

Historic water tank now decaying away



Russia, China not creating military alliance



Eleta dreams of scoring plenty



Bike sales drop 30pc in two months

SUED UNDER DSA

Woman dies in Rab custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An employee of a Naogaon union parishad land office who stood accused in a case under the Digital Security Act died in the custody of Rab-5 after suffering haemorrhages of the brain.

Rab officers told doctors Sultana Jasmine, 38, suffered a fall.

Her son Shahed Hossain Saikat, a student of Chattogram University, said, "She died due to torture in Rab custody. She has a mark of injury on her head."

Family members said she was in perfect health.

Rab picked up Sultana around 10:00am on Wednesday (March 22) when she was on her way to Chandipur Union Land Office where she was an office assistant, law enforcers said.

She died at 10:00am on Friday (March 24) at the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

A day after her detained, she was sued under DSA in Rajshahi "for syphoning off money from job seekers using a Facebook account".

Faisal bin Ahsan, officer-in-charge of

Naogaon Sadar Police Station, told The Daily Star that Rab did not inform police about the arrest and they learnt about the matter from the media.

Sultana's uncle Nazmul Haque Montu, a former councillor of Naogaon municipality, said, "My niece was intercepted at Muktir Mor by a white microbus carrying Rab officers. We had been looking for her in various [Rab] camps since but failed to locate her. Around noon, we heard that she is under treatment at Naogaon Sadar Hospital."

Her family rushed there to find her unresponsive. She had a bruise on her head.

"Rab said that she suffered a stroke but she was young and in perfect health. Why would she have a stroke in Rab custody?" Montu added.

Sultana was moved to the RMCH the next day.

RMCH Director Brig Gen FM Shamim Ahmed said that Sultana was brought in by a Rab team in a critical condition around 9:20pm on Thursday.

"She was unconscious and was immediately rushed to the neurology ward.



Jasmine



President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina cut a cake at a reception marking the country's 53rd Independence and National Day at the Bangabhaban yesterday. The first lady, Rashida Khanam, as well as President-elect Md Sahabuddin and his wife, Prof Rebecca Sultana, were present on the occasion.

PHOTO: UNB

BUSINESS

FOOD IMPORT BILL SURGES

Although Bangladesh has almost achieved self-sufficiency in rice production, its dependence on the international market remains high for food items with import cost rising two and a half times to Tk 80,800 crore from a decade ago.

The country had to spend the money to buy rice, wheat, spices, edible oil, oil seeds, pulses, sugar and dairy and milk products. In the first seven months of this fiscal year, Tk 50,000 crore was spent to import food items, a rise by 10.5 per cent from a year ago.

STORY ON B1

41 RISKY BUILDINGS

Rajuk evacuation move going nowhere

HELEMUL ALAM and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

It appears the evacuation notice handed out to 41 risky buildings by the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) on March 13 was not well-thought-out.

The notice called for vacating the structures within seven days and their demolition in three months – raising questions about its feasibility.

In the two weeks since it was issued, none vacated the structures, which belong to eight government and autonomous bodies in Dhaka, Gazipur and Narayanganj.

And the absence of a relocation option by Rajuk has been blamed for the inaction, The Daily Star has learnt from the occupants.

Take the case of Dhaka Collegiate School in old Dhaka. Three of the buildings on its campus used for labs, classrooms and hall rooms have been identified as risky by Rajuk between 2021-2022 under an urban resilience project.

But the school authority has no option to relocate the functions of the three buildings.

"It will be really tough for us to vacate those buildings without any alternatives," said its headmaster Arifur Rahman, adding that the institute is yet to receive the notice.

Ahmeduzzaman, head clerk of Kabi Nazrul



Government College, echoed the same.

"We do not have another place to run our academic activities. Besides, it is a college established way back in 1874 and needs to be protected as heritage," he said.

Three buildings of Jahangirnagar University have been identified as risky and the university authorities need at least six months to vacate those, according to Abdus Salam Md Sharif, its chief engineer.

"But before demolition, we need to know about the fund for a new building, which will be required for smooth academic activities," he said, adding that the Rajuk notice also called for retrofitting of 10 other buildings of the university.

Helal Uddin Patowari, the chief engineer of Jagannath University, acknowledged receiving a letter from Rajuk on March 15; but the letter did not mention the name of the buildings.

Two buildings of the university have been identified as risky. "We have nowhere to relocate the labs and classrooms," Patowari said.

Three buildings of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) campus have been identified as risky by Rajuk. Of them, the 17-storey D Block building was built in 2011.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

SHISHU HOSPITAL

Man beaten to death over theft allegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was beaten to death allegedly by some Ansar men on suspicion of being a thief at the Shishu Hospital in the capital yesterday afternoon.

Md Mamun, 32, of Pallabi area, was a tea stall owner, said his brother Masud Rana.

He said Mamun along with his wife, daughter, and mother went to the Shyamoli area around 11:30am.

"In the afternoon, Mamun sent his family home on a bus and went to the [Shishu] hospital area. Outside the hospital, he saw his neighbour whose daughter was being treated there. As the neighbour and he tried to enter the hospital, an altercation broke out with the Ansar members present there," he claimed.

"At one stage, my brother assaulted an Ansar man. Later, the Ansar member shouted

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

1971: THE BATTLE OF KUSHTIA

One little town showed how to fight back

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and DIPAN NANDY, back from Kushtia

An eerie silence settled over the streets of Kushtia in the early hours of March 30, 1971, as a curfew, imposed by the occupying Pakistan army, was in place.

Thousands of Bangalees, divided in three groups, were quietly creeping towards the police lines, Wireless Centre and Zilla School, where marauding Pakistani forces had set up their camps five days ago.

As the clock struck 4:00am, the three groups broke the silence by opening fire, as several thousand others, in unison, shouted "Joy Bangla" at the top of their lungs.

"Opening fire and simultaneously chanting the slogan at our loudest confused the Pakistan army about how many of us were actually attacking them," remembered Mesbah Ul Haq, who took part in the battle.

Bangalee forces were shouting slogans from different corners. When one group stopped, the other started. It completely perplexed the Pakistanis, he said.

After his capture, Pakistani army Naik Subhedar (senior sergeant) Mohammad Ayub had said, "We were very surprised."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

... They [the Pakistanis] got the message – Bangladesh is unbeatable. I am proud I was a part of that battle.

MESBAH UL HAQ
freedom fighter

Six injured as two BCL factions clash at college

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least six Chhatra League activists were injured as two factions of Sir Ashutosh Government College unit BCL in Chattogram's Boalkhali clashed over placing wreaths at the campus Shaheed Minar on Independence Day yesterday.

Among the injured, Arafat Hossain Tarek is the convener of the college unit BCL, while Md Irfan is its joint convener, said sources.

Other injured are Altaf Hossain Hridoy, Shuvo Das, Mahim Uddin and Md Noman.

According to sources, the BCL unit has two factions – one is led by Tarek and the other by Irfan.

The two groups fought amongst themselves at different times over

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



The once 150-meter-wide Shoilmari river in Khulna has been reduced to a narrow channel only 3-4 meters wide due to unabated encroachment, sand filling and unplanned development. When the tide is low, the navigability for boats is further reduced. As the authorities concerned remain indifferent, the important river now serves as a drainage system for many areas. Locals fear that if the river dries up completely, the region may become severely flood-prone. The photo was taken from the Batiaghata Bridge yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

DEMERIT POINT FOR DRIVERS Govt agencies dragging foot on enforcement BRTA says required software to be ready in 7-10 days

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

When the Road Transport Act-2018 was enacted over four years ago incorporating a system of demerit points on driving licenses for traffic violation, the authorities said the system would go a long way in ensuring road safety.

The law came into force in November 2019, but the authorities could not implement the system because the rules were not there until December 27 last year.

Even though the rules are here, the system still exists on papers only.

The demerit points system, as mentioned in the act, means there will be 12 points for each driver, and a traffic rules violation will result in deduction of one or two points. A licence will be revoked if a driver loses all the points.

Contacted, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder said the software needed for the implementation will be ready within seven to 10 days and the system will be operational then.

Besides, a mobile app will be developed for the task, he said. "Once the app is available, implementation will be easier. But it will take some more time."

But some BRTA and police officers express doubts as to whether such a system can be implemented with success in a country where over five lakh vehicles operate without fitness certificates, thousands of drivers do not have licences, and cities do not have parking areas.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Netanyahu sacks defence minister

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday dismissed Defence Minister Yoav Gallant a day after he broke ranks and urged the government to halt a highly-contested plan to overhaul the judicial system.

Gallant's dismissal will likely fuel mass protests against the plan that have already rocked the nation for months. It came as Netanyahu was poised to ratify legislation that would tighten political control over judicial appointments.

That bill, and others that would limit Supreme Court powers to rule against government policy, have triggered warnings at home and abroad over Israel's democratic health.

Gallant on Saturday became the most senior member of Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party to say he would not support the judicial overhaul, saying protests that have included growing numbers of military reservists were also affecting regular forces and undermining national security.

"At this time, for the sake of our country, I am willing to take any risk and pay any price," Gallant said in his televised address.

The response came last night. "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has decided this [Sunday] evening to dismiss Defence Minister Yoav Gallant," Netanyahu's office said. It did not name a replacement or give any other details.

Shortly after his dismissal, Gallant, 64, wrote on Twitter: "The state of Israel's security has always been and will always be my life's mission."

Netanyahu, who is on trial on graft charges that he denies, says the judicial overhaul will balance out the branches of government.

Critics, who range from business leaders to former military officers as well as opposition parties, say the overhaul will weaken Israel's democracy, hurt the economy and hand uncontrolled powers to the government of the day.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Bananas grown in Kaliganj upazila of Jhenaidah are known for their taste. The banana bunches kept near the local rail station will be shipped to different districts on freight trains and trucks. Each bunch sells for Tk 300-800, depending on the size and quality.

Risks to financial stability increased

Warns IMF chief, stresses 'the need for vigilance' following recent turmoil in banking sector

AFP, Beijing

International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Kristalina Georgieva warned yesterday that risks to financial stability had increased and stressed "the need for vigilance" following the recent turmoil in the banking sector.

Speaking at a forum in Beijing, the IMF managing director said she expected 2023 "to be another challenging year", with global growth slowing to below 3.0 percent due to the war in Ukraine, monetary tightening and "scarring" from the pandemic.

"Uncertainties are exceptionally high," with the outlook for the global economy likely to remain weak over the medium term, she told the China Development Forum.

"It is also clear that risks to financial stability have increased," she added.

"At a time of higher debt levels, the rapid transition from a prolonged period of low interest rates to much higher rates - necessary to fight inflation - inevitably generates stresses and vulnerabilities, as evidenced by recent developments in the



banking sector in some advanced economies."

Her comments came after the financial sector was shaken by the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and the enforced takeover of Swiss bank Credit Suisse by rival UBS, leading to fears of contagion.

Bank shares tumbled on Friday as fears about the health of the financial sector resurfaced, with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz forced to give reassurances about Deutsche Bank after the long-troubled lender became a focus of investor concerns.

Georgieva said policymakers had acted decisively in response to financial stability risks.

"These actions have eased market stress to some extent, but uncertainty is high which underscores the need for vigilance," she said.

The IMF chief, however, pointed to China's rebound as a bright spot for the world economy.

The IMF forecasts China's economy to grow 5.2 percent this year, driven by a rebound in private consumption as the country reopens after its pandemic isolation.

Woman dies in Rab custody

FROM PAGE 1

From there, she was transferred to the intensive care unit, because her condition continued to deteriorate. We did a CT scan and found multiple intracranial bleeds in her head," he said.

Her health deteriorated too fast for the doctors to revive her, he said, adding that they found an external bruise on her head.

Enamul Haque, the local government director of the Rajshahi divisional commissioner's office, sued Sultana in the case filed under the Digital Security Act with Rajpara Police Station in Rajshahi city, said Officer-in-Charge (investigation) Ruhul Amin.

Interestingly, the case was recorded at 5:10pm on Thursday, more than 31 hours after she had been picked up by Rab and when she was unresponsive in a hospital bed.

Enamul said he had been receiving complaints from people who were defrauded through his Facebook account which was hacked in 2017. This continued when he was serving in Natore, Chapainawabganj, and Rajshahi.

He said he filed general diaries with police stations in Natore and Chapainawabganj.

Enamul joined the Rajshahi divisional office and sought the help

of Rab in November last year after receiving similar complaints, the director said.

He said he filed the case taking help from the Rab investigation.

Rab officials concerned did not pick up phone calls despite repeated attempts by this correspondent.

However, Bangla daily Prothom Alo quoted Rab-5 Company Commander Major Nazmus Sakib as saying, "Rab received a complaint of financial fraud against Sultana. There were allegations of unusual transactions in her bank account. Rab found the allegations to be authentic after scrutinising her bank statement."

One little town showed how to fight back

FROM PAGE 1

"We thought the Bengali forces were about the size of one of our companies. We didn't know everybody was against us," he told TIME Correspondent Dan Coggins in a report titled "Battle of Kushtia" published on April 19, 1971.

About 150 to 200 Pakistani army men of the Baloch Regiment, led by Major Shoeb, took control of Kushtia on the night of March 25, when they launched a barbaric crackdown on the freedom-loving Bangladeshis and began carrying out genocide across the country.

They disarmed some Bangalee policemen at the police lines and then occupied key points, including government offices and institutions.

At the pre-dawn of March 30, Bangladeshi forces, comprising the East Pakistan Rifles (EPR), police officials and civilians, attacked the occupation army.

"As planned, we launched the sudden attack from three directions. The enemy's morale seemed to have been broken by the thunderous slogans being chanted by the people and the simultaneous firing," said Lt Col (ret) Abu Osman Chowdhury, who was a major and commander of the fourth wing of Chuadanga EPR and a frontline fighter.

In the book "Sommukhuddho 1971: Muktijoddhader Kolome", he wrote that after hours of fierce battling, the Bangladeshi troops entered the police lines and wireless centres and began searching for enemies, who, without finding any alternative, threw down their weapons and fled towards the Kushtia Zilla School headquarters. Many of them were killed trying to flee.

Osman later became Sector 8 commander and remained so till August 1971.

US-based filmmaker Anindo Atik's documentary titled "The Battle of Kushtia" showed how by the evening of March 30, the Bangladeshi forces surrounded the Pakistani army at the school headquarters.

The battle continued till night, when the enemies contacted Jashore cantonment seeking additional troops,

The response they received was, "Reinforcement [is] not possible. Try to live on your own."

Rafiqul Alam Tuku, a freedom fighter who took part in the battle, said the enemy forces continued heavy shelling till the next morning, adding that the Bangladeshis fought back valiantly and could sense victory approaching.

After heavy fighting throughout March 31, the Pakistanis faced significant casualties, but about 40-45 of them, including most of their officers, were still alive.

Sensing defeat, they tried to escape that night. They got on two jeeps and a Dodge car, and left towards Jhenaidah at high speed.

But the Bangladeshis were right behind, Rafiqul added.

A group of freedom fighters had already destroyed the Shaikupa Bridge. They created a trap by covering the vacuum with a coarse mat made from bamboo remains and camouflaged the place to look like a bitumen sealed road. On each side of it, two groups of Bangladeshis waited for the fleeing Pakistanis.

As soon as the speeding vehicles fell into the trap, the freedom fighters launched their attack and killed Major Shoeb and several others on the spot.

The remaining Pakistani soldiers, some of whom were injured, fled to nearby areas. However, they could not escape the wrath of the villagers in those places, said freedom fighter Musharof Hossain, adding that the Pakistanis ultimately surrendered to them.

By April 1, the Bangladeshi forces achieved victory and freed Kushtia from the grips of occupation. However, on April 17, the Pakistani army had managed to recapture the area.

While almost all Pakistani soldiers died in the battle, six Bangladeshis embraced martyrdom.

"It was an unprecedented win. It was a war between .303 rifles versus automatic weapons. It was only possible for the all-out support by the locals of Kushtia," Osman said in the documentary.

He said they had recovered weapons and ammunition that filled a three-tonne truck.

HOW PLANNING LED TO VICTORY
The preparations for the battle to free Kushtia started from March 26, said Mesbah Ul Haq.

Upon learning that a military crackdown was taking place in Dhaka, Mesbah's father Ashab Ul Haq, then a Chuadanga-1 member of Provincial Assembly (MPA), and Younus Ali, a Chuadanga-2 MPA, held a rally in the town that morning and called for resistance.

Osman fled from Kushtia town the same morning upon seeing Pakistan army men there. He reached the EPR office in Chuadanga in the afternoon and came to know that Bangladeshis had disarmed all Pakistani EPR members and took control of their weapons.

On March 27, Ashab and Osman chalked out the plan to free Kushtia. They named the area "South-Western Command".

The weapons confiscated from the EPR members were .303 rifles, .303 LMGs, which were used in World War II, and four rusted World War II time 3.5 rocket launchers, also from the time of WW II. Ammunition was absolutely insufficient.

"But I had hope because I knew the common people from all walks of life were with me," Osman wrote in his book.

Members of police, ansar and mujahid were inducted into the force after a day's training, while the people of Kushtia, with their indomitable will, joined in.

As thousands came forward, they had with them dry food, supply of rice and lentils from their own fields and whatever weapon they could find.

Several control rooms were established. Mega kitchens were set up to provide hot meals to the frontline fighters.

By March 28 noon, a group of Bangladeshis went to Jhenaidah and blocked the Jashore-Jhenaidah road to bar the enemies from supplying troops or arms to Kushtia from Jashore.

The initial plan was to launch the

"... She was taken into Rab custody in Mukti Mor area for interrogation. But soon after her arrest, she fell ill. She was rushed to Naogaon Sadar Hospital. After initial treatment, the doctors advised she be taken to Rajshahi. She died of a stroke at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital on Friday," he added.

He said Sultana's body was handed over to her relatives yesterday afternoon.

Assistant Commissioner (Land) of Naogaon Rafiqul Islam said, "Sultana has been working for a year in my office and I have not heard of any accusations of corruption against her."

attack early March 29. However, as some people did not reach on time, the attack was pushed back by 24 hours and was finally launched at 4:00am the next day.

Major Osman had bet on three factors; a surprise attack, depriving the enemy of any intelligence about them, and a siege laid by tens of thousands of volunteers armed with shotguns, machetes and bamboo sticks to deceive and overwhelm the enemy, wrote Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, the then sub-divisional officer of Kushtia's Meherpur, in his book "Chariot of Life: Liberation War, Politics and Sojourn in Jail".

Anindo Atik said the victory in Kushtia was significant as it came at a time when most of the major cities, including Dhaka, was captured by the Pakistani forces.

Speaking to this newspaper, he said, "Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam told me the victory helped boost the morale of the public and even became a tool for them to negotiate with the Indian government."

Mesbah said the victory was a milestone in the history of the Liberation War. "It came within five days of the Pakistan army's crackdown. They got the message - Bangladesh is unbeatable. I am proud I was a part of that battle."

Man beaten to death

FROM PAGE 1

thief and they along with some ambulance drivers beat him to death," Masud alleged.

Abdul Hakim, public relations officer of the hospital, however, said they heard that a mob beat up Mamun as he was "stealing a bicycle" from the hospital premises.

Quoting witnesses, Sub-Inspector Masudur Rahim of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station said Mamun was beaten to death on suspicion that he was a thief.

Police said they are investigating the incident.

The body was sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

BUILDINGS THAT NEED TO BE DEMOLISHED

- Academic bhaban of Demra's Haider Ali School and College
- Block A, block B and block D of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Rashtrobhigyan Bhaban
- Economics department bhaban and Kola Bhaban of Jagannath University
- Three buildings of Mir Mosarraf Hossain Hall of Jahangirnagar University
- Dhaka Collegiate School's main building, Science Bhaban and Hall Bhaban
- Bhaban 1 and 2 of Kabi Nazrul Government College
- Teachers Auditorium Bhaban and Academic Bhaban of Badda Alatumnesa Higher Secondary School
- Academic Bhaban-1 of Savar's Bhakurta Government High School
- Narayanganj Sadar's Delpara Government High School's Bhaban 2 and 4
- Academic Bhaban 1, 2 and Administrative Bhaban of Narayanganj Government Girls High School
- Shadhinota Bhaban of Donia University College
- Bhaban No 3 (Science Building) of Government Bangla College
- Administrative building of Government Kadam Rasul College in Naryanganj
- Hazi Ali Hossain High School in Mirpur
- Bhaban 1 and 2 of Government Kaliganj Shramik College in Gazipur
- AKM Fazlul Haque Bhaban of Kaliganj RRN Pilot Government High School
- Bhaban 1 of Keranigonj Girls School and College
- Khilgaon Government High School
- School building of Sutrapur's Korattola CMS Memorial High School
- Pritilata Waddedar Bhaban of Narayanganj Government Womens College
- Jatrabari's Shahid Zia Girls School and College
- Administrative and classroom building of Shyamalapur High School
- Tejjona Model High School
- Solmaid Government Primary school in Badda
- Darul Islam Fazil Madrasa.

Rajuk evacuation

FROM PAGE 1

"How can a building that was constructed by the Public Works Department only 10 years ago be vulnerable?" said a high official of BSMMU on the condition of anonymity as he is not authorised to speak with media.

He said that they had retrofitted one of the two other buildings constructed in the 1950s in 2005.

"None of the buildings is vulnerable," he said.

Delwar Hossain Mojumder, the chief engineer of the Education Engineering Department, said they have received a letter regarding the matter and that Rajuk incorrectly identified them as the authority for 30 of the school buildings. The EED wrote to Rajuk saying that they only built two of the buildings and those have been handed over to the school authorities.

"Many of the buildings are not so vulnerable that immediate demolition is required. If an earthquake of magnitude 7 hits, then that is a different case."

Mojumder too spoke for relocation first.

"All the buildings are old and there is no doubt about it," said Adil Mohammad Khan, a faculty member of Jahangirnagar University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning.

There are two options here: either protect those by retrofitting or demolish those.

"Since demolition is a major decision, relevant authorities should do a second assessment before carrying out Rajuk's order."

If both assessments say the same

Two schoolchildren drown in Jamuna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Two schoolchildren drowned in the Jamuna in Tangail's Bhuapur upazila yesterday.

Sujay Paul, 16, and Likhon Paul, 12, students of Govindasi High School, drowned while taking a bath in the river adjacent to their home, said their teacher Kalam Hossain.

Locals took them to Bhuapur Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared them dead.

"They died before reaching the healthcare facility," said Sumaiya Jannat, medical officer of the health complex.

SAMRAT MURDER CASE

Accused placed on 2-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A Pabna court yesterday granted a two-day remand for Seema Khatun, an accused in the murder of Samrat, chauffeur to an official of a contractor of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

Pabna Judicial Magistrate Court granted the remand last evening, said Arbinda Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station.

Earlier in the morning, police produced her before the court with a five-day remand prayer, he added.

The victim's father Abu Bakkar filed a case with Ishwardi Police Station against Seema, her husband Momin and some three to four unnamed people yesterday.

India summons Canadian diplomat over Sikh protests

AFP, NEW DELHI

Indian authorities said yesterday they had summoned Canada's top diplomat in New Delhi after Sikh protesters gathered outside India's diplomatic mission in Canada.

According to Canadian media reports, hundreds of people gathered outside the Indian consulate in Vancouver on Saturday over India's hunt for fugitive Sikh separatist Amritpal Singh.

The Indian foreign ministry said it summoned Canada's high commissioner on Saturday "to convey our strong concern about the actions of separatist and extremist elements against our diplomatic Mission and Consulates in Canada this week".

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Enhance water diplomacy to prevent conflict

State minister tells UN Water Conference dialogue

DIPLomatic CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has urged the international community to enhance partnership on water management and focus more on water diplomacy in preventing conflict and crisis.

State Minister for Water Resources Zaheed Farooque made the call while addressing an interactive dialogue of the UN Water Conference held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, which ended on March 24.

He said Bangladesh has 57 transboundary rivers with neighbouring countries including 54 rivers with India, and Dhaka has been working on water cooperation with the co-riparian countries to manage and share the waters of common rivers.

"Knowledge sharing and technical cooperation are critical elements for sustainable water management," Farooque said.

He said water management cooperation extends crucial support to the achievement of all sustainable development goals -- from addressing water scarcity, building sound economies to global peace and security.

The interactive dialogue was co-chaired by Serigne Mbaye Thiam, minister of water and sanitation of Senegal, and Christian Frutiger, state secretary at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation.

Ministers from other UN-member countries also spoke at the dialogue.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Abdul Hamid paying tribute at the National Martyrs' Monument in Savar on Independence Day yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

INDEPENDENCE DAY PM, president-elect attend reception at Bangabhaban

UNB, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid and his wife Rashida Khanam yesterday hosted a reception marking the country's 53rd Independence and National Day at Bangabhaban.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President-elect Md Sahabuddin joined the reception. Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique also attended.

Around 2,500 guests were invited to the reception after a long gap of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cabinet members, advisers, state ministers, ambassadors and high commissioners of different countries, Supreme Court judges, chiefs of the three services, members of parliament, senior political leaders, academics, business community

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



PHOTO: NAKIB SHAH ALAM

What does driving in Dhaka feel like?

MH HAIDER

"If you can drive in Dhaka, you can drive anywhere in the world" – the statement gets casually thrown about when talking about driving in this city. This special "licence" is earned when you've mastered the unruly roads of Dhaka and its next-to-impossible traffic.

It's one thing if you're stuck in the congestion as a passenger – horrible as it is – but it's quite another if you are the one driving! Those of us who don't have a chauffeur and have chosen to drive our own cars are a breed apart.

Why wouldn't we be? Unlike chauffeurs or professional drivers, driving is not our occupation and yet it is a whole lot of work. Moreover, where else can you attain such a high level of patience? What self-help seminar shall impart you with such rich insights on anger management and how to have steady nerves?

Dhaka is an impatient city. Everybody is in a rush. It is a city that can be cruel, rude, spiteful, and selfish, and so in a way, the traffic condition is a perfect embodiment of Dhaka!

Two buses from both sides shall closely slide past your car, leaving you helpless in between. They will also stop in the middle of the road

whenever they want, to take more passengers. Many vehicles will change lanes abruptly without any warning whatsoever; the concept of using the indicator sign is alien to them. Rickshaws shall take their own sweet time to get out of your way. Jaywalkers will cross roads freely, totally ignoring traffic lights and foot-bridges while commanding you to stop by lifting a finger as if they are giving a speech. Swarms of bikers will snake their way around your car in a rush, with no regard for their lives or your own.

I remember, when my father was teaching me how to drive, he always used to say, "Assume that everyone in the road is mad. As the only sane driver, it is upon you to reach safety, protecting both yourself and others on the way."

And hence sanity I keep. But my car does not betray me. The steering wheel has tolerated extreme turns. The wheels have endured many potholes and bumps. The side-mirrors and bumpers have survived quite a few injuries. And the brakes are ever-ready to put the car to a halt at a moment's notice.

So, with my loyal and proven car, I drive through the city.

Driving is supposed to be fun, even therapeutic. But in Dhaka, it's work, a very demanding chore indeed.

Historic water tank now decaying away

Authorities failing to preserve its glory

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Once upon a time, Dhaka's residents relied on Buriganga river, and the city's numerous ponds and wells for water. In 1878, Dhaka's first safe water tank was constructed, which saved its residents from the disaster of water scarcity.

The 144-year-old water tank, locally known as "Bahadur Shah Park Panir Tanky" on Old Dhaka's Johnson Road, was declared a historical monument in May 2020 by Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk). Despite the recognition, it has been forgotten and neglected.

The significant structure has lost its charms, as Rajuk failed to preserve it even almost two years after recognising it as a historical monument. During a recent visit, this correspondent found that the area has been grabbed and turned into a shrine, with an iron gate at the entrance. Walls are also being constructed around the structure, damaging the tank.

There are small cracks in several spots, with the plaster on the upper part of the tank falling off. Three big banners of the shrine have been put up on that part. However, no banners promoting its historical significance were visible.

This correspondent attempted to enter the tank's premises but was stopped by an occupant.

Tushar Ahmed, a local, said, "This is a shame for us. I can't believe a historical structure like this is being disregarded."

Abdus Salam, a university student, said, "The water tank was a lifesaver for the residents. It's unacceptable that it's being neglected and left to fall apart."

Meanwhile, four shops have been illegally set up near the tank by the

general secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra League's Kabi Nazrul Govt College unit. Shopkeepers said he collects Tk 200 every day from each shop.

Contacted, Faruq Hossain, the general secretary, denied the allegations.

Mohammad Selim, councillor of ward 42 under DSCC, said, "I'm afraid that these illegal shops cannot be removed so easily."

Meanwhile, officials of Rajuk and the Department of Archaeology (DoA), have been unaware of the developments.

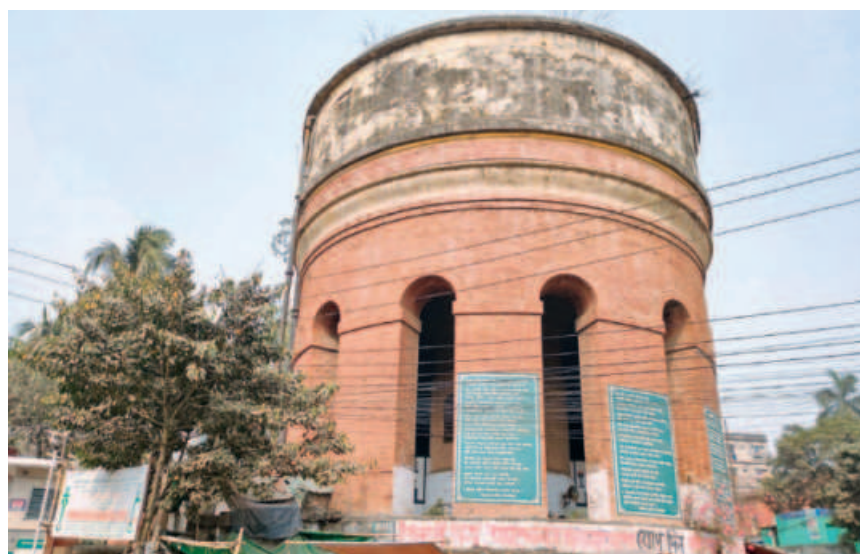
Rajuk Town Planner Ashraf Islam said, "Our team is looking into the issue and will visit the spot soon."

The significant structure has lost its charms, as Rajuk failed to preserve it even almost two years after recognising it as a historical monument.

Afroza Khan Mita, regional director of DoA, said she was unaware of the historical significance of the water tank as it has not been listed. "If it is not listed, then it is not our responsibility."

Historian Prof Muntassir Mamoon has expressed concern over the lack of effort by the authorities concerned to protect the tank. "We keep talking about it, but government officials are not doing anything."

Architect Taimur Islam, chief executive of Urban Study Group, said, "Rajuk listed the tank as a historical monument but DoA did not. Rajuk did nothing to preserve it after the recognition. Both bodies should look into the issue and take steps."



Almost 144 years old, the "Bahadur Shah Park Panir Tanky" on Old Dhaka's Johnson Road was declared a historical monument. Despite recognition, the structure has lost all its charms as Rajuk failed to preserve the tank. There are small cracks on several spots, and banners have been put up in front of the structure, further deteriorating its state.

PHOTO: STAR

Bangabandhu conferred 'FOSWAL Literature Award'

BSS, New Delhi

The Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature (FOSWAL) yesterday conferred "Special Literary Award" to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for his trilogy -- The Unfinished Memoirs, The Prison Diaries, and New China 1952.

"Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature is honoured to present SAARC Literature Award 2023 in its 63rd Literature Festival to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for outstanding literary excellence for his trilogy," said a citation before handing over the award.

Eminent Punjabi novelist and FOSWAL Founder President Ajeet Cour formally handed over the award to the visiting Bangladeshi writers and researchers Ramendu Majumder and Mofidul Haque at the festival.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Anti-liberation 'evil force' still active: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Urging all to defeat the anti-liberation "evil force", Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the defeated enemies of 1971 are still posing challenges to the country's independence.

Quader made the comment while talking to journalists after paying tribute at Savar National Memorial marking Independence Day.

"The anti-liberation forces, sometimes disguised as communalists and militants, are still posing challenges to the independence of the country. This evil must be defeated," he said.

He said, "BNP is saying what Pakistan is saying. It is because BNP is inspired by Pakistani ideology. Pakistan is still in its heart, Pakistan is still in the members' mind."

Meanwhile, President Abdul Hamid and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Still fighting for democracy even after 52yrs: Fakhru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said fighting for democracy even after 52 years of independence is unfortunate.

"It is our misfortune that we haven't achieved the goal for which we fought [the Liberation War]. Even after 52 years of independence, we have to give our lives for democracy. We have to fight for it. We have lost our right to vote. We have lost our right to speak freely," said the BNP leader.

He made the remarks after paying tribute to the war martyrs by placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar marking Independence and National Day.

"In line with the spirit of independence, it was

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Although kids these days are mostly seen busy in front of a digital screen for entertainment, the youths of Barishal's Bashkola village prefer playing with marbles with their friends. After getting their chores and lunch done, the children gather in the yard in front of their house in the afternoon for an exciting match. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

People suffer as salinity

FROM PAGE 5
drums regularly, we have to buy bottled-water, which costs Tk 20 per litre," she added.

Hasan Murad from Chawkbazar area said, "I work as a computer operator at a private firm. Buying water from outside is an extra burden for me." Like Manashi and Hasan, thousands of residents in different areas including Jamal Khan, Chawbazar, Kattoli, Bakalia, City Gate, Halishahar and Bahaddarhat have been suffering due to water salinity.

According to Chattogram Wasa, content of total dissolved solids (TDS), mainly different types of salts, remains at 10 to 15mg per litre of water supplied by Wasa in normal times, but the TDS has increased to 300 to 350 mg now-a-days as the rivers Halda and Karnaphuli, Wasa's two main sources

for collecting water, have become more saline.

As Wasa does not have salinity removal plants, the authorities are now waiting for rainfall so that the salinity decreases in the waterbodies.

Admitting the fact, Ariful Islam, superintendent engineer of Chattogram Wasa, said usually, salinity in Halda increases in dry season. "Usually, we blend the Karnaphuli waters with Halda's to reduce salinity," he added.

"On the other hand, the salinity of Karnaphuli river is decreased by the upstream water released from Kaptai Hydroelectric Project Dam," Arif went on saying, "As there was no rain in the past three months, the level of water in Kaptai dam is 12 feet down now from that of normal time."

"So, salinity in both Halda and Karnaphuli rivers has increased," he

said. "During high tide, the situation worsens further."

According to Chattogram Wasa officials, the daily water supply in Chattogram is around 46 crore litres per day. At present, around 41 crore litres is being supplied from four water treatment plants of Wasa.

Ariful, however, said although people feel discomfort to drink the supplied water, it's "not harmful" for the human body. Contacted, Dr Sujat Paul, a former professor and head of medicine department at Chattogram Medical College, said water with a TDS content of less than 500mg/L will not create any health risk if the water is not contaminated by microorganism.

However, patients with high blood pressure should avoid drinking water that is more saline, he said.

Still fighting

FROM PAGE 3
our hope, desire to establish a democratic state, to establish a democratic society. But today, the autocratic-authoritarian Awami League government is eliminating the opposition to establish a one-party government."

Alleging that BNP leaders and activists are being harassed by "false" cases, he said, "More than 35 lakh leaders and activists are being harassed in false cases."

Fakhrul expressed hope of establishing democracy

through a struggle by uniting democracy-loving people.

"We have started the struggle to bring back democracy, to bring back the right to vote, to bring the price of rice, lentil and oil to a tolerable level and to make the country a truly democratic state. And we will continue our struggle."

BNP standing committee members Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain, Nazrul Islam Khan, Abdul Moyeen Khan and other senior leaders of the party were present on the occasion.

Anti-liberation

FROM PAGE 3
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid respect to the Liberation War martyrs by placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar marking Independence and National Day.

Later, Hasina, also Awami League president,

along with her senior party colleagues paid respect on behalf of the party.

Quader also said that under the leadership of Hasina, the country is on the right track.

"Building a smart country is now the only commitment," he added.

The country will become

FROM PAGE 5
freedom fighters including the Father of the Nation with deep respect and said without Bangabandhu the history of Bangladesh cannot be written.

Mentioning that Bangabandhu united the Bangalee nation and prepared the countrymen step by step, the minister

said, "His able daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has given due status to the brave freedom fighters and is taking the country forward."

Deputy minister of the ministry Begum Habibun Nahar, secretary Dr Farhina Ahmed and additional secretary Iqbal Abdullah Harun spoke as special

guests at the discussion. Before the meeting, the environment minister and guests placed wreaths on the portrait of Bangabandhu. After the discussion, prayers were offered for the salvation of the departed souls of the brave martyrs and the prosperity of the country and the people.

Bangabandhu conferred

FROM PAGE 3
SAARC Literary Award is an annual award conferred by FOSWAL since 2001.

The three-day regional literary conference of FOSWAL began in the Indian capital New Delhi yesterday morning. A large number of eminent writers and literatures from the

South East Asian region including Bangladesh have been participating in the conference.

Eminent writer Selina Hossain, Ramendu Majumder, Mohidul Haque and Mohit Kamal, among others, have been participating in the FOSWAL Regional

Conference from Bangladesh.

Minister (Press) of Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi Shaban Mahmood and Consular (Political) Safiul Alam were present at the function on behalf of the high commission.

PM, president-elect attend

FROM PAGE 3
leaders, artistes, freedom fighters and family members of Birshreshtha gallantry award recipients and distinguished citizens attended the reception.

Newspaper editors and journalist leaders also attended the gathering alongside top civil and military officials.

On the occasion, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina cut a cake.

They exchanged greetings with the injured freedom fighters and other dignitaries and guests at

the function.

Later, the reception was followed by an iftar party. A special prayer was offered seeking divine blessings for continued peace, progress and prosperity of the country. Pesh Imam of Bangabhaban Jame Mosque Maulana M Saiful Kabir conducted the prayer.

Earlier, the resident paid rich tributes to the Liberation War martyrs by placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar, Dhaka in the morning, marking the day.

The president first placed the wreath at the

altar of the memorial followed by the prime minister.

After laying the wreaths, the president stood in solemn silence for some time as a mark of profound respect to the memories of the martyrs of the Great War of Liberation in 1971.

A smartly turned-out contingent drawn from Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force presented a state salute at that time while the bugles played the last post. The president also signed the visitors' book kept on the memorial premises.

Coming together for iftar

FROM PAGE 5
correspondent found people from all walks of life sitting at designated places in a row just after the Asr prayers.

A box of iftar items was being distributed around half an hour before the Maghrib prayers.

The iftar at the southern side are a little different. They distribute items on big sized plates. Every three to four people will have to share the iftar items each place which are a mixture of different items like gram, jilapi, beguni, and puffed rice.

"I've been coming to the mosque for the last two days. As a bachelor, I look forward to coming here and breaking fast with many others," said Md Boshir.

Echoing Boshir, Mohammad Manik, a resident of Shuritolola, said offering prayers at the national mosque gives him



huge satisfaction and it's also an act of virtue to break fast with many people.

Iqbal Uddin, joint secretary of Baitul Mukarram Jatiya Masjid Musolli Committee, said around 2,000 people from all walks of life take part in the iftar.

He said many -- who can have iftar with their family members -- go there for the unique experience.

Sayek Fazlul Haque, one of the organisers of the iftar at the southern side of

the mosque, said they have been distributing iftar for a long time.

It's free for all and anyone also can take part with them giving money or iftar items.

MK Alam, another coordinator of the iftar, said they have been providing iftar there for the last 26 years.

Another group from Tabligh Jamaat will also start distributing iftar from Monday like other years, he added.

Kids explore novo theatre, museum for free on holiday

FROM PAGE 5
"There were several other children who went to visit the novo theatre with their parents. All of them were seen playing in the zone, enjoying space exhibition, scientific and digital exhibit gallery, and 5D movie.

Maksuda Begum, an assistant teacher at Jigatola Model Government Primary School, who came to the planetarium with her 32 students, said, "This visit will help students get attracted to innovation and science."

Besides, the children also get to watch a documentary on Bangabandhu and the Liberation War.

Golam Zakaria, public relations officer at the novo theatre, said the

planetarium is kept open for all free of cost on the occasion of Bangladesh's 53rd Independence Day.

The presence of visitors is lower than expected due to Ramadan, the official added.

Bangabandhu Military Museum, which is close to the planetarium, also remained open for all free of cost marking the same occasion.

William Shekhor Corraya, facilities operations manager of Business Support Service at British Council, went to visit the museum with his family.

He said, "I take my wife and two children here to make them aware of the country's military history,

heritage and success, particularly its incredible valour and bravery throughout the 1971 Liberation War."

His wife and 10-year-old daughter enjoyed the victory arena, Bangladesh Army and Navy Galleries, and Chattogram Hill Tracts

corner.

While visiting the museum with his father, Abrar Jaoyad, a seventh grader at a school in Natore, said, "Since my childhood, I have had a long-cherished dream to become an army officer. So, I requested my father to take me to the

museum."

Prasenjit Bakshi, an NGO worker who came to visit the museum along with his wife and daughter, said, "This military museum is not merely for exhibition. Instead, it'll inspire the young generation to be patriot."

INVITATION FOR TENDER

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

1. **Supply, installation and commissioning of End to End Management & Processing of Card Reconciliation and Settlement system at our Bank.**

Please visit <https://www.pubalibangla.com/tender.asp> for more details, interested parties must submit their Tender documents up to **05 April 2023 by 11:00 A.M.** duly filled up all requirements.

(Ashim Kumar Roy)
GM & Division Head



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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Govt. Brojomohun College, Barishal

College Road, Barishal

Website: www.bmc.gov.bd

Memo No. cedp/bmc/otm/2022-23/02

Date: 27/03/2023

e-Tender Notice 02/2022-2023

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

Tender ID No.	Name of works	Last date and time of tender security submission	Tender closing date & time
805741	Establishment of Campus Networking for Government BM College, Barishal	11-Apr-2023 14:00	11-Apr-2023 15:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches up to 10-Apr-2023 16:00. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

27.03.2023
Prof. Dr. Mohammad Golam Kibria

Principal

Govt. Brojomohun College, Barishal

Phone: 0431-64793

E-mail: principalbmccollege@gmail.com

GD-561

USAID

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Position Vacancy Announcement

Position: **Project Management Specialist (Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting (CLA)), FSN - 10**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Bangladesh is seeking applications from qualified Bangladeshi nationals for the position of **Project Management Specialist (Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting (CLA)), FSN - 10** in the Office of Program (PRO).

Location: USAID/Bangladesh, Deadline for application submission: April 24, 2023

For a complete job description, required qualifications and detailed information on how to apply please visit www.usaid.gov/bangladesh/work-with-us/careers and www.bdjobs.com

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IMPORTANT DEADLINES

- Application opens:** March 27, 2023, Monday (12:01 AM)
- Last date of application and admit card download:** April 30, 2023, Sunday (11:59 PM)
- Written test:** May 5, 2023 (Friday), 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM
- Viva-voce:** May 12 & 13, 2023 (Friday & Saturday)
- Class starts:** 3rd Week of June, 2023

For further details & application process please visit: www.iba-ju.edu.bd/postgraduate_admission

Contact: IBA-JU Office, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342
Website: www.iba-ju.edu.bd | Email: wmba.iba.ju@juniv.edu | Cell: +8801730641073

BCL man beaten up by fellow activists

DU CORRESPONDENT

An activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League who studies at Dhaka University was assaulted by fellow activists, who are also the university's students, on campus on Saturday evening.

Zubaer Ibne Humayun, a student of the criminology department and leader of the social science faculty's BCL unit, had to receive treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

According to witnesses, a speeding car splashed muddy water on Zubaer while he was talking to some of his friends near the faculty building in the evening.

This prompted Zubaer and his friends to chase down the car near Tin Netar Mazar area for an explanation, initiating a quarrel with those inside the car, they said.

According to Zubaer, about an hour later, he was asked to come to Kabi Jasimuddin Hall area over phone. When he reached there, a group of around 15 students attacked him with sticks, cricket stumps. Some of them whipped him with their leather belts.

Witnesses said the attackers are also BCL activists.

Campus sources said the attackers stay at different halls of the university and run a "gang" called "Proloy".

The gang members are involved in different types of offences over trivial matters.

According to the victim, the accused students are Tabarak Mia, Sifrat Sahil, Faysal Ahmed Shakil and Shovon, students of Muktizodha Ziaur Rahman Hall. The rest are Ferdous Alam Emon of Bangabandhu hall; Ornob of psychology department; and Hedayetun Nur and Sadman Tawhid Borshon, students of Shaheed Sergeant Zahurul Haque Hall and Joy Biswas Jagannath Hall.

Talking to The Daily Star, Hedayetun, Borshon, both activists of Shaheed Serjeant Zahurul Haque Hall unit BCL, admitted to assaulting Zubaer. They claimed that Zubaer attacked them first.

Tabarak denied the allegation.

Contacted, DU Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani said they know about the incident. "If the victim lodges any written complaint, then we will take action after investigation."

A written complaint has been lodged with Shabbagh Police Station.



As the holy month of Ramadan ensues, locals and visitors in Dhaka gather at the premises of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque for breaking their fast. Around 2,000 people gather here for iftar every day, where they are provided food for free.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Sandwip: A haven for stolen motorbikes

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

From the city of Chattogram, Sandwip island is nearly 60 kilometres away. It is located in the north-east of the Bay of Bengal, having only a waterway to move to other places. But the island has now turned into a haven for stolen motorbikes according to police.

In the latest development, Kotwali police station yesterday recovered 24 motorbikes that were stolen from different parts of the city and arrested five persons, including a leader of a motorbike-lifting gang, from the island.

Police said most of the motorbikes in Sandwip upazila have no registration and other required documents, and the thieves used to sell stolen motorbikes in the remote area for a meagre price, persuading local police and administration.

The arrestees are Mithun Dhar, 29; MD Babar alias Babul, 35; Md Shahad, 26; Md Ripon, 40, and Md Khorshed Alam, 29. Among them, Mithun is the ringleader, said police.

Mustafizur Rahman, deputy commissioner (DC, South) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP), in a press briefing at his

office yesterday noon, said police first arrested Mithun and Babar from Chattogram Railway station area along with a stolen motorbike. Based on information, a team of police then started raiding different areas including Sandwip and traced down the huge number of stolen bikes.

Police said most of the motorbikes in Sandwip upazila have no registration and other required documents, and the thieves used to sell stolen motorbikes in the remote area for a meagre price, persuading local police and administration.

"They are the active members of an inter-district motorbike-lifting syndicate. The operatives are working in four tiers maintaining a good chain of command," he added.

The DC said, "During our investigation, police found that most of the motorbikes which are plying Sandwip upazila have no licence, registration and other documents. After stealing, the

motorcycles used to be moved to the island and sold for only Tk 15,000 to 30,000, based on the model."

This correspondent talked to local sources in Sandwip upazila, who alleged that the stolen motorbikes are plying the local streets by persuading Sandwip police and political leaders.

Seeking anonymity, a local businessman in Sandwip municipality area told The Daily Star, "The lifters sometimes also manage local political leaders and police before moving the vehicles."

Locals also said Sandwip's Kalapani union parishad chairman Alimur Raji Titu is one of the masterminds behind the stolen motorbikes. Titu is also the athletics affairs secretary under Awami League.

Titu said he is not involved in any such activities, and his political rivals are spreading rumours to defame him.

Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Sandwip police station, told The Daily Star, "Following the investigation of a case, police [Kotwali] recovered the bikes with our help. It's not true that police used to get money from stolen motorbikes."

The country will become pollution-free: minister

UNB, Dhaka

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Md Shahab Uddin yesterday said that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had planted trees extensively in the country with the call of a green revolution, and enacted laws to protect environment and wildlife.

Taking Bangabandhu as an ideal and inspiration, work is being done to turn the country into a pollution-free green Bengal, he said.

The minister said these as chief guest at a discussion programme titled "The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historical leadership and development of the country" organised at the Forest Department on the occasion of the Independence and National Day.

At the beginning of the speech, the minister remembered all the brave

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Coming together for iftar at Baitul Mukarram

HELEMUL ALAM

Mohammad Hedayetul Islam, an employee of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), usually breaks his fast at his mess at Jurain, but he came to Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday as it was a holiday.

"It's an interesting experience having iftar with so many people. I attended an iftar at this mosque around seven years back and came here again since its a government holiday," said Hedayetul.

Omar Faruk, a marketing official of Salman Hospital and Diagnostic Centre at Shanir Akhra however, came here as he was at Paltan area for his official purpose.

"It isn't my first time. Whenever I remain in the area near the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, I try to come here and attend the iftar as I feel good at the national mosque," said Omar.

Around 2,500 people from all walks of life attend the iftar every day at the mosque which are all free. Bachelors, jobholders, students, workers of different shops and customers of adjoining markets attend the iftar.

Many who have the scope to have iftar items with their family also sometimes go there to take an experience.

These iftars are distributed under two banners - Baitul Mukarram Jatiya Masjid Musolli Committee and Musalli Samaj.

Around 2,000 iftar packets are distributed at the eastern corner of the mosque funded by a big corporate group while iftar for around 500 others is distributed at the southern side of the mosque.

During a visit to the mosque yesterday, this

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Kids explore novo theatre, museum for free on holiday

MD ABBAS

Six-year-old Mohammad Aqib was seen playing in the kids' zone at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Novo Theatre, the only planetarium in Bangladesh.

Accompanied by his father Sabbir Hossain, Aqib was thrilled to explore the novo theatre, located in the heart of Dhaka.



"You can see how happy he is from his face," said Sabbir, pointing to his son.

"We were walking next to the novo theatre and noticed the text displayed on a digital board at the main entrance - Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Novo Theatre is open for all. So, we decided to enter the theatre," he said.

He described the experience as a captivating sight, and he compared visiting the planetarium to taking a trip through space from Mars.

"As my son watched the show at the novo theatre, I couldn't help but notice the wonder in his eyes."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PRAYER TIMING

MARCH 27

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

JAZAM 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, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN MARCH SEHRI IFTAR

4 27 6:16

5 28 4:34 6:16

6 29 4:33 6:17

People suffer as salinity in drinking water rises

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Chattogram city dwellers have to drink bottled-wasa as the salinity of Chattogram Wasa's water has increased almost 30 times than it was a month ago.

This new phenomenon has put extra pressure on the monthly budget of people from low and lower-middle income groups, who are already

struggling due to the excessive price hike of daily essentials.

"We have been suffering because of this for around a month," said Manashi Talukder, a resident of port city's Jamal Khan area.

"A 15-litre drum of water from shops costs Tk 100, and a family needs one every alternative day," she said.

"If the companies cannot supply

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
রোগতত্ত্ব, রোগ নিয়ন্ত্রণ ও গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট (আইইডিসিআর)
মহাখালী, ঢাকা-১২১২
টেলিফোনঃ +৮৮০২-২২২২৮০৩৭৬, +৮৮০২-২২২২৮৭৯৬, +৮৮০২-২২২২৮৬৬৯
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Ref. No. IEDCR/FETP/2023/325 Date: 22/03/2023

Want to Become a Disease Detective??
Apply for Msc. in Applied Epidemiology & Field Epidemiology Training Program, Bangladesh (FETP, B) Advanced (Session: 2023-2024)

The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC) jointly invite application from the government medical doctors and government veterinary doctors for **MSc. in Applied Epidemiology (session: 2023-2024)** & the 10th batch Field Epidemiology Training Program, Bangladesh (FETP, B)-Advanced.

Application Deadline: 6th April, 2023.
For detailed information please log on to: <https://iedcr.gov.bd/fetpb/advanced/notices>
Online application link: <https://forms.gle/m2hBTknzYWYXXJ4y7>

Director
Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control & Research (IEDCR) and
Course Director, Field Epidemiology Training Program, Bangladesh
Mohakhali, Dhaka

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Upazila: Golapganj, Dist: Sylhet
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.9138.000.14.035.19-183 Date: 21/03/2023

e-Tender Notice
Tender Notice No. 07/2022-23

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

Sl. No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID No.	Method of tender	Tender closing date and time
1	e-Tender/PEDP-4/SYL/GOL/2022-23/W1-01933	Construction of additional Classroom (3H+2V/F4) at Ghugarkul GPS under PEDP-4, Upazila: Golapganj, District: Sylhet.	803629	NOTM	18.04.2023 on or before 14:00 BST
2	e-Tender/PEDP-4/SYL/GOL/2022-2023/W1-01176	Construction of additional Classroom (2H+2V+1V/F3) at Uttar Kanishail GPS under PEDP-4, Upazila: Golapganj, District: Sylhet.	803630		
3	e-Tender/PEDP-4/SYL/GOL/2022-2023/W2-02070	Construction of additional Classroom (4H+1V/F2) at Palpara GPS under PEDP-4, Upazila: Golapganj, District: Sylhet.	803631		

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

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited through online at any branches of registered bank up to 17/03/2023 on or before 17:00 BST.

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

The Tender Notice will be available on the website: www.lged.gov.bd

Signed
Md. Mahmudul Hasan
Upazila Engineer
LGED, Golapganj, Sylhet
Phone: 01708-161691
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She went to Pakistan, SANG RABINDRA SANGEET on their national television

A Bangladeshi girl went viral on the internet for singing Rabindra Sangeet on Pakistan's national channel, ARY. Musician Sheikh Dina, the NSU graduate who now resides in the US, told us the story that is still circulating on social media.

SHARMIN JOYA

"I met this group of Pakistani musicians in the UK, who have a band named Sounds of Kolachi. We met while we performed in the UK, for Birmingham Contemporary Music Group," said the artiste. "As we were discussing about Pakistani artistes performing at Bangladeshi folk festival, they said that they wish to invite some Bangladeshi artistes to perform at their festival as well."

Deep inside, the young singer did not want to miss this opportunity. "I felt it would be a great chance to present my mother tongue in Pakistan."

Dina, is currently pursuing her Masters in Business Administration (MBA) - Business Analytics at Midwestern State University, in Texas.

After she received the official invitation, she was still in dilemma as people around her were making negative remarks about her visit to Pakistan. "I was discouraged, and some even told me that I will struggle to get a Visa for many countries, especially the US. These were all stereotypes, as I am sitting in the US and talking to you right now."

Rabindranath Tagore was considered a taboo and controversial figure in Pakistan, since the partition of India and the formation of Pakistan in 1947. Twenty years later, all works of Tagore were officially banned in all government media (radio, TV, government newspapers, etc.) by the orders of Ayub Khan's powerful information and broadcasting minister, Khwaja Shahabuddin, and East Pakistan governor Monem Khan, in 1967.

Dina had previously performed on several international platforms representing our local folk music to the world. She has been collaborating with the British Council and Art Council England, on their digital platforms,

which was arranged by Transforming Narratives.

"This initiative has been taken by the British Council and with their sponsored amount, I have produced a short film, 'Dhaka Say Karachi', that connects Pakistan and Bangladesh." Besides this, Dina is also the Global Ambassador at the Office of Global Education at MSU Texas.

On March 8, 2020, Dina performed at Pakistan's NAPA (National Academy of Performing Arts) International Folk Festival, alongside some other international artistes. They performed in some other countries including Germany and Nepal, among 15 other countries.

"When I entered the stage, I saw that the centre was adorned with red flowers representing Bangladesh," Dina recalled. "I performed the song 'Amar Haat Bandhibi', and it was a collaboration with a musical theatre group. The performers who danced with me literally had their limbs tied, and I was in tears during my performance."

Dina's performance was a representation



of the brutal rapes and war crimes that took place during our Liberation War. She explained that the lyrics of the song were translated and the audience were in pin drop



PHOTOS: COURTESY

silence, as they could clearly understand what the performance signified.

Born and brought up in Chattogram, Dina comes from a conservative family, who did not allow her to explore the world of art initially, which was her only passion. "I managed to come to Dhaka all alone and from there my journey towards my dream began," shared Dina.

She is also the vocalist of the band Ektara, along with other members Amit Rajbongshi, SN Tonwi, Zaim Mustakim, and Azmain Mahtab. "We formed the band while studying at North South University," she adds.

Dina stayed in Pakistan for a week, and apart from participating in the festival, she met many people who left behind

their families in Bangladesh. "Being a Bangladeshi citizen visiting them as a guest was delightful, and learning about their stories was heartbreaking as well," shared an emotional Dina. "I didn't want to miss the opportunity to perform in my mother language in the land of Pakistan," asserts the singer.

Dina had experienced the unheard stories that were left behind, and buried many years ago. Amongst many memories, Dina shared some which will always remain in her heart. "I went on a radio show, where I met an elderly person who has been working in a low-level position. Upon hearing that a Bangladeshi girl has come to their radio for a show, the man couldn't resist meeting me,"

said the singer. "Without uttering a word, he hugged me and cried like a child, and shared that he used to work in West Pakistan during the war, and his family lived in the then East Pakistan."

"Dhaka Say Karachi— A Tale of Two Lost Souls" was released on February 22, 2021, as a collaboration between Bangladesh, Pakistan and the UK. The film highlights Dina's travels to Pakistan. Dina's journey and her experience of visiting the country that still shares a bittersweet relationship, has brought her inner South Asian identity to the forefront. It was not easy for Dina either.

As many people are captioning the video of Dina's performance on social media, Dina shared that she is upset about it. "It is absolutely upsetting that people are making fun of such a critical moment a country is going through," spoke Dina, about Pakistan's current financial crisis.

Many even captioned that sinking Pakistan is desperate to build a relationship with Bangladesh. "I am totally against this, and I would request everyone not to spread hatred connecting with such a special moment that we brought after many decades."

"Since I have travelled there and I have been maintaining a bond with a group of Pakistani musicians who are my friends, I know what perspective they have towards us. They are extremely sorry about the brutality that happened in 1971, and it was interesting to know that they actually had a completely different idea about the history we share. Even the new generation of Pakistan grew up knowing that 1971 was a conflict with India. Many, with their own effort, identified the true history, and they felt guilty for their lack of knowledge. Thus, we should at least show our empathy during their crisis," she concluded.

NEWS

Russia took

FROM PAGE 12

war "remains extremely low".

"ISW continues to assess that Putin is a risk-averse actor who repeatedly threatens to use nuclear weapons without any intention of following through in order to break Western resolve," it wrote.

However, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons called Putin's announcement an extremely dangerous escalation.

"In the context of the war in Ukraine, the likelihood of miscalculation or misinterpretation is extremely high. Sharing nuclear weapons makes the situation much worse and risks catastrophic humanitarian consequences," it said on Twitter.

7 BNP men

FROM PAGE 12

in an altercation around 10:00am.

At one stage, police attacked BNP men, resulting in chases and counter-chases, alleged Johirul.

Police fired blanks during the incident.

Abu Chan, Rukku, and Chhatra Dal activist Shishir were admitted to Durgapur Upazila Health Complex with injuries, Johurul said.

Contacted, Shibirul Islam, officer-in-charge of Durgapur Police Station, meanwhile, claimed the BNP men attacked police first and later they retaliated.

He also admitted to firing four rounds of blanks to bring the situation under control.

Sub-Inspectors Sanwar Hossain and Shuvashish Ganguly filed two separate cases against the BNP men over the attack on police and obstructing them in conducting their duties.

However, police did not disclose the number of accused in the cases.

The detainees were being interrogated at the police station as of filing this report.

Records tumble

FROM PAGE 12

by Marco Jansen, South Africa's best bowler with 3-52. He hit 11 sixes — half of the West Indies total for the innings — which equalled the record 22 in an innings set by Afghanistan's against Ireland three years ago.

Charles was ably supported by Kyle Mayers (5) in a 135-run second-wicket partnership followed by an unbeaten 41 from Romario Shepherd.

South Africa began at blistering pace in reply and by scoring 150 without loss off the first 10 overs set another T20 record.

No ransom

FROM PAGE 12

server was infected with ransomware.

On Friday, hackers said the national carrier has approximately four days to comply with the ransom demand or else they would make public about 100GB of data, which include passport details of passengers, employees, and reports on other carriers, according to Biman sources.

The data also included flight, cargo, and crew information of all flights, the hackers claimed.

Asked about the reported demand about ransom yesterday, Mahbub Ali said the information that hackers have demanded ransom was not correct.

"We do not have any such information. Biman has issued a press release in this regard," he also said.

"The hackers could not enter through the firewall. Because of this, they could not cause much damage. They could not steal any information. Everything that needs to be done in case of a cyberattack has been done

Six injured

FROM PAGE 1

establishing supremacy on the campus, they added.

Yesterday, an altercation broke out between the groups over laying wreaths at the Shaheed Minar around 11:30am, leading to the clash, said witnesses.

The groups attacked each other with sticks and iron rods, they said.

A chase and counter-chase also took place between them, added the witnesses.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Contacted, Irfan said when they were leaving the Shaheed Minar premises after placing a wreath, his rivals, led by Tarek, attacked them, adding that he and three of his men were wounded in the incident.

"Of them, the condition of Shuvo and Hridoy is critical. They were taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital," Irfan added.

However, denying the allegation, Tarek said Irfan's supporters attacked them with the help of outsiders, leaving three of his men injured.

Tarek further said he also got

by Biman. A general diary has been lodged and all measures have been taken."

Asked why Biman could not recover its email server from the hackers even after 9 days, the Biman MD said, "There was no disruption in the operations of Biman. Our activities are going on as usual. There was no problem. We hope to be able to give a complete picture of the incident tomorrow."

"A team of experts is working. We will be able to know about the hacking when the work will be done. However, there was no major damage to the airline."

He also said, "No such warning was given in advance regarding the possibility that the airline might be a victim of a cyberattack."

Asked if the hackers caused this incident due to negligence in the security system of Biman, he replied, "If we have any deficiencies, we will bring this forward. Biman will also work on how to prevent such incidents in the future."

injured and received treatment at Boalkhali Upazila Health Complex.

Abdur Razzak, officer-in-charge of Boalkhali Police Station, said no one filed any complaint over the incident. "We will take legal action if we receive any formal complaints."

Prof Partha Pratim Dutta, principal of Sir Ashutosh Government College, could not be communicated over the phone for comments.

2,000 mummified

FROM PAGE 12

of ancient trees, leather clothes and shoes.

Abydos, which lies some 435 kilometres (270 miles) on the Nile river south of Cairo, is famed for its temples such as that of Seti I, as well as its necropolises.

Cairo regularly announces new archaeological discoveries, which some suggest are made more for political and economic impact than their scientific or historic importance.

Egypt, home to some 105 million people, is mired in an economic crisis and relies on tourism for 10 percent of GDP, employing two million people.

Bangladesh can feel proud

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladesh has demonstrated its humanitarian commitment to sheltering vulnerable refugees.

Also, by developing adaptation strategies to the climate crisis, the country has shown leadership in protecting the environment and strengthening climate resilience, reads the statement.

Noting that the US has made real strides battling Covid, tackling climate change, and promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific region, the US secretary said Americans and Bangladeshis are stronger together because of cooperation on the defining issues of this era.

"I look forward to deepening our partnership in the year ahead."

The US is committed to working with Bangladesh in support of free and fair elections, open to all, said Blinken, commenting on the national polls due late this year or early next year.

In a message, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the

multifaceted partnership between the two countries is founded on shared sacrifices.

"Bangladesh will always be a strong pillar of India's Neighbourhood First Policy," he said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping too lauded the remarkable progress of Bangladesh.

China and Bangladesh are enjoying solid and profound political trust, and practical cooperation has been advancing steadily, he said, referring to the development projects under the "Belt and Road Initiative".

He said China attaches great importance to the development of China-Bangladesh relations and stands ready to work to push the strategic partnership of cooperation to a new height.

In a congratulatory letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the relations between the two countries are based on good traditions of friendship and mutual respect.

Putin said he is confident that

further development of constructive bilateral cooperation fully meets the core interests of the people of Russia and Bangladesh, and goes in line with the promotion of regional security and stability.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said his country accords importance to its relationship with Bangladesh and looks forward to further strengthening the bilateral ties to the mutual benefit of the people of the two countries.

He wished good health to Hasina and continued progress and prosperity of the brotherly Bangladeshi people.

UN Resident Coordinator Gwyn Lewis said since independence, Bangladesh evolved from a war-torn country to one of the leading economic powers in South Asia.

"The hospitality of Bangladesh's diverse people is just one of the many facets of a country that my colleagues and I have been fortunate to experience every day," she said.

Govt agencies

FROM PAGE 1

WHAT WILL BE THE SYSTEM?

According to section II of the Road Transport Act 2018, all sorts of drivers' licences, except the ones for learners, will be assigned 12 points.

The authorities issued a gazette on December 27 last year putting the rules of the act in effect. The rules mentioned 13 offences.

A driver may lose two points for overloading and intentionally obstructing movement of other vehicles and one point each for 11 other offences including illegal parking, speeding, and violation of traffic signals, the rules said.

A mobile court or a BRTA official not below the rank of motor vehicle inspector or police officer not below the rank of sergeant can deduct the points. The officer must have a photo or video footage of the offence and inform the driver and the authority immediately after deducting a point.

A driver can request a review of the decision within a month by paying a fee and the authorities will make a decision within a month.

If a driver does not violate any rules for six months, the authority can give them back two points following an appeal. The drivers will get two more

points if they do not violate any rules for another six months in a row.

But drivers will not be allowed to appeal for points for two years after losing eight points.

The BRTA has already held meetings about the matter and directed its software vendor to prepare a system so that it can be implemented, said a top official.

But it will be very difficult to implement the system because of the large number of drivers and vehicles without valid documents, said the official, requesting anonymity.

Moreover, the transport associations may become an impediment as they often obstruct government initiatives that go against their vested interests, he added.

Sources at the road transport and bridges ministry said the authority may consider these matters and pilot the system before starting full implementation.

Similar systems of demerit points are used in different countries, officials said.

Contacted, Monibur Rahman, additional commissioner (Traffic) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said the police are reviewing the system.

"We are hopeful about starting the

system, but it may take some time," he said.

Shahed Al Masud, a deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Traffic division, told The Daily Star that implementation of a new system always poses some challenges.

Congress holds

FROM PAGE 12

Countering the BJP's efforts to bill Gandhi's remark which led to his defamation conviction and parliament disqualification as an insult to the Other Backward Class (OBC) community, Kharge said, "Is Nirav Modi OBC? Is Mehul Choksi OBC? Is Lalit Modi OBC? They are fugitives."

"Rahul Gandhi only raised the issue of these fugitives fleeing with black money. The Congress will hold hundreds of such protests across the country. We will fight to preserve Freedom of Speech. I thank all opposition parties for standing with Rahul Gandhi," he said.

Top party leaders P Chidambaram, Jairam Ramesh, Salman Khurshid, Pramod Tiwari, Ajay Maken, Mukul Wasnik and Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary, were also seen at the protest. Delhi Police maintained a tight vigil in the area and banned large gatherings around Raj Ghat.

Russia, China not creating military alliance Says Putin in an interview

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia and China are not creating a military alliance and the cooperation between their armed forces is "transparent", President Vladimir Putin said in comments broadcast yesterday, days after hosting Chinese leader Xi Jinping in the Kremlin.

Putin and Xi professed friendship and pledged closer ties, including in the military sphere, during their March 20-21 summit, as Russia struggles to make battlefield gains in what it calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine.

"We are not creating any military alliance with China," Putin said on state television. "Yes, we have cooperation in the sphere of military-technical interaction. We are not hiding this."

"Everything is transparent, there is nothing secret."
China and Russia signed a "no limits" partnership accord in early 2022, just weeks before Putin sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine.

Beijing has refrained from criticising Putin's decision and has touted a peace plan for Ukraine. The West has dismissed its proposals as a ploy to buy Putin more

time to rebuild his forces in Ukraine.

Washington has said recently that it fears Beijing could arm Russia, something China denies.

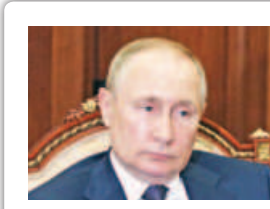
In his televised remarks, Putin dismissed suggestions that Moscow's increased ties with Beijing in areas such as energy and finance meant that Russia was becoming overly dependent on China, saying these were the views of "jealous people".

"For decades many have desired turning China against the Soviet Union and Russia, and vice versa," he said. "We understand the world we live in."

Putin also accused the US and Nato of seeking to build a new global "axis" that he said bore some resemblance to the WWII alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan.

Putin named Australia, New Zealand and South Korea as being in line to join a "global Nato" and referenced a defence deal signed by UK and Japan earlier this year.

"That is why Western analysts... are talking about the West starting to build a new axis similar to the one created in the 1930s by the fascist regimes of Germany and Italy and militarist Japan," he said.



Palestinian men scuffle with Israeli security forces in the West Bank town of Huwara, yesterday. Two Israeli soldiers were wounded on Saturday, the military said, in a drive-by shooting claimed by a Palestinian armed group in Huwara.

PHOTO: AFP

BOATS SINK OFF TUNISIA

29 African migrants die

REUTERS, Tunis

At least 29 migrants from sub-Saharan Africa died when their two boats sank off the coast of Tunisia as they tried to cross the Mediterranean to Italy, the Tunisian coast guard said yesterday.

Separately, in the last four days, five migrant boats have sunk off the coast of the southern city of Sfax, leaving 67 missing and nine dead, after a significant increase in boats heading towards Italy.

Tunisia has taken over from Libya as a main departure point for people fleeing poverty and conflict in Africa and the Middle East in the hope of a better life in Europe.

Houssem Jebabli, a senior official in the national guard told Reuters that the Tunisian coast guard had also rescued 11 people off the coast of Mahdia, further north.

The coast guard said it had stopped about 80 boats heading for Italy in the past four days and detained more than 3,000 migrants, mostly from sub-Saharan African countries.

RAHUL GANDHI'S REMOVAL AS MP

Congress sees opportunity to unite opposition

NDTV ONLINE

In the support that Rahul Gandhi received from Opposition parties after his disqualification from the Parliament, the Congress has found an opportunity to take further its attempt to unite the parties opposed to the ruling BJP.

Gandhi's conviction in a defamation case and his consequent removal from the Lok Sabha last week witnessed backlash from a vocal and united Opposition. The Congress, the main opposition party in the parliament, has welcomed this rare show of support.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, a Gandhi family loyalist, said people were unhappy earlier with other parties as they were not coming together when the country is not going in the right direction.

"But now they have started backing us and everybody is happy with their support,"

he said at a protest against Gandhi's disqualification in Delhi yesterday.

"I am happy that all opposition parties are standing together with Rahul ji. I want to thank them as they stood with us at such a time to save democracy," said Mallikarjun Kharge, who heads the Congress party.

His colleague Jairam Ramesh, a party veteran, had earlier said the Opposition parties should take the issue of opposition unity forward in a systematic way.

"The Congress president has been coordinating with opposition parties every day in parliament, now this has to be done outside also," he had said.

Opposition unity remains a hot topic ahead of next year's national elections, a precursor to electing the Prime Minister by elected representatives.

The fractured opposition has been one of the greatest advantages for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata

Party. Attempts to unite the resisting non-BJP voices are yet to show positive results as they scramble to find common ground over their diverse ambitions.

Congress leaders had asserted no opposition front was possible without it amid a buzz over a third front by regional leaders that would exclude the BJP and the Congress.

Gandhi's Lok Sabha membership was cancelled after he was convicted in a defamation case for saying PM Modi shared the same last name as fugitive businessmen Nirav Modi and Lalit Modi.

"How come all thieves have Modi as the common surname," he had said at a pre-election rally, a remark that the ruling BJP projected as a smear campaign against those with the Modi surname, shared by an electorally critical disadvantaged community.

A court in Gujarat sentenced Gandhi to two years in jail, but he was allowed to walk free on bail to appeal verdict. The conviction made him ineligible to continue as a Lok Sabha member.



'Not a crime' Trump dismisses NY probe at Texas rally

AFP, Waco

Donald Trump staged his first presidential campaign rally in Texas Saturday, brushing off his potential indictment as he railed against multiple criminal probes threatening his bid for the White House. The Republican addressed several thousand supporters -- far fewer than the 15,000 he had expected -- in the city of Waco as he braced for possible charges over a hush-money payout just days before the 2016 election, to a porn star alleging a sexual encounter. Maintaining the investigation was over "something that is not a crime, not a misdemeanor, not an affair," Trump told supporters how he had been the victim of "one witch hunt and phony investigation after another." The former president has made a torrent of increasingly bellicose statements, claiming "misconduct" by prosecutors he refers to as "human scum" who are pursuing cases against him in New York, Washington and Atlanta.

Used exorcism to fight crime

Says Colombia police chief

AFP, Bogota

Colombia's chief of police said he and other officers have used exorcism and prayer to tackle crime and the country's most powerful criminals, including drug cartel leader Pablo Escobar. Sitting in his office surrounded by crucifixes, effigies of the Virgin Mary and other Catholic symbols, General Henry Sanabria told local media on Saturday that these religious practices have helped the police throughout the last 50 years of armed conflict in the South American country. As examples, he recalled police operations in which Escobar (in 1993), FARC guerrilla leader Alfonso Cano (2011) and his military chief known as "Mono Jojoy" (2010) were killed. "The existence of the devil is certain. I have seen him. I have felt him," Sanabria said in an interview with Semana magazine.

Dhamrai Pourashava, Dhamrai, Dhaka
e-Tender Notice (OTM) No. 02/2022-2023

Memo No. DHA POUR/2022-23/Covid-19/1766 Date: 21/03/2023

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

Tender ID No.	Package No. & description of the works	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time	Opening date & time
805656	LGCRRP/Dhamrai/2022-23/W-01 Construction of RCC Road	26-April-2023 16:00	27-April-2023 13:00	27-April-2023 13:00
805680	LGCRRP/Dhamrai/2022-23/W-02 Construction of RCC Pipe Drain & Uni Block Road	26-April-2023 16:00	27-April-2023 13:00	27-April-2023 13:00
805687	LGCRRP/Dhamrai/2022-23/W-03 Construction of Uni Block Road	26-April-2023 16:00	27-April-2023 13:00	27-April-2023 13:00

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

Md. Shahadathe Hossain
Executive Engineer
Dhamrai Pourashava, Dhamrai
Dhaka-1350

GD-562



DEVASTATING TORNADO Mississippi death toll hits 25

REUTERS, Silver City

Rescuers combed through rubble on Saturday after a powerful storm tore across Mississippi late on Friday, killing at least 25 people there and one person in Alabama as it levelled hundreds of buildings and spawned at least one devastating tornado.

The tornado stayed on the ground for about an hour and cut a path of destruction some 170 miles (274 km) long, according to Nicholas Price, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Jackson, Mississippi.

US President Joe Biden approved an emergency declaration for Mississippi yesterday. Biden ordered federal aid to supplement state, tribal and local recovery efforts in the affected areas, a White House Statement said.

In Rolling Fork, a town of around 1,900 in western Mississippi that was hit the hardest, homes were reduced to rubble, tree trunks snapped like twigs and cars were tossed aside like toys. The town's water tower lay twisted on the ground.

Michael Searcy, a storm chaser who saw the tornado approach Rolling Fork, spent hours helping to rescue trapped people.

"As soon as we would go from one vehicle to the next vehicle or from building to building, we could hear screams and we could hear cries for help," he told Reuters. "And we were just basically in small groups, digging through the rubble, trying to find and extricate people."

Members of one family narrowly escaped by taking shelter in a bathroom and the high winds dropped a van on top of the home, Searcy said.

BLOW TO TAIWAN

China opens ties with Honduras

REUTERS, Beijing

China established diplomatic ties with Honduras yesterday after the Central American country ended its decades-long relationship with Taiwan, while Taiwan's foreign minister accused Honduras of demanding exorbitant sums before being lured away by Beijing.

The ending of ties with Taiwan had been expected after the Honduran foreign minister travelled to China last week to open relations and President Xiomara Castro said her government would start ties with Beijing.

China said its foreign minister, Qin Gang, and Honduran Foreign Minister Eduardo Enrique Reina signed the deal on diplomatic recognition in Beijing, ending relations with Taiwan dating back to the 1940s.

In a brief statement late on Saturday, the Honduran foreign ministry said it recognised the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate government that represents all of China and that Taiwan is an "inseparable part of Chinese territory".

China claims democratically ruled Taiwan as its own territory with no right to state-to-state ties, a position Taipei strongly rejects. China demands that countries with which it has ties to recognise its position.

স্বাধীন

প্রিয় গ্রাহক,
আরো আধুনিক এবং উন্নতসেবার লক্ষ্যে আগামী ২৯শে মার্চ থেকে যমুনা ব্যাংকের অনলাইন ব্যাংকিং সেবায় যুক্ত হচ্ছে নতুন মোবাইল অ্যাপ এবং ওয়েব ভিত্তিক ডিজিটাল ব্যাংকিং সেবা "স্বাধীন"। ২৯শে মার্চ থেকে justpay স্যান্ডিটি আর কার্যকর থাকবে। এবং "স্বাধীন" app টি Google Play Store, Apple App Store থেকে ডাউনলোড করে অথবা Web Portal থেকে Self Registration করা যাবে।

বিস্তারিত জানতে ডায়াল করুন: ৯৬৭৪২

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Beware of methane leaks!

Excess methane concentrations in Dhaka demand proper scrutiny

It has been known for some time that Bangladesh, one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, has also been a major contributor of methane, a greenhouse gas about 80 times more potent in its first two decades in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide. Bangladesh has some of the highest methane emissions in the world that can be detected by satellites, according to a 2021 analysis. A new study by the well-known scientific journal *Environmental Research Letters* has now supported this finding, suggesting that methane emissions in Dhaka are well in excess of those of the surrounding regions. In the study, which was based on satellite observations over nearly four years, Dhaka ranked second in a list of 61 cities responsible for the highest methane emissions in the world.

There are three major contributing factors – untreated garbage, wastewater and leaks in gas connections – which, together, form a deadly combination that is not only contributing to the global warming but also making the life of Dhaka residents quite vulnerable. Each of these sources deserve appropriate scrutiny. Apparently, 47 percent of Dhaka's methane emissions is caused by garbage. The study identifies 13 dumps where garbage is left in the open and decomposed leading to methane emissions. Moreover, constant pollution and contamination of water sources is also causing this. The other source identified – leaks in gas connections – is due to negligent handling of Titas Gas connections, which has been responsible for some recent building fires and explosions.

The findings of this study make a compelling argument in favour of taking a critical look at Dhaka's waste disposal system and utility services. Reportedly, Dhaka produces about 10,000 tonnes of waste every day. The city corporations collect and dump about half of them, while the rest is left littering roads, open spaces and water bodies. Often, buildings are constructed on wetlands by filling them up with waste and earth. Add to this the questionable electrical and structural safety of most buildings. Excess concentrations of methane – which is a highly combustible gas without colour or odour – produced in this manner can lead to explosions when it comes into contact with fire or electricity. One may recall that methane leaks, among other reasons, were blamed for the recent Science Lab blast as well as the 2020 explosion in a Narayanganj mosque, which went on to claim 34 lives.

The risks for Dhaka, and Bangladesh by extension, are clearly two-fold: we are not only compromising our long-term future and that of the earth, but also causing a very real and immediate threat to the survival of city-dwellers. Lack of awareness and indifference to these urban household methane sources are primarily to blame for this situation. The methane menace, however, is only symptomatic of what residents in general have to go through on a daily basis, with poor air, poor-quality food and water, poor waste disposal (without treatment), and poor services in all other aspects. We, therefore, urge our city fathers to take the methane study as a reminder of the massive reforms that Dhaka needs to improve its quality of life. Residents deserve to live without a threat to their life every other day.

An ancient craft struggling to survive

Govt support can revive interest in the once-popular Shital pati

It is distressing to know that yet another traditional craft is on its way to extinction. As per a report by this daily, artisans involved in the century-old craft of making *Shital pati* (a form of cane mats) in Tangail are struggling to survive due to the shortage of raw materials, rising production costs, and lack of capital. Made from a plant fibre, *Shital pati* has been popular among the people of Bengal for ages as its surface remains cool even in the hottest weather. It is used primarily in rural households, for sleeping and relaxing purposes. Sometimes, the mats are placed above tin roofs for cooling effects.

Reportedly, around 1,000 families in several villages of Tangail are involved in this craft, who are now facing a threat to their only means of livelihood. With cheaper plastic substitutes flooding the market, the demand for these beautifully crafted mats has gone down, while production issues continue to jeopardise their chance of revival, especially in the face of competition from large corporations. Cane, the primary raw material used in making the mat, is also becoming scarce as there is little investment in this industry. Moreover, the artisans can only earn during the summer months when the demand is relatively high. In the remaining months, they do not have any sales and hence no earnings.

It should be noted that making *Shital pati* is a slow process as it involves collecting the cane and processing the fibre, after which it is weaved into mats. Most of the weaving is done by women.

Apart from its practical use as a cooling mat during the scorching summer months, *Shital pati* making is an ancient craft that is part of our heritage. Being environmentally friendly, it has the potential to be very popular in both domestic and international markets if the industry is given the support needed, and it could be a reliable foreign exchange earner. Thus, the arguments in favour of keeping this tradition alive are quite compelling. With proper investment, which would increase cane production and ensure fair remuneration to the skilled artisans, *Shital pati* has immense value as a sustainable product. Design innovations can also create different uses of the material.

Needless to say, government support is vital to make sure that this industry survives and thrives again. It is encouraging to know that the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) provides loans to small and medium level entrepreneurs in Tangail. This can be expanded further to include more *Shital pati* entrepreneurs so that the industry can grow. We, therefore, urge the government to take advantage of the opportunity that it offers, and provide all the financial and marketing support needed to ensure that the artisans of this ancient craft can earn enough to make a decent living and also contribute to the national economy.

Why low global prices don't reach local consumers



MACRO MIRROR
Dr Fahmida Khatun is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

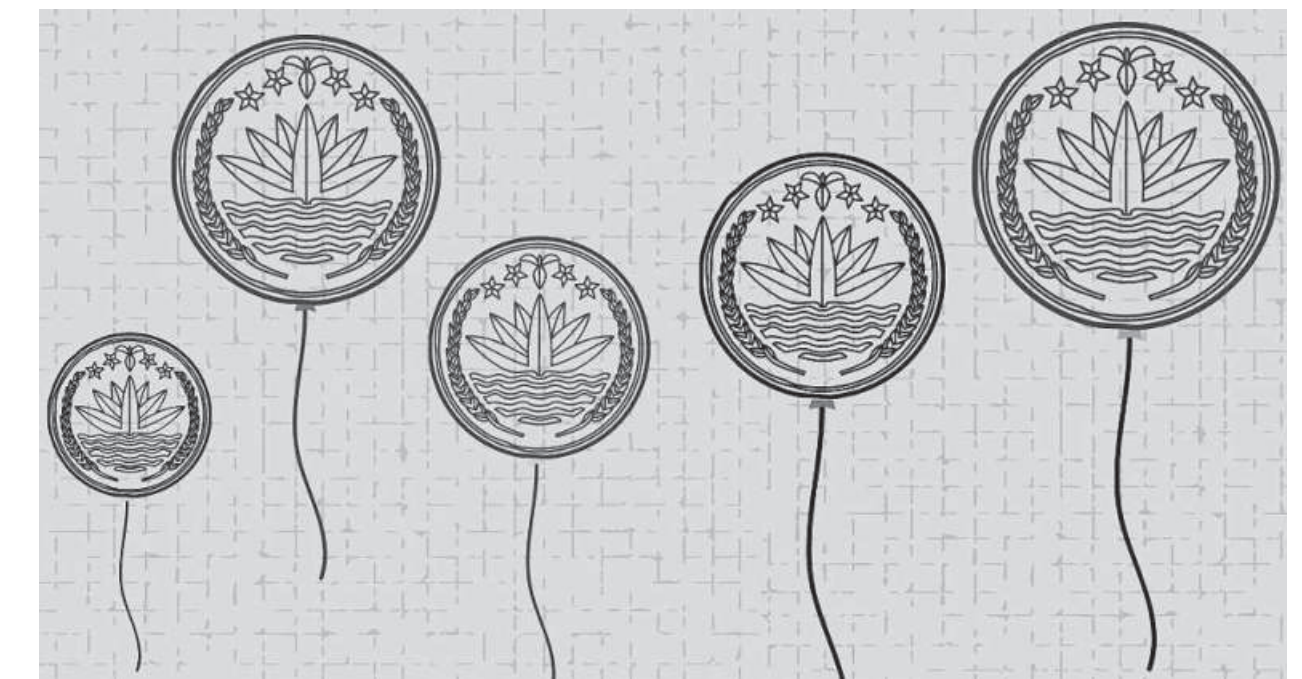
Inflation in Bangladesh continues to be a crisis. In January this year, inflation soared to 8.78 percent, according to data by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), exceeding the projection of 5.6 percent for FY2022-23 by the government. This surge is partly attributable to imported inflation as the country heavily relies on fuel and other essential commodity imports. The high fuel prices, transportation, and logistical costs associated with global inflation have also impacted locally produced items. However, this inflation can partly be attributed to imperfect market mechanisms as well.

In Bangladesh, high commodity prices in the global market are often used as an excuse to justify price hikes in the domestic market, even if there is no direct correlation. This is particularly true for critical commodities such as fuel, edible oil, and sugar, which the country imports. Any increase in global prices for these commodities inevitably gets passed on to the consumers without any delay.

This pass-through effect only happens during price increases, however; the domestic market does not benefit when prices fall in the international market. Importers justify that by claiming that their stocks are from when the prices were high, and they cannot sell the products at lower prices immediately following a drop in the global prices. By this logic, the commodities that are imported at cheaper rates should also be sold at lower prices till the old stocks are depleted even if there is a price hike in the international market. But when the international prices go up, some importers immediately increase prices even for their old stocks.

Though irrational price setting is a regular phenomenon in Bangladesh irrespective of global crises, importers are now blaming the costly US dollar for an increase in the cost of imported goods. The government has tried to reduce duties on some commodities from time to time. But traders say this does not help them reduce the gap created due to a sharp depreciation of the taka over the last few months.

While this is a policy failure on the government's part, the consumers are to bear the brunt of it. Leaving aside imported items, locally produced



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

commodities are also being sold at exorbitant prices, taking advantage of the difficult situations. Here again, the cost of transportation and logistics are cited to justify price hikes. Indeed, opportunists at all levels take advantage of the authorities' weak monitoring mechanism.

Some examples of price differences between local and international markets would help understand the situation. Data from the World Bank Pink Sheet and the BBS indicate that the world price of soybean oil has dropped by 10.46 percent during February 2022-February 2023, but increased by 12 percent in Bangladesh. During the same period, the price of sugar has increased by 31.45 percent in the world market, which has increased by 41.91 percent in the Bangladeshi market.

Apart from imported items, price differences in some locally produced commodities are also high. The price of 1kg of beef has increased by 25.70 percent in the domestic market even though it has declined by 5.98 percent in the international market. Of course, the rate of price increase of local rice is lower than Thai and Vietnamese rice during the February 2022-February 2023 period. Bangladeshi Nazirshail,

Pajam and Irri/Boro rice increased by 21.61, 9.85, and 14.29 percent, respectively, whereas the prices of both Thai and Vietnamese rice increased by more than 30 percent over this period. However, the price of rice in absolute terms is higher in Bangladesh than in those countries. For example, Bangladeshi Nazirshail costs Tk 84 per kg while Thai five percent parboiled

The responsible authorities should also watch the market and regulate it for the benefit of consumers. Lack of infrastructure and logistical facilities are often blamed for arbitrary prices. Due to a weak logistics network, transportation costs of goods are high. The practice of rent-seeking through collecting money from vehicles carrying products on the way

to the marketplace adds to this cost.

All these costs ultimately affect the prices of goods and are paid by the consumers. The pricing system should be transparent. The presence of middlemen in the supply chains, who contribute to high prices by taking a margin, should be removed. The Bangladesh Competition Commission needs to bolster its role. The commission must establish a comprehensive database, conduct routine surveillance of dominant market players' activities, scrutinise market manipulation, and take appropriate actions. The Competition Act, 2012 should be updated to specifically address monopolies and incorporate clear antitrust provisions, accompanied by concrete penalties for violators. Close monitoring and supervision are necessary for efficient market management to keep commodity prices in check.

For an effective inflation control measure, fiscal and monetary policies play a critical role. However, without eliminating the non-economic and distortionary practices in the market, prices cannot be brought down. This requires bold and concerted measures.

Since a few big players control the market and manipulate the prices to their advantage, there must be strict enforcement of the competition law.

CLIMATE ACTION

Collaboration is in our collective interest



RMG NOTES
Mostafiz Uddin is the managing director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

According to the latest report of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the world is likely to fail to reach its most ambitious climate target – limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above the preindustrial temperatures. The report warns that now is our last chance to avert a climate disaster. Many believe that unless governments around the world opt for the most aggressive climate change policies, the world is just 10 years away from either catastrophic climate change impacts or some form of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission “tipping point,” at which such change will become inevitable.

Reading such reports breeds a certain sense of helplessness, but there is work we can all still do – and we must start immediately. From a personal perspective, I think the most important keyword right now is partnership. Climate change is a joint problem that requires collaborative solutions across supply chains.

In the RMG industry, we keep hearing the same message. The only way the global fashion sector will achieve its goals is by reducing carbon emissions in supply chains. Is this happening? Sadly, no. A recent report by a US-based environmental NGO assessed the progress of many

of the world's leading fashion brands in reducing supply chain emissions. The bad news is, emissions are actually rising – at precisely the wrong time.

Many people are talking about the need to “decouple” growth from carbon emissions. That way, fashion brands can continue to grow while also stabilising or reducing emissions. I accept that. I also accept that our customers need to grow. To standstill is to die in business, we all know that.

There is some talk of “degrowth” as a new form of economic system. That's all well and good, but where does it leave supply chains? The answer is: a huge number of job losses. Degrowth has huge negative social consequences for developing countries like Bangladesh. So growth – decoupled from emissions – is the only option as far as I can see.

The problem is that decarbonisation is simply not happening. I've been watching this situation for a decade. Without radical change, I don't believe our industry will hit climate targets.

What might the radical actions entail? It comes back to that word – partnership. There is a lot of discussion about suppliers and their customers working collaboratively. Yet, talks are all we have had so far. There is very little in the way of genuine partnership. For me, without fashion retailers and

their suppliers working together, our industry as a whole will continue to see emissions rising. Decoupling will not happen.

What's frustrating is that I look at other industries and I feel sure we are missing a trick. Some of the world's largest multinationals in other sectors have been developing mutually

Some of the world's largest multinationals in other sectors have been developing mutually beneficial relationships with suppliers for more than a decade, investing heavily in supply chains to meet environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals. Many are taking a financial stake in their major suppliers, ensuring that their fortunes are collectively tied together. Why is our industry not following suit?

beneficial relationships with suppliers for more than a decade, investing heavily in supply chains to meet environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals. Many are taking a financial stake in their major suppliers, ensuring that their fortunes are collectively tied together. Why is our industry not following suit? There has to be a better

way. In fact, there is no choice but to find a more collaborative approach.

This is about more than just suppliers and fashion retailers, however. The key to decoupling is shifting to renewable energy use in supply chains. This means we need governments, energy/utility companies and development agencies included in these partnership conversations. We all need a place at the table so we can figure out how we are going to finally crack the carbon emission conundrum.

As I write this, we are already a quarter of the way through 2023. When one considers this, the realisation that 2030 will soon be upon us comes into clear focus. Will we still be having these same conversations in 2024? 2025? Will we still be having discussions around purchasing practices? Will we still be arguing over who funds the “greening” of garment supply chains – be it suppliers or brands? Will we still be talking about the need to leverage external investment?

Personally, I'm tired of the talk. I want to see clear, practical plans which set out what we need to do collectively to reduce emissions. It's time to develop a broad industrial strategy, with input from our international partners and a focus on decarbonisation.

I hear a lot of criticism of fashion retailers and some talk of greenwashing. My personal view is that most sustainability leaders in the fashion industry want to do the right thing and help make the world a better place. But they can't do it on their own. They need their suppliers just as much as we need them. Let's work together and start making a real difference.

Time to discard EVMs instead of repairing



Kamal Ahmed
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KAMAL AHMED

The recent image of a Jubo League leader carrying a ballot unit panel of an electronic voting machine (EVM) after snatching it during a by-poll in Chattogram's Boalkhali upazila is the latest addition to a growing list of examples as to why EVMs may not be suitable for conducting a free and fair election in Bangladesh. Neither the assistant presiding officer nor the on-duty members of the law enforcement agencies were able to prevent the mighty Jubo League's union level leader Nirmalendu Dey Sumon from taking the EVM ballot unit panel away. They were unable to recover it either; Awami League's union President Ratan Chowdhury recovered the panel and returned it to the polling centre.

This incident occurred only a few days after Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Kazi Habibul Awal said no one had yet made a sound and objective complaint about the use of EVMs, and the commission had taken a stand in favour of EVMs after conducting several tests. Would the CEC now, at the least, agree that his several tests didn't include robbing of ballot-equivalent parts of their very expensive toy? Clearly he has been oblivious to the arguments made by most of the political parties, except the ruling Awami League and its allies. There's even stronger opposition to the idea of using EVMs among the citizenry and civil

society organisations. Have the polling officers not blamed these machines' inefficiency for slowing down the voting process, which left many voters frustrated and contributed to lower turnout?

While speaking at a workshop in Cox's Bazar on March 11, the CEC, perhaps unwittingly, revealed the Election Commission's obsession with EVMs when he said, "The Election Commission is always in favour of conducting elections using EVMs. We are also working to find innovative modern technology for future elections." His comment that "so far, there has been no objective complaint about rigged elections using EVMs" suggests that he has conveniently forgotten that these EVMs do not have any option for verifying voting records, owing to a design fault of not including the voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) system.

Even though it has abandoned the ambitious plan to hold 50 percent of the next parliamentary election through EVMs due to the country's ongoing financial crisis, the EC still appears to be aiming at using EVMs in quite a significant number of parliamentary seats. On March 15, the commission decided to ask the finance ministry for allocating Tk 1,260 crore (equivalent to more than \$1 billion) for repairing 110,000 EVMs. This means each EVM unit will cost Tk 115,000, which is nearly half



Amid the ongoing crisis, it would be sensible to abandon the wasteful plan of spending Tk 1,260 crore to repair broken EVMs.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

the purchase price.

It was reported in this daily that each EVM was bought for Tk 235,000, a price 11 times costlier than neighbouring India. When better EVMs (including VVPAT) cost much less, then why does the EC want to repair discredited junks?

Earlier, it was reported in the media that about 40,000 EVMs were beyond repair. When these EVMs were

introduced, the EC bought 150,000 EVMs, which means there's none, or very few, usable EVMs available now. Even then, the commission is insistent on having some EVMs in the upcoming parliamentary election.

According to Election Commissioner Anisur Rahman, the Election Commission just wants a pledge that its request would be approved. He told the media, "If we are assured of the required funds, we

will go for the work immediately. We can even make half payment to the Machine Tools Factory in this fiscal year and the rest in the next fiscal year." This shows the EC's resolve to go the extra mile to have as many EVMs being used in the next election as possible.

Such an extraordinary emphasis on having elections in some constituencies make us wonder whether there's more to this than

meets the eye. It may sound cynical, but questions can be raised whether the intention is to allow the workers of the ruling party to cover their unlawful act of pressing voting buttons for their candidates in the name of assisting the voters. Besides, allowing election officials up to one percent of the voters in a polling booth to cast votes through EVMs in the event of fingerprint mismatch also increases risks of manipulation.

The amount of money that the Election Commission is seeking to repair faulty EVMs is almost double the money allocated for the last parliamentary election – which was also a record in our electoral history. Available data shows that the allocation for the last national assembly election was Tk 700 crore, when the voter number was 104 million. The EC's original plan was to have voting in 150 constituencies through EVMs, and for that it sought Tk 8,711 crore, which would have cost us 14 times more than the previous election. In a way, the ongoing economic predicament has saved us from an exorbitant waste.

Under these circumstances, it would be sensible to abandon such a wasteful wish, and concentrate on other crucial preparatory work for the coming election instead. CEC Habibul Awal, in his public statements, has acknowledged that there is a crisis. The reason for the crisis is evident in his words, "We still do not see a consensus among parties regarding the upcoming general election, which is essential. We do not want any political crisis before or during the elections."

It's well understood that the CEC doesn't want to take the role of a mediator, but getting an agreement from the contending parties on the rules of the game beforehand is not someone else's responsibility.

In which direction is Bangladesh heading?



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BADIUL ALAM MAJUMDAR

As an activist, I interact with many people from all walks of life every day. They include young and old, women and men, ordinary villagers and urban elites. They also represent different shades of political opinions. However, one common trait among all of them is, they are preoccupied with our upcoming general election.

The common questions that I face in these interactions are: in which direction is Bangladesh as a nation heading? Will there be an election at the end of 2023 or the beginning of 2024? Will the election be free and fair? Will it be participatory? Will there be dialogues between the major political parties? Will there be a caretaker government? What will be the role of India, US, UK, Japan, and the EU? Will Khaleda Zia be able to participate in the election? Will Sheikh Rehana be in politics and contest the next election? Will there be further sanctions? Will there be violence during the election? And so on.

Through all these questions, these people invariably want to know the country's political destination via the coming election. Many of them feel that as a commentator on political issues, I know or should know the answers to these questions. Many of them are disappointed that I do not. Faced with such questions, I normally ask them about their own opinions and engage in conversations. Most of them do have opinions – rather strong opinions – about the future direction of the country. Many of them also do not hesitate to express them. Some even insist that their opinions are the correct ones, and I should wait to see their predicted future unfold.

Based on my conversations with hundreds of people over the past few weeks, I can see three possible scenarios unfolding in the coming months. The first and best scenario is of a free, fair and credible parliamentary election, which will be not only participatory, but also

competitive and credible. In the election, people will be able to cast their votes and our next government will be based on their consent. In other words, our democracy will be back on track through the next election.

Almost everyone I interacted with in the last few weeks are convinced that a free and fair election is a pipe dream. This is because the main stakeholders – the Election Commission, bureaucracy, judiciary, and the law enforcement agencies – are totally partisan, and they will make sure that the ruling party stays in power. Almost all of them have given up the hope for a free and fair election.

The second scenario is of a violent election. To some of the people I spoke with, violence is inevitable as people are angry not only because they could not vote in the past, but also because of the price hike of essentials as well as corruption. Many of them think that if violence goes out of control, everyone will be at risk. However, no one wants to see violence; they want peace and harmony. Some people feel that peace has become the new name of development – development will neither take place nor sustain with violence.

The third scenario is of another controversial election like the previous two. However, most of the people I interacted with feel that different types of strategies will be used to manipulate the upcoming election. Many of them

are convinced that the ruling party will come back to power one way or the other. They feel that the Election Commission and the ruling party's friends and cronies are ready to do the betting for them.

Almost everyone I interacted with in the last few weeks are convinced that a free and fair election is a pipe dream. This is because the main stakeholders – the Election Commission, bureaucracy, judiciary, and the law enforcement agencies – are totally partisan, and they will make sure that the ruling party stays in power. Almost all of them have given up the hope for a free and fair election.

Most people I interacted with in the last few weeks feel that there won't be serious violence, because the law enforcement agencies will be able to contain it. However, if the violence does escalate, many of the beneficiaries, in their view, will flee the country because they have already stashed away significant financial resources abroad. They also feel that with serious violence, the election will become uncertain.

Almost everyone I spoke with in the last few weeks are convinced that by whatever means, the ruling Awami League and its alliance partners are going to stay in power, the consequences of which, in their view, would lead us towards an uncertain future in the long run. In their opinion, free and fair elections are the only legal, constitutional, and peaceful means of going forward. If that is thwarted, it would lead to violence. Thus, manipulated elections will serve no purpose.

Some of the people, especially those who are sympathetic to the ruling party, are confident that the prime minister is a miracle maker who can use her magic wand to find a solution to our electoral problem. She has solved many thorny problems in the past. She has, for example, abolished the highly popular caretaker government system through the 15th amendment of our constitution and could manage its fallout. She can do it again.

We, too, hope that Sheikh Hasina's lucky streak will continue, and she will be able to pull a solution out of her hat for holding a free and fair parliamentary election for Bangladesh.



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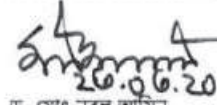
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তারিখ: ৯ চৈত্র ১৪২৯
২৩ মার্চ ২০২৩

“১৯৫৪ সালের নির্বাচনের পটভূমি ও বঙ্গবন্ধুর ভূমিকা” বিষয়ক গবেষণা সম্পাদনের জন্য গবেষণা প্রতিষ্ঠান/পরামর্শক প্রতিষ্ঠান নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণের অনুরোধ (REOI) সশর্ত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

(১)	মন্ত্রণালয় / বিভাগ	: মুক্তিযুদ্ধ বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়
(২)	সংস্থা	: জাতীয় মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কাউন্সিল (জামুকা)
(৩)	আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণ আবেদনকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের নাম ও ঠিকানা	: প্রকল্প পরিচালক, বঙ্গবন্ধুর আদর্শ ও মুক্তিযুদ্ধের চেতনা বাস্তবায়ন প্রকল্প, কক্ষ নং- ১৩০৭, জাতীয় স্ক্রাউট ভবন (১৩ তম তলা), ৬০ কাকরাইল, ঢাকা-১০০০, ফোন: ০২২২৬৬৬৪৪৩৮, ইমেইল: nuriaminnahid@gmail.com।
(৪)	ক্রয়/সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	: গুলগত মান ও বায়ুতান্ত্রিক নির্বাচন পদ্ধতি (QCBS)
(৫)	বাজেট এবং অর্থের উৎস	: উন্নয়ন খাত (সরকারি)
(৬)	কাজের নাম	: “১৯৫৪ সালের নির্বাচনের পটভূমি ও বঙ্গবন্ধুর ভূমিকা” বিষয়ক গবেষণা সম্পাদন।
(৭)	আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণ আবেদন গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	: ১২/০৪/২০২৩ দুপুর ০২:০০ টা পর্যন্ত
(৮)	গবেষণা কাজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	: ১৯৭১ সালের মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধ ও তার মাধ্যমে আমাদের স্বাধীনতা অর্জন একদিনে সংঘটিত হয়নি। এটি বিভিন্ন কর্মসূচি ও আন্দোলনের মাধ্যমে ধাপে ধাপে এগিয়ে গিয়েছে এবং লক্ষ্যে পৌঁছেছে। আর এ সব কর্মসূচি ও আন্দোলনের সাথে বঙ্গবন্ধুর ভূমিকা ও তত্ত্বাবধানে জড়িত। ১৯৫৪ সালের সাধারণ নির্বাচনের পটভূমি, নির্বাচনে অংশগ্রহণকারী দলসমূহের নির্বাচনী ইশতিহার, প্রধান নির্বাচনী ইস্যু ও প্রচার কৌশল, নির্বাচন ও ফলাফল, অভিঘাত, এবং গুলুৎ ও প্রয়োজনীয়তা; নির্বাচনী ইশতিহার ও ফলাফলে পাকিস্তানের দুই অঞ্চলের অর্থনৈতিক বৈষম্যের প্রতিফলন; নির্বাচনে বঙ্গবন্ধুর ভূমিকা; এবং মহান মুক্তিযুদ্ধের পটভূমি তৈরিতে এই নির্বাচনের গুলুৎ ও তাৎপর্য তুলে ধরা এই গবেষণার অন্যতম উদ্দেশ্য।
(৯)	গবেষণা প্রতিষ্ঠান/পরামর্শক প্রতিষ্ঠানের যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা	: (ক) প্রয়োজনীয় যোগ্যতা: (১) আগ্রহী গবেষণা/পরামর্শক প্রতিষ্ঠান বা গবেষণা দলের মুখ্য সদস্যদের মুক্তিযুদ্ধ/শান্তি ও যুদ্ধ/ইতিহাস বিষয়ে সফলভাবে কর্মক্ষেত্রে তিনটি গবেষণাকর্ম সম্পাদনের অভিজ্ঞতা; (২) গবেষণা দলের দলনেতা ও উপনেতার মানবিক/কলা/মানবসম্পদ/ইতিহাস/সাহিত্য ও সম্পৃক্ত বিষয়ে ন্যূনতম পোস্ট গ্রাজুয়েশন ডিগ্রি এবং সাত বছরের গবেষণা করার অভিজ্ঞতা; (৩) গবেষণাদলের দলনেতা ও উপনেতার বাংলাদেশের প্রেক্ষিতে গবেষণাকর্ম পরিচালনা ও বাস্তবায়নের অভিজ্ঞতা; এবং (৪) গবেষণা দলের মুখ্য সদস্যদের বাংলা ও ইংরেজী ভাষায় মানসম্মত গবেষণা প্রতিবেদন লেখার অভিজ্ঞতা। (খ) অতিরিক্ত যোগ্যতা: (৫) গবেষণা দলের দলনেতা ও উপনেতার মানবিক/কলা/মানবসম্পদ/ইতিহাস/সাহিত্য ও সম্পৃক্ত বিষয়ে পিএইচডি ডিগ্রি; এবং (৬) আগ্রহী গবেষণা প্রতিষ্ঠান/পরামর্শক প্রতিষ্ঠান বা গবেষণা দলের মুখ্য সদস্যদের উন্নয়ন সহযোগী বা সরকারি অর্ধাধিকারিত গবেষণাকর্ম সম্পাদনের অভিজ্ঞতা।
(১০)	গবেষণা কাজ শুরুর ও সমাপ্তির সম্ভাব্য তারিখ	: শুরুর: ১৬/০৬/২০২৩ খ্রি., শেষ: ১৭/১২/২০২৩ খ্রি.
(১১)	অন্যান্য বিষয়াদি (প্রয়োজ্য ক্ষেত্রে)	: আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণ আবেদন একটি বন্ধ নামে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর বরাবরে দাখিল করতে হবে। নামের উপর স্পষ্টভাবে লিখতে হবে “১৯৫৪ সালের নির্বাচনের পটভূমি ও বঙ্গবন্ধুর ভূমিকা বিষয়ক গবেষণা সম্পাদনের জন্য আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণ আবেদন”।

বি.দ্র.: কর্তৃপক্ষ কার্য দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন আগ্রহব্যক্তকরণ আবেদন বা সকল আবেদন গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।



ড. মোঃ নূরুল আমিন
প্রকল্প পরিচালক (উপসচিব)
বঙ্গবন্ধুর আদর্শ ও মুক্তিযুদ্ধের চেতনা বাস্তবায়ন প্রকল্প

GD- 564

THE LIBERATION WAR MUSEUM

Narrating Collective Trauma

As mentioned in the mission statement of the museum, it aims to commemorate not only the suffering but also the heroism of the people, which, together, generates the discourse of martyrdom. The discourse of martyrdom in any culture is fraught with many complexities and can be interrogated at great length.

MADHURIMA SEN

Liberation War Museum (LWM) in Dhaka tells the story not only of the Liberation War but also of the long struggles of breaking the fetters that, over the decades, led to the ultimate formation of Bangladesh. For a nation that went through as many major tragedies as Bangladesh, this is not merely a museum meant for education or recreation but a site of personally meaningful memory for millions. The interpretation of history in the museum is from a Bengali Bangladeshi perspective and the narrative is largely that of the victims and sufferers chronicling their own histories. The exhibition of the collections is geared towards visitors who are mostly locals and might often have a personal link to the war, and for whom, the viewing might aid in the process of healing. There is a deeply ethical element to the museum collections, and, for a visitor who has links to the perpetrators of violence, the collections may inspire a sense of guilt or the desire to undo historical injustices. And even for others who do not have a personal connection to the war, the museum has the potential to be one of the most emotionally perturbing sites of memory they ever visit.

Every museum has a specific social, ethical, and perhaps also a political purpose, and every museum has a story to tell. The story that LWM



Madhusudan Dey, affectionately referred to as Madhu da, is commemorated in the Liberation War Museum with a shirt donated by his family members.



On display at the Liberation War Museum is a poignant artifact - the coat and syringe belonging to Dr. Zikrul Huq, who lost his life during the war.

PHOTOS: MADHURIMA SEN



COURTESY: LIBERATION WAR MUSEUM

A view of the Liberation War Museum building in Agargaon, Dhaka.

the Pakistani army on November 25, 1971. Another display holds a two anna coin donated by Md. Zillur Rahman Jamil, and the note beside it informs us that this coin was paid to a young boy by a Pakistani soldier in exchange for a can of milk inside what seems to have been one of the army rape camps. The boy, we are told, never spent the coin as he could not get that scene out of his mind.

The museum website has an open call to people to donate objects of relevance to the museum. For a museum that aims to tell the story of the people's sufferings, crowdsourcing of objects seems to be a befitting approach. With the name of the donors mentioned beside every exhibit, visitors get an impression of interacting with survivors and victims' families instead of museum curators. Such participatory culture fits in with the aim of creating a sense of citizenship through shared suffering, and, in some ways, breaks down the walls of elitism around museums.

As mentioned in the mission statement of the museum, it aims to commemorate not only the suffering but also the heroism of the people, which, together, generates the discourse of martyrdom. The discourse of martyrdom in any culture is fraught with many complexities and can be interrogated at great length. Leaving that aside for another time, one might shift attention to how the museum exhibits offer an entry point into this discourse through material memory. The galleries are designed in such a manner that there is an impression of allocation of similar space to all martyrs' contributions as the museum exhibits similar objects like monochrome photos and clothes for all victims, whether they be civilian, military participants or those who accidentally came under the wheels of history. This humanises the dead, personalises history and emphasises the individuality of each victim instead of them being reduced to statistical data.

The differing social status and professions of various martyrs is also made evident through the various objects displayed. There are social and vocational clues in the memorabilia. For instance, the museum displays the art works of Bhupatinath Chakraborty Chowdhury, a mentor of music and art. His artwork is accompanied by a narrative of him being compelled to perform during his interrogation by the Pakistani army. Not only material memories of those who died but also those of individuals who contributed in their own ways towards the war efforts are exhibited in the galleries. For example, the museum preserves a radio receiver used by Ejaz Hussain to monitor news broadcasts from which information was later used for Swadhin Bangla Betar. This serves the museum's purpose of illustrating the contribution of the entire population towards the liberation of the nation. The narrative comes

across as one in which everyone is united, putting aside differences in class and social backgrounds. The exhibits are doubtless filtered and mediated through the museum curators, but the crowdsourcing of memorabilia visibly adds an element of egalitarianism to the display. In a way, the museum, like the formation of Bangladesh, is also presented as an outcome of its citizens' efforts.

What LWM offers is a very physical and dramatic experience of the war. Using various media, through effective lighting, architecture and accompanying narratives, it appeals to the visitor's sensory faculties. This contributes not only to the visitor experience but also adds to the meaning of the site. For instance,

physical experience of visiting LWM change now that it has moved to a spacious modern building with twenty-first century architecture and advanced technologies? The knowledge and the space enter into a combination with each other to create the physical and emotional response to the museum and its collections. Is the modern building, with its elevators and its glass doors, representative of a new modern Bangladesh that is built on the foundation of its past traumatic sufferings? Is it emblematic of a Bangladesh that is moving ahead with times despite its foundational trauma?

LWM provides a very hybrid space with multimedia engagements where

viewers to have varied entry points into the museum's narrative. The museum space is transcended both physically through mobile museums and virtually through online access. Such uses of modern digitisation technologies shows that LWM is evolving with times and adapting to the shifting landscape of modern communication with sophisticated new technologies. One of the main struggles of LWM is to get 1971 internationally recognised as a genocide. Thus, the digital outreach programme, digital reproduction and exhibition might serve a significant role in reaching a wider audience and increasing engagement.

Digital media has become commonplace in museums, not only in the West but also in South Asia. Thus, my intention is not to marvel at the novelty of digitisation in LWM but to open questions about the target viewership of the museum and the societal changes that bring about this need for newness in museological practice. The social media presence and virtual viewing options are not neutral and inconsequential. What are the societal needs that these changes cater to? Is it that the humdrum of our social media life has encroached upon museums? Are museums succumbing to the unquestioned technophilia around us? Or is it that the museums are transcending beyond the space that they have traditionally been limited to? In a nation like Bangladesh where digital literacy is on the rise, LWM's investment of time and resources into digitisation is meaningful indeed.

Museums and archives have always held the power, in the Foucauldian sense, of being storehouses of knowledge. The power to disseminate knowledge of specific memory, to decide what is worthy of remembering, to determine whose archival value mandates preservation. It is interesting to see how LWM exerts its power to create an overarching narrative of the Liberation War. At the same time, it is also interesting to witness the effect that the larger social trends have on its museological practices. Using inventive technology in a museum comes with its own challenges. How to digitise collective trauma without falling into the trap of going overboard, so as not to jeopardise the reverence and contemplation that is aimed for, so as not to trivialize the gravitas of the subject? Populist practices facilitate engagement with the larger public, but it also presents a challenge for museums to not let the populist practices eclipse its larger message. It is to be seen how LWM navigates the difficult terrain of strengthening the legitimacy of its cultural status as a source of authoritative information while, at the same time, opening up the museum space to make it a more welcoming and accessible site.

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PHOTO: THE DAILY STAR

A gallery within the Liberation War Museum features a wall entirely covered with poignant photographs depicting wartime refugee shelters in Kolkata, where entire families lived inside concrete sewage pipes.

one of the galleries includes a dark room with dimmed lighting in which the displays are behind wired nets, and an army truck glares at visitors with its headlights on. On several occasions, I observed visitors, including chattering school students on a day trip, being stunned to silence at the sight of the army truck. Even if they were visiting casually, the very tactile experience brings in an awareness that they are engaging with intensely traumatic memory in some form, even if not in the form of conscious critical engagement. Another gallery has an entire wall covered with poignant photos from wartime refugee shelters in Kolkata in which entire families lived inside concrete sewage pipes. What makes the viewing experience even more intense are similar pipes projecting out of the gallery walls. Even though some of the exhibits may be small objects which may seem minor and inconsequential in terms of their economic value, like the coin donated by Md. Zillur Rahman Jamil, but they serve to tell deep affective stories.

The museum was located in a residential building in Segunbagicha since its foundation in 1996 but has now shifted to Agergaon in 2017. Earlier, insufficiency of space necessitated that only 1300 objects could be displayed. How does the

there are photographs, material objects, audios, and videos. Many of the documents in the archives have been digitised and made accessible to a wider audience and international researchers. The museum website also offers access to a virtual tour in which viewers can navigate through various galleries and listen to audio descriptions of artefacts. It also has a mobile form in which a bus goes around the country disseminating information about the war. In addition, there is active engagement through the various social media pages of the museum. For instance, LWM's Facebook page publishes a 'This day of the year' post every day in which it mentions significant events that happened on each day of 1971. This intense memorialisation through Facebook not only keeps up with digital trends but also facilitates audience experience, contributes to memorialisation and creates meaning in a complex way.

In today's mediated environment and rapidly changing technological field, the museum is no longer merely a one-time experience, but it instead offers an opportunity to connect via online platforms. It is not just the physical space of the museum anymore, but the museum's activities can be accessed through multiple media platforms, thereby allowing

narrates is one of national suffering that led to the establishment of today's modern Bangladesh. It is a narrative that finds echoes in many of the larger social and political discourses of the country. What is interesting is the ways in which LWM attempts to navigate the challenges of narrating a kind of collective trauma that has been and continues to be narrated extensively and in varied, often contradictory, ways in the larger society.

In the face of increasing number of official apologies and transitional justice movements, memorial museums like LWM have emerged all over the world. Such a museum becomes all the more important for Bangladesh in the absence of any restitution, formal compensation or apology to war victims from Pakistan's end. Museums play a central role in the mediation of memory in the public realm.

This becomes even more significant considering that, in Bangladesh, for a long stretch of time, the military achievements of the war became the focus of attention and the civil agitation behind the war lay buried under layers of dust.

LWM presents itself as a storehouse of the memories of ordinary people as well as freedom fighters.

Founded in 1996 in the backdrop of civil society agitations for war crimes trials, and at a time when there finally was adequate space for commemorating civilian contribution in the war, LWM memorialises objects donated by victims' families and survivors of the war, in the form of photographs, daily use objects and family heirlooms. Many of the exhibits are mundane objects but they each tell a memory story, often a deeply distressing one. For instance, the museum displays burnt wood pieces from Khan-house of Keraniganj near Dhaka, which, the visitor learns, was set on fire by



In a gallery at the Liberation War Museum, visitors encounter a dark room with dimmed lighting. The displays are visible through wired nets, and an army truck with its headlights on glares at them.

PHOTO: THE DAILY STAR

AFGHANS inspiring Ireland

SPORTS REPORTER

Although Ireland lost the three-match ODI series without putting up a fight against the hosts, the Irish head coach Heinrich Malan informed that his side are taking inspiration from Afghanistan's victory over Pakistan as the visitors head into the first of the three-match T20I series against Bangladesh in Chattogram starting from today.

"Look, you got to go back a couple of days where Afghanistan beat Pakistan. The shorter the format, the more it gets intense and that's the exciting part about T20 cricket," Malan told the reporters in the pre-match press conference yesterday.

"We have shown in the past that we can play some good T20 cricket. So, hopefully we can adapt to these conditions and I think the boys now have a better understanding about what we could expect. Hopefully we can go out there and put up a good show," he added.

The visitors opted to rest their regular skipper Andrew Balbirnie with experienced Paul Stirling set to lead the Irish side against the Tigers in red-hot form.

According to the Ireland head coach, the visitors are willing to play an exciting brand of cricket, regardless of results in the series.

"This is going to be a tough challenge as they [Bangladesh] have shown that by beating the world champions England in the shortest format. But we are really excited as we have shown in the World Cup that we can play a brand that is exciting, which the people would want to watch.

"Look, international cricket is all about winning and losing and it's not just about how we would go and beat Bangladesh 3-0 as it's about playing a certain brand of cricket. If we can do that, the result of 3-0 hopefully can take off," he said.

The South African-born Irish coach also praised the Bangladesh team for demonstrating how hard work and planning over the years can help a team improve significantly.

"I think they have shown us, and also during the series against England, that Bangladesh is becoming an all-round side as it's not just about playing spin anymore. They have got a quality seam attack as well.

"So, it's a challenge for us as our batters generally don't face 140 kmph bowlers often in the domestic circuit - something we identify and work on. We know why we are here and we are going to put our best foot forward," Malan concluded.



After inflicting a 3-0 whitewash on world champions England, (R) Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan apparently couldn't keep his eyes off another trophy, during the trophy unveiling ceremony yesterday, ahead of the three-match T20I series against Ireland starting in Chattogram today.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

on Hathurusingha's agenda

SPORTS REPORTER

The aggression in mentality that Chandika Hathurusingha is trying to bring to the Bangladesh dressing room can be effected through openness to change and trying out new things, the head coach said a day before the first of the three-match T20I series against Ireland.

The changes being targeted and endorsed has to come about due to the psychological safety that the coaching staff is trying to establish. Bangladesh have won two out of the three series under Hathurusingha. Following the loss against England in the ODI series, Bangladesh bounced back to inflict a 3-0 clean sweep against the T20 world champions before clinching the ODI series against Ireland 2-0.

Fear of failure has often stunted the growth of cricketers despite showing potential for better careers.

After two series, Hathurusingha felt not much changed in terms of skill, but the dressing room environment has found more assurance.

"I don't think anything has changed. They are the same players with same skills. Only the environment changed a little bit inside the dressing room and the way we speak and what we talk about," he said at the press conference yesterday.

"I tried to bring some psychological safety around the group and tell them that whether they do well or fail, they have value to us," added Hathurusingha, who believes that aggression has to be shown through

"No doubt they can improve skill playing IPL. It's a very top, high-class tournament. But their number one priority is to play for country."

BANGLADESH HEAD COACH, CHANDIKA HATHURUSINGHA



and through, not just on the field but in every area of importance.

"Aggressive cricket, as I explain, doesn't mean we go and hit hard, further as we can. It's aggressive in every sense of the word. We select [the team] with aggressive intent, field-placing, our body language, batting. Tactically we're going to be aggressive. I think when we play like that with freedom, this team has always done well," he said.

The seniors such as Mushfiqur Rahim have already shown an openness to change. Coming down at number six instead of

his usual position at number four in the ODIs, Mushfiqur has shown tremendous intent in what was a switch from how he conducted himself in the England ODIs.

Hathurusingha felt that players have to worry less about outcomes and repercussions, which can often hinder progress.

"One word I can sum up is psychological safety. It's a big word. There's a lot of things behind that, like if you can create an environment that the players can do their best without worry about outcomes, without worry about repercussions. Not only coaches, not only selectors, even from their peers so they can be free to try things and if they fail, it's still okay, they are the same players and we trust them.

"I think that's the biggest change. If you create an environment like that, they can do their best. I mean, if their base is not good enough on some days, we will say that's okay," he said.

The selection of leg spinner Rishad Hossain appears to be one where long-term benefits are sought over immediate impact.

"We think that his skill set is good enough and there's something special that we can develop in the long [run]," he said, adding that, at the same time, Afif Hossain's exclusion was due to performance.

"He has to do what everyone else does - go and score runs," the coach said as he keeps building on his idea of an aggressive team after having sent the message to those keen on going to the Indian Premier League (IPL) that country comes first.

Regragui in dreamland after win over Brazil

REUTERS

Morocco coach Walid Regragui has hailed his team as history makers after they followed up their giant-killing feats of last year's World Cup with their first win over Brazil in a friendly in Tangier on Saturday.

The Atlas Lions became the first Arab team to defeat the five-times world champions, with goals from Sofiane Boufal and substitute Abdelhamid Sabiri earning Morocco a 2-1 victory.

"It feels like I'm dreaming," Regragui told reporters. "We wrote history. We beat Brazil, who are number one in the FIFA rankings and the country of football."

The match, Morocco's first since their stunning run to last year's World Cup semi-finals, was played out in a festive atmosphere at a sold-out Ibn Batouta stadium in front of more than 65,000 fans.

"To make the celebration beautiful, we had to win this match and that's what we did," Morocco centre back Romain Saiss said.

"We were at the level even though it was complicated. The mental state of the team made the difference and made people happy again and that's what is important."



Russia to play first home match since start of war

REUTERS

Russia's men's team will host their first match on home soil since November 2021 on Sunday, a friendly against Iraq in St Petersburg, having been kicked out of international competition because of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Both European soccer body UEFA and global football's governing body FIFA decided in February, 2022 that all Russian teams - national or club sides - would be suspended from participation in their competitions following the invasion.

The Russian Football Union (RFU) has touted switching from UEFA to the 47-nation Asian confederation (AFC), but its executive committee has not officially proposed this idea.

TASS reported that the RFU expects around 20,000 fans to attend Sunday's game at the Gazprom Arena, which had been due to host last year's Champions League final before Russia was stripped of that honour.

Russia's men have played four friendlies since the invasion, all away from home. Russia won 2-1 away in Kyrgyzstan last September, before draws against Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Iran.

Russia's women have not played at home since February, 2022.

The RFU and four Russian clubs had appeals against the bans dismissed by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) last July.

Scoring plenty for Bangladesh is KINGSLEY'S 'NEXT DREAM'

After having earned Bangladeshi citizenship in 2021, Eleta Kingsley became the country's first naturalised footballer to represent Bangladesh national football team as the Nigerian-born striker featured against Seychelles in a FIFA friendly match on Saturday. The morning after, Eleta spoke to **The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman** before training in Sylhet. Here are the excerpts of the conversation:

The Daily Star (DS): Did you have a sound sleep after your dream of donning the red and green jersey came true?

Eleta Kingsley (EK): I couldn't sleep because I had a lot to reflect on. Normally when you have beautiful moments, the next night is very difficult to sleep.

DS: How do you feel now after making the long-awaited debut?

EK: At last, I've done it! I'm very excited for this chance I got in the national team. The dream would have been completed had I taken my first [scoring] chance.

DS: Did you even dream of playing for the Nigeria national team when you started playing football?

EK: Yes, I dreamt. As a Nigerian, I had a chance to get in the national team but selection saw me out. I was upset and decided to go outside and play football.

DS: One of your dreams has been fulfilled, what's next?

EK: Scoring as many goals as possible for



the national team is my next dream because [eventually] I want to sit back and count how many goals I scored for my country as a striker.

DS: Did you ever think about becoming a citizen of Bangladesh and to play for the national team after marrying a Bangladeshi?

EK: I never thought I was going to be Bangladeshi before 2015 even though I got married in 2012. However, when I won the Sheikh Kamal International Club Championship [for Chittagong Abahani], I took a flag of Bangladesh and ran around the ground to thank our fans. From that moment, my wife [Liza Jafar] was telling me how

I wished it was real and that was how I started the journey.

DS: Were you nervous after being on the ground in debut and finding the first chance to score?

EK: Yesterday I was just unlucky because the ball bounced off the ground. I blame the pitch which has not been up to mark for international standard. I was a bit nervous because putting on a jersey for the first time and scoring a goal at the same time was too much load. But, if you ask me just to play, I score.

DS: How was the reaction from your family members, especially your mother in Nigeria?

EK: My wife and daughter have come here to watch my first match and fulfilled my dream. I spoke to my mom and brothers yesterday [Saturday] and everyone is happy.

DS: How challenging is it to play football at the age of 33?

EK: Yes, but in my case, I have to rely on experience. As long as the coach tells me I'm supporting the team on and off the ball, I think that's enough for me.

DS: Can Bangladesh expect something from the upcoming SAFF Championship with your inclusion after having been eliminated from the group stage in last five editions?

EK: In the first meeting I had with the coach, we talked a lot about SAFF Championship. We don't want just to play SAFF this time and qualify for the group, we want to become champions.



South Africa opener Quinton de Kock celebrates his 43-ball-century against West Indies in the second T20I at SuperSport Park in Centurion yesterday. South Africa scored 259 in a record chase, with six wickets in hand and seven balls to spare.

PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh can feel proud for many reasons

World leaders on Independence Day laud the country's achievements

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is quickly becoming a regional leader, with a rapidly growing economy, an increasingly well-educated workforce, and a dynamic youth demographic, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said yesterday.

"As you celebrate your 53rd Independence Day, Bangladesh has many reasons to be proud," he said in a statement, conveying warm congratulations to the people of Bangladesh on the occasion.

Fifty-two years after its independence, Bangladesh today stands strong on the global stage as it has not only made improvements in socio-economic indicators but also contributed to global and regional peacebuilding.

Many of the world's developed countries are increasingly engaging with Bangladesh and cooperating for democratic and economic development.

"By committing to democratic norms, good governance, human rights, and media freedom -- all of which are hallmarks of developing, stable, and prospering societies -- I believe Bangladesh will achieve its great potential," said Blinken.

By generously welcoming Rohingyas fleeing genocide,

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Pedestrians struggling to cross a footbridge at the Shishumela intersection in the capital's Shyamoli area. As the footbridge itself and the stairways leading up to it are both very narrow, it becomes rather chaotic when a lot of people, many of whom are patients of nearby hospitals, cross together. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BNP-COP CLASH 7 BNP men detained in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police yesterday detained seven BNP men for their alleged involvement in hurling brick chips at police during a clash in Netrakona's Durgapur upazila.

The detainees are Imam Hasan Abu Chan, former president of Durgapur upazila BNP; Ataur Rahman Farid, convener of Durgapur municipality BNP; Abu Siddique Rukku, Durgapur municipality Jubo Dal convener; and BNP activists Shah Alam, Mohammad Mahi, Mohammad Arman, and Md Arif Mia, according to BNP leaders and police.

Johirul Alam Bhuiyan, the convener of Durgapur upazila BNP, alleged that when BNP men were on the way to the municipal independence memorial to place floral wreaths, police waylaid them resulting

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BIMAN SERVER HACKING No ransom demanded Claims state minister for civil aviation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Civil Aviation M Mahub Ali yesterday claimed that hackers didn't demand any ransom for restoring Biman Bangladesh Airline's access to its server.

There was also not much damage caused to the national flag carrier due to the hacking, he said while talking to reporters after launching a memorial book titled "Mujib's Bangladesh" at a city hotel.

Shafiul Azim, managing director and CEO of Biman, who was beside the state minister at the event, claimed that they do not have any information regarding any ransom demand.

Biman and aviation insiders furnished The Daily Star with documents stating that hackers were demanding \$5 million in ransom for restoring Biman's access to its server.

The email server of the airline was hacked on March 18.

According to Biman sources, on March 21, the hackers said they had more than 100GB data of the airline. Apart from this, they have downloaded data from many databases from the internal network of Biman.

If Biman did not accept their demand, they would publish the data on their blog.

On March 22, the hackers sent another message to Biman, saying, "You say in the media that no information has been leaked. But you are wrong."

The hackers also told Biman that flight information, passport information of passengers and employees and several other information have been stolen.

Biman in a press release the next day said their email

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Russia 'took Belarus as nuclear hostage'

Says Ukraine as Putin announces deployment of nuke weapons to Minsk; US reacts cautiously

AGENCIES

A top security adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that Russian plans to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus would destabilise that country, which he said had been taken "hostage" by Moscow.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the decision on Saturday, sending a warning to Nato over its military support for Ukraine and escalating a standoff with the West.

Although the move was not unexpected and Putin said it would not violate nuclear non-proliferation promises, it is one of Russia's most pronounced nuclear signals since the beginning of its invasion of Ukraine 13 months ago.

Oleksiy Danilov, head of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council, called it "a step towards internal destabilisation of the country" adding it maximizes what he called the level of "negative perception and public rejection" of Russia and Putin in Belarusian society.

"The (K)remlin took Belarus as a nuclear hostage," he wrote

on Twitter. Ukraine called for a meeting of the UN Security Council in response. It asked the international community to "take decisive measures" to prevent Russia's use of nuclear weapons.

Putin likened his plans to the US stationing its weapons in Europe, and said Russia would not be transferring control of the weapons to Belarus. However, this could be the first time since the mid-1990s that Russia has based such weapons outside the country.

"Russia's nuclear rhetoric is dangerous and irresponsible... and we are closely monitoring the situation."

Says a Nato spokesperson

Another senior Zelensky adviser yesterday scoffed at Putin's plan, saying the Russian leader is "too predictable".

"Making a statement about tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, he admits that he is afraid of losing & all he can do is scare with tactics," Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted.

Washington, the world's other

nuclear superpower, played down concerns about Putin's announcement and the potential for Moscow to use nuclear weapons in the war in Ukraine, reports Reuters.

"We have not seen any reason to adjust our own strategic nuclear posture nor any indications Russia is preparing to use a nuclear weapon. We remain committed to the collective defence of the Nato alliance," a senior US administration official said.

The official noted that Russia and Belarus had been speaking about the transfer of nuclear weapons for some time.

Nato said the Russian president's non-proliferation pledge and his description of US weapons deployment overseas were way off the mark, reports AFP.

"Russia's nuclear rhetoric is dangerous and irresponsible. Nato is vigilant, and we are closely monitoring the situation," a Nato spokesperson said.

Analysts at the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in a note late on Saturday that the risk of escalation to nuclear

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2,000 mummified ram heads found in Egypt temple

AFP, Cairo

Archaeologists in Egypt have discovered more than 2,000 ancient mummified sheep heads left as offerings in a temple to the pharaoh Ramses II, the tourism and antiquities ministry said yesterday.



Mummies of dogs, goats, cows, gazelles and mongooses were also exhumed by a team of US archaeologists from New York University at Abydos, a site in southern Egypt famous for its temples and tombs.

Sameh Iskandar, head of the American mission, said the ram heads were "offerings" indicating "a cult to Ramses II celebrated 1,000 years after his death".

Ramses II reigned over Egypt for nearly seven decades, from 1304 to 1237 BC.

Mostafa Waziri, head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, said the finds will help people know more about the temple of Ramses II and the activities which took place there from its construction between 2374 and 2140 BC and the Ptolemaic period, from 323 to 30 BC.

As well as the remains of mummified animals, archaeologists discovered the remains of a palace with five-metre-thick (16 foot) walls dating to some 4,000 years ago.

They also found several statues, papyrus, remains

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Records tumble as SA beat Windies

REUTERS

South Africa pulled off the highest successful run chase in Twenty20 international cricket on Sunday to beat the West Indies by six wickets at Centurion on an afternoon of blistering assault on the ball as well as the record books.

Opener Quinton de Kock hit a first T20 century as South Africa scored 259-4 after being set an imposing target of 13 runs per over to win the match.

Johnson Charles had led the West Indies to 258-5, a new record T20 total at the Pretoria test venue, after they had been put into bat and amassed a formidable total.

The 34-year-old from St Lucia set a West Indies record for the quickest century, achieved off 39 balls, eight fewer than Chris Gayle's previous best mark.

Charles scored 118 off 46 balls before being bowled

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India's Congress party leaders take part in "Sankalp Satyagraha" at Raj Ghat in New Delhi yesterday to protest against conviction of Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi in a criminal defamation case.

PHOTO: AFP

RAHUL'S REMOVAL AS MP Congress holds protest rally across India

AGENCIES

Congress leaders, workers across India yesterday held a "Sankalp Satyagraha" in protest against the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha.

Congress leaders Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Mallikarjun Kharge flipped the BJP's pitch against Rahul Gandhi, saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the BJP's caustic attacks against the Gandhi family and insulted his Kashmiri Pandit lineage.

Calling Rahul Gandhi the "son of a martyr", his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the BJP insulted him every day, not even sparing their Nehru-Gandhi family.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the party general secretary, and Kharge, the Congress chief, led a "satyagraha" outside Delhi's Raj Ghat after their protest request at the Mahatma Gandhi memorial was turned down by the police, reports NDTV online.

"You call my brother, the son of a martyr, a traitor and Mir Jafar. You insult his mother. Your Chief Minister says Rahul Gandhi doesn't know who his mother is. You insult my family every day. But no cases are filed," Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said.

"Your Prime Minister, in a parliament full of people, says 'why doesn't this family use the name Nehru name'. He insults the whole family of Kashmiri Pandits, and the custom of a son carrying forward the family's name after the death of his father," she said.

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