ৩২ বছর।	(১) কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ; (২) কম্পিউটার সূত্রাকারে প্রতি মিনিটে বাংলায় ২০ শব্দ এবং ইংরেজিতে ২০ শব্দের গতিসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে Standard Aptitude Test (ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষা)-এ উত্তীর্ণ হতে হবে; (৩) বাংলা ও ইংরেজি উভয় প্রকার সূত্রাকারে ক্ষেত্রে প্রতি ৫টি ঘণ্টার একটি শব্দ হিসেবে গণ্য হবে; (৪) ৫% এর অধিক ভুলের ক্ষেত্রে কোনো গতি অর্জন করেননি বলে গণ্য হবে; (৫) ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষায় শূন্য উত্তীর্ণ/অনুগ্রহীত হিসেবে গণ্য হবে; এবং (৬) লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীরা শূন্য ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষায় এবং ব্যবহারিক পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীরাই শূন্য মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন।	ঢাকা বিভাগের ফরিদপুর, গাজীপুর, গোপালগঞ্জ, হুগলিগঞ্জ, মাদারগঞ্জ, নারায়নগঞ্জ, ও চাঁদগাঁও জেলা। ময়মনসিংহ বিভাগের জামালপুর ও পাবনা জেলা। চট্টগ্রাম বিভাগের রাঙ্গামাটি, কুমিল্লা, লক্ষ্মীপুর ও নোয়াখালী জেলা। রংপুর বিভাগের গাইবান্ধা, পঞ্চদশ, কুড়িগ্রাম ও ঈশ্বরদী জেলা। রাজশাহী বিভাগের কুমিল্লা, রাজশাহী ও সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলা। কুমিল্লা বিভাগের কুমিল্লা, মাদারগঞ্জ ও সাতক্ষীরা জেলা। বরিশাল বিভাগের বরিশাল জেলা। তবে এতিম ও শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী কোনোও সকল জেলার প্রার্থীপদ আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
৭	অফিস সহকারী প্রো-২০ (৮৫০০-২০০০০/-)	৮(আটটি)		কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।	ঢাকা বিভাগের ফরিদপুর, গাজীপুর, গোপালগঞ্জ, হুগলিগঞ্জ, মাদারগঞ্জ, নারায়নগঞ্জ, ও চাঁদগাঁও জেলা। ময়মনসিংহ বিভাগের জামালপুর ও পাবনা জেলা। চট্টগ্রাম বিভাগের রাঙ্গামাটি, কুমিল্লা, লক্ষ্মীপুর ও নোয়াখালী জেলা। রংপুর বিভাগের গাইবান্ধা, পঞ্চদশ, কুড়িগ্রাম ও ঈশ্বরদী জেলা। রাজশাহী বিভাগের কুমিল্লা, রাজশাহী ও সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলা। কুমিল্লা বিভাগের কুমিল্লা, মাদারগঞ্জ ও সাতক্ষীরা জেলা। বরিশাল বিভাগের বরিশাল জেলা। তবে এতিম ও শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী কোনোও সকল জেলার প্রার্থীপদ আবেদন করতে পারবেন।

নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলি আবেদন করণ পূর্বক এবং নিয়োগ পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে অবশ্যই অনুসরণ করতে হবে:

১. অনুরোধনামা জমা দেওয়ার বিধি-১ শাখার ২২/০৬/২০২২ তারিখের ০৫.০০.০০০০.১৭০.১১.০১৭.২০-১৪৯ নং স্মারক মোতাবেক ২৫.০৩.২০২০ তারিখে প্রার্থীর সর্বোচ্চ বয়সসীমা এ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত সংশ্লিষ্ট পদের বিপরীতে বর্ণিত বয়সসীমার অধিক হবে না। বয়স প্রমাণের ক্ষেত্রে কোনো এককোডিত প্রমাণযোগ্য হবে না।
২. সরকারি/আলা-সরকারি/খাসরপালিস প্রতিষ্ঠানে চাকুরিত প্রার্থী যথার্থ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতি সাপেক্ষে আবেদন করবেন এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় অনুপস্থিতি স্বীকার করবেন। এক্ষেত্রে কোনো অগ্রিম কপি প্রমাণযোগ্য হবে না।
৩. প্রার্থী বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যা বা পুত্র-কন্যার পুত্র-কন্যা হলে আবেদনপত্রে তা স্পষ্টভাবে উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
৪. সরকারের সর্বশেষ নির্দেশনা অনুযায়ী কোনো প্রার্থীকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদ/প্রমাণক;
৫. প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা যাচাই:
- প্রার্থীর মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় নিম্নবর্ণিত (ক্রমিক নং ৮ হতে ১৩ পর্যন্ত) কাগজপত্রের সূচক পদ প্রদর্শনপূর্বক প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা দ্বারা সত্যায়িত সকল সনদের ছায়াছবি দাখিল করতে হবে:
 - (ক) প্রার্থীর সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদ (প্রমাণ্য ক্ষেত্রে অভিজ্ঞতা সনদ);
 - (খ) প্রার্থী যে ইউনিয়ন/পৌরসভা/ওয়ার্ড এর বাসিন্দা সে ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/পৌরসভার মেয়র/সিটি কর্পোরেশনের ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত নাগরিকত্বের সনদ;
 - (গ) প্রথম শ্রেণির গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদ;
 - (ঘ) মহিলা কোনো ব্যক্তি অন্যান্য কোনো দায়িত্ব সম্বন্ধে প্রার্থীকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদ/প্রমাণক;
 - (ঙ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র;
 - (চ) Online-এ পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের কপি (Applicant's Copy) ও Admit Card;



Farmers busy producing red sugar next to a sugarcane field in Mymensingh's Fulbaria upazila. PHOTO: STAR

M'singh farmers eye good profit from red sugar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Red sugar, locally known as Lal Chini, is a cash crop for hundreds of farmers, mostly small and marginal, from different villages in Phulbaria upazila.

Locals said the production of red sugar is a 200-year-old tradition and Phulbaria is famous for producing it.

While visiting several villages during the ongoing peak season, this correspondent saw many farmers busy harvesting sugarcane and producing Lal Chini.

Ninety-year-old Muntaz Ali Fakir was seen boiling sugarcane juice on an earthen tray at Polashtoli union's Chalapara village.

Muntaz, a marginal farmer, said he is involved with Lal Chini production since his boyhood. Now he is passing on the tradition with his sons and grandchildren.

This year, both production and price are better than the previous years, Muntaz said, adding that at present one maund (40kg) of Lal Chini is being sold at Tk 4,000 to Tk 5,000.

Nazrul Islam Fakir, 50, a resident

of Chalapara village, said he cultivated sugarcane on 50 decimals of land and got 40 maunds of sugar worth around Tk 160,000.

This sugar is processed in two ways – Dingi (preparing on a large tray) and Dang or Doop (hand-made) method, he said.

Sugarcane was cultivated on 865 hectares of land this year with a production target of 6,920 tonnes of red sugar worth around Tk 86.5 crore.

MOHAMMAD ABU RAIHAN
Sub-assistant plant protection officer in Phulbaria

Dulal Mia of Chalapara village prefers the Dang method as it has a great demand in the market and the price is also comparatively much higher. He cultivated sugarcane on 90 decimals of land this year, he said.

Farmers said sugarcane cultivation is comparatively cheaper

as it requires little water, fertiliser and insecticides.

However, many also said most of them do not have land of their own, which is why the landless farmers do not make much profit. They said due to that, almost all the family members work together to save costs.

Farmers also said the sugarcane leaves and bagasse (residue) is used as fuel for making red sugar. Those by-products are also sold at local bazaars as fuel and cattle fodder.

Mohammad Abu Raihan, sub-assistant plant protection officer in Phulbaria, said sugarcane was cultivated on 865 hectares of land this year with a production target of 6,920 tonnes of red sugar worth around Tk 86.5 crore.

Besides, about 850 hectares of land was brought under sugarcane cultivation last year.

Sugarcane is cultivated in Radhakana, Polashtoli, Bidhyananda, Koierchala, Bakta, Kushmail, Kaladah, Enayetpur, Rangamatia, Sontoshpur and Chowdhar areas in Phulbaria, Raihan said.




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Memo No: 46.19.0005.051.99.23-524

Invitation for Tenders (IFT) (Works)

Tender Notice No. 07/2022-2023

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

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH					
Sl.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives/Local Government Division.			
2	Agency	Gazipur City Corporation.			
3	Procuring entity name	Executive Engineer, Zone-05, Gazipur City Corporation.			
4	Procuring nature	Works.			

KEY INFORMATION

5	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM) (e-GP).			
6	Source of funds	Own fund.			


PARTICULAR INFORMATION

	Date	Time	
7	Schedule tender publication date & time	23/03/2023	11:00
8	Tender documents last selling date & time	16/04/2023	12:00
9	Tender closing date & time	16/04/2023	14:00
10	Tender opening date & time	16/04/2023	14:00

INFORMATION FOR TENDER

Sl.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of the work	Tender/proposal security (amount in Tk)	Tender/proposal document price	Completion time (Days)
1	804260	GCC/Z-05/T-07/2022-23/R-01	Construction of Uni Block Road from Moishan Bari Bash Bari Road to Mr. Sahajuddin's House. (2) Construction of Uni Block Road from Polashtek road to Salna Mayshan Bari Road via Freedom Fighter Mr. Abdul Malek's House. (3) Construction of Uni Block Road from Mojlishpur Road to Let Mr. Goni Mia Member House & Shil Para Gosh Para road. (4) Construction of Uni Block Road from Salna Mojlishpur Road to Kathora Eidgah field & Freedom Fighter Nowab Ali's House.	8,45,000.00	1500.00	365 Days
2	804126	GCC/Z-05/T-07/2022-23/R-02	Construction of Uni Block Road from Salna Jolarpar road member bari jame mosque to North side via North Moliah Para jame mosque. (2) Construction of BC road from (A) Salna Shimultoli road Naga Mr. Eidris's Shop to Salna Bagolbari link road connecting. (B) Salna Jolarpar Road Shiddik Member Bari Mosque to Mr. Saiful's House.	7,55,000.00	1500.00	365 Days
3	804265	GCC/Z-05/T-07/2022-23/R-03	Improvement of RCC Pipe Drains pit Mobil Slab at Bangla bazir main road. (b) Repairing of front side of Deshpara Mosque are other places.	50,000.00	500.00	365 Days
4	804268	GCC/Z-05/T-07/2022-23/R-04	(a) Construction of Uni Block Road from Salna Shimultoli Karim Nagar Mosque to Mrs. Ayasha Councilor's house & Soierlek to Button factory. (b) Earth filling road near Beparipara BFS road from Rabeya house to Harun Rashid house. (c) Salna Joydevpur road to Mr. Sahajuddin's house.	7,50,000.00	1000.00	365 Days
5	804271	GCC/Z-05/T-07/2022-23/R-05	Construction of BC road from South side of Manjukhan's house to Mir Bohor BRTC connecting road.	2,60,000.00	1000.00	365 Days
6	804274	GCC/Z-05/T-07/2022-23/R-06	Construction of BC road from Rokunuddin Government Primary to Bhawraid Dakhin para.	4,94,000.00	1000.00	365 Days
7	804285	GCC/Z-05/T-07/2022-23/R-07	Construction of BC road from Dhaka-Mymensingh road near Porabari Bahari Bari to Vawraid South Para via Maxi Factory road.	9,35,000.00	1500.00	365 Days
8	804287	GCC/Z-05/T-07/2022-23/R-08	Construction of Uni Block Road from Dhaka-Mymensingh near Porabare Filling Station to Vawraid Noab Ali Primary School.	3,00,000.00	1000.00	365 Days
9	804295	GCC/Z-05/T-07/2022-23/R-09	Construction of BC road from Mirergaon road to London Market.	3,35,000.00	1000.00	365 Days
10	804299	GCC/Z-05/T-07/2022-23/R-10	Construction of BC road from North Salna Palan para Dhaka-Mymensingh highway to Aminul Islam house via Graveyard and Pond para to Jolarpar.	2,90,000.00	1000.00	365 Days
11	804300	GCC/Z-05/T-07/2022-23/R-11	(a) Construction of Boundary wall at Bhadurpur Graveyard (b) Construction of RCC road from Masterbari Banglabazar Road to Ex-Chief Engineer Ohidur Rahman Banglo House.	2,50,000.00	1000.00	365 Days

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 mandatory. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches of Bangladesh. 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
Zone-05
Gazipur City Corporation

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়

পটুয়াখালী

(স্থানীয় সরকার শাখা)


www.patuakhali.gov.bd

স্মারক নম্বর: ৪৬.১০.৭৮০০.০০৭.০৬.০১৭.২২-২০৯ তারিখ: ০৯ চৈত্র ১৪২৯
২৩ মার্চ ২০২৩

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি -০১/২০২২-২৩

পিপিআর, ২০০৮ মোতাবেক চলতি ২০২২-২৩ অর্থবছরে পটুয়াখালী জেলাধীন ৭৭টি ইউনিয়ন পরিষদে কর্মরত গ্রামপুলিশদের (দফাদার ও মহল্লাদার) পোশাক ও অন্যান্য সরঞ্জামাদি সরবরাহের নিমিত্ত প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীল মোহরযুক্ত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

ক্র.সং.	বিভাগ/বিভাগ	স্বাক্ষরিত/প্রতিষ্ঠান																		
০১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ, স্থানীয় সরকার, পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়																		
০২।	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান	জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, পটুয়াখালী																		
০৩।	খাত/কোড	স্থানীয় সরকার, পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়; স্থানীয় সরকার বিভাগ; ইউপি-২ শাখা এর ২০২২-২৩ অর্থবছরের অনুময়ন বাজেটের মঞ্জুরী নং-৩৪, হিসাবের খাত নং-১৩৭০১০১/১২০০০১৩০৮/৩৬৩১০৩ গ্রামপুলিশদের পণ্য ও সেবা বাবদ সহায়তা খাত।																		
০৪।	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (ওটিএম)																		
০৫।	দরপত্র প্রণয়নের নাম	'২০২২-২৩ অর্থবছরে গ্রামপুলিশদের পোশাক ও অন্যান্য সরঞ্জামাদি সরবরাহ'																		
০৬।	দরপত্র ফরমের মূল্য ও ক্রয় পদ্ধতি	১,০০০/- (এক হাজার টাকা মাত্র) (অফেরতযোগ্য)																		
০৭।	দরপত্র বিক্রয়, দাখিল এবং খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	<table border="1"><thead><tr><th colspan="2">দরপত্র বিক্রয়</th><th colspan="2">দরপত্র দাখিল</th><th colspan="2">দরপত্র খোলা</th></tr><tr><th>তারিখ</th><th>সময়</th><th>তারিখ</th><th>সময়</th><th>তারিখ</th><th>সময়</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>পত্রিকা প্রকাশের তারিখ থেকে ২৬-০৪-২০২৩ পর্যন্ত</td><td>৪:০০ পর্যন্ত</td><td>২৭-০৪-২০২৩</td><td>০১:০০ পর্যন্ত</td><td>২৭-০৪-২০২৩</td><td>০৪:০০</td></tr></tbody></table>	দরপত্র বিক্রয়		দরপত্র দাখিল		দরপত্র খোলা		তারিখ	সময়	তারিখ	সময়	তারিখ	সময়	পত্রিকা প্রকাশের তারিখ থেকে ২৬-০৪-২০২৩ পর্যন্ত	৪:০০ পর্যন্ত	২৭-০৪-২০২৩	০১:০০ পর্যন্ত	২৭-০৪-২০২৩	০৪:০০
দরপত্র বিক্রয়		দরপত্র দাখিল		দরপত্র খোলা																
তারিখ	সময়	তারিখ	সময়	তারিখ	সময়															
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০৮।	দরপত্র বিক্রয় ও দাখিলের স্থান	১। বিভাগীয় কমিশনারের কার্যালয়, বরিশাল (স্থানীয় সরকার শাখা) ২। জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, পটুয়াখালী (স্থানীয় সরকার শাখা) ৩। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, পটুয়াখালী ৪। উপজেলা নির্বাহী অফিসারের কার্যালয় (সকল), পটুয়াখালী।																		
০৯।	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, পটুয়াখালী																		
১০।	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	(ক) প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান/তৈয়াদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান দফাদার, মহল্লাদার/আনসার ডিভিপি/পুলিশ/ এধর্মের প্রতিষ্ঠানে বিগত ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের মধ্যে ১০.০০ (দশ লক্ষ) টাকার পোশাক ও সরঞ্জামাদি সরবরাহ করার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে (খ) দরপত্র দাতার ডাউন রেজিস্ট্রেশন, টিআইএন নম্বর, হালনাগাদ আয়কর পরিশোধ সংক্রান্ত সনদ, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সার্টিফিকেট থাকতে হবে (১ম শ্রেণির গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত)।																		
১১।	দরপত্র জামানত	দাখিলকৃত দরের ৩% টাকার পে-অর্ডার / ব্যাংক ড্রাফট জেলা প্রশাসক, পটুয়াখালী বরাবর দাখিল করতে হবে।																		
১২।	কার্য সম্পাদনের মেয়াদ	কার্যাদেশ প্রদানের পর ৪৫ দিনের মধ্যে।																		
১৩।	কাজের বিবরণ (বিস্তারিত দরপত্রে সংযুক্ত শর্তাবলীতে বর্ণিত আছে)	দরপত্র কমিটি কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত নমুনা অনুযায়ী: (নমুনা প্রদর্শনের জন্য এ কার্যালয়ের স্থানীয় সরকার শাখায় সংরক্ষিত আছে)। (১) শার্ট (ফুল হাতা) ৬৮৮ টি (নীল রং), (২) শার্ট (হাফ হাতা) ৬৮৮ টি (নীল রং) [দফাদারদের প্রত্যেকের জন্য পরাপেল কালার সোতার ব্যাজ, Four Pointed Cross থাকি কালার, Four Pointed Cross এর মধ্যে সোয়েল, আকাশি রং এর রিবন এবং গ্রাম পুলিশ লেখাটি সাদা রং এর মহল্লাদারদের পরাপেল কালার সোতার ব্যাজ, আকাশি রং এর রিবন এবং গ্রাম পুলিশ লেখাটি সাদা রং এর ২ টি করে], (৩) ফুল প্যাট (৬৮৮X২) ১৩৭৬টি (খাকী রং), (৪) মহিলা গ্রাম পুলিশের পোশাক সরঞ্জামাদি (শাড়ী, ব্লাউজ ও পোটিকোট)-০৪সেট, (৫) বেল্ট ৬৮৮টি, (৬) উন্নতমানের কাপড়ের জুতা-৬৯০জোড়া, (৭) উন্নতমানের জ্যাকেট এবং উলের জামা-৬৮৮টি, (৮) কার্টাগান-০২টি ও (৯) সাইড ব্যাগ-৬৯০টি																		
১৪।	অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী	সিডিউএল এর সংশ্লিষ্ট সংযুক্ত শর্তাবলী																		
১৫।	নির্দেশাবলী	সিডিউএল ক্রয়কালে দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতার সাথে সংশ্লিষ্ট কাগজপত্র/প্রত্যয়ন পত্রের মূল কপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে। সিডিউএল বর্ণিত মালামালের যে কোন আইটেম/আইটেমের সংখ্যা বাড়াবো কমাবো ক্ষমতা এবং কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে দরপত্র বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।																		



(মোঃ শরীফুল ইসলাম)
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GD-556

PENSION PROTESTS

King Charles’s France visit postponed

REUTERS, Paris

Britain’s King Charles yesterday cancelled a state visit to France after social unrest over President Emmanuel Macron’s new pension law erupted into some of the worst street violence seen in years across the country.

The postponement will be a major embarrassment to Macron, who had hoped the monarch’s visit would mark a symbolic step in the two countries’ efforts to turn a page after years of poor relations post-Brexit.



Charles had been due to travel to France on Sunday for three days before moving on to Germany, an itinerary that had been seen as a win for the French leader who has sought to position himself as Europe’s de facto leader.

The king’s visit had been due to include a lavish banquet at the Palace of Versailles and the postponement will pile further pressure on Macron to find a way out of a crisis over his plans to raise the retirement age, which has seen some of France’s worst unrest since the ‘Yellow Vest’ rebellion of 2018-2019.

A source in British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s office said Macron had asked for the visit to be cancelled.

Black-clad anarchists fought street battles with police for several hours in the French capital on Thursday, ransacking a McDonald’s restaurant, smashing up bus shelters and setting alight mounds of garbage that have piled up during strikes.



Russian support for Myanmar junta ‘destabilising’ SE Asia: US envoy

REUTERS, Bangkok

Russia’s backing for Myanmar’s military rulers is unacceptable and destabilising, with its supply of weapons helping to fuel a conflict that has become a catastrophe for the country, a top US official said on Thursday.

The United States is concerned about the wider impact of the escalating crisis in Myanmar since a coup in 2021 and advancement of the junta’s ties with Russia, which could seek to establish military bases in the country, US State

Department Counselor Derek Chollet told Reuters.

“Anyone who is talking to Moscow needs to tell them that their continued military support for the junta is unacceptable. It’s destabilising,” he said in an interview during his trip to Southeast Asia.

“And it’s not only a problem for Myanmar, it’s a problem for this region.” Myanmar has been in turmoil since the coup that ended a decade of tentative democracy, with about 1.2 million people displaced by fighting,

according to the United Nations, as the military seeks to crush resistance to its rule.

Activists and UN experts have condemned Russia as well as China for supplying weapons to a military they accuse of systematic atrocities against civilians.

“What I have seen over the last several years is a military relationship that is only growing,” Chollet said. “I’m more concerned right now about the supply of weapons going into Myanmar from Russia principally.”

US AIR STRIKES

11 pro-Iran fighters killed in Syria

AFP, Beirut

Eleven pro-Iran fighters were killed in US air strikes on Syria carried out in retaliation for a drone attack that left an American dead and wounded six others, a war monitor said yesterday. A US contractor was killed, and another contractor and five US service personnel were wounded, when a kamikaze drone “of Iranian origin” struck a maintenance facility on a base of the US-led coalition near Hasakeh in northeastern Syria, the Pentagon said. In response, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Thursday that, at President Joe Biden’s direction, he had ordered “precision air strikes tonight in eastern Syria against facilities used by groups affiliated with Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps”. “The air strikes were conducted in response to today’s attack as well as a series of recent attacks against coalition forces in Syria by groups affiliated with the IRGC,” Austin said. Iran-backed militias have a heavy presence across Syria, especially around the border with Iraq and south and west of the Euphrates in Deir Ezzor province, where the latest strikes took place.

N Korea tests new nuke-capable drone

AFP, Seoul

North Korea yesterday claimed it had tested an underwater nuclear attack drone able to unleash a “radioactive tsunami”, as it blamed recent US South Korea exercises for a deteriorating regional security situation. Pyongyang carried out military drills of its own in response this week, the official Korean Central News Agency said, including test-firing a new nuclear-capable underwater drone. The weapon’s mission is to “stealthily infiltrate into operational waters and make a super-scale radioactive tsunami ... to destroy naval striker groups and major operational ports of the enemy,” it said. The new weapon, called Haeil, “can be deployed at any coast and port or towed by a surface ship for operation,” the report said.

Two tonnes

FROM PAGE 12

Controllor said on March 21, an OMS truck went in front of the office of councillor Abdul Karim Babu with two tonnes of rice.

Saddam, the dealer, could not be reached.

His father Akter Hossain Babul told The Daily Star that though his son’s name is on the list of dealers, he is the one who oversees the business.

He further said the price of the rice was paid by the councillor who stored the rice at Adarsha Girls School and College.

Principal Mizanur Rahman said more than 50 sacks of rice were kept in those rooms last Tuesday.

Abdul Karim Babu refuted the allegation, saying that he distributed the rice among people from 10:00am to 12:30pm on March 21.

“I buy rice with my own money for those who cannot buy it,” he said.

Contacted, city corporation CEO Shahidul Islam, Food Controllor Asma ul-Hosna, and Deputy Commissioner Monjurul Hafiz said action will be taken if the allegations are found to be true.

Webb telescope

FROM PAGE 12

The telescope detected both larger and smaller silicate dust grains within these clouds.

Co-author Beth Biller, of the University of Edinburgh, said: “The finer silicate grains in its atmosphere may be more like tiny particles in smoke. The larger grains might be more like very hot, very small sand particles.”

The researchers found that the planet has low gravity compared to more massive brown dwarfs, which means its silicate clouds can appear and remain higher in its atmosphere where Webb can detect them.

5 more lives lost

FROM PAGE 12

The dead is Ibrahim Hossain, 37, supervisor of the bus, said police.

The Kaliganj-bound bus started from Jashore. The driver lost control of the bus in Keyabagan Bus Stand area around 1:30pm, said Monjur Alam, officer-in-charge of Barobazar Highway Police Station.

[Our Cumilla, Jhenidah, and Pirojpur, correspondents contributed to this report.]

Eight involved

FROM PAGE 12

improper handling of the USB drive that contained the exam question papers.

The bodies recommended action against the 41 officials, and that the officials not be included in future recruitment test committees.

Biman MD Zahid and Major Taiz, deputy general manager of security of Biman, were removed based on the probe reports, said sources in Biman.

When asked about the issue, Biman MD Shafiul Azim didn’t make any comment.

Requesting anonymity, a top Biman official said some officials involved in leaking question papers have been co-opted to the administrative work related to the examination.

Happy with outcome

FROM PAGE 12

signed and votes were being cast at that time.

Momtaz: It never happened.

TDS: There is an allegation that no discussion was held on the appointment of a new election subcommittee convenor after the resignation of Munsurul.

Momtaz: The article 15/6 of the rules clearly states that the executive committee will decidethis.

TDS: If the convenor steps down, the most senior lawyer will be tasked with the duty. Isn’t that the case?

Momtaz: There is no rule that says the most senior person should be chosen. Any senior lawyer can take the role.

TDS: The seven-member committee was formed unanimously. Wasn’t it necessary to seek the pro-BNP lawyers’ opinion or to hold a discussion with them?

Momtaz: There was no need for a discussion. The executive committee takes decisions in such cases. We did everything as per the rules.

I believe journalism is like a mirror of the society. You should watch all video footage of this election.

TDS: So why did the police beat up the journalists?

Momtaz: When a scuffle broke out between lawyers on that day, at one stage I fell on the floor. I don’t know

whether the lawyers were beaten by the police. However, I saw the video footage of the journalists. If the police beaten up someone, legal action will be taken accordingly.

TDS: According to media reports, the election was held after the pro-BNP lawyers and journalists were beaten and driven out of the SCBA auditorium.

Momtaz: No such incident happened.

TDS: At what stage of the violence did you call in the police?

Momtaz: A letter was sent to the police beforehand. They came after hearing about the chaos.

TDS: As per the documents of the case filed with Shahbagh Police Station, police talked to the law minister, the attorney general and many others. Also, it is mentioned there that General Secretary Abdun Nur Dulal and you called the police and sought their cooperation.

Momtaz: I can’t comment on the documents without seeing those. Police already had the letter.

TDS: We are not talking about the previous letter. When the pro BNP lawyers were trying to prevent voting, police were called and it was you who called them.

Momtaz: I have to check the facts before making any comment.

TDS: Why do you think the police attacked the journalists?

Momtaz: I didn’t see the attack when it took place.

TDS: But you saw the video.

Momtaz: I saw it later. Journalists informed me that police have beaten up Javed. It hurt me. I personally know NTV’s Javed. Initially, I couldn’t believe that they have beaten Javed. I met him the next day and came to know that it was not him but another person with the same name, who was assaulted.

TDS: It has been alleged that journalists were beaten up and driven away because they were witnessing and filming everything.

Momtaz: That may be true.

TDS: Are you satisfied after being elected SCBA president, considering the process of this year’s election?

Momtaz: Yes, I am satisfied. At least the election has taken place.

TDS: Media reports said when the pro-BNP lawyers went to meet the chief justice, he told them that he didn’t call the police.

Is there any rule that stipulates that the police cannot enter the Supreme Court premises without the chief justice’s permission?

Momtaz: When the security on the Supreme Court premises is breached, the police must step in. I don’t know whether the chief justice granted permission. I cannot comment on this.

Russian wanted by US ‘goes missing’ in Italy

AFP, Rome

The son of a senior Russian official arrested in Italy at Washington’s request disappeared the day after a court approved his extradition to the United States, media reports said yesterday.

Following his arrest at Milan Malpensa Airport on October 17, Artyom Uss was held at his residence near Milan but required to wear an electronic bracelet.

US authorities accuse Uss, the

son of a Siberian governor, of having illegally sold US technologies to Russian arms companies.

On Tuesday, an Italian court agreed to his extradition to the United States -- but the following day, he disappeared, media reports said.

According to La Repubblica newspaper, police checked on Uss early Wednesday but around lunchtime his electronic bracelet sounded the alarm, and he has not been seen since.

Build a society free

FROM PAGE 2

In her message, Hasina said, “We have recognised March 25 as Genocide Day. We have sheltered more than 1.1 million displaced Rohingyas who escaped with their lives from genocide in neighbouring Myanmar. ...”

President Abdul Hamid also issued a message on this occasion.

“The observance of Genocide Day is a recognition of the great sacrifices made by three million Bangalees in the liberation struggle

of Bangladesh,” he said.

It is also a symbol of protest against the genocide committed by the then Pakistani aggressors, the president added.

Political parties have taken up programmes in observance of the day.

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

BNP doubts EC’s intention

FROM PAGE 1

Several senior BNP leaders told this correspondent that they are wondering why the commission suddenly sent the letter after the party rejected such invites several times in the past.

The commission is trying to improve its image, especially since there is pressure from the western countries over the national election.

A recently published US State Department report on human rights mentioned for the first time that the last national election in Bangladesh was neither free nor fair.

Thursday’s letter to the BNP came at a time when diplomats stationed in Dhaka held meetings with the Awami League and BNP about the election.

Several BNP policymakers said the commission sent the letter to appear sincere and impartial.

“It is a strategy of the ruling party and the Election Commission is implementing it,” said Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, a standing committee member of the party.

The BNP has no interest in talks with a commission that does not have the right to hold an election, he said. “It is a commission of the government and does not serve the people’s interest.”

Other senior leaders said the ruling AL will be quick to criticise the BNP for turning down the invite and try to take advantage.

“How the [AL’s] strategy can be countered will be discussed at the party’s standing committee meeting on Monday. It is clear that they want to make the issue linger,” a senior leader said.

Thursday’s letter said even after the BNP repeatedly rejected the ECs invites for talks, a views-exchange meeting could be held over the 12th parliamentary election. “I invite you to the Election Commission. Dates can be discussed and fixed... Waiting to get a reply,” reads the letter.

The letter also said the BNP repeatedly expressed its decision not to participate in elections without a non-partisan government. The EC has no comment on the party’s political decisions and strategies.

Political analyst Hasanuzzaman said the wording in the letter is not appealing and may create a barrier to build confidence. “It seems that the commission wants to show that it is cordial.”

Prof Shantanu Majumder of political science at Dhaka University, however, said sending such letters was routine work for the EC, and there was nothing special in it.

“The Election Commission has a responsibility to bring all political parties to the election. Through this letter, the commission may have tried to brighten its image,” he said.

The BNP and eight opposition political parties skipped the talks organised in July last year regarding the next general election. They said they didn’t believe the commission would be able to hold a free, fair, and participatory election. The BNP and several other parties also skipped a previous round of talks organised to discuss the use of EVMs.

Besides, the BNP also did not join President Abdul Hamid’s initiative on formation of the Election Commission.

SADIA

aims for the stars



“I am extremely lucky that in the initial years of my career, I got the opportunity to work with such great filmmakers,” said Sadia



SHARMIN JOYA

As a child, Sadia Ayman wanted to be a little bit of everything. Her first wish was to become a business woman, following her family tradition. The goals kept on changing with time, from doctor to fashion designer and so on, till it finally landed on the dream of becoming an actor.

“After I began working in showbiz, I realised that this is my own place,” shared the artiste, who is also pursuing her degree in law at East West University.

Sadia’s charm flared as she appeared on the screen with some of the romantic projects, including Mizanur Rahman Aryan’s *Phooler Namey Naam*, which was the first big break in her career. The actress stole hearts after donning Sara, in Shihab Shaheen’s web-film, *Mayashalik*. Now, she is all set for her silver screen debut in Gias Uddin Selim’s *Kajolrekha*, which is expected to release this Eid-ul-Azha.

“I am extremely lucky that in the initial years of my career, I got the opportunity to work with such great filmmakers,” said Sadia, whose fans adore her for being simple both on and off the screen. “I always get to hear from my fans that they haven’t seen simplicity in actresses for a while, and that they find it in me. I hope that I will always be the same.”

Sharing a fan moment, she mentioned that a junior from her university texted her saying, “I got admitted to East West for you, and it is really upsetting that I haven’t met you yet.”

The actress shares an experience while shooting for her debut film with us. “We shot the film deep in nature, where some of the deadliest creatures from snakes to leeches roamed freely in the surrounding areas. It was really dangerous and frightening for a person like me, who is afraid of snakes. I even had to get into the pond for a shot, where there was a snake.” Upon witnessing the snake, Sadia jumped out from the pond screaming.

To develop her acting skills, Sadia prefers watching films and reading books. She mentioned that she likes to watch romantic-thriller projects more. When it comes to books, Sadia shared that she is an avid fan of noted writer and filmmaker, Humayun Ahmed. “I am a huge fan of him. If he were alive, I would definitely wish to work in one of his directorial projects,” asserted the actress.

Sadia will be seen in more than ten tele-fictions, which will be released on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

STYLE STATEMENT

Michael

B Jordan

Michael B Jordan looked dapper in a black suit during the premiere of *Creed III*. He wore a Givenchy matte black suit with svelte lapels, matching trousers and a band collar.

Both the blazer and trousers had distressed hems, which added an edgy touch to his ensemble. He completed the look with a Vacheron Constantin watch and some Tiffany & Co jewellery—which included a platinum and diamond necklace, a flower-shaped gold and diamond brooch, diamond stud earrings, and two diamond rings.



TV TALKIES

MIERUKO-CHAN

Do ghosts see us instead?

Adapted from the popular manga written by Tomokilzumi, *Mieruko-chan* chronicles the story of a high school student named Miko Yotsuya. Despite her cool demeanour and somewhat apathetic outlook on life, Miko cannot stop herself from uttering a gasp when she wakes up one day and discovers that she can see ghosts. These ghosts are not the benevolent, wispy spirits or lore, but rather slimy and grimy petulant husks of what a person, or rather, their sins use to be.

They chase her around her school, around the hallway and even pop up under her covers. The story truly takes a turn when a nasty spirit in particular, latches itself to Miko’s best friend, slowly draining her life force. Available on Netflix, this drama is a fun and simultaneously creepy dive, into what happens when the ghosts who are left behind start vying for attention in the worst ways possible.



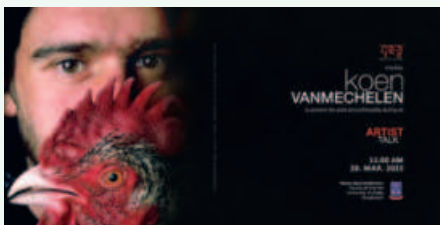
Out and about IN DHAKA



Theatre Play “Adam Surat”
March 30 | 7:30 pm
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy



Informal Desire
March 10-28 | 4 pm – 8 pm
Kala Kendra



Artist talk - Koen Vanmechelen
March 28 | 11 am
Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Shadow and Bone

Chorki
Luca

Hoichoi
Indubala Bhaater
Hotel

Disney plus
Eureka

Amazon Prime
Pathaan

Bangladeshis paying way more for essentials

This did not happen by chance, but because of poor governance

It is unfortunate that people in Bangladesh are unable to benefit from the fall in the prices of essentials in the international market. On the contrary, Bangladeshis have been struggling to make ends meet with domestic prices remaining extremely high. As a result of the Russia-Ukraine war, prices of essentials in the international market hit a record high 10 months ago. Since then, prices of most commodities have come down in the international market, but not by the same amount or at all in our domestic market, according to *Prothom Alo* findings.

The price of soybean oil, for example, went up to \$1,883 per tonne back in May 2022. That has dropped to \$1,331 this month in the international market – a 29 percent decrease. Yet, in Bangladesh, the soybean oil price has dropped by a measly nine percent. Similarly, the price of palm oil has also come down in the global market by 36 percent per tonne, but in the domestic market, the price has been reduced by 26 percent. The price of lentils, one of the few sources of protein which the lower-income groups can afford – especially when prices of meat and fish are still high – has gone down by 20 percent internationally. But in Bangladesh, the price has been reduced by 10 percent only. The main reasons for such discrepancies, according to traders, are the rise in the prices of dollars, gas and electricity. And for that, the blame must fall on the government's poor policies.

Had the government not artificially propped up the taka's value against the dollar over the years, but allowed it to depreciate gradually instead of suddenly all at once, as experts have opined, the price shock would not have hit consumers this hard. The government's refusal to explore gas within the country – despite multinational organisations and experts remaining confident that it would pay dividends – and opting to import expensive LNG, in defiance of all logic, have been terribly detrimental for us. In fact, the only explanation behind this government decision which makes any sense is that the government wanted to benefit some politically connected importers of gas, as some have recently proposed.

Meanwhile, the price of flour, which has remained steady internationally, has gone up by 35 percent in Bangladesh in the last 10 months, apparently because its import from India has stopped completely since last November. The price of onions, which has gone down by 25 percent in the international market, has gone up in Bangladesh because of shortage rumours. In both cases, poor market monitoring and the government's inability to assure that there are no shortages, or to squash rumours of shortages, are to blame.

What all these government failures and poor policies show is that the government is either terribly unaware of how badly people are suffering as a result of high commodity prices, or it just doesn't care; but given the scenario on the ground, it ought to. The government needs to own up to its past mistakes, listen to expert advice, and work overtime to bring prices under control and within people's reach.

The crumbling coasts

Illegal sand mining is eating away people's farmland and wildlife habitats

That our environment – and by extension, people's lives and livelihoods that depend upon it – is at the mercy of powerful quarters is no longer news. Yet, we can't help but be horrified by the extent shipbreakers and influential locals are exploiting the environment in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila. According to our report, they have been extracting huge amounts of sand from the Sandwip Channel of the Bay of Bengal – as usual, with impunity – resulting in the destruction of embankments and coastal forests. At least two kilometres have reportedly already collapsed due to uncontrolled sand mining, while more embankments are at risk of collapsing, putting the area and its inhabitants at tremendous risk of natural calamities. Meanwhile, saline water from the sea is now inundating cultivable land in the surrounding areas, leading to a loss of prized farmland and farmers' income. With coastal forests taking the hit of the sand mining, hundreds of wildlife species have already been displaced and thousands of trees will likely die if nothing is done to stop it.

What is most upsetting is that this has been happening because the Ministry of Industries gave special permission to shipbreakers to lift sand from their yards, apparently to facilitate the anchoring and navigability of the ships. Many shipbreakers, it seems, have taken this provision as permission to lift sand at will, whenever and from wherever, even going so far as to lift sand from the sea and selling it to local buyers. As much as 300,000 cubic feet of sand has already been excavated from the Sitakunda coast, according to an enquiry report from the Department of Environment (DoE), even though it is illegal to lift sand from the sea, rivers and water bodies for commercial purposes, without permission from the relevant authorities.

There can be no doubt that destruction on such a massive scale has taken place because the authorities failed to do their job. And as usual, no one is willing to take the blame. The DoE, for instance, says that it can only levy fines on miners, but that it falls upon the Ministry of Land to take harsher steps. But even if that were true, thus far, they have only fined three companies a meagre Tk 250,000, which, when compared to the tremendous profits they are making from the mining, is a drop in the ocean. Are we to believe these are the only companies that are grossly violating the law? Meanwhile, the Ministry of Land, which is supposed to implement the Sand Fields Management Act, has apparently conducted only 10 mobile courts in two years to stop sand mining, which has clearly been inadequate in detecting and deterring the lawbreakers. As for the Ministry of Industries, why would they grant such a special provision if it couldn't guarantee coordination among the relevant authorities to ensure monitoring and compliance?

The authorities involved must answer for their part in enabling such a large-scale devastation to take place. Most importantly, they must stop their usual blame game and take coordinated steps to urgently stop all sand mining in the area, and protect people's lives, livelihoods, forests and wildlife habitats.

For whom the titles toll



BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

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

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

I have the best job in the world. I read stories and poems for fun. I share my joy with my students. And I get paid for it. The best part is, with every new batch, I return to old texts and find new meanings and new reactions. The freshness of young students keeps me alert and agile.

I don't blame those who are envious of my profession. Little do I care if people call me "Sir" out of love, respect, conviction or protocol. The great master I had, under whose apprenticeship I got accepted for my highest academic degree, never insisted that I address him as "Sir," even though he was native to the country responsible for the colonial hangover that has led to our obsession with being a sire while in a position of power. I called my PhD supervisor by his first name. That was the norm at graduate schools in the UK. In a formal setting or at an undergraduate level, you are expected to use a title with surname, but never Sir or Madam. So I don't mind if people call me by my first name without any honorifics as long as I know that the address is sincere and genuine.

I teach my students to learn from the essential human spirit embedded in human triumphs and downfalls, engagements and detachments. We deal with characters in every possible permutation and combination of lived and imagined experiences to prepare for life. When characters from the pages of our imagination appear, I start making connections. That's what literature is all about.

The young rebels that I teach about appear in the real world in the guise of some little girls of Bogura Government Girls' High School. My passion for life is renewed by their spirit of redressing wrongs. The older generation, represented by their parents and teachers, surrendered to the whims of an additional district and sessions judge who allegedly threatened her daughter's classmates with jail terms under the Digital Security Act (DSA).

While the old ones boosted the ego of the judge by apparently begging for her mercy by touching her feet to protect their daughter from her wrath, the young ones staged a protest that



has now allowed the judge to be judged. The protesters insisted that at school the only identity that the judge has is that of a mother and guardian. When other girls are expected to sweep the classrooms to keep them clean, the daughter of the said judge should have done the same. On the contrary, the young girl, powered by her mother's haughtiness, refused to join her peers in the cleaning process. The girls acted as the voice of democracy. Their boldness makes me alive. They are my Joan of Arc. These little ones exposed one instance of abuse of power within the system. The judge has now been recalled.

A similar tension over power dynamics was felt when the deputy commissioner of Rangpur insisted on being addressed as "Sir." She got into an altercation with a university teacher who went to her office for an official purpose. The officer did not like the way she was being addressed as "*Apa*" (sister) and told her visitor to follow the official decorum. The university teacher staged a protest, which drew media traction.

The "*Apa*" address was a sign of her not being taken seriously enough.

The debate that has erupted now involves the desire to de-sire colonial legacies. As a student of postcolonial literature, I would welcome any such move that would revisit some of the colonial biases and practices and end all forms of asymmetrical power arrangements. But I think what the officer said about her post is important: you need to show respect to the chair. A personalised *bhai* and *apa* often compromise the dignity and integrity of the post. We often face such odd examples in real life. For instance, if a minister comes to our campus, a university teacher is expected to address him/her as "sir." Then again, our politically active students, who address us as their sir or madam, would address the minister as "*bhai*"/*apa*," latching onto their party camaraderie.

In *The Prison Diaries*, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman shares a funny anecdote. One thief was promoted to the position of a guard. He wrote to his wife about the prestige and honours

Sometimes reality is stranger than fiction. The internet is rife with a modern-day Count of Monte Cristo. An absconding prisoner returns to city life with an immense amount of wealth to settle some scores. On second thought, Arav Khan, the Dubai-based gold jewellery shop owner, is showing off his wealth with the naivety of a teenager. He is playing pranks with the police like the childhood game that we used to play, "See croc, we have dipped into your water." The crocs are probably his old patrons who sponsored his business.

In Ben Jonson's animal allegory *Volpone*, a fox is outwitted by his parasite, a fly called Mosca. To avoid his sex scandal, the fox uses his parasite's help to announce his death. The moment the fox is presumed dead, the slave fly claims himself as the fox's sole heir and takes possession of his property. The slave fly does not anticipate the "master" stroke: the fox comes back to life to expose the cheat.

Volpone was a gold worshipper who treated gold as his soul. My job is fun. I connect stories.

How Bangladesh can survive in a geopolitical age

Dr Sk Tawfique M Haque is director of Center of Peace Studies and the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at North South University (NSU).

Dr Raymond Kwun Sun Lau is member of the Center for Peace Studies, SIPG at North South University (NSU).

SK TAWFIQUE M HAQUE and RAYMOND KWUN-SUN LAU

After spending months studying the issues related to the US-led Indo-Pacific Strategy, the foreign ministry of Bangladesh has finalised a draft strategic paper on Dhaka's position on this matter. The paper, provisionally titled "Indo-Pacific Outlook," expected to be released in April, is meant to clarify Dhaka's stance on how it sees the Indo-Pacific Strategy and what it wants to achieve in the context of the growing geopolitical contest between the United States and China in the region. By highlighting the importance of not leaning towards any side, the responsible foreign ministry officials suggested that Dhaka considered the Indo-Pacific Strategy mostly from the economic point of view.

As a rising middle power, Bangladesh is being wooed by major powers as a market, investment destination, and strategic outpost. Its rising importance is recognised in the protracted great power competition (GPC), particularly between China and the US. Qin Gang, China's former ambassador to the US and the newly appointed foreign minister, made a surprise "technical stopover" at the Dhaka airport, meeting his Bangladesh counterpart Dr Abdul Momen before making his first diplomatic trip to Africa on January 10.

Just four days after the Chinese foreign minister's visit, US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Donald Lu arrived in Dhaka for a

two-day visit on January 14. This was the second high-profile visit by a US government official within a week, following the four-day visit of US National Security Council's Senior Director for South Asia Rear Admiral Eileen Laubacher on January 7.

These visits by high-ranking US and Chinese government officials were soon followed by Anne-Marie Trevelyan, UK's minister for the Indo-Pacific, who visited Bangladesh on March 10.

With Bangladesh becoming the site of major power rivalry, Dhaka needs to understand the unfolding dynamics of the great power competition by figuring out a more effective way to ensure its survival in this new geopolitical age. Dhaka's ability to handle foreign affairs and relationships with other countries will determine whether Bangladesh is torn apart by the rivalry of bloc politics or succeeds in preserving its political independence by safeguarding its national interest.

One overriding national interest of Bangladesh is its physical survival as an independent sovereign state. In order to preserve and defend its hard-won independence, Dhaka has a vital stake in ensuring that the region as a whole is peaceful while the neighbouring countries remain friendly (or at least not hostile) towards Bangladesh. The rationale behind "Friendship to all, malice to none," therefore, is to

dissociate Bangladesh from military alliances by avoiding alienating major powers.

Another important national interest of Bangladesh is its economic security for the people. In order to continue the growth of exports, the flow of foreign investment, and official development assistance, it is in Bangladesh's economic interest to keep friendly relations with other countries for trade, assistance and support.

The fact that Bangladesh, as the foreign minister suggested, is getting so much geopolitical attention means the country can no longer fully insulate itself from major power rivalry in the Indo-Pacific region. Bangladesh has successfully established good relationships with different countries and major powers by adopting a policy of peace and non-alignment. However, with South Asia and the Indian Ocean region increasingly becoming a significant site of major power competition, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for Dhaka to continuously adopt this middle-ground approach.

Bangladesh wishes to avoid upsetting China, since China is crucial for its socioeconomic and infrastructural development. As Foreign Minister Abdul Momen puts it, "[W]e need to help develop our economy, and they (China) have baskets of money. They come with the baskets of money with affordable and aggressive proposals." On the other hand, the US has exerted great efforts to persuade Bangladesh to join the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

But the reality facing Dhaka is, while the US is keen to incorporate Bangladesh into the Indo-Pacific Strategy, China has (already) made

its displeasure known over the possible consequences of Dhaka's participation in the anti-Beijing "club." In this context, maintaining a good relationship with both Washington and Beijing at the same time, even as Momen admits, is a challenging task.

Furthermore, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has put Bangladesh in an awkward position. Except voicing its support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine and peaceful settlement of all disputes, Bangladesh has abstained on every UN resolution condemning Russia. Since the US seeks to intensify sanctions against Russia, Bangladesh's "neutral" stance may amount to a form of tacit support for Russia's act of aggression. Dhaka's room to manoeuvre by maintaining a balanced foreign policy is, inevitably, shrinking.

Bangladesh's vital national interest lies in its extensive decision-making autonomy. Therefore, rather than paying attention to the attitudes of major powers towards the country (in order not to upset them), Dhaka has to demonstrate its ability to conduct an independent foreign policy by evaluating whether becoming part of US Indo-Pacific Strategy, including joining the QUAD and the IPEF, is in its national interest.

With the Russia-Ukraine war dragging on, and both the US and China vying for influence in the Indo-Pacific, there is no better time than now for Bangladeshi policymakers to think and reflect on their country's geopolitical value, re-evaluate its relationship with major powers, and have the nerve to come to grips with some tough decisions. After all, siding with a major power on the basis of common interests instead of having the best of the two worlds may be crucial to Bangladesh's fundamental survival in this geopolitical age.

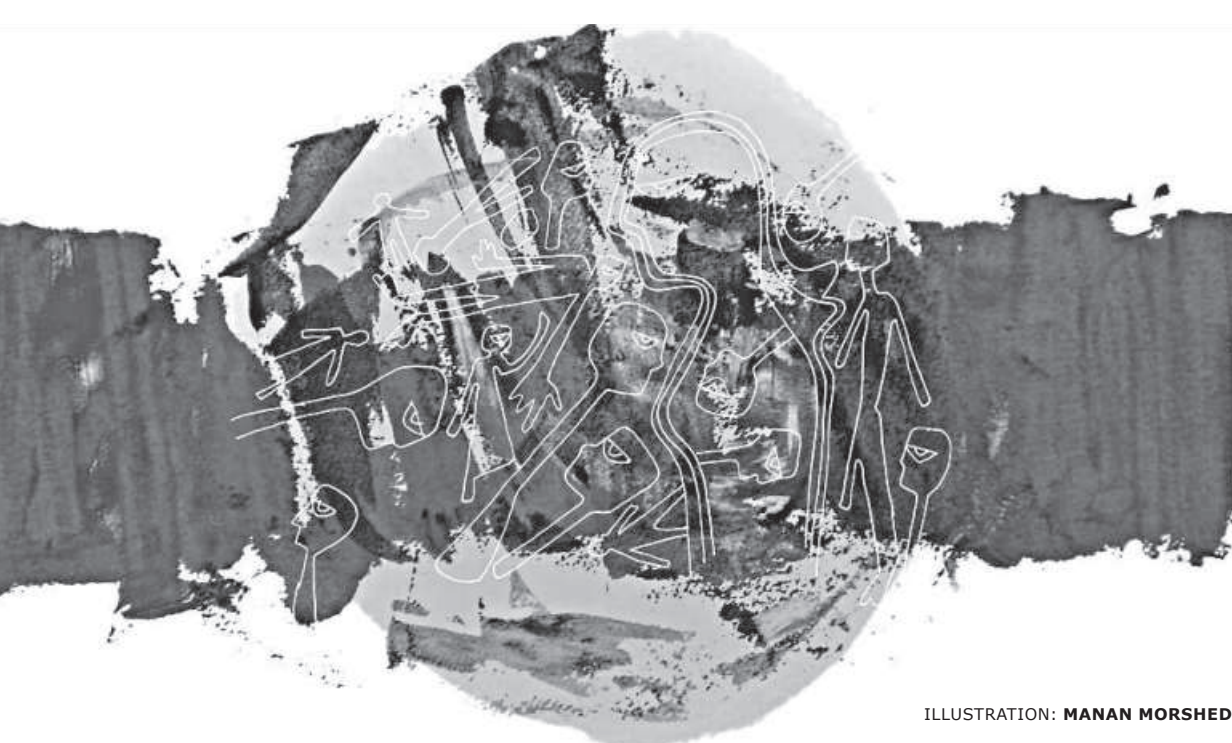


ILLUSTRATION: MANAN MORSHED

The genocide of MARCH 25 as a metaphor



Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher.

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

Pakistan is the metaphor of everything Bangladesh doesn't want to be. And the independent land we call Bangladesh today ceased to be a part of Pakistan on March 25, 1971 when the Pakistan state apparatus launched a genocidal war. The genocide was unique in the sense that it was perpetrated by the state against its own people. The Pakistani state lost its legitimacy by killing its own citizens.

Bangladesh's Proclamation of Independence has emphasised this *causa finalis* by stating, "Whereas the Pakistan government by levying an unjust war and committing genocide and by other repressive measures made it impossible for the elected representatives of the people of Bangladesh to meet and frame a constitution, and give to themselves a government... we declare and constitute Bangladesh to be sovereign peoples' republic."

The March 25 genocide became the metaphor for the irreparable break that the Bangladeshi state will never reverse. As if the Bangladeshi state, which pledged to uphold the principles of "equality, human dignity, and social justice," would never perpetrate such violence against its citizens. To fully comprehend the metaphor's significance, it is essential to have a more profound understanding of the nature of the violence that transpired on March 25, 1971.

Numerous eyewitness accounts exist regarding the events that occurred on that fateful night. In this instance, we are focusing on Ahmed Sofa's testimony. In his article titled "*Dhakay Ja Dekhechhi Ja Shuneechhi*" (What I saw and heard in Dhaka), he vividly depicts the heinous brutality unleashed by the Pakistani state, showcasing a dreadful contempt for the democratic aspirations of the people of East Pakistan.

After spending the night of March 25 in a hideout, Ahmed Sofa ventured out when the curfew was lifted for a few hours the following morning. Upon witnessing the city's situation, his eyes were filled with tears. He described the scene as if thousands of savage animals had descended upon the city, leaving scars of destruction and chaos in their wake.

He traversed the city, from Topkhana to Gulistan, then to Dhaka University, Medical College, Salimullah Hall, Pilkhana, and Rajarbagh. At every turn, he encountered signs of death, torture, rape, and barbarism.

The lethal apparatus of the Pakistani state not only killed the ordinary citizens, but also numerous members of the state's uniformed personnel, including police and EPR members. Historian Thomas Newbold aptly noted, "No other 'police operation' by a state before or since has started with the slaughter of its own security apparatus, and few other commanders who have ordered the killing of their soldiers in their barracks have ever had the nerve

to accuse those they ordered to be murdered of 'betrayal.'"

While returning home, Ahmed Sofa discovered that the Pakistan Army had burnt down the newspaper offices of *The People* and *Daily Ittefaq*.

At the conclusion of his account for the day, he shared the distressing news of the brutal slaying of Lieutenant Commander Moazzem Hossain. The Pakistan Army, after murdering him in cold blood, tied his lifeless body to a jeep and dragged it along the road. Sofa expressed his sorrow, stating that they had killed a hero of Bengal and desecrated his body in such a despicable manner.

The following day, Ahmed Sofa went out once more and arrived at Ramna Kali Mandir, only to find it in ruins. The idols had been demolished

by shelling. In the midst of such devastation, a thought occurred to him: where did all the people go? The region was cordoned off by soldiers, yet someone whispered to him that the army had first set fire to the houses by pouring petrol. When the inhabitants came out to escape the flames, the army opened fire on them.

Ahmed Sofa bore witness to numerous other heinous acts committed against the Hindu community in various areas of Dhaka. In Shankhari Bazar, he encountered hundreds of charred corpses displaying clear evidence of torture, rape, murder, and arson. According to Ahmed Sofa's testimony, the Pakistani junta specifically targeted religious minority communities. The collaborators of the Pakistan Army would identify Hindu homes and properties during the day, which the army would destroy under the cover of the night.

Ahmed Sofa witnessed the most horrific brutality near Nawabpur crossing, where shanties built by impoverished people lined both sides of the rail track in an area stretching

from Tejgaon to Kamalapur. The Pakistan Army mercilessly set fire to the entire area, leaving burnt rubble and human skeletons. The stench of charred bodies permeated the whole air, Sofa testified.

The savage attacks extended to industrial areas and nearby labour colonies, such as Narayanganj, Demra, and Gazipur. The rampant hatred towards the labourers and the urban poor, often termed as "lumpen class," was fuelled in part by their active involvement in all the protests against the Pakistani state. Unfortunately, the sacrifices of the labourers and urban poor are conspicuously absent from the nationalist narrative of Bangladesh's liberation struggle.

On that day, the prominent Bangla daily *Sangbad* was set on fire.

Ahmed Sofa had to flee Dhaka to save his life. He ends his article with the lament, "Dhaka has become a dangerous place for students and young people. The Pakistan Army is shooting young people at sight and abducting them without any trace. The soldiers appear to have grown weary of killing, and the whereabouts of the arrested individuals remain unknown. Rumours are circulating that the detainees are being

As I read Ahmed Sofa's testimony, a question continued to plague my thoughts in the context of present-day Bangladesh: what distinguishes state-sanctioned killing of one individual from the mass murder of many? Wasn't the genocide on March 25 the ultimate culmination of Pakistan's 24-year history of state violence? As we ponder the significance of March 25, it is critical to ask ourselves whether the oppressive nature of the state has changed. Are practices such as extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, custodial deaths, and the systematic persecution of religious and ethnic minorities, as well as the structural killing of labourers, still prevalent in contemporary Bangladesh?

taken to a secluded area near the Shitalakkhya River in Narayanganj and shot dead, or that they are being drained of blood using syringes before being killed. In various parts of Dhaka, including Kamalapur and Dhanmondi, bloodless bodies have been discovered."

As I read Ahmed Sofa's testimony, a question continued to plague my thoughts in the context of present-day Bangladesh: what distinguishes state-sanctioned killing of one individual from the mass murder of many? Wasn't the genocide on March 25 the ultimate culmination of Pakistan's 24-year history of state violence? Perhaps the only difference lies in the number of victims.

As we ponder the significance of March 25, it is critical to ask ourselves whether the oppressive nature of the state has changed. Are practices such as extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, custodial deaths, and the systematic persecution of religious and ethnic minorities, as well as the structural killing of labourers, still prevalent in contemporary Bangladesh?

Remembering my teacher Dr Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta

On the fateful night of March 25, 1971, Prof Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta was dragged out of his university flat and shot repeatedly on the back by the Pakistan Army. He died later in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital on March 30, 1971. The following is a tribute to the martyred professor.



Dr Shawkat Hussain taught at the Department of English of Dhaka University.

SHAWKAT HUSSAIN

If Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta sir were alive today, he would have turned 103 in July. I was fortunate enough to be in his tutorial class both in my second and third years. In 1967, when I was a first-year student at Dhaka University, JGT – as we used to call him – had just returned from the UK after completing his PhD. He was 47 years old, slightly balding, always smiling, a trifle portly. I'm more than 50 years too late with this tribute, but I'm still grateful to be able to write the following words.

I remember often seeing JGT hanging around at the end of the dark corridor near the mezzanine floor (between the Department of English and the Department of International Relations) where he had his office, sometimes smoking a cigarette, often chatting with senior students walking by. He was the only teacher who did that, the only teacher who seemed to enjoy talking to students. Years later, in the early 1980s (1981-85), that office was mine coincidentally. I felt a secret pride in having the same room that JGT used to have.

I remember eagerly waiting for his lectures in the second year (1968-69). In the promotion test from first year to second year, I had done rather well, so when we started attending his classes on Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, he already knew me by name. Incidentally, Swinburne and his use of classical myths were one area of his PhD research. He often called upon me and a few other class friends to take on dramatic roles from the play and read aloud in class. I was not particularly good at it and didn't enjoy the experience, but it did feel good to be singled out by him. Interestingly, when I was doing my PhD in Canada about a decade later, I once wrote a term paper on Swinburne's interest in the Italian revolutionary Mazzini in *Songs before Sunrise*. I certainly had Guhathakurta sir in mind.

In the English department, you get to know your teachers better in the tutorial classes. The teachers also get to know students much more closely in these small classes. I had tutorial classes with JGT both in second year and third, so I got to know him better than the other teachers. I remember once getting a B++ for a paper on Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, and JGT sir could see that I wasn't too happy with that grade. He said to me with a big smile that I really had not given too much effort on that tutorial, and then he added that if I spent less time hanging around the corridors of the department and more time studying, I could really do well. I have written about this elsewhere, but let me repeat that JGT's words made me "ambitious" academically for the first time in my life, and I did well in my Honours and MA exams. I owe this to Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta sir. A few words of encouragement, a small gesture of

appreciation from a teacher can work wonders for a student. He was that kind of a teacher.

Tragically, we lost him too early. We only had him for a little over two years. I did enjoy the special privilege of being invited to his house in Gandaria, where he lived with his wife and daughter (Dr Meghna Guhathakurta). His wife Bashanti Di, as she was known, was the headmistress of a school, and their house was located within the school compound. On that occasion, JGT gave me Buddhadeva Bose's novel *Golap Keno Kalo* to read. Set in the 1930s and 40s, the novel gives a wonderful account of Dhaka in those decades, and of Buddhadeva Bose's own experiences in the



Prof Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta with his wife Basanti Guhathakurta and daughter Meghna Guhathakurta.

English department. I remember one paragraph where the great writer talks about the "unreadability" of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. This had a direct impact on me. When I was preparing for my Honours final exam, I found Spenser's allegory equally unreadable and decided not to read it, like Buddhadeva Bose.

Besides tutorial classes, departmental picnics afforded opportunities for students to get close to teachers, and for teachers to show their more "human" face to students. In late 1969 or early 1970, we were at a picnic with JGT and other teachers which involved a river cruise up and down the Buriganga River. JGT was a smoker. We watched him trying to light a cigarette and the wind blowing out the matchstick every time he tried. Then he approached a group of us, sitting close to him; cupping his palms expertly around the flame, one of us managed to light JGT's cigarette. It might have been me, for I was an expert smoker in those days. JGT was the only teacher who smoked. I would have enjoyed a smoke with JGT and I feel certain he

to staunch the bleeding, too scared to go to the hospital, just a stone's throw away. They took him to the hospital after curfew was lifted on March 27, but it was too late. He died on March 30 from too much loss of blood.

For those of us who knew him personally, it was an immeasurable loss. When I started teaching in the department about a year later from August 1973, I often thought of JGT, missed not being able to drink tea with him in the lounge, maybe even smoke a cigarette. Personally, it was a great loss not having him around as a colleague and a mentor. I came to know later that Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta sir was a follower of MN Roy's "Radical Humanism" in his youth. In the 1920s and 30s, the radical humanists believed in the armed overthrow of the British government. It certainly would have been wonderful to hear him talk about our own armed struggle against the Pakistanis. It's a great honour to be able to write about JGT to bring alive my memories of a wonderful person and an inspiring teacher.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Copier problem

5 Trill

11 Clarinet's kin

12 Foolish

13 Sky shade

14 Syrian city

15 Ready to go

16 Wilma's husband

17 Male deer

19 Combo instrument

22 Sentimental

24 Clean with effort

26 Memo letters

27 Goddess of the moon

28 Historic event

30 Cracked

31 Have something

32 First Hebrew

letter

34 Male deer

35 Buddy

38 Use a mister on

41 – California

42 Sources of answers

43 Turkey neighbor

44 Hit on the noggin

45 Gumbo veggie

DOWN

1 Resume listings

2 Skilled

3 Insect's feeding apparatus

4 Spot

5 Milk shot

6 Except if

7 Really impressed

9 Sixth sense, briefly

10 Old roadster

16 Make tempura

18 Phone downloads

19 Comedy Central series

20 Uncle's wife

21 Clinic picture

22 Ump's call

23 China setting

25 Thunder sound

29 Be a snitch

30 Implore

33 Took it easy

34 Ailing

36 Cracked

37 Turner of movies

38 Express despair

39 Debate side

40 Operated

41 Book jacket bit

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32

33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43

44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54

5-25

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

CUFF LAMAS
ARIEL INANE
MADEAMOTION
ENDMAN TIS
LULLED CANE
SEINE HITS
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FORT MUSES
OPUS ENTREE
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Tamim ton guides Prime Bank

SPORTS REPORTER

Just a day after leading Bangladesh to an emphatic 10-wicket victory over Ireland to wrap up the three-match ODI series 2-0, ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal struck an unbeaten hundred to guide Prime Bank Cricket Club to a comfortable seven-wicket win over Mohammedan Sporting Club in the Dhaka Premier League yesterday.

Tamim remained not out on 109 off 156 deliveries, striking 12 fours, as Prime Bank chased down a modest 200-run target set by Mohammedan at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah.

Tamim, along with Mohammad Mithun, added 72 runs for the opening stand before the latter was dismissed on 31. Prime Bank then saw wickets of Nasir Hossain and Yasir Ali fall in quick succession before Mushfiqur Rahim, the player of the series of the Tigers' ODI series against Ireland, paired with Tamim in an unbeaten 119 runs stand that saw their side cruise to victory in 42.1 overs. Mushfiqur remained not out on 39 off 57 deliveries.



Earlier, Mohammedan, eyeing their first win of the league, were bundled out for 199 after being sent to bat. Opener Mahidul Islam Ankon's 41 was the highest score for Mohammedan.

Nasir remained pick of the bowlers for Prime Bank, picking up three wickets for 29 runs in six overs. Pacers Rubel Hossain and Rejaur Rahman Raja took two wickets each as Prime clinched their fourth consecutive win.

At BKSP-4, a century from Fazle Mahmud saw Sheikh Jamal seal an 11-run win (via DLS) over Brothers Union. Apart from Mahmud's knock, skipper Nurul Hasan Sohan scored 66 runs in Sheikh Jamal's 287 for 6.

Chasing the revised target of 207 in 29 overs following resumption after a break due to rain, Brothers Union were all-out on 195 runs despite fillets from Sabbir Hossain and Zahiduzzaman.

In the other rain-curtailed game at BKSP-3, Legends of Rugganj sealed a three-wicket win over Shinepukur Cricket Club. Riding on Amite Hasan's century, Shinepukur managed to post 207 all-out.

Rugganj reached the revised target of 168 runs in 36 overs, thanks to 40-run knocks from Chirag Jani and Irfan Shukkur.



Thursday night saw the two GOATS of football, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, reach milestones. CR7 became the player with the most international caps in history with his 197th appearance, surpassing Kuwait's Bader Al-Mutawa, and marked the occasion with two goals in Portugal's 4-0 win over Liechtenstein in a Euro 2024 qualifier. Ronaldo's second goal was also his 100th competitive international strike, more than any other footballer. Meanwhile, Argentina's World Cup-winning captain Messi became only the second player to 800 career goals after Ronaldo as the world champions defeated Panama 2-0 on their return to the pitch.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Camera-shy Bangladesh primed for Seychelles

ANISUR RAHMAN from Sylhet

The way fitness coach Ivan Razlog and physio Kandasmy Senthil Kumar Yoseshwar kept an eye on journalists, especially cameramen and photographers to ensure no footage of the training session was being captured, it seemed as if Bangladesh were set to play a crucial international match at the Sylhet District Stadium today.

Following repeated signals from the sidelines, camerapersons lay down their equipment while Spanish coach Javier Cabrera worked on the game plan. The grand occasion that the team was working towards was the first of two friendlies between two of the lower-ranked teams in the FIFA Rankings: Bangladesh, who are 192nd, and Seychelles in 199th place.

The first FIFA-sanctioned friendly will get underway today at 3:45pm and be broadcast on T Sports.

The hosts, who have been struggling for a long time, however see the two matches against Seychelles, a squad full of amateur footballers aside from two plying their trade in England, as a chance to raise their ranking.

Cabrera was hoping to best Seychelles after taking inspiration from an unofficial match against Malawi in Saudi Arabia, which saw the men in red and green create many chances in a come-from-behind 1-1 draw against an opponent ranked 120th.

"Our target is to win both games. We are not thinking that Seychelles are a weak

team. We have to prove ourselves and show the consistency that we have lacked in previous years. We have always alternated between good and bad performances. But we need to be more consistent and this is a very good opportunity to show the consistency that we did in Saudi Arabia. We have to be very serious about the two games," Cabrera told this reporter after the pre-match press conference.



The 37-year-old also opined that playing against a lower-ranked side did not add any pressure but added that playing in front of a home crowd would.

"It is not pressure. I think it is important to have tension. Again, we have to be smart enough to face the opponents in the most professional way and so it makes sense to think whether they are higher or lower-ranked sides," Cabrera said. "Seychelles played against Comoros, who are 17 places

ahead of Seychelles, but they drew. Don't believe Seychelles is a weak team. That would be the first mistake and we will regret it."

Captain Jamal Bhuiyan is also optimistic of securing a win although the last time the two teams met during a four-nation tournament in Sri Lanka in 2021, Seychelles staged a strong comeback in a 1-1 draw.

"We are ready for the match. The mood in the group is good and everybody is positive about the next two matches. Everyone knows that if we can produce good results in these two matches, it will be good preparation for the upcoming SAFF Championship," Jamal said.

Nevertheless, Bangladesh will want goals from their strikers, including Nigeria-born Eleta Kingsley, who is likely to make his debut for Bangladesh.

On the back of only six training sessions, Seychelles coach Neville Both expressed his desire to win both matches to inspire his young players ahead of the Indian Ocean Games in August.

"I watched Bangladesh's last game and I think they have progressed since 2021. I know the game won't be easy, but I like to say that we will try to win, especially the first one, because we are preparing for August's Indian Ocean Games. We are going to play strongly in the first match and then try our young players in the second game so they can gain experience," said Both, who is also a physical education teacher in Seychelles.

U-17s edge past India

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh beat India 1-0 in the SAFF U-17 Women's Championship, thanks to an own goal from India, at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

The goal came in the 74th minute of an otherwise drab affair, where neither team created too many meaningful chances. It looked as if the championship would produce its first stalemate following a glut of goals before India defender Akhila Rajan headed the ball into her own net while trying to clear a cross inside the box.

India, who were playing their second match after beating Nepal 4-1, were the more attacking side throughout the match though, but Bangladesh keeper Songita Rani Das was solid under the bar, foiling every Indian effort that came her way. The defenders also came to Bangladesh's rescue a few times.

Bangladesh, who came into the match on the back of a 3-0 defeat against Russia following an 8-1 thrashing of Bhutan, failed to build the game from behind as most of the time they tried to take long-ball approach, eventually losing possession in the process on most occasions.



Both teams had a great chance each in the first half, but failed to make that count. After a pretty even first half, India started the second half strongly and initiated many attacks but failed to beat Songita. Sagorika then failed to guide Sauravi Akanda Prity's cross into the net in the 54th minute, despite being inside the box with no markers around. India though continued their domination but that own goal led to their downfall and Bangladesh held firm for the remainder of the match to earn all three points.

Meanwhile, favourites Russia thrashed Bhutan 9-1 in the first match of the day. With two wins and a positive goal difference of 11, the European nation sit on top of the five-team table after the second match day.



Premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan marked his 36th birthday with a noble initiative, inaugurating the 'Shakib Al Hasan Cancer Foundation' at a hotel in the capital yesterday. Shakib, during his speech at the inauguration ceremony, said that this is a first step in his long term plan with the ultimate objective being building a cancer hospital in the country.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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Trans athletes decry ban

REUTERS

Transgender athletes have condemned World Athletics' exclusion of transgender women from elite female competitions, while the decision was welcomed by some sportswomen as a win for fairness.

Athletics' global governing body on Thursday voted to ban transgender women who have gone through male puberty from competing in women's events, citing a "need to protect the female category".

"What's happening is the most vulnerable are being excluded from sport more for political reasons," Canadian cyclist Kristen Worley, a transitioned athlete told Reuters.

Ricki Coughlan, one of Australia's first transgender athletes in professional running, said WA's ruling would embolden the "forces of hate" against transgender people.

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MARADONA must be smiling

The current Napoli side is rightly drawing comparison to the one led by Diego Maradona in the late ‘80s, which won two Serie A titles alongside one UEFA Cup, one Coppa Italia and one Supercoppa title.

While the fans of Italian football continue to struggle to convince their peers from the English Premier League and LaLiga about the relevance of Serie A in European footballing hierarchy, it is with a renewed optimism that they can now boast about Napoli – the new entertainers of European football.

The Serie A may have lost much of its sheen following the Calciopoli scandal in 2006 and the overall economic downturn in the peninsula, causing the once-world’s-best football league looking enviously across its shoulders. However, even during the relative lull of the last decade-and-a-half, the country has seen some fascinating revolutions, albeit for brief periods, from some of the lesser clubs.

First it was Zdenek Zeman’s ultra-attacking Pescara side in Serie B in 2011 – a perfect retort to those who still like to believe that Italian football relies mostly on defensive pragmatism rather than attacking flair.

Then there was Sarriball at Napoli, a style of play which impressed one and all, including Pep Guardiola himself. Next came Gian Piero Gasperini’s Atalanta and Roberto de Zerbi’s Sassuolo, both teams turning heads not just in the peninsula but also across Europe.

Each team had their own philosophy and style of play, and was entertaining and successful to an extent, in their own way. Latest in that line and arguably the most entertaining of all is Luciano Spalletti’s Napoli.

Since the shaven-headed Tuscan took over from

Gennaro Gattuso ahead of the 2021-2022 season, Napoli have been one of the most entertaining sides in Europe. After finishing a creditable third in the Serie A table last season, The Blues have unleashed their full array of entertainment this season.

They have scored a whopping 64 goals already in 27 matches – behind only Bayern Munich, Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain across the top five leagues in Europe. They have also scored the most goals in the Champions League group stage and are already into the quarterfinals of Europe’s premier club competition for the first time following a 5-0 aggregate win over last season’s Europa League winners Frankfurt. At home, they are all but assured of a third Serie A title with a 19-point lead after only 27 match days.

But something that might easily escape notice of casual observers is the fact that Napoli have been the second-most frugal team across top five leagues, second only to Xavi’s Barcelona. And they have suffered only two defeats in the league thus far – the best record alongside the Blaugrana.

This is what sets Spalletti’s side apart from the Pescaras and Atalantas and the Sassuolos of the past few years. The Partenopei have been able to entertain while making sure they do not endanger their title ambitions by doing so.

The biggest surprise is, Napoli are tearing up Serie A and Champions League order after having experienced an exodus of star players, including Lorenzo Insigne, Dries Mertens, Fabian Ruiz, and Kalidou Koulibaly.

The Neapolitan revolution did not come in one day, it was 20 years in the making. Once bankrupt, the club was lifted from the depths by

ambition of its flamboyant owner Aurelio de Laurentis. With their lofty ambition, there was some astute management as well, who made some bargain buys in the preseason transfer window, offloading ageing stars and replacing them with young and promising players. Some of those acquisitions include Kim Min-Jae, Frank Anguissa, Mathias Oliveira and, of course, Khvicha Kvarashkhelia, with the latter having already become a star after forming a lethal partnership with Victor Osimhen.

The current Napoli side is rightly drawing comparison to the one led by Diego Maradona in the late ‘80s, which won two Serie A titles alongside one UEFA Cup, one Coppa Italia and one Supercoppa title.

Before Maradona arrived in the peninsula, no team from the south of the country had ever won a league title. The power structure in football was symbolic of the great north-south divide, which was probably more real in Italy than anywhere else at that time. The Argentine great changed it all and gave the eternally neglected Neapolitans and the southerners a reason to take pride in, an occasion to see the ‘superior’ northerners eye to eye. It was a watershed moment in the history of Italian football, and indeed of Italian society as a whole where football is no lesser a religion than Catholicism.

Since Maradona’s acrimonious departure from Italy though, Napoli had slipped into obscurity as the hegemony of the north, perpetuated by the likes of Juventus, Milan, and Internazionale once again set in.

But it looks like de Laurentis and Spalletti are bringing back the good times with the class of ‘22-23. And Maradona would surely be cheering from above when the likes of Osimhen and Kvarashkhelia proudly hold aloft the coveted Serie A trophy at the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium.



A higher purpose

While takeovers from wealthy financiers have been very much in vogue across top-tier European leagues, one that continues to do its best to resist that trend is the Bundesliga in Germany.

Although the German Football Association (DFB) recognised the need for outside investment and abolished the law that clubs could only be owned by members’ associations, they found a place just north of the middle ground and introduced the “50+1 rule”. It allowed investment, but ensured that the members would always maintain a majority of voting rights.

The only clubs in the Bundesliga that see private entities hold majority stakes are Bayer Leverkusen, owned by pharmaceutical company Bayer, and VfL Wolfsburg, owned by Volkswagen – solely because the clubs were owned by those companies before the inception of the Bundesliga itself.

And while clubs such as RB Leipzig have managed to find loopholes to circumvent the rule, it has never worked against the league as a whole. In fact, it could be argued that the rule is what makes the Bundesliga boast one of the highest average attendances in world football and enables



the infectious fan culture.

The level of football has not suffered greatly either and there is true competition all the way down the ladder. This season, Union Berlin and SC Freiburg became the 12th and 13th German teams to reach a Europa League round of 16. No other nation has had as many.

The caveat, of course, is when you look at the top of the food chain. It has been almost 11 years since Germany saw a champion other than Bayern Munich.

While that could all change this season with Bayern Munich in second place, one point behind Borussia Dortmund with only nine games left, the perennial German champions could restore the natural order when Dortmund travel to Munich on April 1.

There is reason to believe Bayern are the most exposed they have been in recent years, especially after coach Julian Nagelsmann lambasted a “snitch” at a press conference after German outlet Sport Bild published a couple of pages from his playbook for the game against VfL Bochum.

But for fans of teams like Freiburg – who meandered on in the second tier for 15 years until finally earning promotion to the Bundesliga for the first time in their history in the 1993-94 season – and Union Berlin, perhaps no trophy would be worthy of the sacrifice they have made to bring their club so far.

When Union were at risk of losing their licence in 2008 because three terraces on the sides of the Stadion An der Alten Försterei had fallen into disrepair, 2,500 fans volunteered to rebuild the stadium. In the early 90s, when their club was on the verge of bankruptcy, fans initiated a blood drive, naming it “Bleed for Union”. It was a simple slogan that encapsulated exactly the lengths they were willing to go to.

It was not until the 2018-19 that the club had made its way into the top tier of German football. Since then, they have stubbornly climbed up the table and battled for European spots until, this year, finding themselves in a title race.

Union are five points off the top. Their hopes are slim. The inevitability of Bayern is depressing. Yet, you can rest assured in the knowledge that every person in the stands believes in a collective dream. It is not a dream bound to trophies, but to a simple core philosophy: Iron Union.





BIMAN RECRUITMENT Eight involved in question leak still in committees

RASHIDUL HASAN

At least eight Biman officials, who were involved in question paper leak of recruitment test last year, are still members of its examination and recruitment committees, said insiders of the national flag carrier.

Biman has a seven-member examination committee and another seven-member recruitment body. Three to four officials, who were found involved in the scam, are members of each of the committees.

A recruitment test for the post of traffic assistants is scheduled for today.

In October last year, the civil aviation ministry, Biman and Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police formed three separate bodies to investigate the question leak.

The committees found involvement of around 41 Biman officials in the irregularities, said investigators.

After the allegation of question leak surfaced, Biman postponed the written exams for several hundred posts, including junior operator GSE (casual), driver and junior tailor.

According to probe reports of the ministry and Biman committees, Zahid Hossain, former Biman managing director and CEO, supervised the entire recruitment exam process, which was plagued with irregularities such as missing exam committee meeting minutes and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



THE JOY OF KINDNESS... Young volunteers of Feed Doggo Fridays are feeding dogs in the Mohammadpur area of the capital yesterday morning. They have been doing this for 41 weeks.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

NARAYANGANJ CITY Two tonnes of OMS rice 'hoarded' by councillor

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Narayanganj

A councillor of Narayanganj City Corporation has allegedly hoarded two tonnes of rice from the government's OMS programme, depriving at least 400 poor people.

The open market sale programme allows low income people to buy up to five kilograms of rice at Tk 30 per kg, which is lower than the market price.

Ward-17 Councillor Abdul Karim Babu on March 21 allegedly bought two tonnes of rice from a dealer named Saddam Hessain though the rice was meant to be sold among the poor.

Babu is also the first panel mayor of the city corporation and a member of the ruling Awami League.

Officials of the city corporation and Food

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

SCBA ELECTION

The recent polls to the Supreme Court Bar Association were marred by violence and abstention from voting. The pro-Awami League lawyers alleged that the pro-BNP lawyers tried to make the election controversial while the pro-BNP lawyers claimed that the election was rigged by the pro-ruling party attorneys. The Daily Star's Golam Mertoza talked with SCBA President Md Momtaz Uddin Fakir and Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum leader Mahbub Uddin Khokon.

Happy with outcome of the polls

TDS: Senior lawyer Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury is known to be an important and reliable person. He participated in the previous SCBA polls from the pro-AL lawyers' panel. Why did he have to step down?

Montaz: The reasons are unknown. We gave the details at a press conference. He said that votes would be counted using the Electronic Counting Machine. Then I said the candidates and the voters should have been informed about this beforehand. But they were in the dark. I asked why he had done this. Then he kept on saying that we should see this on the projector. We asked why we should watch it if a decision on the use of the machine was not made.

TDS: The are allegations that you disrespected and insulted Munsurul and termed him "biased".

Montaz: Nothing like that happened.

TDS: Why was the police called in on the Supreme Court premises? Who ordered the police to beat up and injure lawyers and journalists?

Montaz: Let me give you the background first. As per the article 15/5 of the rules, ballots should be printed by the general secretary. Then the election subcommittee convener and the general secretary would sign it. On the night before the polling day, they were signing ballots inside the conference room. Suddenly, Mahbub Uddin Khokon and Ruhul Quddus Kazal appeared there, snatched some ballots and tore them up. A case was filed in this connection that very night.

TDS: Pro-BNP lawyers have alleged that ballots were being

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Momtaz Uddin Fakir

'We don't even consider it an election'

TDS: Why did so many incidents happen during the Supreme Court Bar Association polls this year?

Mahbub: Starting from the national election, the Awami League has destroyed each and every electoral system. Similarly, they have ruined the tradition of the SCBA election.

TDS: Why did so many complexities arise even after the formation of an election subcommittee?

Mahbub: Senior lawyer Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury's name came up as the convener. He participated in the previous SCBA polls from the pro-AL lawyers' panel. However, we kept our faith in him because of his personality and honesty. They also agreed on his appointment. The seven member committee was formed unanimously after picking three lawyers each from the camps of the pro-AL and pro-BNP lawyers.

Once the subcommittee got to work, the executive committee members went to Munsurul and told him that they would print the ballots. This job had been done by the electoral subcommittee since 1948.

TDS: You were not present there. What is the basis of your complaint?

Mahbub: Munsurul told me this later. SCBA President Md Momtaz Uddin Fakir told Munsurul in presence of me that he was "biased" and he was "showing favourism".

TDS: A views-exchange meeting was held with the subcommittee on March 12.

Mahbub: In that meeting also, Momtaz Uddin told Munsurul



Mahbub Uddin Khokon

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

5 more lives lost on roads Reckless driving blamed for BRTC bus crash in Jhalakathi

STAR REPORT

At least five people were killed and 47 others injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday.

In Jhalakathi's Rajapur, two were killed and 25 others injured as a bus of BRTC hit a roadside electric pole.

The dead are Mehedi Hasan, supervisor of the bus, and Mohammad Parvez, a passenger, said police.

The driver locked into an altercation with the supervisor in Barishal. He had been driving recklessly ever since, said Jamal Sharif, a passenger of the bus.

Around an hour later, the driver lost control of the bus and hit a roadside electric pole, he added.

Mehedi and Parvez died on the spot. The injured were rushed to a local hospital, said Pulok Chandra Roy, officer-in-charge of Rajapur Police Station.

Meanwhile, in Cumilla's Daudkandi, two were killed and two others injured as a bus ran over a battery run three-wheeler on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Raipur Dighirpar area.

The dead are Yakub Ali, 30, of Malikhil village of Daudkandi upazila; and Jothna Begum, 55, of Chotna of Debidwer upazila, said police.

Jothisna died on the spot while Yakub breathed his last at a local hospital, said Jahangir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Daudkandi Highway Police Station.

Police seized the bus, but its driver and his helper managed to flee, he added.

In Jhenaidah's Kaliganj, one was killed and 20 others were injured when a bus fell into a roadside ditch.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

RELATED PHOTO ON PAGE 2

Webb telescope spots swirling clouds on remote planet



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Swirling hot sand clouds have been detected on a distant planet by Nasa's James Webb Space Telescope.

Researchers pinpointed silicate cloud features in the distant planet's atmosphere.

They found that the atmosphere is constantly rising, mixing and moving during its 22-hour day, bringing hotter material up and pushing colder material down.

Researchers say the resulting brightness changes are so dramatic that it is the most variable planetary-mass object known to date.

The team, led by Brittany Miles of the University of Arizona, also made clear detections of water, methane and carbon monoxide with data from the telescope, and found evidence of carbon dioxide.

This is the largest number of molecules ever identified all at once on a planet outside our solar system.

Catalogued as VHS 1256 b, the planet is about 40 light years away from Earth and orbits not one, but two stars over a 10,000-year period.

Dr Miles said: "VHS 1256 b is about four times farther from its stars than Pluto is from our sun, which makes it a great target for Webb."

"That means the planet's light is not mixed with light from its stars."

According to the researchers, higher up in its atmosphere, where the silicate clouds are churning, temperatures reach a scorching 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit (830 degrees Celsius).

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Ukrainian servicemen fire an M119 105mm howitzer at Russian positions near Bakhmut, on Thursday, amid Russian invasion of Ukraine.

PHOTO: AFP

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ের সম্মানিত যাত্রী সাধারণের সেবা বৃদ্ধির লক্ষ্যে আসন্ন পবিত্র ঈদ-উল-ফিতর এ আন্তরনগর ট্রেনের অগ্রিম টিকিট (১৭-৩০ এপ্রিল ২০২৩ তারিখ পর্যন্ত) শুধুমাত্র অনলাইনের মাধ্যমে ক্রয় করা যাবে। এছাড়াও বর্তমানে জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র যাচাইয়ের মাধ্যমে রেলওয়ের আন্তরনগর ট্রেনের টিকেটিং ব্যবস্থা ও অনলাইনের মাধ্যমে ক্রয়কৃত টিকেট অনলাইনে রিফান্ড এর ব্যবস্থা চালু করা হয়েছে।

যাত্রীদের প্রতি নির্দেশনা ও শর্তাবলীঃ

- আন্তরনগর ট্রেনের টিকিট প্রত্যাশীগণ দ্রুত জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/পাসপোর্ট/জন্মনিবন্ধন যাচাই পূর্বক নিবন্ধন করবেন।
- নিবন্ধনের ক্ষেত্রে মোবাইলের মেসেজ অপশনে গিয়ে BR <space> NID নম্বর <space> জন্ম তারিখ (জন্ম তারিখের ফরম্যাট-জন্ম সাল/মাস/দিন) লিখে ২৬৯৬৯ নম্বরে এসএমএস প্রেরণ করতে হবে। ফিরতি এসএমএস-এর মাধ্যমে নিবন্ধন সফল বা ব্যর্থ হয়েছে কিনা তা জানিয়ে দেওয়া হবে।
- <https://eticket.railway.gov.bd> ওয়েবসাইট অথবা "Rail Sheba" app এ সঠিক NID নম্বর ও জন্ম তারিখ verify পূর্বক অন্যান্য তথ্য প্রদান সাপেক্ষে রেজিস্ট্রেশন প্রক্রিয়া সফলভাবে সম্পন্ন করতে হবে।
- বিদেশী নাগরিকগণ পাসপোর্ট নম্বর প্রদান ও পাসপোর্টের ছবি আপলোড করার মাধ্যমে নিবন্ধন সম্পন্ন করবেন।
- ১২-১৮ বছর বয়সী যাত্রীগণ জন্মনিবন্ধন নম্বর প্রদান ও জন্মনিবন্ধন সনদ আপলোড করার মাধ্যমে নিবন্ধন সম্পন্ন করবেন।
- সফলভাবে এনআইডি/পাসপোর্ট/জন্মনিবন্ধন যাচাই পূর্বক নিবন্ধন ব্যতীত কোনো যাত্রী আন্তরনগর ট্রেনের টিকেট ক্রয় করতে পারবেন না। স্ট্যান্ডিং যাত্রীদের ক্ষেত্রেও রেজিস্ট্রেশন বাধ্যতামূলক।
- একজন যাত্রী সর্বোচ্চ চারটি টিকিট ক্রয় করতে পারবেন। তবে অনলাইনে টিকিট ক্রয়ের সময় সহযাত্রীদের নাম ও জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/জন্ম নিবন্ধন নম্বর লিপিবদ্ধ করতে হবে।
- ভ্রমণকালে সকল যাত্রীকে অবশ্যই নিজস্ব এনআইডি বা জন্ম নিবন্ধন সনদের ফটোকপি/সফটকপি অথবা পাসপোর্ট/ছবি সংলগ্ন আইডি কার্ড সাথে রাখতে হবে। টিকেটের উপরে মুদ্রিত যাত্রীর নাম ও NID নম্বর যাত্রী কর্তৃক প্রদর্শিত পরিচয়পত্রের সাথে না মিললে যাত্রীকে বিনা টিকেট ভ্রমণ-এর দায়ে অভিযুক্ত করা হবে এবং বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ের প্রচলিত আইন অনুযায়ী ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

জিডি-৫৫৩

বাংলাদেশ রেলওয়ে

আপনার আস্থা আমাদের অনুপ্রেরণা



Bittipara Baddhabhumi Smiriti Stambha is built on a mass killing site of Kushtia to honour the martyrs of the Liberation War. PHOTO: DIPAN NANDY

‘Like a morning after a nuclear attack’

STAR REPORT

A World Bank team that visited different areas of war-torn Bangladesh in June 1971 likened Kushtia to a bombed-out “WWII German town”.

Shocked by the atrocities committed by the Pakistani military, the team during their short visit found people there “dazed” and “terrified”.

The team visited Jashore, Khulna, Chalna and Kushtia from June 3 to 6 in 1971 and depicted the devastation and atrocities by the Pakistani army in a report.

On April 15, some 20 days after the genocide in Dhaka, the Pakistani army moved into Kushtia from Jhenaidah.

The team, which roamed Kushtia for one and a half hours, in its report noted the utter devastation of the town. After overcoming the “strong resistance” from the freedom fighters in the early days, the army’s punitive action devastated the town, it said.

“It was like the morning after a nuclear attack,” said Hendrik Van der Heijden, a member of the team and an economist at the World Bank posted in Pakistan, said after visiting Kushtia.

“It lasted 12 days and left Kushtia virtually deserted and destroyed,” he said.

The military brutality reduced the population in Kushtia town to 5,000 from 40,000. The report said ninety percent of the houses, shops, banks and other buildings were destroyed.

“The city looked like a WWII German town having undergone strategic bombing attacks. People were sitting around dazed,” it said.

“I asked them [officials of Pakistan] to show me a shop where food was being sold. ... It was impossible to find one. Kushtia, as someone told me, is the My Lai of the West Pakistan Army,” Hendrik said referring to the infamous massacre in the Vietnam War.

On March 16, 1968, American soldiers indiscriminately slaughtered more than 500 civilians, including young girls and women, in a Vietnamese village called My Lai.

GENOCIDE 1971

Kushtia’s tale of unimaginable brutality

“The killers used to play music loudly on loudspeakers so that others could not hear the victims’ screams. ... Everyone was hacked to death with their hands and legs tied. One of my cousins was pregnant then. Her stomach was cut off,” said Halim Haque.

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR,
with DIPAN NANDY back from Kushtia

A dilapidated tin-shed stands precariously at Bittipara area in Kushtia.

For someone new to the area, the three-roomed structure looks like any old building decaying with the ravages of time. But this crumbling structure is a silent witness to crimes against humanity carried out by the marauding Pakistani army and their local collaborators during the 1971 Liberation War.

It was originally the office of the “Cotton Development Board” but during the war, it became a torture centre and mass killing site of the Pakistani army.

“The Pak army, along with local collaborators, would pick up people from various areas and mercilessly torture them there,” says Abdul Latif Biswas, a freedom fighter, now in his late 70s.

still sends shivers down their spine.

Pakistanis picked up Bangalees from Kushtia, Chuadanga, Meherpur and other places and brought them to Bittipara. On many occasions, they were blindfolded with their hands tied behind them. They shot, beheaded and bayoneted them. Many women were killed after rape. Many bodies were buried in a single grave, according to the locals.

US based filmmaker Anindo Atik, has made a 103-minute documentary titled “Battle of Kushtia” where he vividly describes the genocide in the district especially at Bittipara.

According to the documentary, freedom fighter Abdul Motleb’s father was dragged there. He was forced to dig his grave and buried alive.

Talking to The Daily Star, Anindo Atik says, “Bittipara is one of the largest killing fields in the country that remains uncared for. Although a memorial was built in the area, there is no mention at the memorial of what happened there.”

Kushtia.

Kohinoor Villa is one of the killing sites situated in Deshwali Para in Kushtia town. Locally known as “Ekattorer Roktakto Bari”, Biharis and local collaborators slaughtered at least 17 people there on the night of September 18, 1971.

Of the deceased, 16 were from the families of two brothers – Rabiul Haque Mallick and Arshed Haque Mallick, who were owners of the villa. The reason for the killing was that the family used to help freedom fighters.

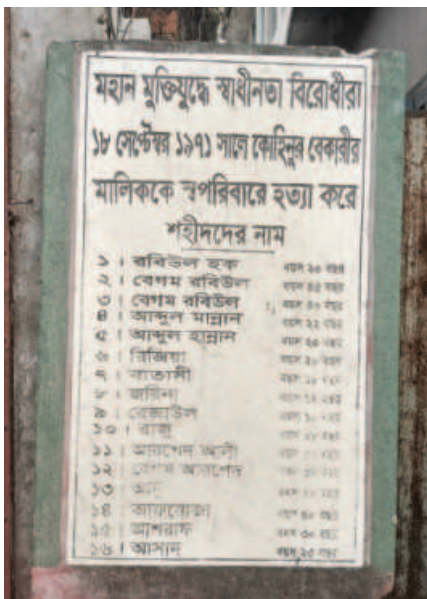
Rabiul’s nephew Halim Haque who came back from India after the Liberation War and is now living in Kushtia, says he came to know the details of the brutalities from locals.

“I have no words to describe the atrocities committed by Pakistanis. The killers used to play music loudly on loudspeakers so that others could not hear the victims’ screams,” he adds.

“Everyone was hacked to death with their hands and legs tied. One of



Another torture center of Pakistan army and their local collaborators at Bittipara, Kushtia. PHOTO: DIPAN NANDY



Present state of Kohinoor Villa. On the night of September 18, 1971, local collaborators of Pakistan army brutally killed at least 17 people.



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Opposite the building, there is an area filled with bushes. It is believed to be the place where the Pak army buried many of the Bangalees they killed, he said.

Apart from the Cotton Board Office, there were two more torture centres in the locality. Locals say how the Pakistani army tortured their victims

Rafiqul Islam, a local of Bittipara, says workers found five skulls when they were digging a piece of land while constructing the foundation of his building. The skulls were later handed over to the authorities of a privately-run genocide museum in Khulna.

The Pakistani army carried out atrocities in many other places in

my cousins was pregnant then. Her stomach was cut off,” he says.

The next morning, the locals found bodies lying haphazardly in the bathroom, kitchen, and corridors of the residence. Some bodies were also dumped in the drains. Bodies of the female victims were found undressed and the killers also looted valuables

from the house.

Freedom fighters in Kushtia say the Pakistani forces inflicted their rage on the people of the town so brutally because they had been defeated by the freedom fighters on March 30-31, 1971 – the early days of the war.

When the Pakistan army was approaching Kushtia to recapture it on April 16 and 17, they virtually set fire to all houses that came their way.

Giving a description of the savagery, Gawher Nayeem Wahra, a climate change and disaster management expert from Kushtia, refers to the events of April 17, 1971.

Around 25-26 men, women and children of two families took shelter in a deep hole between Ganges-Kobadak Irrigation Project canal and railway line in Chandinagar of Bheramara, to save their lives on that day.

The Pakistani military was going to Mirpur in Kushtia through that way. Unfortunately those who were hiding were discovered by the soldiers who promptly killed 18 people with brush fire in the blink of an eye. The entire pit was filled with blood.

A pregnant woman died in the brush fire, but her child was born. One of the surviving relatives took the baby, he says.

This brutal killing is included in Gawher’s book titled “Ekattorer Samajik Itihas: Protokhodorshi Boyane” based on testimonies of eyewitnesses.

In Kushtia town, Pakistani forces in association with local collaborators picked six persons from different

families of Thanapara on the night of August 28 and took them to the bank of the Gorai river. One of them was released and remaining four were killed, says Gawher.

Several boatmen who came from Doulatpur to sell the firewood in the town happened to be there. Three or four boatmen were killed. The Pak Army did not spare anyone.

“They threw all the bodies into the river,” he said.

An area stretching 4 kilometres from Renwick Badh to Kushtia Maha Shamshan (crematorium), on the bank of the Gorai River, are mass killing sites and mass graves, according to Lalim Haque, a freedom fighter of the area.

The Pakistan Army base was in Kushtia police lines while Roxy Cinema Hall was the headquarters of the peace committee and the Biharis. After torturing Bangalees in these two places, they were shot or slaughtered at a solitary place beside the railway or the char of the Gorai river, say locals.

Abul Ahsan Chowdhury, a retired professor at Islamic University, Kushtia, says the forces tortured and killed Kushtia Mahila College teacher Durgadas Saha; renowned singer Meer Ahia; footballer Sarwardy; and businessmen Rafiq Ahmed and Hasan Foyez, among many others, during the Liberation War.

“The Pakistani army and their collaborators killed some of Kushtia’s best minds” says Ahsan, who is also a researcher and folklorist.

ESSAY

War and peace and poetry and poets

This paper has been edited for brevity. It was first presented in the Poetry Conference’s panel for international participants on the theme of poetry and peace. All translations from Bengali poets in this piece are by Fakrul Alam unless specified otherwise.

FAKRUL ALAM

How can you talk about peace without taking into account war? Both are subjects not only of Tolstoy’s great novel but also of the two founding epic poems of Greek as well as Indian literature. About the *Iliad*, I recall now the great essay the French philosopher Simone Weil wrote titled, “*The Iliad*, or The Poem of Force.” To her, the epic reveals the overwhelming power of force unleashed by war/ rage/ lust that it unleashes or induces. But the poem to her also shows human love offsetting the deaths and horrors marring human relationships, implying the need for peace and making it an imperative in human relations. The subject of the poem then is also pity/ sympathy/compassion. These are qualities needed to counter wrath and reaffirm the place of love for each other. I think of WH Auden’s great poem induced by the onset of the Second World War, “September 1, 1939”. Its immortal and wise line tells

can’t resist talking about the late 19th century Bangla prose epic, *Bishad Sindhu*, a masterpiece that I translated into English and that Bangla Academy published in 2018 as *Ocean of Sorrow*. The narration is entirely in prose, but again and again its author Mir Mosharr al Hossain comes close to poetry in discussing the anguish and distress as well as the intense emotions of losing loved ones caught up in the turmoil of war. Indeed, as we come to the end of the mammoth epic—500 plus pages in my translation—we can read the narrator seeking God’s mercy and trying to figure out the divine scheme of things. As he puts it, “No poet has the ability to exercise his imagination to articulate that plan or explain its essence to everyone either.” Clearly, it is poetry that comes closest to articulating the empathy that war necessitates and God’s plan to have it in the scheme of things.

If we move to dramatic poetry on the subject of war and peace, it is Shakespeare’s name that comes foremost

the Crusades.

Hamlet begins in the ramparts of a castle and ends with numerous dead people, including the protagonist, but Fortinbras, now destined to be King of Denmark as well as Norway, indicates that there has been enough war; peace was what was needed now. War is destructive and exhausting; though the impulse to war is part of human nature, so is the urge to have peace prevail everywhere. That seems to be the message Shakespeare has for us all in this and other plays.

Truly, poets are best in articulating the desire for peace amongst peoples. They know it is difficult but they also know it is so desirable. I think of WB Yeats in “The Lake Isles of Innisfree” where he talks about an idyllic isle where the poet could “have some peace...for peace comes dropping slow”. Always, it is something to be craved for because the world knows too much turmoil; the mind and the body will always seek peace. It may be elusive but must be sought for.

his most famous poem, “Dover Beach” where war as well as the ferment of ideas calling into question faith were troubling all eminent Victorians. Love appears then the best antidote to such turmoil-inducing things. Arnold is troubled not merely by a receding “Sea of Faith”, but a world “swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, /where ignorant armies clash by night.”

More than any previous centuries, the 20th has been most devastated by wars. Imperialism, nationalism and modern weapons of mass destruction, including, most horrifically, nuclear bombs on the one hand, and unending missions and visions to thwart warmongers and bloody expansionists on the other, have resulted in war poetry and poetry of resistance.

Take the First World War English poet, Wilfred Owen’s moving poem “Anthem for Doomed Youth” as an instance. Its first stanza is worth quoting in full for the way he remembers the young lives lost and the endless corpses left behind by war machines fueled by ethnic hatred and nationalist egos—

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles’ rapid rattle Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;

Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

But if war fomented by nationalism appeared to be overwhelming and all-engulfing, and if imperial egos seemed to be also involved, the 20th century saw poetry of resistance as well. Take the Bengali poet—our national poet—Nazrul Islam—as an instance.

He had joined the British Army at one point, but soon he would become the rebel poet who would use poetry as a weapon against unjust wars and make it a literary genre that would help take oppressed people to peace and brotherhood. The poet, he claims, is volcanic, tempestuous and fierce in the cause of rebellion in raising the “flag of man’s triumph” but he is also the harbinger of peace, “Orpheus’s lute, / Lulling the restless ocean to sleep,” bringing “calm to a fevered world” by enthralling people with “melodies” of peace.

The poet, then, takes up poetry to protest against tyranny and unjust governments, but his penchant really is for peace. But Nazrul’s optimism about the poet’s role is not shared by all poets. I am thinking here of my favourite Bengali poet of the 20th century, Jibanananda Das, who wrote about darkness that had descended on the world with the Second World War, and on partition and global uncertainty caused by massive destruction. This surely is why his 1947 collection of poems is called *The Darkness of Seven Stars* and why he includes in it poems about shipping lanes “crowded by magnetic mines

and unending convoys” and “splinters” lighting up “skies into countless ghosts.” Where could peace be found and the rebel poet appear in such a situation?

Rabindranath Tagore’s conclusion to his speech, “Crisis in Civilization” comes to my mind at this point. It was written as the Second World War broke out, confirming his worst fears about nationalism, expansionist and imperial proclivities. This is what the poet-savant had to say then: “As I look around I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man. I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in his history after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice.”

Let me conclude by talking about our own Liberation War and the anguish and pain felt by poets everywhere at what was happening to Bangladesh after the genocidal bid to thwart Bangladeshis from becoming independent. American beat poet Allen Ginsberg’s 1971 poem/ song, “September on Jessoro Road” articulates his distress and grief at war refugee suffering as well as his rage at the American support of the Pakistani war machine:

Ring O ye tongues of the world for their woe

Ring out ye voices for Love we don’t know

Ring out ye bells of electrical pain

Ring in the conscience of America brain.

And here is the Bengali poet Shamsur Rahman celebrating freedom unforgettably and the peace that it could bring in:

Freedom, you’re the wife’s raven tresses, tempestuous in the untamed wind.

Freedom, you’re: The colorful kurta on a young boy.

The playful sunlight on a girl’s supple cheeks.

Freedom, you’re: The home amidst a flower garden; the warble of koel-bird.

The twittering leaves of antediluvian banyan trees.

My notebook of poetry, to pen poems as I please.

[Translated from ‘Shadinota Tumi’ (Bangla) by Syed Manzoorul Islam.]

Poets keep evolving in amazing ways. One of my favourite Bangladeshi poets of recent decades, Shaheed Quaderi, has a postmodern take on poetry, war and peace in “Greetings, Dearest” where the poet-lover assures his beloved that he will “fix it so that/night and day the army, navy and air force will circle round and salute/only you, dearest” (Kaiser Haq’s translation). Love is the best prescription for peace and antidote to war! Death is inevitable, but whether in war or peace, poets will keep producing beautiful poetry about life, hope, love, and peace despite war, death and the decay of values—forever and forever.

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COLLAGE:
SALMAN SAKIB
SHAHRIYAR

us unequivocally the kind of essential truths poetry can highlight for us—“We must love one another or die.”

The Indian epic I have in mind which deals with war but also implies the need for peace is the *Mahabharata*, Vyasa’s enduring masterpiece. When Krishna is given the task of becoming the envoy of peace, he takes it with the conviction that war can only lead to endless death; it must thus be avoided and peace pursued assiduously. Here and elsewhere in the epic, it is implied that amity and harmony must be sought actively and war is not the only option available when human relationships are scanted.

On the subject of epic narratives, I

to my mind. Whether we turn to the history plays, or the Roman plays, or the tragedies, we find the centrality of the theme. Whether depicting civil war, or war among neighbouring kingdoms, or wars issuing from imperial expansionist designs, we find Shakespeare dwelling on the psychology of war mongers and the deeply felt need for peace of ordinary people. *Henry IV, Part I* begins, for instance, with the king expressing the exhaustion internecine wars have brought to Britain and the havoc done to nature—human or nonhuman—by it. He would like the island to experience peace, although ironically he would now like to aid the Christian military cause in

As the 17th century English mystical poet George Herbert puts it, “Sweet peace, where dost thou dwell? I humbly crave/ Let me once know.” Similarly, the 19th century American poet Emily Dickinson expresses intensely the need for something which is ever elusive and sometimes something of an illusion—“I many times thought peace had come/ When Peace was far away—/ As wrecked Men—deem they sight the Land—At Centre of the Sea”. It may seem near but is never that easily graspable. After all, life is a perpetual attempt to experience “fictitious shores/Before the harbors be.”

Emily Dickinson’s English contemporary, Matthew Arnold, wrote

TALESPEOPLE SPIELS

Take note

How note-taking can come in handy when you’re short of inspiration

SABRINA FATMA AHMAD

As an “elder millennial”, I spent an analog childhood as a literature student where all the classroom notes, essay assignments, and diary entries had to be done by hand. While I’ve caught up with the times and learned to make my way around digital platforms and tools, I still derive pleasure from taking actual pen-to-paper notes when it comes to doing a brain dump, and have, over the years amassed a not inconsiderable number of notebooks that have been turned into sketchbooks and bullet journals, recording the mundane minutiae of my days, and from which I occasionally find inspiration when pressed for time and find myself in need of material or a reference for a feature or a creative piece.

My sister-from-another-mister Tarin, who is on the other end of the millennial spectrum, is an avid reader and a talented photographer. She records her life through beautifully composed shots, with poignant captions about the moment, her state of mind, and her literary/pop culture inspirations du jour for each image. While she insists she’s not a writer, each post, each clip, and each reel is a thoughtful witness account of the world as she sees it.

And then there’s my kid Usraat, a true-blue Gen-Z, who, like many of her generation, will “story” every waking moment on the fly, blurry



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

images and keyboard smashing interspersed with memes and reels to create a chaotic, organic narrative, which, in calmer moments, she can reference for more thoughtful meditations on her journey and growth.

While our approaches have changed with technology, the basic idea remains the same: to record the world around us as we see it, to capture a moment for posterity, and more often than not, these little records become the springboard for

longer pieces, raw material for other creative work.

Every so often, when I am trying to encourage someone to take up the Sehri Tales challenge, or helping a new feature writer learn how to pitch stories, or getting approached by beginner writers seeking tips on how to get going, or commiserating with professional writers about their latest bout of writer’s block, the question that arises is: What do I write about? And for me, the answer goes back to that one very simple piece of advice I received very early on in my career: look around you, and take notes, and revert back to these when you’re short of material. It is a practice that has paid back a thousandfold—providing me with inspiration, context, references and data. If that blank page and blinking cursor try to team up on you, there’s no better ammo to have in your corner.

Every Ramadan, the Sehri Tales challenge brings a month of creative writing prompts released daily at midnight, with participants getting between sehri time and 6 AM to submit their artwork and flash fiction. Read the best of each day’s Sehri Tales selections on The Daily Star website and on Daily Star Books’ Facebook and Instagram pages. Watch this print space for the Talespeople’s weekly reflections on creative writing.

Sabrina Fatma Ahmad is an author and journalist. She is the founder of the annual Sehri Tales challenge.

POETRY

a night poem

RIFAT ISLAM ESHA

my eyes can barely take the weight of sleep
now
now that you are wording sentences on wars
and those who are left behind, those who are left on foot
running,
hiding,
dying, dying for real –

i am trying to ration my poetry
for you and i:
because
i dared to memorise the glow of the sun
by staring straight at it in the morning –
all by myself, alone,
while capturing an image of the clear blue sky; clouds softly formed
like your years-ago fingers on my face; as you slept a little –
somewhere else you call home, maybe.

some days i make do with the memory
to breathe, unaware
because
because my everyday
contains the images of
faraway wars too
and the wars we both share:
wars so close to our eyes, blinding, blindly tucked in our skins;
wars of desperate stomachs, fearful hands and legs clinging on to
whatever helps to survive a day

because my everyday
contains images of the skeleton of a city
which gets fleshed by
faceless people – sweating, grating their spines –
just to be burned alive.

Rifat Islam Esha is a poet. For more updates on her work, you can follow her on Instagram: @rifatiesha.

Interview with a Birangona

From *Seam*, a book in the Crab Orchard Series in Poetry, co-published with Southern Illinois University Press. Copyright © 2014 by Tarfia Faizullah.

I realised that I really care about women's voices.

I do think that art has a function, it is not just necessary but essential. Art is where you see the human spirit, what we would call the soul; it's an important place to find, recover and discover your own humanity.

I was lucky enough to interview Ferdousi Priyabhashini before she passed away. There

DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA



Juniors massaged student leader’s legs because he was preparing for the Olympics

“I have been dreaming about representing my country in the Olympics as a sprinter since my childhood, a stage of age I passed 40 years ago. These junior students of my dormitory, I mean our dormitory, did not let me take care of my legs all by myself.”

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

The country erupted in joy at news that a student leader from Bangladesh Mountains University is going to partake in running events of the Paris Olympics next year.

There was joy because for so long the country was unable to send a worthy opponent to the Games, but this youth – whose preparation for the event has started more than a year in advance – emerged with the message that the records of Usain Bolt and Mo Farah could be in danger.

This student leader was too down-to-earth to let the country know about his breathtaking preparation. Instead, a photographer had to capture this scrumptious moment very secretly while the leader was receiving a leg massage from juniors in a room isolated from the rest of the world.

As the photo went viral, people didn’t take much time to react.

Some believed that this latent talent should get some government aid as he was going to represent our country in the world’s biggest sporting event, while others thought that this wannabe Mo Farah should get global, if not then at least South Asian, attention.

The scene that an unknown photographer captured had artistic value – the man was watching amateur TikTok videos wearing a barely mentionable piece of clothing while his juniors, young enough to be his sons if he had gotten married when he entered the university as a fresher, was taking care of his precious legs.

Empty packets of medicine in his room indicated what he had to go through to get ready to represent his motherland on the global stage.

“I have been dreaming about representing my country in the Olympics as a sprinter since my childhood, a stage of age I passed 40 years ago. These junior students of my dormitory, I mean our dormitory, did not let me take care of my legs all by myself. If I ever win a gold medal in Olympics, half will go to these juniors, I promise,” Burel, the young leader and Olympic aspirant, said.

When asked why they were taking care of their senior with such devotion, the juniors said, “First of all, we want to say ‘Sohomot Bhai’ as we agree with what our leader said previously. Secondly, our Bhai is of our fathers’ age. So, we took care of him with great honour. Thirdly, he is going to represent our country

in the Olympics. So why wouldn’t we take such good care of him?”

Controversy, however, is always around the corner in Bangladesh. Despite being part of a heroic step in, the student leader had to face a lot of criticism, which he clearly didn’t deserve, according to him.

People allegedly blamed him for getting a body massage free of cost. Some even said such a half-nude photo of him circulating on social media could degrade the morals of the youth. Some even went so far as to say that he was forcing his juniors to massage his legs.

As Satireday believes that the pursuit of knowledge is not bound by the pursuer’s age, we asked this elderly youth if the last allegation was true.

Burel raged, “I cannot believe I am going to make these stupid people proud one day. How could you say something like that about me? Ask these boys. If they say that I used them to massage my body, I will leave this dormitory.”

When reminded that he had already crossed his residential permission a decade ago, he said, “That’s another lie about me. If education knows no age, how could a student lose his studentship? If I don’t lose my studentship, why should I leave dormitory?”

What to do if you like Nahubo

CHARPAHAR HAI

There have been few songs in the history of this country that united as many people as Coke Studio Bangla’s Nahubo has.

People on social media have been united in their hatred for the song. Complaints ranged from having to read three sets of subtitles, to the song just not being good. There has also been outrage that a channel calling itself Bangla are not featuring enough songs in the language.

But what if you actually liked the song? How are you going to show your face in public, or argue its case.

The following are a few tips:

GO FOR HIGHER STUDIES

To keep up with, or even have a hope of winning, arguments about the song on social media, you need higher education. Make sure you study hard and get enrolled in one of the leading private universities in Dhaka. This is not an ad but we suggest you go to Private University Pvt limited which will soon build a campus of their own, according to an article published on Shout.



VISUAL: STAR

“My husband is a corporate sellout, so he always listens to songs released by this capitalist venture without expending any thought to how the artists are being treated. I want nothing to do with this as I am a left-leaning activist. As such I have invested in the latest Universe S earbuds for him,” says Naseka Sohan, a working woman.

MAKE SURE YOUR PARTNER IS GENEROUS

“My husband is a corporate sellout, so he always listens to songs released by this capitalist venture without expending any thought to how the artists are being treated. I want nothing to do with this as I am a left-leaning activist. As such I have invested in the latest Universe S earbuds for him,” says Naseka Sohan, a working woman.

Naseka’s advice maybe suitable for many couples to ensure they do not have to participate in their partner’s musical choices.

FIND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN NASEK NASEK AND NAHUBO

Nasek Nasek, the first song by Coke Studio Bangla, was an immense hit. It was also sung by Animes Roy, the same guy who sung Nahubo. That was also a rock song. So, if you find enough similarities between the two songs, you can point out to people poo-pooing on Nahubo that they were not being inclusive and were jealous that a non-Bangla speaking person was the first artist to be featured twice on Coke Studio Bangla.

PLAY THE MISOGYNY CARD

Remind every critic that Daughter of Coastal is a woman and they were unable to take the fact that a woman could perform rap, a music form considered a masculine one. Call them misogynists.

FORGET ABOUT IT

Or, you can just remember that it is supposed to be subjective and forget the whole thing. There will be another song soon.

Not such a good boy after all

Police dog that ‘discovered’ bodies took another dog’s credit

AFIZAN HADIAR

What this correspondent is about to break to you is a story of betrayal, heartbreak and of course, utter and complete disappointment.

Last week, Puma, the goodest boy on the force, found six bodies from the rubble of an unnatural disaster. Everyone was quite proud of Puma, especially since the sheer amount of debris would’ve made any dog miss out on the bodies.

However, Puma, being as exceptional as he is, sniffed them out.

Everyone was overjoyed. Puma received more pats on the head than he ever did before. The treats kept on coming. And if that wasn’t enough reward for our good boy, Puma also received the “Police Chief’s Medal” (the highest honour among police), which was previously only awarded to human cops. He was the envy of all the dogs on the force.

The police chief said, “Well I had no doubt that Puma would be the one to retrieve the bodies. Ever since he was a pup, he was so sharp. We used to call him ‘The Hound’ for the kind of nose that he has on him. He could always tell from afar if a cop hadn’t washed his hands after going number 1. From then on, we knew he had serious talent.”

“Everybody thought that I was just jealous when I barked out the truth. A week ago, the lieutenant called me to his room and said that I’m off the leash. That I have been a bad boy,” whimpered Lattu.

However, upon in-depth investigation, this correspondent found that Puma stole credit from another dog on the force, Lattu, who was the real good boy that sniffed out the bodies.

This correspondent met with Lattu on Wednesday, who was found chasing his

own tail at an alley near the Police Academy building. He seemed quite anxious.

When this correspondent asked why Lattu was loitering in the alley, he replied “woof, ruff, woof woof, ruff ruff, whoof”, which loosely translated to, “They burned me man. I found those bodies and they burned me. Puma isn’t the good boy you think he is.”



Asked to elaborate, Lattu said, Puma went east while I covered the west front. After around seven minutes or so, I found the bodies. I kept calling out to my lieutenant, barking. Minutes later, Puma comes running. He shoved my paw off the body and scowled. And that’s exactly when everyone came in and lo and behold, Puma saved the day.

“Everybody thought that I was just jealous when I barked out the truth. A week ago, the lieutenant called me to his room and said that I’m off the leash. That I have been a bad boy,” whimpered Lattu.

This correspondent would’ve asked more questions but before she could, Lattu

got distracted and started barking at a homeless man.

Upon meeting Puma, this correspondent understood his allure. Meeting this correspondent, Puma started wagging his tail and stuck his tongue out. This correspondent almost got distracted by his charms and found herself

compromising her journalistic integrity by patting Puma. He was good, a little too good.

However, after a game of fetch, Puma blurted out the truth.

“Look, Lattu wasn’t ever going to make it. He was a dog adopted from a corner shop. I, on the other hand, am a premium breed. The police chief’s daughter picked me out herself.

“Dogs like Lattu just don’t figure out the game as well as dogs like me do, that’s all. He just needed to work harder. But it seems nobody wants to work these days. Lattu was just barking up the wrong tree I suppose,” added Puma.



PHOTO: FREEPIK.COM