



Remittance
changing rural
economy



N Korea unveils
new nuclear
warheads



A Frenchman
in Chittagong



Khushir
Bazar: Where
everything is
affordable

BANK COMPANY (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2023

Walls closing in on habitual defaulters

Cabinet approves landmark draft law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday cleared the draft Bank Company (Amendment) Act, 2023 that would usher in major consequences for habitual loan defaulters and restrict the influence of families on the bank board.

The draft act, which has been in the works since 2019, will now be placed before the parliament for final approval – a longstanding demand of the multilateral lenders.

For instance, a \$250 million loan from the World Bank as budget support is hanging in the balance because of this, according to finance ministry officials informed on the proceedings.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund has stipulated submitting the draft law before the parliament by September as a part of its \$4.7 billion loan.

"Now the banking activities are run under the Bank Company Act, 1991 -- the amendment proposal was brought to make it a modern and time-befitting one," said Mahmudul Hossain Khan, a secretary

of the cabinet division, while briefing reporters after the meeting.

As per the draft act, which was approved at the meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, habitual loan defaulters will not be allowed to run businesses or travel abroad.

A maximum of three members of a family can serve on the bank board, down from four in the existing law. But the tenure of the directors, which was increased to nine years from six years in 2018, remains the same.

The bank directors and their family members must provide collaterals, bonds or securities for taking loans from the bank as per a new provision incorporated in the draft law.

The banks will publish their lists of wilful defaulters on their websites and newspapers, as per the draft law, which has been stuck in the vetting stage with the law ministry since May 17, 2021, when the cabinet approved it in principle.

An individual will be considered a wilful

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Workers at a farm in Sirajdikhan of Munshiganj push each bicycle loaded with four heavy sacks of potatoes. The growers sell each kilogram for Tk 10-12, which is about half the price one finds in retail stores in Dhaka. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Under what authority did Rab detain her? Questions HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned under what authority Rab picked up Sultana Jasmine of Naogaon, who died in its custody on March 24, as she was not accused in any case at the time of her detention.

"It is a fact that Rab picked her [Sultana] up at 11:50am on March 22, and she was taken to Naogaon hospital at 1:15pm the same day after she fell sick. Then she was taken to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital at 9:20pm that day, where she died on March 24. What happened to her during the time from her detention to taking her to Naogaon hospital, and where was she kept for that time?" said the HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Ahmed Sohel while hearing a writ petition.

"She might have committed a heinous crime, but she has the right to life. There are rules for regulating Rab, a special force. Can Rab detain any person without any case? Our concern is whether Rab has followed the relevant procedures in dealing with her," the bench said.

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SULTANA'S DEATH IN RAB CUSTODY

'Her home was under watch for two weeks'

ANWAR ALI, from Naogaon



Sultana Jasmine's house in the calm and quiet Chalkdeb Janakalyanpara area of Naogaon town was under watch by a group of unidentified men for about two weeks prior to her arrest, said her landlord.

The group of three to five people used to sit on a concrete bench in front of his three-storey house and chit-chat until midnight, said landlord Delwar Hossain Dulal.

Sultana, a union-level land office employee in Naogaon, who died in the custody of Rab on Friday, used to live in one of the 650sqft flats on the second floor for a rent of Tk 4,200.

Her death triggered a barrage of criticism from human rights groups and the High Court yesterday questioned under what authority Rab picked her up since she was not accused in any case at the time of her detention.

"It was an annoyance in our area when some three to five young men started staying in front of my house at night," said Dulal who lives on the ground floor.

Around 11:00pm one day, the men knocked at Dulal's door and

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BUSINESS

RMG orders fall up to 40pc

The inflow of work orders from international clothing retailers and brands has slowed because of high living cost in the Western world and a pile-up of unsold stock at stores.

Orders for the April-June season declined by 20 per cent to 40 per cent due to the runaway inflation in major export destinations stemming from the Russia-Ukraine war. Although exporters say the orders are falling, official data showed exports are still in positive territory.

STORY ON B1

RPO AMENDMENT
2-7 years in jail for disrupting election
Cabinet okays draft

UNB, Dhaka

The cabinet yesterday in principle approved the draft of the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act-2023 with a provision of two to seven year's imprisonment for obstructing election observers and journalists from carrying out their "lawful" duties during polls.

The approval came from a cabinet meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Briefing reporters at the Secretariat after the meeting, Cabinet Division Secretary (coordination and reforms) Mahmudul Hossain Khan said, "If anyone obstructs media workers and election observers from performing their lawful works, the person may face two to seven year's rigorous imprisonment."

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Effluents released from mills and factories into the Louhajang river have severely polluted the water body in Khudirampur area of Tangail, around four-km away from the district town. The water is now black. The photo was taken on Monday.

PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL

'We invited BNP to have chat, not formal talks'

CEC says they did it of their own accord; BNP won't even respond

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP was invited for informal discussions and not for any formal talks, said Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awan yesterday.

It was the Election Commission's decision to invite the BNP; it was not made as part of any government tactic or following any kind of international pressure, he said at a press briefing held at the EC office in the capital.

The CEC said, "The matter of [international] pressure is completely absurd."

The CEC sent a semi-official letter to BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir on Thursday, saying that the invitation was for its leaders as well as for those from its like-minded parties to discuss issues, including the next polls, due to be held in late December this year or early January next year.

Although the BNP is yet to make any formal reply to the letter, Fakhrul on Saturday said the EC's letter inviting the BNP to "talks is nothing but the latest strategy of the

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"It's just sick.
It's ripping our
communities apart,
ripping the soul of this
nation, ripping at the
very soul of the nation."

Biden on Nashville school shooting

Two ex-land officials jailed over graft

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced two former officials of land record and survey department to jail in a decade-old graft case.

The convicts are Ashraf Ali Howlader, former settlement officer, and Monirul Islam, former surveyor, of land office in Tejgaon.

Ashraf was given five years and fined Tk 50,000 while Monirul two years and fined Tk 30,000. Each would have to serve nine more months if they do not pay the fine.

Sheikh Hafizur Rahman, judge of Dhaka Special Judge Court 9, handed down the sentence in presence of Ashraf at the courtroom.

The punishment of fugitive Monirul will start from the day of his arrest or surrender, read the judgement.

Abdul Hakim and Nurunnabi Firoze, two more accused in the case,

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Couple killed in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

A couple was killed when the battery-run rickshaw van they were on was rammed by a pickup truck in Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila yesterday morning.

The dead are Sabdar Hossain, 48, and his wife Parvina Begum, 40, of Bishoykhali village in Jhenidah Sadar.

Officer-in-Charge of Kaliganj Police Station Abdur Rahim Molla said Sabdar and his family members fell on the road when the pickup van hit the rickshaw van near Mobarakganj Sugar Mills around 6:00am.

Locals took them to Kaliganj Upazila Health Complex where Sabdar and his wife succumbed to their injuries, Ariful Islam, a duty doctor, said.

Besides, their daughter Sathi Khatun, 25, her son Arafat Hossain, 7, and van driver Abdul Karim were also admitted to the healthcare facilities.



People gather outside a multi-storey apartment block damaged in recent shelling in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in Donetsk, Russian-controlled Ukraine, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

AIR POLLUTION IN BANGLADESH It causes 20pc of premature deaths: WB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air pollution is responsible for about 20 percent of the total premature deaths in Bangladesh, says a World Bank report.

The report titled "Striving for Clean Air: Air Pollution and Public Health in South Asia" said that air pollution causes an estimated two million premature deaths in South Asia each year and inflicts significant economic costs.

Premature deaths are those that occur before the average age of death in a given population.

The report also said that South Asia is home to nine of the world's 10 cities with the worst air pollution, and Dhaka is one of them.

Exposure to such extreme air pollution has impacts ranging from stunting and reduced cognitive development in children,

to respiratory infections and chronic and debilitating diseases. This drives up healthcare costs, lowers a country's productive capacity, and leads to lost days worked," said World Bank in a press release yesterday.

The study found that concentrations of fine particulate matter such as soot and small dust (PM2.5) in some of the region's most densely populated and poor areas are up to 20 times higher than WHO standard (5 µg/m³).

"Air pollution creates a serious threat to public health and has major consequences on economic growth," said Abdoulaye Seck, World Bank country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan.

"Evidence shows that with commitment, the right actions, and policies, it is possible to tackle air pollution. Bangladesh has

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Ukraine shoots down drones over Kyiv

AGENCIES

Ukraine yesterday said it had shot down a dozen Russian drones over the capital Kyiv, adding that there had been no casualties as a result of Moscow's latest aerial barrage.

Single-use drones were key to a series of attacks that Russia launched against Ukrainian infrastructure over the winter months, disrupting heat, water and electricity supplies to much of the population.

"In total, 12 enemy UAVs of this type were detected and destroyed by... air defence forces in the airspace of Kyiv," said the head of the city's military administration, Sergiy Popko. "There were no victims."

He said "a non-residential building caught fire due to falling UAV wreckage" and the fire had been extinguished.

We invited BNP

FROM PAGE 1

government to hold another election depriving people of their voting rights".

The CEC said, "I want to inform all that the government has no relation with the letter. If there is any tactic, that was EC's..."

"It was not sent in line with recommendations of the government. We feel hurt when it is said that we act obediently to the government. We did not do so; rather our thought was reflected, he said, adding, "It would be better if a party like the BNP could be brought to the election."

The EC is expecting BNP's response to their letter in writing, he said.

When asked what would be the agenda for discussion as the BNP is adamant about an election-time caretaker government, Habibul said: "They [BNP] might have told you that, but we are yet to receive any letter. If they join the discussion and set the agenda, then the commission will decide on that issue. I don't want to make any advance comment on it."

He added that the commission from the beginning is expecting a free, fair, participatory and effective competitive election. Political parties should take part in the polls for the sake of country's democracy as well as democracy within the parties, he added.

The BNP skipped the talks organised in July last year regarding the next general election. The party also did not join another dialogue organised by the EC in June last year to discuss the use of EVMs.

Besides, the party did not join President Abdul Hamid's call on the formation of the EC last year.

BNP's RESPONSE
The BNP will not sit with the EC for any formal or informal talks.

It has decided not to reply to the EC even but will make its position clear holding a press conference, said party leaders.

The decision was made at the standing committee meeting, the highest policy making body of the BNP, last night, said party sources.

The sources said they believe the letter was sent following the government's instructions and it is a staged drama and the BNP does not want to take part in any such drama.

Wishing not to be named, a standing committee member told The Daily Star that the party will go for talks only if it is held on the caretaker government issue.

He added that leaders in the meeting said as the party is in movement for election under a caretaker government system and the EC does not have anything to say regarding this issue, there is no reason to hold talks with the EC.

Walls closing in on habitual defaulters

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defaulter if he or she does not repay a loan taken in their name or their company's name despite having the means to pay it back.

In addition, any person will be treated as a habitual defaulter if he or she takes loans under the name of a non-existent company.

A borrower will also be defined as a wilful defaulter if he or she transfers any asset kept as mortgaged in banks to get loans without prior approval from the bank concerned.

Banks will inform the Bangladesh Bank about wilful loan defaulters and the central bank can issue a ban on their foreign travel, obtaining trade licence, and companies' registration to the joint stock and security exchange commission, Khan said.

Besides, they have to wait for five years after their name is removed from the list of wilful defaulters to become a director of a bank or financial institute.

If any director of a bank becomes a wilful loan defaulter, the central bank can declare his or her post vacant.

A provision was included to allow the BB to regularly inspect different

institutes and foundations run under the law.

Besides, every bank will have to form two separate bodies -- identification and confirmation committees -- to detect habitual defaulters, according to the proposed act.

BB will give instructions to banks to this end.

Also, each bank or the non-bank financial institution will have to send the list of habitual defaulters to the BB from time to time.

The persons, who are treated as habitual defaulters by the confirmation committee of banks, can appeal to the central bank within 30 days from the submission date of the list.

The BB will make the final decision on whether the aggrieved persons will be enlisted in the list of habitual defaulters.

As per the move, the central bank will send the list to the government agencies concerned, which will then impose restrictions on delinquent borrowers.

Banks will issue notices to habitual defaulters to repay their loans within two months.

If habitual defaulters fail to repay

the loans by then, banks will arrange an auction to sell off the mortgaged assets as per the Money Loan Court Act 2003.

In the proposed act, there is a provision for mergers and restructuring of banks.

"The addition of a wilful defaulter clause in the amended Banking Companies Act 2023 is a step in the right direction," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the WB's Dhaka office.

It signals the government's commitment to addressing this longstanding problem.

"Hopefully, it will have a deterrence effect. How this plays out in reality will depend on the details of implementation."

For instance, if the "wilful defaulters" can file writs before the courts to stay the BB's adjudication on their listing, the new clause may not have the intended effects, he said, adding that there is a need for transparency on how BB will make the adjudication.

"All these need to be clarified in the implementation rules. Otherwise, we will be back to square one," he added.

herickshaw until she reached Mukti Mor from where she was taken into a white microbus, Dusal said quoting witnesses.

Hearing about Sultana's phone call to my wife, I returned home around 10:00am and heard that she was detained," Dusal said.

He said they were clueless as to who detained her.

Dusal said locals identified at least three of the men, who stayed in front of his house at night, during Sultana's burial on Saturday. She was laid to rest in a graveyard near her home. Policemen and Rab members were present there.

This correspondent talked to at least five shop owners between Janakalyanpara intersection and Mukti Mor but none of them agreed to talk.

Sultana's colleagues at the Naogaon municipality-Chandpur union land office in Tinpaty area described her as a gentle, sincere, and punctual person.

"I have been here for eight months and I have never seen her miss a day at work," said Kazi Raful Alam, union assistant land officer.

He said Sultana was at work during office hours on March 19 as well.

In a case filed a day after her detention with Rajpara Police Station

in Rajshahi, she was accused of conning people in front of the office of the divisional commissioner in Rajshahi on March 19.

Momena Khatun, union sub-assistant land officer, said she got worried after not seeing Sultana at work on March 22.

"I never saw her absent, she was so punctual," said Momena.

Momena was at work from 10:30am that day and she repeatedly called Sultana to know where she was. Her calls were not picked up.

She even called Sultana's son to know where she was. Sultana's son around 1:30pm told Momena that Rab took her to the hospital.

Yesterday, none of Sultana's relatives picked up calls from this paper.

This correspondent was, however, able to arrange a meeting with Sultana's maternal uncle Nazmul Haque Montu.

Montu changed the location of the meeting twice before seeing this correspondent inside a parking garage in Naogaon town.

"Since her death, our family members and I are living in constant fear of being picked up by law enforcers," said Montu, who served 27 years as a municipality ward councillor.

Eight Bangladeshi

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locate 18 injured Bangladeshis having treatment in different hospitals.

"We have sent a two-member team to the spot. They are talking to the migrant workers as well as the Saudi authorities to help the Bangladeshis," he added.

The foreign ministry released two phone numbers -- +966538643532 and +966553026814 -- that the family members concerned could call for information.

Md Arifuzzaman, secretary of the labour wing at the Jeddah consulate, said four migrants -- Gias Uddin from Comilla, Shefayet Ullah from Moheshkhali (Cox's Bazar), Nazmul Hasan and Rony from Jhore -- are missing.

Families of the deceased have urged the government to bring back the bodies as soon as possible.

Under what authority

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It asked Attorney General AM Amin Uddin to submit the autopsy report of Sultana before it by April 5 and fixed the day for further hearing.

Earlier in the day, Supreme Court lawyer Manoj Kumar Bhownick filed the petition as a public interest litigation, seeking the HC directive on the government to form a high-powered committee, led by a retired judge of this court, to probe the death of Sultana, who was an employee at Chandpur union land office in Naogaon.

On Monday, the lawyer placed a report run by The Daily Star on Sultana's death before the bench.

During yesterday's hearing, Manoj told the HC that Rab members picked up Sultana for her Facebook posts, though she was not accused in any relevant crime.

Besides, he mentioned that Rab has no authority to investigate any case filed under the Digital Security Act. Police have the authority to probe such cases, but Rab probed the case against Sultana under the DSA, which was filed 31 hours after she was detained.

Rab did not produce Sultana before a court in 24 hours of her detention, and all these acts are unlawful, he argued.

Opposing the petition, Attorney General Amin Uddin told the HC that it is absolutely incorrect that Sultana was in Rab custody for over 24 hours.

Placing some documents from the hospitals and the Rab office in Naogaon before the HC judges, he said Sultana was in the custody for a little

Woman gets life imprisonment for killing husband

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A Munshiganj court yesterday sentenced a woman to life imprisonment for killing her husband.

Kazi Abdul Hannan, judge of Munshiganj District and Sessions Judge Court, delivered the verdict.

The court also fined her Tk 50,000, in default of which she would serve another year in prison.

Neela Akhtar strangled her husband Nazir Hossain in the town's Matpara area on June 20, 2015, said court inspector Jamal Uddin.

Victim's brother Jahangir Hossain filed a case with Munshiganj Sadar Police Station the next day. "Neela Akhtar had confessed her crime before the court. Based on evidence, the court sentenced her to life imprisonment," said Public Prosecutor Abdul Matin.

Seven lakh yaba pills seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Bangladesh Coast Guard seized seven lakh yaba pills from an engine boat at the Bay near St Martin's Island at Teknaf in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

On information, a team of coast guard conducted a raid around 2:00am and seized the yaba pills in 10 sacks, said Lt Commander Abdur Rahman, communication officer of coast guard (east zone).

The boatmen jumped into the sea and swam in the Myanmar water, he said, adding legal proceedings were underway.

Fourth grader missing for a week

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The ordeal to get land documents

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Farhana Nasrin applied for a copy of a khatiyan (land-record document) for a piece of land owned by her through the government's online portal on May 8 last year, hoping to get a hassle-free service.

However, her hope faded as it turned into a never-ending wait.

"I was happy thinking I would not have to go to the local land office. I praised the government initiative as well. But when a month passed after my application, I realised that there was no hope of getting it," she said.

Nasrin applied for the khatiyan to be sent home through the courier service.

An applicant is supposed to get a khatiyan and mouza map within 10 days of applying. In the applicant's dashboard at epocha.gov.bd, it is seen that Nasrin was supposed to get her document on May 18, 2022.

However, her application was still on the waiting list.

An applicant has to pay Tk 50 for a certified land record document and another Tk 40 to receive it through courier service. Farhana paid Tk 90 in total to get the document, also known as porcha, for her land in Narayanganj.

"I contacted their helpline. They advised me to go to the local office for a solution. I asked them if I have to go to the local office then what is the point of an online application? They could not answer my question. I asked for a refund but they told me it is not possible," she said.

According to the land ministry, Dhaka is the lowest service providing district in Dhaka division, followed

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Even though Buriganga Bridge-1 was opened almost 20 years ago, the authorities have just recently taken the initiative to set up a divider throughout the stretch of the bridge to regulate congestions as well as prevent accidents. This photo was taken in Postogola area recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



ARAV KHAN ARMS CASE
Statements of witnesses, IO recorded

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday completed recording the statements of all prosecution witnesses, including the investigation officer of an arms case filed against Rabiu Islam alias Arav Khan.

Judge Murshid Ahmad of Dhaka's Special Tribunal-14 recorded the statement of Investigation Officer Sheikh Hasan Muhammad Mostafa Sarwar, a sub-inspector of the Detective Branch of police, before it concluded recording statements of the witnesses.

The judge then fixed April 13 for arguments in the case. Earlier, the tribunal recorded statements of nine other witnesses, including the complainant of the case.

According to the case statement, Arav Khan went to his father-in-law Sekendar Ali's residence in

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MAWA-BHANGA BR likely to go for trial run April 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway is likely to go for a trial run of a special train on the newly-constructed Mawa-Bhanga section crossing through the Padma Bridge next week.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan is likely to inaugurate the trial on April 4, railway sources said.

Talking to The Daily Star on Monday, Project Director Afzal Hossain said installation of rail track on the entire Mawa-Bhanga section, including the Padma Bridge, is over, except for only the 41-metre part.

A special sleeper has to be installed in this part, he said, adding that the contractor has already brought the sleeper, and it is expected that the installation works would be completed within a day or two.

"The works will be completed within this week. Hopefully, we will be able to carry out the trial run next week," he said.

BR is implementing a project to build a 169-km rail line from Dhaka to Jashore through the Padma Bridge at a cost of around Tk 39,247 crore.

The railway authorities are planning to open the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga section by August this year, while the deadline for the entire project is June 2024.

Once opened, the distance from Dhaka to Jashore would decrease by 200 km and the travel time would halve.

PRAYER TIMING MARCH 29

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:45 12:45 4:45 6:20 7:45

JAMAT 5:20 1:15 5:00 6:25 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN MARCH SEHRI IFTAR

6 29 6:17

7 30 4:36 6:17

8 31 4:35 6:18

MY DHAKA



KHUSHIR BAZAR

Where everything is affordable

RBR

Underprivileged people are crowding the "Khushir Bazar" shop at Mohammadpur's Beribadh, where they can buy clothes, shoes, frocks, household commodities, and furniture for nominal prices starting from Tk 10. It is retail therapy at its affordable best, giving the disadvantaged a right of choice. They can choose and buy according to their needs, and it is not charity as they are making a purchase.

"The Khushir Bazar is a perfect place to do our shopping. We come here often to buy what we need. I'm here to do early Eid shopping, and with only Tk 500, I bought a panjabi, trousers, and three-piece salwar kameez for my family," says Nargis, a vegetable vendor.

Khushir Bazar is a shopping outlet of "10 Takay Khush", a project of Switch Bangladesh Foundation, a non-profit organisation founded in 2011. The foundation was established by seven enthusiastic friends from Dhaka University, Buet, and Dhaka Medical College.

Switch Bangladesh Foundation's mission is to ensure quality education for vulnerable, marginalised children and improve the socio-economic condition of their parents. Their target groups are mostly day labourers, landless and homeless people, and housemaids with an income of less than Tk 200 per day.

Their area of operation is the Mohammadpur Gabtali Beribadh slum -- a backward area where activities of non-government organisations (NGO) or government charities are absent. The foundation caters to 20,000 families with its subsidised project.

To run this project, the volunteers donate anything between Tk 100 to 1,000 and the rest is managed from sales.



Muinul Ahsan Faysal, a founder and general secretary of Switch Bangladesh Foundation, explains, "During Covid-19, while visiting different slum areas in Mohammadpur, we found out that disadvantaged women and children there only had a few pieces of clothing. They lacked household commodities like pillows, mattresses, etc. Our volunteers came up with the idea of collecting used clothes, toys, utensils, glassware, and

The carrying cost of things like furniture and heaps of clothes takes up a lot of money. It is costly to bring the clothes, and wash, clean, iron, and package them.

"To give them peace of mind we initiated this payment process," says Faysal. "We do all these so that the buyers, who are slum dwellers, don't feel like they took it for free. It helps them cope with the recent price hike."

Sultana fell sick on way to police station: Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab yesterday claimed that Sultana Jasmine, who died in custody on March 24, had initially fallen ill while being taken to a police station on March 22.

After detaining Sultana, a union-level land employee in Naogaon, members of the force were busy printing documents from her phone at a nearby shop for around an hour and a half, on the way to the station, it said.

It conducted primary interrogation and evidence gathering in presence of the complainant and witnesses.

When Sultana felt sick on the way, Rab members took her to Naogaon Sadar Hospital, Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab's legal and media wing, told reporters.

He was answering questions about why it took so long for Rab members to take her to hospital.

Rab officials detained Sultana around 11:30am and admitted her to the hospital

around 1:15pm.

Moin said Sultana had gotten out of the vehicle and walked into the hospital.

Her relatives and colleagues were then informed about her illness, and she was provided treatment at the hospital under their supervision, the Rab official said.

Moin further said hospital authorities in the evening suspected that the 38-year-old woman might have suffered a stroke and transferred her to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

Sultana was shifted to the RMCH's ICU after the doctor found signs of stroke in a CT scan, said the official.

She died while undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Moin said an inquiry cell of the Rab Headquarters was tasked to investigate whether there was any negligence on Rab members' part as the woman fell ill while in the force's custody.

Departmental action will be taken if anyone is found guilty in the investigation,

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UNCOVERING FACE IN EXAM DU Bangla dept's move stayed for 6 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed for six months the move by Dhaka University's Bangla department asking its students to keep their faces, including ears, uncovered during exams and presentations.

The court also issued a rule asking authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why the department's decision should not be declared illegal.

The bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Mohammad Ali issued the order and rule following a writ petition filed by three students of the department challenging the legality of the decision.

They submitted the petition through lawyer Md Faizullah Faiz on February 19, saying that the decision is contradictory to their religious beliefs and independence and therefore is liable to be declared illegal.

Faiz said the department on December 11 last year issued a notice asking students to keep faces, including their ears, uncovered during exams and presentations.

'Prepare budget to increase women's access to IT' Demands Bangladesh Mahila Parishad at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday demanded a gender-specific budget for the country's information technology sector to achieve equality between women and men.

They made the demand in a discussion titled "National Budget: Women's Access to Information Technology and Preparation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution" in the capital's Shegunbagicha.

Gender budgeting is a strategy to achieve equality by focusing on how public resources are collected and spent.

The organisation demanded evaluating allocations and increasing the participation of women in the country's ICT sector. They also requested that ICT be made more accessible for people with disabilities to provide them with more opportunities.

State Minister of Planning Shamsul Alam, during his speech as chief guest, said the current government is actively promoting women's political and economic empowerment and has made significant progress in this field over the past 15 years.

He also suggested that the government establish a task force to hasten growth and ensure equality. However, he acknowledged that the given budget may not always be fully implemented due to various social and political contexts.

Gender budgeting was introduced to four ministries in 2009 and has since expanded to include 44 ministries. Currently, the results-based evaluation of the budget is conducted through 81 indicators.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Sitting in their yard, a family makes "haatpaka" (hand-fans) as the demand for them will soon increase with summer approaching. Each of these fans goes for Tk 10 and they sell them in batches of 100. This photo was taken in Barishal's Chandshi village yesterday. PHOTO: TITU DAS

World Vision and Samakal discuss air pollution

STAR REPORT

World Vision Bangladesh and the Daily Samakal held a panel discussion and roundtable dialogue on "Air Pollution Mitigation" at the conference hall of the newspaper in Dhaka yesterday, said a press release.

Environment Deputy Minister Habibun Nahar was present as chief guest on the occasion. Prof Ainun Nishat, an academician, water expert and environmentalist, was lead panel discussant.

Free iftar at High

FROM PAGE 5 mosque floor in long queues.

The process to distribute iftar started just after Asr prayers.

"We provide iftar items like date, watermelon, grapes, banana, apple, potato chop, chickpeas, beguni, potato chop, piaju, sherbet, khichuri, tehari and sometimes sweets like bundia," said Justice Md Khasruzzaman, member of Supreme Court Major O Mosjid Proshashon.

Around 1,500 people from all walks of life attend the iftar every day which is provided free of cost.

"Apart from the people who attend here, we also provide a portion of it outside the mosque and distribute it to the people there. These are being arranged with the contribution of all," said

Prepare budget to increase

FROM PAGE 3

Lawmaker Rumana Alim mentioned that women in rural areas have significantly increased their income through the use of information technology. She emphasised the need to raise awareness to maintain this upward trend.

The meeting also highlighted Goal 5 of the SDG, which focuses on using information technology to accelerate women's

empowerment and taking into account their needs and wants in planning and implementation.

Farhana A Rahman, chairperson of UY System, stated that while women's participation in mobile usage has increased, there is still a large gender gap in internet usage.

She also noted that digital accessibility is a part of basic human rights and that Bangladesh currently

ranks 147th in the ICT Development Index.

The meeting was presided over by Dr Fauzia Moslem, president of Mahila Parishad, and addressed by Dr Selim Raihan, executive director of South Asian Network for Economic Modeling and professor of economics at Dhaka University, and Rabeya Khatun Shanti, movement secretary of Mahila Parishad.

Statements of witnesses

FROM PAGE 3

the capital's Moghbazar on January 28, 2015 to extort money at gunpoint.

However, Arav was arrested in front of the house by Rama police, who seized a revolver from his possession.

Later, a case was filed

against him under the arms act with Rama Police Station.

After an investigation, DB pressed charges against him on March 1 of the same year. The tribunal framed charges against him on May 10.

Arav got out on bail on

March 14, 2018 and went into hiding. The tribunal declared him a "fugitive" and issued an arrest warrant against him on October 24 of the same year.

Arav, who runs a jewellery store in Dubai, is currently facing an Interpol red alert.

Sultana fell sick on way

FROM PAGE 3

he said.

Asked about the injury to Sultana's head, Moin said, "We did not have any information of injury. The postmortem report is important here and investigation is underway. It needs some time."

Regarding the arrest of Sultana, Moin said some fraudsters had assumed the identity of Enamul Haque, joint secretary of Rajshahi divisional commissioner's office, by hacking his Facebook account and also making a fake one. Using the IDs, they extorted money from people with false promises of jobs.

After becoming aware of this, Enamul filed a general diary in March 2022, he

during the detention and interrogation process, said the Rab official.

"Sultana Jasmine admitted to her involvement during interrogation in the witnesses' presence. Enamul's Facebook ID was found open in Sultana's phone," he said.

Moin said Rab also found evidence of transactions of lakhs of taka and bank account details from her phone.

Regarding the delay in filing the case, Moin said filing of a case under the Digital Security Act takes time and requires permission.

Complainant Enamul Haque filed a case with the police station with permission later, he said.

LAND FOR SALE @ BARIDHARA

At Baridhara diplomatic zone on prime location 8.75 Kathas land with six storied building is ready for sale. Only genuine buyers or their authorised official representatives are requested to contact. Mobile: 01711-53 58 72

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College Education Development Project (CEDP)

Govt. Brajalal College, Khulna

Memo No. BL/CEDP/495

Dated: 28 March, 2023

e-Tender Notice

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

Tender ID No.	Package No. and Description	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time
807395	BL/CEDP/2022-23/G-1 Procurement and installation of Smart boards for Classrooms and laboratories	16-Apr-2023 14:00	17-Apr-2023 14:00
807450	BL/CEDP/2022-23/G-3 Establishment of Campus Network in Govt. BL College, Khulna	16-Apr-2023 14:00	17-Apr-2023 14:30

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

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender document from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any branch of any registered banks within the date mentioned in the tender notice. Further information & guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Prof. Sharif Atiquzzaman

Principal

Govt. Brajalal College, Khulna

GD-579

পনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বালাদেশ পুলিশ কলান ট্রান্সের মারিকানারীন পুলিশ প্রজা কুম্হা বালিঙ্গিক ভবনের জন্য ভার্টিয়াল প্রেস্প্রেস (পিএফ) এবং জেনারেটর সিস্টেম কক্ষ ও স্লাপন করা হচ্ছে। উক্ত কক্ষ সম্পত্তির জন্য আবাহী এবং যোগাযোগস্থল অভিযন্তারে নির্মিত হচ্ছে সুন্দর দরপত্র আবাহন করা হচ্ছে।

পুনর্নির্মাণ করার পরে তারিখ আন্তর্মান ১৫/০৪/২০২৩ বার্ষিক ১১:০০ ঘটিকা। সুন্দর দরপত্র নির্মাণস্থল নির্মাণিত হচ্ছে কক্ষ প্রেস্প্রেস- বালাদেশ পুলিশ কলান প্রেস্প্রেস, ৬, ফরিদপুর রোড, কুলতানা, ঢাকা-১০০০।

LOST

Gulshan Bahumukhi Samabay Samity Limited, Registration No. 41, Date of Registration: 20/09/1990, Registered Address: Road-8, House-10, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212. It is hereby brought to the notice of all concerned that some important documents of the society, as mentioned above, are lost. A General Diary (GD) has been filed at the local police station, in this regard. Gulshan Thana GD Number: 1278, GD Date: 19/03/2023 Eng.

Copy of the said application may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on payment of required costs.

Legal Notice

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 112 OF 2023
IN THE MATTER OF

Fisher and Paykel Healthcare Asia Investments Ltd.

...Petitioner

-VERSUS-

Fisher and Paykel Healthcare Bangladesh Limited and another

...Respondents

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under section 81(2), 85(3) read with Section 183(2), 183(5) and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 and Rule 8 of the Companies Rules, 2009 for submitting the audited balance sheet and profit and loss account for the year ended on 31st March, 2022 in the 2nd AGM of Fisher and Paykel Healthcare Bangladesh Limited for the calendar year 2023 has been filed by the Petitioner Company before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon preliminary hearing, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Khizir Ahmed Chowdhury vide an order dated 16.03.2023 was pleased to admit the said application.

Any person or persons having interest in the said application may appear either personally or through duly authorized Advocate on before the date so fixed.

Yours faithfully
(Kazi Ershadul Alam)

Barrister-at-Law
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh

Tanjil Alam & Associates
BSEB Bhaban (Level 11)

102, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue

Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh

D-41

Monjuma Hossain

The ordeal to get land

FROM PAGE 3 closely by Narayanganj.

According to the data, a total of 20,946 applications for land-record documents and 157 for mouza maps were filed with the Narayanganj deputy commissioner's office, which provided services to fewer than 1,100 applicants.

Around 260 applicants got online services from Dhaka's deputy commissioner's office, where a total of 1,36,580 applications were filed for land documents and mouza map, according to the land ministry's data till

March 6. The delivery date was March 16. But his application status is still shown as "under process".

Contacted,

Jahid Hossain Panir, joint secretary of the Digitization, Knowledge Management and Performance (DKMP) section of the land ministry, said the rate of service providing is poor due to the lack of training, and the negligence and indifference of officers.

"I applied online but I'm yet to receive my documents. In the last three weeks [of March], I visited them several times and heard the same reply: come next week," he said.

Monjurul Hafiz, deputy commissioner of Narayanganj, said he is yet to check the land-ministry report. "Once I go through it, I'll be able to tell you about it," he said.

This correspondent could not reach Dhaka

DC Mohammad Mominur Rahman over phone despite repeated attempts.

Contacted, Jahid Hossain Panir, joint secretary of the Digitization, Knowledge Management and Performance (DKMP) section of the land ministry, said the rate of service providing is poor due to the lack of training, and the negligence and indifference of officers.

He declined to comment any further and suggested talking to the land ministry's secretary Mustafizur Rahman.

This correspondent could not reach Mustafizur Rahman over phone and sent him a text message, but there was no response.

3 trucks with Indian goods

FROM PAGE 5

came to know that three trucks with Indian goods will enter Bangladesh illegally on Monday night.

Burimari BOP camp BGB members of Teesta Battalion 2 conducted a raid at the Burimari bus stand area and seized the trucks, all of which were found without the owners.

After the search, the market value of recovered Indian goods was estimated at Tk 3 crore 29 lakh 84

thousand. The seized goods have been deposited at the Patgram Customs.

Locals told this

correspondent that a smuggling ring has become active in Burimari land port area ahead of Eid. They are bringing goods illegally from India in various ways. Some unscrupulous traders from Burimari land port in Bangladesh and Changrabandha land port to India have become

involved in this smuggling syndicate. With the help of unscrupulous traders, the gang illegally brought truckloads of Indian goods to Bangladesh.

Rangpur 61-BGB battalion's Commanding Officer (CO) Lt Colonel Mir Hasan Shahriar Mahmud said that BGB has filed a case in Patgram police station. The police will investigate and reveal the name of the owner of the goods, he said.

31pc working women

FROM PAGE 5

The study's findings highlight the need for policymakers and employers to address these issues and ensure that women have access to safe and fair working conditions.

Women's organisations from all sectors must come together to work towards creating a more inclusive society that ensures equal rights for women, said lawmaker Lutfun Nessa Khan.

She emphasised the importance of raising awareness about legal protections for women workers and managing activities to ensure their rights are safeguarded.

Shirin Akhter, lawmaker and chief guest at the event, emphasised the importance of success stories and leadership roles of women in society, in addition to highlighting their struggles. Women must be given opportunities to participate actively in decision-making processes, including leading their trade unions, to ensure that their rights are protected and upheld.

"Education is also essential in promoting gender equality and empowering women to realise their full potential," she added. Gita Rani Ghosh, deputy director at the National

Skills Development Authority, said the government is taking steps to train women workers in various sectors, including agriculture, industry, and services.

Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar, a former lawmaker, drew attention to the issue of setting the minimum wage for workers at Tk 20,000, emphasising that women workers' salaries must be increased to ensure a decent standard of living for them and their families.

OXFAM Country Director Ashish Damle presided over the programme, while around a dozen workers and leaders spoke at the discussion.



HOUSES ON THE EDGE... Residents of Satkhira's Gabura area are living in constant fear of losing their homes. Every day, during high tide, the Kholpetua river eats away bits of the bank, eroding the embankment that was set up there to prevent the erosion in the first place. If prompt action isn't taken, an unfortunate fate seems to be unavoidable. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Two get life term for raping child in Natore

STAR REPORT

A Natore court yesterday sentenced two people to life-term imprisonment for raping a child in Barai gram upazila of the district in 2016.

They are Sohag, 29, and Sagar, 27, of the upazila, reports UNB.

The court also sentenced another accused, Roni, to 10 years' detention under the Children's Act.

Natore Women and Child Repression Prevention Tribunal Judge Abdur Rahim handed down the verdict in presence of the convicts.

The convicts were fined Tk 20,000 each and ordered to give it as compensation to the victim.

According to the statement of a case filed by the victim's mother, the three intercepted the girl at a fair and took her to a nearby pond, where they raped her.

MAN ARRESTED OVER RAPE OF CHILD IN NGANJ
Police yesterday arrested a man for allegedly raping a 10-year-old on yesterday in Fatullah of Narayanganj.

Arrested Shahin Nawab, 45, is from Farazikanda area of Fatullah.

Police said the child's father filed a case against Shahin under Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Act with Fatullah Model Police Station on Monday night.

Police then arrested the accused from his home yesterday morning.

The accused and victim's family were living in the same rented house.

Shahin raped the child on Monday noon, said sub-inspector Md Rezaul of the police station, according to case statements.

The accused was sent to jail through court on yesterday afternoon, he added.

A health hazard for Khulna residents

Poor medical waste management leading to unsanitary condition on streets

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Khulna is facing a severe health hazard as around half of the clinics, hospitals, and diagnostic centres in the city do not have their own waste-disposal mechanism and dump unsorted garbage in street bins, said officials of Directorate General of Health Services and Khulna City Corporation (KCC).

Similar situation prevails in the other 117 medical facilities in nine upazilas of Khulna, they said.

According to Md Abdul Aziz, chief conservancy officer of KCC, 12 to 14 tonnes of clinical waste is produced every day. Of those, two NGOs -- Prodipan and Sadichha -- collect only 7 to 8 tonnes from 172 out of the 406 hospitals and clinics regularly.

Only Khulna Medical College Hospital and BNS Upasham (Navy hospital) have their own waste disposal plants, the KCC official added.

Each patient of a private hospital produces 1.15 kilos of waste a day, while a public-hospital patient generates 0.69 kilos. As there are no specific legal provisions for clinical waste management, half of the hospitals dispose of their waste in city corporation bins with other wastes, according to KCC.

Amputated body parts, stool, urine, blood, phlegm, bandages, syringes, needles, and other materials used in laboratories and medical services are often dumped on the city's roadsides, causing serious public nuisance and health risk.

Palash Das, a resident of the city's Boyra Das Para area, said amputated human body parts are often seen in front of KMCH and adjacent areas.

Dr Sheikh Baharul Alam, president of Bangladesh Medical Association Khulna, said unsafe dumping poses a serious health risk. "Some trash collected pick up used syringes and other clinical materials from the hospitals and sell them to syndicates at low prices."

Dr Sujat Ahmed, civil surgeon of Khulna, issued notices to all clinics to

AT A GLANCE

- Total waste produced: 12 to 14 tonnes per day
- Each patient in public hospital produces 0.69 kg waste each day
- Each patient in private hospital generates 1.15 kg
- Waste collected: 7 to 8 tonnes per day

waste.

Dr Gazi Mizanur Rahman, chairman of Gazi Medical College Hospital, admitted that it is difficult to maintain medical waste properly in their social and practical reality, and they rely on an NGO for waste management.

Iqbal Hossain, director of the Department of Environment, Khulna, said a lack of human resources prevents them from conducting drives in regards to waste mismanagement in every sector.

The hospital and clinic authorities should install their own incinerators to destroy waste, and they should follow the rules for their own interest," he added.

If clinical waste is not managed properly, waste collectors, health professionals, and common people may be affected by various contagious diseases.

Free iftar at High Court Mazar Mosque



HELEMUL ALAM

For Muslims, Ramadan is about restraint, austerity and fostering social cohesion and brotherhood among all, irrespective of wealth.

Iftar at High Court Mazar is epitomised by that spirit in the fullest sense.

Around 2,500 people from all walks of life gather here to break their fast.

The process of cooking and distributing iftar for so many people is a huge task, said Md Shahid, a follower of Khawaja Kasheem Ali Shah Chisti, who is involved in the endeavour for around 30 years now.

Around 3:15pm yesterday, two hours ahead of iftar, several volunteers were seen busy completing the cooking of vegetable khichuri. They had no time to waste as they will need to serve iftar exactly at 6:30pm at the High Court Mazar Mosque.

The iftar preparations started in the morning. They cut vegetables and different kinds of fruits and prepared other iftar items like chickpeas, beguni, potato chop, piaju and sherbet.

Shahid said around 1:00pm, they started to place plates and glasses on the floors at the premises next to the mosque.

"Most importantly we have to ensure that everybody gets equal shares," he said.

Zihad Ali Pagla, another follower of Kasem Ali, said most people who come here for iftar are the poor, including beggars, orphans, street children, rickshaw-pullers, unemployed and homeless people.

Ahaduzzaman said the followers of Kasem Ali have been arranging this kind of iftar at 11 places in 11 districts, an initiative which was started by Kasem himself.

However, the picture is a little different inside the Dhaka High Court Mazar Mosque, where food items are distributed through bowls and one bowl was dedicated to four persons.

They also distribute a glass of sherbet to each person.

During a visit to the mosque at 4:00pm, it was found several hundred red bowls were placed on the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

DHAKA WEDNESDAY MARCH 29, 2023
CHAITRA 15, 1429 BS

The Daily Star

5

31pc working women experienced physical violence: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women in eight districts of Bangladesh, particularly those who have low-paying jobs, face multiple challenges at workplaces, including poor working conditions, low wages, and violence, revealed a new study.

The study was conducted over three months in 2022, covering 1,507 women from four divisions: Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong, and Khulna.

Presented yesterday at a dialogue organised by OXFAM Bangladesh in the capital, the study found that 75 percent of live-out domestic workers lived in slums with only one room for living quarters.

Furthermore, 81 percent of women workers had poor physiological conditions, and only 1 percent received paid maternity leave. Additionally, 76 percent did not receive social security support at work.

The study found that 72 percent of women workers faced "mental violence", with 74 percent facing verbal abuse, 31 percent experiencing physical violence, and 6 percent sexual violence.

The dialogue featured women from various professions, including Rahima Begum, a domestic worker from

Chattogram, who described how she worked 18 hours a day for just Tk 1,500 and suffered verbal abuse from colleagues.

Helena Begum, a fisher from Patuakhali, also spoke, describing the difficulties she faced when her husband was away at sea and the lack of recognition for women in her profession.

The study -- conducted over three months in 2022, covering 1,507 women from Dhaka, Sylhet, Chittagong, and Khulna divisions -- found that 75 percent of domestic workers lived in slums with only one room for living quarters.

Women domestic workers, tea-garden workers, home-based workers, and fisherfolk women workers faced various challenges related to their salaries, lack of nutritious food, fair leave and bonus facilities, and other difficulties, according to the study.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

3 trucks with Indian goods worth Tk 3cr seized at port

S DILIP ROY

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) members have seized three Indian trucks with Indian goods worth Tk 3 crore, including sarees, three pieces, chemical products, and spectacles, which were illegally coming through the Burimari land port in Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila.

Rangpur Lt BGB Battalion's Commanding Officer (CO) Lt Col Mir Hasan Shahriar Mahmud confirmed this information through a press conference yesterday.

BGB members of Teesta Battalion 2 under 61 BGB Battalion seized the trucks from Kala Bagan and Burimari Bus Stand around 11:00pm on Monday night.

However, none of the truck drivers and helpers were arrested.

BGB officials said through secret intel, they

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

'Influenced by video games to commit violence' Rab claims after arresting two in double murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prime accused for the murder of two schoolboys in Patuakhali's Baufal upazila was influenced by playing video games to commit the act of violence, claimed Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday.

Rab made the claims yesterday following the arrest of the prime accused and another associate from Dhaka and Narsingdi on Monday night.

Both the accused are aged around 15 years, said Rab.

On March 22, Maruf Hossain Bappi and Nafis Mostofa -- both 15 years of age and tenth graders at Indrakul Secondary School -- were killed brutally by a group of ninth graders studying at the same school.

Nafis' mother Nargis Begum filed a murder case with Baufal Police Station accusing nine teenagers, including three unnamed ones.

While conducting a shadow investigation, a team of Rab headquarters' intelligence wing and Rab 3 arrested two absconding accused of the case, said Commander Khandaker Al Moin,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Principal
Narsingdi Polytechnic Institute
Narsingdi-1600
www.narpoly.gov.bd

Date: 28/03/2023

Re-e-Tender Notice

e-Tender ID	Package No	Description	Online notice publication date & time	Last date & time for tender security submission	Tender closing and opening date
808142	e-TENDER/NPI/Rev/22-23/GD-04	Procurement of Engineering & Others Equipments for Civil Technology Modern Lab (Surveying Equipment) (411204)			
807689	e-TENDER/NPI/Rev/22-23/GD-01	Procurement of Engineering & Others Equipments for Electrical Technology Modern Lab (Electrical Power Shop) (411204)			
807684	e-TENDER/NPI/Rev/22-23/GD-03	Procurement of Engineering & Others Equipments for Civil Technology Modern Lab (Geotechnical Lab) (411204)			
807685	e-TENDER/NPI/Rev/22-23/GD-05	Procurement of Engineering & Others Equipments for Computer Science & Technology Modern Lab (Network & Software Lab) (411204)	29.03.23 Time: 12:00	12.04.23 Time: 11:30	12.04.23 Time: 12:30
807687	e-TENDER/NPI/Rev/22-23/GD-07	Procurement of Engineering & Others Equipments for Food Technology Modern Lab (Food Quality Control & Microbiology Lab) (411204)			
807688	e-TENDER/NPI/Rev/22-23/GD-08	Procurement of Office Equipments (4112310)			

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

The fees for selling/downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches to scheduled date and time.

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

Engr. Md. Rezaul Karim
Principal (Additional Charge)
E-mail: rezaul@narpoly.gov.bd
Mobile: 01952-008002

CORRIGENDUM

Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited (A State Owned Organization) 116 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1205 www.bscl.gov.bd	
CORRIGENDUM	
With respect to the CORRIGENDUM No 14.39.0000.012.07.001.23.95; Date: 22 March 2023, the following changes has been made for the Tender Notice No: 14.39.0000.012.07.001.23.36; Tender Publication Date: 15/02/2023 "Procurement of Multiple Carrier Per Channel (MCPC) Broadcast Platform":	
13. Tender Last Selling Date	29/03/2023 Time: 03:30 PM
14. Tender Closing date and time	30/03/2023 Time: 12:05 PM
15. Tender Opening date and time	30/03/2023 Time: 12:20 PM

Note: As per ITT last date of asking for clarification 06 April 2023.

(Signed)
Md. Shafiqul Islam
Managing Director (Additional Charge)
Email: procurement@bscl.com.bd

GD- 583

রাজশাহী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
এম.ফিল. ও পিএইচ.ডি. প্রোগ্র

A FRENCHMAN in Chittagong

Meet the director of the first western feature film in Bangladesh

"We were at once asked to stop shooting for a month or two. The principal French actor left us, after shooting for a few days. Hence, we had to change both the actor and the actress."

SHISHIR BHATTACHARJA

Leon Desclozeaux, born in 1951, is a Paris-based film director and producer, who has been active for nearly four decades. He had come to Bangladesh in the early nineties, as the producer of a documentary on the 'Flood Action Plan', conceived by the then-French Government.

In 1992, when Leon's team revisited Bangladesh for a second documentary, he was inspired to capture the country on film. In the monsoon of 1998, Leon took a high-interest loan from a French bank, came to Dhaka with a big film crew, and started to shoot his film *Chittagong: The Last Stopover*. The film received recognition around the globe and claimed numerous prizes. Unfortunately, it was never released in Bangladesh.

During a recent visit to Bangladesh, Shishir Bhattacharja interviewed him on behalf of The Daily Star.

You have been quite familiar with Bangladesh for over thirty years. What impression do you have about the country and its people?
It's a beautiful country with wonderful people. They know how to smile at you, and it is not a fake one. They have a lot of kindness in their hearts for others living around them.
To date, you are the only producer-director from the west, who made a feature film in Bangladesh. What were the



PHOTO: SABINA YASMIN

reasons to have chosen Bangladesh as your location?

This country has an extraordinary natural beauty, that remains unexplored to date. I saw this beauty when I had been producing documentaries here in the nineties. I thought I must keep a record of this beauty on celluloid and expose it to the outside world.

Could you tell us more about your film, "Chittagong: The Last Stopover"?

The film narrates the story of a ship captain, Paul, who brought his cargo vessel to the ship (grave)yard in Chattogram, to be broken into pieces. While traveling through Bangladesh by train and launch, he meets a village woman Alima and her son Moti. He accompanies them to their village and soon the conflict starts. Both Alima and the foreigner get banned by the village tribunal.

Did the shooting go smoothly? Do you have any bad memories?

Oh, a lot! The Bangladeshi actress acting as Alima got angry, because we were shooting

without make-up and with the normal people of the country, instead of professional actors. Out of a whim, she wrote a letter to the authorities, blaming us for secretly shooting an inappropriate film, out in the deep sea with our digital cameras.

We were at once asked to stop shooting for a month or two. The principal French actor left us, after shooting for a few days. Hence, we had to change both the actor and the actress.

Otherwise, the whole Bangladeshi team worked with zeal and we could finally finish our shooting successfully.

Would you like to say anything to the new generation of cinematographers in Bangladesh?

I am quite eager to see their work. Meanwhile, I will ask them to make films about their extraordinarily rich society and beautiful country, with authenticity and courage.

The interview was taken in French and translated into English by Shishir Bhattacharja.



'Myself Allen Swapan' spinoff coming this Eid

The witty and funny Allen Swapan will be back with his smuggling business this upcoming Eid, as the new teaser revealed the release date of the spin-off series, *Myself Allen Swapan*, directed by Shihab Shaheen. The teaser was released on the official Facebook page of Chorki.

With Chorki's original series, *Syndicate*, Nasir Uddin Khan carved a place in the hearts of the audience by overshadowing his co-stars. The spin-off series will be focused on the origin story of the character and how he became a kingpin in the money laundering business.

The series also stars Rafiath Rashid Mithila as the wife of Allen Swapan, Shimila, Senu, and Sumon Anwar, among others.

Harry Styles wins Artist of the Year at iHeartRadio Music Awards



Earlier yesterday, Harry Styles was crowned the 'Artist of the Year' at the iHeartRadio Music Awards 2023. This year, the awards ceremony took place at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. While the former One Direction member was not present at the show, he did thank his fans via a video message for the honour.

Harry Styles was nominated in multiple awards this year, including 'Artist of the Year', 'Song of the Year', and 'Best Music Video' for *As It Was*, and Favorite Residency for *Love on Tour*. With a total of eight nominations, he was tied with Taylor Swift and Lizzo, as one of the most recognised artistes on the show.

NEWS

Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 12

School, is from Ramroypur village under Parbatipur upazila of Dinajpur and lives in Rangpur with his parents.

The 17-year-old is physically challenged,

He became the best debater of the tournament out of 534 participants from different countries.

The US government organises parliamentary debates every year in two categories—British Parliamentary and Asian Parliamentary—to find future leaders.

Russia became the champion country in the competition followed by the Netherlands. The United States was the second runner-up.

According to the White House website, Holland Lop Michigan of the Russian Federation became the best speaker in the competition while Shah Muhammad Rakib Hasan of Bangladesh was the best debater.

Rakib was scheduled to be formally presented with the award at the White House South Court Auditorium on March 28 (Tuesday-US time). US President Joe Biden would be the chief guest and Jeff Giants the special guest at the ceremony.

Despite getting an invitation from the organisers, Rakib is missing the ceremony for various reasons, including not having a passport.

The website also wrote in a footnote that the last record belonged to Louie Anderson by winning 139 debates in a row. Rakib, winning 144 debates in a row, broke all the past records and got a place in the White House Record Book.

He so far has earned a huge reputation in domestic debating competitions.

Adani buys

FROM PAGE 12

Rahav Behl-promoted Quintillion Business Media runs the news platform Bloomberg Qunit, now called BQ Prime.

Adani group had set up AMG Media Networks Limited for its foray into businesses of "publishing, advertising, broadcasting, distribution of content over different types of media networks".

In September 2021, the Adani group hired veteran journalist TV Sanjay Pugalia to lead its media company.

DU beset with gang crimes

FROM PAGE 12

on Buet campus.

The DU suspended them, but many of their fellow gang members have become cautious, said a student.

He said many Nishachor members ride bikes and deliberately hit cars. "Other gang members waiting around rush to the spot and start shouting about reckless driving. At one stage, they would realise money from the car occupants. If any car driver tried to protest, they would assault the driver," he added.

Speaking to The Daily Star, DU Vice Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman said, "We have learnt about a gang from the media. We can't tolerate any anti-discipline activities by students on campus."

He said they earlier had taken actions against students who were involved in criminal activities and violated the rules of the university. "We have formed an inquiry committee to investigate the 'Proloy' gang" incident. We will take stern action if we find any student guilty of committing crimes."

This newspaper could not reach Saad Ibrahim and Tabarak for comments as their phones were found switched off.

RHD moves to get rid

FROM PAGE 12

Project two years ago, Bangladesh Railway is now reviving the project with Japanese assistance.

The Tk 14,250 crore project to turn the 162 km Joydebpur Iswardi section into dual gauge, double lines was taken in November 2018. In March 2021, China declined to finance the project citing "lack of in-depth preliminary work and insufficient feasibility study". The deadline of the project is December 2024.

Japan then agreed to finance the project.

Following a discussion with an "appraisal mission" of JICA, the BR prepared a Technical Assistance Project Proposal for reviewing feasibility study, preparing a detailed design for the lines and bidding, sources said.

The JICA will sign a Tk 327 crore loan for the project today.

Besides, JICA will sign a Tk 8,166 crore loan deal today for a deep sea port the government is building in Maheshkhali at a cost of Tk 17,777 crore.

It is the second tranche of the loan for the project, RHD officials said.

Two ex-land

FROM PAGE 2

died during the trial.

The court cross-examined seven prosecution witnesses before delivering its verdict.

According to the case statement, one Swarna Khan bought 3.5 decimals of land in the capital's Dakshinkhan area in 1987.

In 2007, then settlement officer Ashraf, in collusion with another accused, ordered to record her property in the name of Nurunnabi Firoze.

Following the incident, Swarna challenged the record with the higher court and won the legal battle.

On September 8, 2011, the Anti-Corruption Commission filed a case against Ashraf and three others with Tejgaon Police Station.

After an investigation, the ACC pressed charges against them on December 29, 2012.

13 Jamaat men held

FROM PAGE 12

day remand prayer.

In the remand prayer, the SI mentioned that they carried out the drive and arrested them from the office of Rahmatullah and Mansur and recovered eight crude bombs and some organisational leaflets and literature.

The SI also stated that they came to know that the arrestees stored the explosives there with a plan to carry out subversive activities to damage public properties and tarnish the image of the government.

Abdur Razzak, a lawyer of the accused, opposed the remand prayer, saying the arrestees neither stored the crude bombs nor were they planning any subversive activities there.

They were performing Isha and Tarabih prayer when police picked them up, he told the court.

On March 20, the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested 54 leaders and activists of BNP's Munshiganj unit from Banani Club and claimed that they were planning to hold anti-government activities.

However, BNP said the leaders and activists went there to attend a social programme followed by a dinner being invited by a leader who was supposed to leave the country to perform umrah in Saudi Arabia.

It causes 20pc

FROM PAGE 2

already taken steps to improve air quality management, including the approval of the Air Pollution Control Rules. Along with strong national actions, transboundary solutions will be important to curb air pollution. Through analytical work and new investments, the World Bank is helping Bangladesh reduce air pollution," said the official.

The report said that air pollution travels long distances, crossing national boundaries and gets trapped in large "airsheds" that are shaped by climatology and geography.

It identified six major airsheds in South Asia where spatial interdependence in air quality is high.

"Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan share a common airshed that spans the Indo Gangetic Plain. Particulate matter in each airshed comes from various sources and locations, for example, in many cities, such as Dhaka, Kathmandu, and Colombo, only one-third of the air pollution originates within the city."

2-7 years in jail

FROM PAGE 1

According to the draft law, an electoral candidate has to clear all utility bills at least a day before the submission of nomination papers. Otherwise, the candidature would be cancelled, he said.

A candidate will have to attach TIN certificate and receipts of tax payment to the nomination paper as well, said the secretary.

As per the existing law, a person shall be disqualified for election if he fails to pay telephone, gas, electricity, water or any other bill of any service providing organisation of the government seven days before the day of submission of nomination papers.

Yesterday, the cabinet in principle also approved the draft of the Land Development Tax Act-2023 with a provision to collect land development tax through electronic system in every fiscal year instead of Bangla calendar year.

Recognising the transboundary nature of air pollution, South Asian nations Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan joined together to draw up the Kathmandu Roadmap for improving air quality in the Indo-Gangetic Plain and Himalayan Foothills.

"Air pollution is not limited to a city, state, or national boundaries -- it is transboundary in nature," said Cecile Fruman, World Bank director for regional integration for South Asia.

"South Asian Countries in the same airshed -- common geographical areas that share the same air quality -- can reduce the alarming level of air pollution only if they take a coordinated approach.

"By working together countries can get results better, faster and cheaper," Fruman added.

The most cost-effective scenario, which calls for full coordination between airsheds, would cut the average exposure of PM2.5 in South Asia to 30 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ at a cost of \$278 million per $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ of reduced exposure, and save more than 750,000 lives annually.

"All land development taxes will have to be paid online," Mahmudul said, adding that the owners of less than 25 bighas (8.25 acres) won't require to pay tax.

He said the union land assistant officer (tahsildar) will prepare a list mentioning the specific amounts of tax for every landowner, and send the list to the assistant commissioner (land) to display it at the latter's office. If anyone is aggrieved with the tax amount, the person will be able to lodge an objection with the AC (land) and also the district collector. The district collector will dispose of the objection within 15 days.

The cabinet approved the president's draft speech to be delivered in the coming special session of the 11th parliament. The Jatiya Sangsad will go into a special session on April 6 to mark the 50th anniversary of parliament.

The Jatiya Sangsad will go into a special session on April 6 to mark the 50th anniversary of parliament.

North Korea unveils new nuclear warheads

Vows to produce more weapons-grade material as US air carrier arrives in S Korea

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korea unveiled new, smaller nuclear warheads and vowed to produce more weapons-grade nuclear material to expand the country's arsenal, state media KCNA said yesterday, as a US aircraft carrier arrived in South Korea for military drills.

KCNA released photos of the warheads, dubbed Hwasan-31s, as



Kim Dong-yup, a former South Korean naval officer who teaches at Kyungnam University, said the warheads were most likely designed for use with at least eight different delivery platforms listed in posters on the wall.

"Those are not limited to tactical missiles but appear to be a miniaturised, lightweight and standardised warhead that can mount on various vehicles," he said.

"Now that the delivery vehicles are nearly ready, they would churn out warheads to secure second strike capabilities - perhaps hundreds, not dozens - while running centrifuges even harder to get weapons grade nuclear material," he added.

Kim Jong Un ordered the production of weapons-grade materials in a "farsighted way" to boost its nuclear arsenal "exponentially" and produce powerful weapons, KCNA said.

He said the enemy of the country's nuclear forces is not a specific state but "war and nuclear disaster themselves," and the policy of expanding arsenal is solely aimed at defending the country.

Experts say the images could indicate progress in miniaturising warheads that are powerful yet small enough to mount on intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of striking the US.

"It has something more powerful in a smaller space. That's worrisome," said Kune Y. Suh, professor emeritus of nuclear engineering at Seoul National University, comparing the new warheads to the 2016 version.

Xi hails ME thaw in call with Saudi crown prince

AFP, Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping lauded what he called the easing of tensions in the Middle East during a call with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman yesterday, state media reported.

Beijing brokered an agreement between Tehran and Riyadh on March 10 to restore diplomatic ties following a seven year freeze.

Long bitter rivals, Iran and Saudi Arabia have engaged in a series of proxy conflicts in the region, such as the protracted fighting in Yemen.

In his first comments on the matter to be made public since the deal was struck, Xi said the dialogue promoted by China would "play a major role in strengthening regional unity and cooperation".

Crown Prince Mohammed yesterday "expressed the Kingdom's appreciation for the Chinese initiative to support efforts to develop neighbourly relations" between the two sides, according to the official Saudi Press Agency.

Saudi Arabia and Iran are now preparing to reopen embassies in each other's capitals, with a meeting between their two top diplomats due before the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, Saudi state media said Monday.

A trilateral statement issued after the deal said the Saudi and Iranian delegations "expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the leadership and government of the People's Republic of China for hosting and sponsoring the talks".

China ramping up bailout loans to 'Belt and Road' nations

Says report by researchers from WB, Harvard Kennedy School, AidData and Kiel Institute for the World Economy

AFP, Beijing

China has handed out \$240 billion worth of bailout loans to 22 developing countries at risk of default over the past two decades, with the trend accelerating in recent years, a report said yesterday.

Almost all the funds went to Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) countries such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Turkey -- mostly low- and middle-income nations that have received Chinese loans for infrastructure development, according to the study.

The 40-page report by the US-based research lab AidData, the World Bank, the Harvard Kennedy School and the Kiel Institute for the World Economy showed bailout loans had accelerated between 2016 and 2021, with Beijing doling out 80 percent of its rescue lending in that period.

Around the world, BRI nations have come under strain as soaring inflation and interest rates, compounded by the lingering impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, have hurt their ability to repay debts. The bailouts allow the countries to extend their loans and remain solvent, the report said.

China says more than 150 countries have signed up to the BRI, a trillion-dollar global infrastructure push unveiled by President Xi Jinping a decade ago.

Beijing says the initiative aims to deepen



friendly trade relations with other nations, particularly in the developing world.

But critics have long accused China of luring lower-income countries into debt traps by offering huge, unaffordable loans.

"China has developed a system of 'Bailouts on the Belt and Road' that helps recipient countries to avoid default, and continue servicing their BRI debts, at least in the short run," the report said.

In comparison to the International Monetary Fund and the vast liquidity support extended by the US Federal Reserve, China's bailouts remain small but are growing quickly, according to the AidData report.

"Beijing has targeted a limited set of potential recipients, as almost all Chinese rescue loans have gone to low- and middle-income BRI countries with significant debts outstanding to Chinese banks," its authors wrote.

The report warned that Chinese loans tend to be more opaque compared with other international lenders of last resort -- and often come at an average interest rate of five percent, compared with a typical two percent rate on an IMF loan.

Many such agreements were so-called "rollovers", in which the same short-term loans are repeatedly extended to refinance debts about to come due.

China's foreign ministry yesterday

hit back at the criticism, accusing "some people" of "hyping up so-called Chinese 'debt traps' and opaque loans, and slinging mud at China, something that we absolutely do not accept".

"China... has never forced any party to borrow money, has never forced any country to pay, will not attach any political conditions to loan agreements, and does not seek any political self-interest," spokeswoman Mao Ning said at a regular press briefing.

China this month agreed to restructure its loans to Sri Lanka, clearing the way for an IMF bailout of the island nation that lists Beijing as its biggest bilateral creditor.

BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

For a decade, Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative has poured billions of dollars into infrastructure projects each year: paving highways from Papua New Guinea to Kenya, constructing ports from Sri Lanka to West Africa and providing power and telecoms infrastructure for people from Latin America to Southeast Asia.

First announced in 2013 under Chinese leader Xi Jinping, the initiative has been seen as an extension of the country's sharp ascent to global power, reports CNN.

"Beijing is ultimately trying to rescue its own banks. That's why it has gotten into the risky business of international bailout lending," said study co-author Carmen Reinhart in the AidData post.

China is negotiating debt restructurings with countries including Zambia, Ghana and has been criticised for holding up the processes.

In response, it has called on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to also offer debt relief.

EU AGENCY STUDY
Cancer-causing compounds found in everyday food

AFP, Paris

Cancer-causing chemical compounds called nitrosamines have been detected in a range of everyday foods and could pose a health risk to consumers, the European Food Safety Agency warned yesterday. The 10 nitrosamines -- which are not intentionally added to food but which can form during its preparation and processing -- are carcinogenic and also genotoxic, which means they may damage DNA, according to a new study conducted by the European Union agency. "Our assessment concludes that for all age groups across the EU population, the level of exposure to nitrosamines in food raises a health concern," said Dieter Schrenk, chair of the EFSA's panel on contaminants in the food chain. "Based on animal studies, we considered the incidence of liver tumours in rodents as the most critical health effect," he added. Nitrosamines have been detected in foods including cured meat, processed fish, cocoa, beer and other alcoholic drinks, the EFSA said.

Girls' education activist arrested by Taliban



AFP, Kabul

The founder of a project that campaigned for girls' education in Afghanistan has been detained by Taliban authorities in Kabul, his brother and the United Nations said yesterday. The Taliban government last year barred girls from attending secondary school and later university, making Afghanistan the only country in the world to issue such restrictions on education. Matiullah Wesa, the head of PenPath was stopped by men outside a mosque after prayers on Monday evening, his brother Samiullah Wesa told AFP. "When Matiullah asked for their identity cards, they beat him and forcefully took him away," he said. "He has been arrested for his activities in the education sector."

ISMAILI CENTRE
Two killed in knife attack in Lisbon

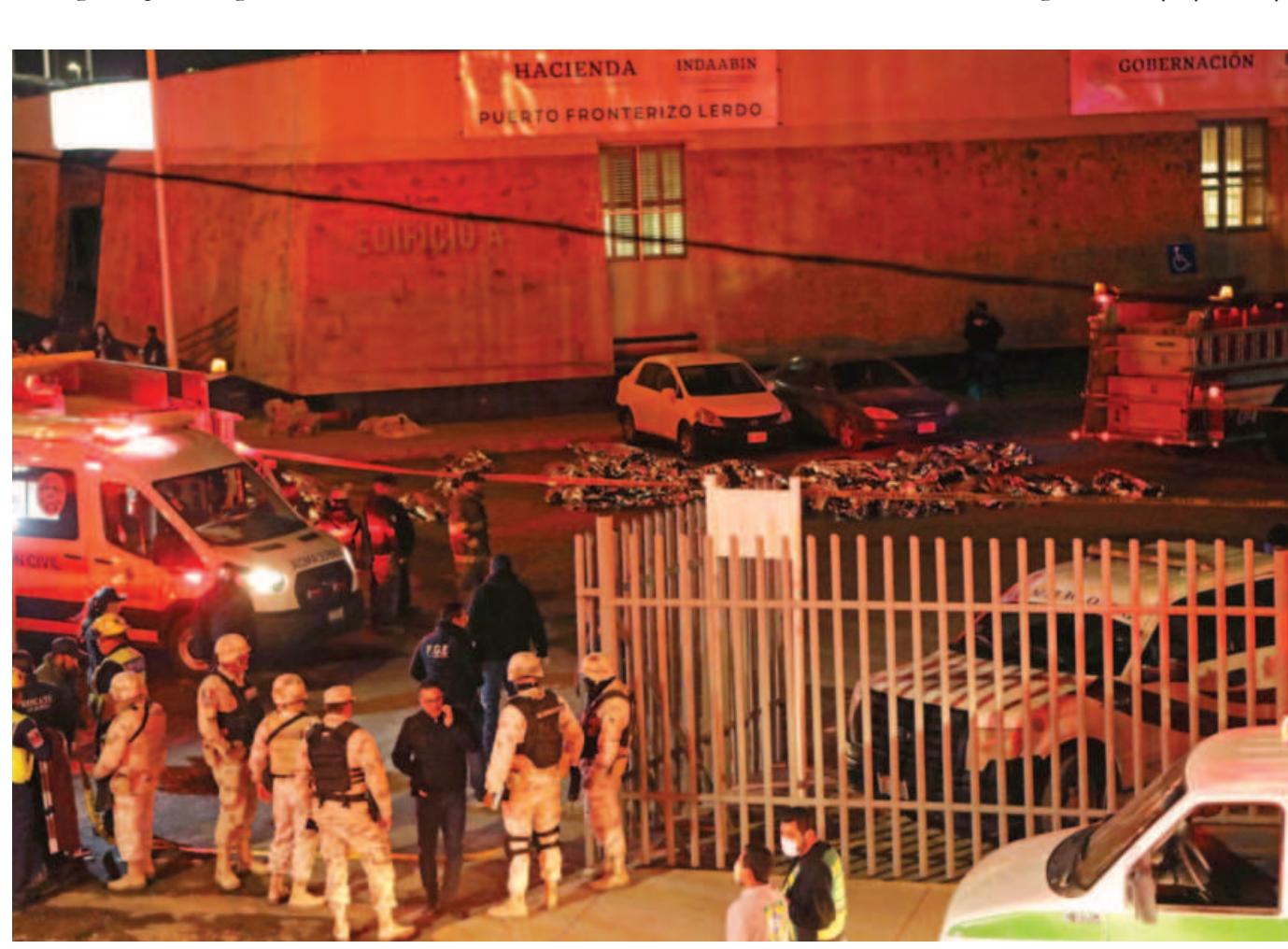
AFP, Lisbon

Two people died yesterday following a knife attack at an Islamic centre in the Portuguese capital Lisbon that wounded several others, police said. Prime Minister Antonio Costa said it was "premature to make any interpretation of this criminal act." "Everything points to this being an isolated incident," he told reporters. Images on Portuguese television showed armed police outside the Ismaili Muslim centre. "The attack left several people wounded and, for the moment, two dead," police said in a statement, adding that the suspected assailant had been shot and arrested. Police said they arrived at the building just before 11:00 am after being warned that a knife attack was underway. "The police come across a man armed with a large knife. Orders were given to the attacker to cease the attack, which he disobeyed, advancing towards the police, knife in hand," the police statement added. "Faced with the serious and ongoing threat, the policemen used firearms against the person," it added.



Students hold placards during a demonstration, as part of the tenth day of nationwide strikes and protests against French government's pension reform in Paris, France yesterday. The slogan reads "Macron, your Rolex in our strike funds".

PHOTO: REUTERS



Firefighters and police rescue migrants from an immigration station in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua state, Mexico early yesterday, where at least 39 people were killed and dozens injured after a fire at the immigration station.

Act against ex-PM Imran
Pakistan PM urges parliament

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif yesterday appealed to parliament to act against predecessor Imran Khan over accusations that his party was involved in violence that erupted when police tried to arrest him for alleged corruption.

The clashes occurred earlier this month after Khan's supporters prevented police and paramilitary forces from detaining him over allegations he unlawfully sold state gifts during his 2018-22 tenure as premier. He denies any wrongdoing.

"Did you ever see law enforcement officers going to serve a court summons on someone and then being attacked with petrol bombs?" Sharif asked lawmakers in a speech telecast live.

"I'm appealing to this parliament that these things need to be taken care of immediately. This house has to take action today if we want to save Pakistan," he said, adding: "Enough is enough. Now law has to take its course."

Welcome promise of ever-elusive 'justice'

Sultana's case must not meet the same fate as countless others

We welcome the High Court's assurance to deliver justice following a report in this daily of the death of Sultana Jasmine in Rab custody. Stating that the state has a responsibility to file a case if the family does not, the High Court bench, on its own initiative, raised questions as to why she was arrested, who arrested her, where she was taken to after the arrest, where and under whose presence she was interrogated, who interrogated her, whether she sustained any fresh injury after her arrest and whether any law was violated during her stay in custody. Given the deplorable track record of the state in holding law enforcement agencies accountable for deaths and torture in their custody, we can only hope that the court's intervention signals a marked departure from the way such cases have been dealt with in the past.

We have noted with increasing alarm the reluctance of the state to ensure systems of accountability for unwarranted deaths in law enforcement custody. In fact, faced with mounting criticism nationally and internationally over the years about the failure to independently investigate such killings, our government seems to have been more interested in defending the questionable actions of our law enforcement than instituting much-needed reforms. This has essentially given wholesale immunity to Rab, police and other law enforcement members to carry out unconstitutional and unlawful acts against Bangladeshi citizens – whom the former are mandated to protect – without so much as a slap on the wrist.

Almost a decade has passed since Bangladesh enacted the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013, but there has only been one known verdict against three policemen for the death of Ishtiaque Hossain Jonny. Even in this case, the verdict was only possible because Jonny's family could secure a judicial investigation, which is treated as optional under the law. Had the investigation been left to the law enforcement agency itself (which, unfortunately, is what the law mandates) it would be safe to surmise that the case would have met the same fate as countless others before and after it.

We are not confident that Rab, as the accused party, or police detectives for that matter, can act with courage or neutrality, especially when the government is so invested in proving Rab innocent in the face of US sanctions. We urge the court to initiate a judicial investigation into what really happened to Sultana and ensure a proper trial, thwarting any attempt to compromise it or slow down the proceedings. It must also guarantee safety for Sultana's family, who, if the past is any indication, are likely to be intimidated, threatened or harassed in the months/years to come. Finally, we hope that the court will ensure that a verdict is swiftly delivered. Without convictions, which are rarely witnessed in cases of custodial deaths, we cannot expect to put an end to extrajudicial excesses in Bangladesh.

As for the government, it must take urgent steps to institute long-needed reforms within law enforcement. We need not remind them that this is the second allegation of extrajudicial death at the hands of Rab in 10 days, and as such, need to be dealt with sensitively and urgently, if they are to prove their commitment to human rights with the whole world watching.

Govt ineptitude fuelling inflation

Domestic prices should drop as global prices do

It is unacceptable that the government has failed to deliver to Bangladeshi consumers the benefits of a fall in the prices of food items on the international market. At a programme on March 27, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) observed that prices of essentials are on the rise in the domestic market compared to those in overseas markets due to market manipulation by a group of businesses and absence of internal governance. It is something that the media has previously reported on, and that we have also mentioned in this column.

According to the commerce ministry's own data, the price of soybean oil has dropped by 39 percent in the international market over the past year but has increased by more than 10 percent in the country during the same period. Prices of other imported items such as palm oil and red lentils have also dropped substantially on the global market, but the benefits of that drop have not reached local consumers. A number of other essential items such as rice, sugar, and beef, according to the CPD, are more expensive in Bangladesh than in other developing countries. As a result, many families, including minimum wage earners across all sectors, are struggling to meet their needs. Some have even been forced to exclude meat and fish from their diets altogether.

Researchers at the CPD revealed that the average monthly food expense for a family of four is now about Tk 22,664, which was Tk 18,115 a year ago. The fact that traders waste no time to raise prices of essentials when their prices go up in the international market, but are unwilling to compromise on any profits whatsoever at a time when the majority of the population is struggling due to exorbitantly high prices, should be urgently addressed. Government agencies themselves have a tendency of doing the same in regards to energy prices, which of course adds to the inflationary pressure by pushing up the prices of everything – while providing no respite to consumers when global prices eventually drop.

Market distortions by a small number of dominant firms and lax regulations are the major problems facing our markets. The government has to ensure that these influential traders are not manipulating prices to make exorbitant profits. In that regard, the government needs to revise the existing laws that regulate competition of essentials in the market.

According to the CPD, the tax burden on at least 28 imported essential food items is now quite high. The government needs to reduce import duties and VAT to bolster supply and meet current domestic demand. It has to realise that prices have surpassed the purchasing capacity of the majority of Bangladeshi consumers and that it must intervene effectively in the market.

EDITORIAL

Inefficient system, criminal traders making people's suffering worse



A CLOSER LOOK

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TASNEEM TAYEB

Earlier this year, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi asked people not to panic purchase Ramadan essentials or buy in excess, as there would be enough supply in the market and no change in prices. The minister's thought, unfortunately, bears little resemblance to reality. The prices of Ramadan essentials, including lentils, sugar, brinjal and lemons, were on a soaring trajectory even before the month of fasting began, and the government failed to ensure fair prices for the common people.

Ironically, a paper by the commerce ministry, released last week, suggested that due to high prices, demand for Ramadan essentials might fall by 20 percent year on year. And why not? The price of sugar – a basic Ramadan necessity as people break their fast with a cooling glass of *shortob* – has skyrocketed to Tk 115-120 per kg from last year's Tk 78-80 per kg – an almost 50 percent hike. This certainly comes as a surprise because to tame it, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) removed import duty in February on both refined and raw sugar till May this year. Moreover, regulatory duty on sugar import was reduced to 25 percent from 30 percent. Despite this, sugar remains beyond the common people's purchasing capacity, with the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) even suggesting a rise of Tk 5 per kg, despite the NBR initiatives. One cannot help but ask the obvious question: who are reaping the benefits of these tax waivers?

Among the Ramadan essentials that are beyond the purchase capacity of lower-income groups is animal protein as well. The price of broiler chicken has shot up to Tk 270-280 per kg in the kitchen markets, from Tk 170-175 per kg last year. While the increased cost of poultry feed has been cited as a major cause, according to a March 19 report by the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP), production costs of broiler chicken should be between Tk 135 and Tk 160, depending on the size of the firm. So why such a high margin for broiler chicken in the kitchen markets?



A kilogram of eggs now costs Tk 45-47, compared to Tk 32-35 last year. Fish have also become pricier. Coarse rice prices have also risen by Tk 2-5 this year. One kilogram of lentil costs Tk 136 this year, up from Tk 115 last year. Given the current scenario, how are the low-income groups expected to survive this fresh onslaught of rising prices?

Now, everything can be blamed on the economic aftershocks of Covid pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, but the reality is that what we are experiencing are not organic hikes. These are rather deliberate price manipulations – criminal activities that we are allowing to be carried out in broad daylight. And the three bodies that we have to ensure fair prices for consumers and protect their rights – Directorate General of Food, Directorate of National Consumers Right Protection, and the Department of Agriculture Marketing – are to be blamed for the additional burden on people.

There are also an equal number of laws – Control of Essential Commodities Act, Consumers' Right

Protection Act, and Agricultural Marketing Act – to check unnatural price hikes and bring the criminal business syndicates and traders to justice. But these laws are not being enforced, which is giving a sense of security to the unscrupulous syndicates and traders.

These three bodies have no synergy

can't there be a single body – perhaps a separate ministry – to protect consumer rights?

It is high time the government and policymakers took this problem seriously and demonstrated a strong political will to enforce the laws on curbing price manipulations. It is only natural and understandable that

VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

those who are blessed with four meals a day, with adequate access to good quality protein and imported fruits and vegetables, the plight of the poor would seem a distant issue. But given that it is with the votes of these poor, limited-income groups that they have come to power, the government and policymakers owe it to them to ensure the basic three meals a day for them.

If the bureaucrats are not doing their jobs properly, they should be investigated to see if there are ulterior motives behind their reluctance (read: underhand dealings with market syndicates), and if proven guilty, they should be brought to book as well. Anyone who is found involved in this mess should be dealt with strictly.

In fact, this entire system should be overhauled and replaced with one empowered, efficient, and honest authority to weed out corruption and malpractices from the market. We have suffered for years already – the last three have been especially excruciating – and now people are teetering on the brink. Before greater consequences befall us, we must rein in the prices.

NEW CANALS FROM TEESTA

The hydro-hegemony in South Asia

Masfi ul-Ashfaq Nibir
is a Dhaka based independent
researcher and analyst.

MASFI-UL-ASHFAQ NIBIR

The West Bengal government recently decided to dig two new canals to divert water from the Teesta, a transboundary river that India shares with Bangladesh. Water from another transboundary river, Jaldhaka, will also be channelled to the canals for agricultural purposes. The canals are expected to benefit 100,000 farmers in Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar, and the West Bengal Irrigation Department has already been allocated 1,000 acres of land for the canals under the Teesta Barrage Project.

However, the benefits will come at the expense of Bangladeshi farmers in northern Bangladesh. As Teesta is a transboundary river, both Bangladesh and India should share its water in an equitable and reasonable manner, as per the international water-sharing convention. Unfortunately, Bangladesh has been denied such equity and reason as upper-riparian India unilaterally constructs barrages, dams, and canals, restricting the river's flow to Bangladesh.

This has also resulted in a scarcity of river water, with only 100 cumecs (cubic metres per second) available during the dry season, compared to the 1,600 cumecs required for agriculture in both countries.

Bangladesh and India share 54 rivers that flow from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal. The best practice across the world is to manage such

international or transboundary rivers in accordance with international rules and conventions such as Helsinki Rules, Berlin Rules, and the 1997 UN water-sharing convention. But in South Asia, this takes the form of bilateral agreements between the relevant stakeholders. As a result, the upper-riparian countries often enjoy advantages and unequal shares. For instance, India's construction of canals and barrages affects Bangladesh adversely. In the same manner, India also faces the same issue with China in the case of Brahmaputra River. As a result, Bangladesh has managed to get India to sign agreements on only two rivers: the Ganges and the Kusiyara. The Kusiyara agreement came nearly 25 years after the Ganges River treaty. Decade-long negotiations have failed to ink the treaty on Teesta water-sharing.

The delay in signing the Teesta treaty and the uneven water distribution have resulted in serious environmental and agricultural concerns in northern Bangladesh, where the river is drying up, biodiversity is under peril, and food production is being adversely affected. Between 2006 and 2014, the northern region of Bangladesh, known for its ample Boro rice harvest, lost Tk 8,132.6 crore in production due to water shortages caused by India's arbitrary withdrawal from the river.

Why has the water-sharing deal stalled when both Bangladesh and India have built much more fruitful relationships in other areas? The answer probably lies in the concept of hydro-hegemony.

Hydro-hegemony is a relatively

new theory that argues that water-sharing, conflicts, and river management between the countries that share transboundary rivers are influenced by their riparian position, power dimensions, and exploitation potential. Prominent Indian scholar Brahma Chellaney used the term to explain China's activity in the upstream that affected India. In the case of Bangladesh-India transboundary rivers, India holds the upper hand as the country is upper-riparian. When India has a demand for river water, it can simply dig canals and redirect the river's flow, or build a barrage to navigate the water flow.

Bangladesh lacks the political and economic power to force India to provide its rightful share of water. Because of this power asymmetry, India influences the negotiation process often in its favour. The decision to drain water from Jaldhaka River without informing Dhaka is a prime example of such influence. Not only that, but India consciously depoliticises bilateral disputes between the two countries.

India also gets to exploit Bangladesh based on its technological projects. Historical water flow data suggests that Bangladesh's share should not fall below 4,500 cumecs (cubic foot per second), but India's upstream interventions with technologically advanced barrages have decreased Bangladesh's share to one-third of that amount. Similar riparian and power dynamics have harmed India's equation with China over water sharing on the Brahmaputra. The river is shared by China, India, and Bangladesh, but because China is upstream, it can build dams and

barrages that threaten water flow to India and Bangladesh in the absence of any treaty. While India narrates China's behaviour as unequal, interestingly it does the same with lower-riparian Bangladesh.

River disputes will persist in South Asia because the region's largest rivers – the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Teesta, Mahananda, Surma, and Ghaghara – are transboundary. The region is largely dependent on these river basins. As a result, disruption and unjust water flow can lead to conflicts. Brahma Chellaney in his book *Water: Asia's New Battleground* also discussed such.

War or conflict for water has been going on for ages. For decades, conflicts between Egypt and Ethiopia often escalated over the Nile River's water-sharing. Water also played a central role in the civil war in Sudan. Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon also had a series of confrontations with Israel in the 1960s over the Jordan River that ultimately culminated in the Six Day War.

In the case of Bangladesh and India, river basin management has been always suggested to avoid such conflicts. But for that, the upper-riparian side must acknowledge equity and reason. Yet, the hydropolitics between Bangladesh and India can be of great interest to researchers as it has unique hegemonic elements in river management. How the upper-riparian and its federal governance structure is posing challenges to the lower-riparian is quite a new phenomenon in hydropolitics. Therefore, researchers may take a keen interest in developing further understanding.



One lesson is clear from Silicon Valley Bank's collapse: there should be greater scrutiny of depositor concentration risk.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

The free fall of Silicon Valley Bank



Dr Sharjil Haque
is an economist based in
Washington, DC. Views expressed in
this article are his own and do not
necessarily reflect the views of any
institution he is affiliated with.

SHARJIL HAQUE

For nearly 40 years, Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) was heralded as the go-to bank for startup companies sponsored by venture capital funds. SVB was the 16th largest bank in the United States and the lender-of-choice for many young firms in California's technology (tech) sector, the so-called tech hub in the country. All that changed when it collapsed on March 10, an event that captured headlines across the globe. This is the biggest bank failure in the US since the 2008 financial crisis. What happened to the 40-year-old bank that was so highly regarded among all stakeholders in America's tech sector?

Understanding the chain of events that led to SVB's demise requires some historical perspective. Following the onset of the pandemic, the American tech sector experienced a meteoric rise in capital inflow, owing to the increase in demand for more digital services as everything moved online. Flush with capital from venture capital funds during this low interest rate environment, many tech companies deposited their large influx of cash into SVB. In other words, SVB's deposits became over-reliant on large commercial deposits. While a concentrated depositor base is not unheard of, it is inherently riskier since fewer entities would need to pull their money out before the bank faced liquidity and solvency problems.

What could SVB do with this bonanza of deposit inflow? Without a sufficiently large number of corporate clients to lend to, SVB did what any bank would do: it poured all that excess liquidity into government-backed treasury bonds and mortgage securities. In fact, at the end of 2022, around \$117 billion of SVB's portfolio comprised these securities. That's nearly 60 percent of its entire assets.

But what are the benefits and costs of investing in these bonds? The advantage is that they have low default risks. The cost is that their returns are relatively low and, more importantly, their prices are sensitive to changing interest rates. The latter is what proved to be SVB's Achilles' heel. Even a student of Economics 101 can tell us that when interest rates rise, the price of these low-yielding bonds would fall since new bonds will offer more attractive returns. Given such a large investment in interest-rate-sensitive securities, one must wonder why the bank did not hedge this risk.

SVB's likely strategy with these available-for-sale bonds was to wait for a time when interest rates are sufficiently low, so that the value of these bonds exceeds their cost, thus allowing for a profit. Or perhaps CEO Greg Becker got a bit too greedy and chose not to pay the cost of hedging, and hoped their depositors would always remain true to them.

This mistake proved costly. SVB's heyday came to an end as the US Federal Reserve began raising short-term interest rates to tackle

historically high inflation. Venture capital funds received a lower influx of capital from all types of investors due to two reasons: the looming threat of a recession, and a growing near-term uncertainty surrounding the tech industry.

Consequently, venture capital funds supplied lower capital to many companies that happened to be SVB's biggest depositors. Not surprisingly, these startup companies began to pull out their deposits from SVB to meet routine operations – an effect that was amplified due to rising inflation. As deposit withdrawals spiked sharply, SVB was forced to sell a large share

2012 and 2015, short-term interest rates (federal funds rates) in the US remained flat and close to zero percent. During the same period, there were 101 bank failures in the US, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. All of these were much smaller banks than SVB and hence did not draw as much attention. Ultimately, bank success or failure boils down to proper risk management given its preferred business model.

The second question relates to the current regulatory architecture governing the US banking system. Owing to its relatively smaller size, SVB was not subject to some of the toughest regulatory requirements that the largest banks are. At present, the toughest capital and liquidity requirements have to be met by banks whose assets are larger than \$250 billion. Specifically, the largest banks need to have enough high-quality liquid assets to meet 30 days of unexpected net cash outflows.

SVB faced a more relaxed requirement. This is not necessarily an obvious solution, because there

If higher interest rates are the biggest factor, we should not see bank failures during periods when rates remain low and unchanged. For example, between 2012 and 2015, short-term interest rates (federal funds rates) in the US remained flat and close to zero percent. During the same period, there were 101 bank failures in the US, according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. All of these were much smaller banks than SVB and hence did not draw as much attention.

of their government securities at steep losses since they did not have enough cash on hand to pay their depositors.

This was the final nail in the coffin. Many of the remaining depositors naturally became concerned about the bank's solvency and overall financial health, leading to another wave of deposit withdrawals. As many commercial depositors withdrew their funds from the bank simultaneously, the bank experienced what economists often call a "bank run." With no other choice, regulators shut the bank down and took control to mitigate the damage and stop the contagion from spreading across the financial system.

The drama hardly ended there. Two days later, on March 12, frightened investors pulled their money out of Signature Bank, which had large amounts of deposits from the cryptocurrency sector. What would have been very hard to believe even a week ago, quickly became reality: the US saw a second bank run in the space of three days, leading regulators to shut down Signature Bank barely 48 hours after SVB. It's small wonder that bank stocks have been tumbling ever since, with financial experts predicting that we may not have seen the end of bank shutdowns just yet.

The fall of SVB raises important questions. The first question is whether higher interest rates are the main culprit. Indeed, a lot of commentators believe that aggressive monetary tightening by the US Federal Reserve was the key reason. If higher interest rates are the biggest factor, we should not see bank failures during periods when rates remain low and unchanged. For example, between

is always a trade-off to tougher regulatory requirements. On the one hand, tougher liquidity requirements mean a bank is less likely to face a run by depositors. But on the other hand, it also means a bank can extend fewer loans to truly viable businesses that hire employees from different income groups. This has implications for competition and fair pricing of loans, which ultimately affects ordinary borrowers.

One lesson is clear: there should be greater scrutiny of depositor concentration risk, which dictates funding stability. Much of the existing focus on understanding banking sector health is on the asset side of a bank's balance sheet – i.e. the loans it makes to various companies, and the associated credit risk. There is much less focus on a bank's liability side – i.e. the deposits it receives.

Finally, how will this episode affect the US economy as well as the global banking system? Some overseas spillover effects are already visible from the fall of European bank Credit Suisse, although their demise primarily came from years of scandals and mismanagement. A key trend we are observing is that many ordinary depositors in the US are withdrawing their money from relatively smaller and regional banks and allocating it to the biggest banks in the country, since those are perceived to be safer. Moreover, greater regulatory pressure might slow down credit growth and, by extension, economic activity. Overall, the SVB experience has increased investors' risk aversion and reduced confidence in the banking system, which could also weigh in on near-term growth.

THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE PROJECT

University students' struggle with concentration and self-worth

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

Irfan Ahnaf completed his MBA from the IBA, Dhaka University.

SYED SAAD ANDALEEB and IRFAN AHNAF

Ask a student, "How are your studies going?" Don't be surprised if they say one of two things, or both in reply: a) they are finding it difficult to concentrate; and b) they are struggling with a feeling of worthlessness. The two phenomena are intertwined with mental health. Ideally, a university student's responsibility is to study and excel in academics. This gets difficult if they find it hard to concentrate. Being unable to concentrate leads to less-than-optimal academic performance, which then leads one to question one's self-worth.

It goes both ways: one feeds off the other in a series of escalating steps. than 10 percent cannot seem to concentrate on anything at all, and the rest either find it difficult to keep their minds on anything for long, or are unable to concentrate as well as usual. Extrapolating these numbers across university-going students reflects a serious and disturbing situation.

On the question of worthlessness, 313 indicated not feeling worthless. What is disconcerting is that almost half of our university students feel some sense of worthlessness. Some of them feel worthless in comparison to others, some vis à vis their past selves, and almost 10 percent felt "completely worthless." Is this

Our nagging question is whether such "professional" help is available for the mental challenges students experience so widely.

Slowly, but surely: One cannot expect to heal overnight, just like any physical illness.

Good companionship: It is important to be with people who provide genuine love and care – those who want what is best for the suffering individual. Oftentimes, young people ignore those who have their best interests at heart, seeking the ephemeral approval of those who do not really care.

Physical fitness: The mind and the body are connected; neglecting one's physical well-being may adversely affect one's mental health. It is important to take up a sport, start physical exercise, or even try the martial arts.

Philanthropy: It is important to help others without publicising it and without asking for anything in return. With positive impact, it can



VISUAL: ABIR HOSSAIN

The result is stress, anxiety, and even depression. Academic administrators are blissfully unaware of this, nor do they seem to care that a large number of university students are suffering from mental health issues.

A student struggling with the feeling of worthlessness will find it hard to summon the willpower needed to focus on their studies. This difficulty can be crippling because of the other struggles in their daily lives; when things become near impossible, some fall into depression and go over the edge.

Our recent survey explores the barely traversed topic of depression among university students in Bangladesh. Research on this topic is vital to eliminate the myths, fabrications, and guesswork around this subject. Among other metrics, we explore concentration difficulties and feelings of worthlessness that students frequently experience.

On concentration difficulty, 33 percent of the respondents had none. But an overwhelming majority (67 percent) reported facing some form of concentration difficulty. More

acceptable?

It's worse still that a large proportion of the students feel completely worthless. If these proportions are projected for all the university-going students in Bangladesh, there are deep-rooted problems that cannot be left unaddressed.

We hope the university governing bodies across the country are taking a note. Boasting about how much they value their students (perhaps their pockets only) is one thing; backing up the claims is what the stakeholders ought to demand. Academic fulfilment requires serious attention to students' mental health. Students who are finding it difficult to concentrate and questioning their self-worth might take heart from the fact that others have been there and pulled out.

Here are some things students must keep in mind to bring balance to their lives:

Get professional help: Getting clinically diagnosed and accepting medical treatment can save lives.

do wonders to one's self-worth.

The list is not comprehensive, but something to begin with and incorporate into one's life. If academic institutions really care, they will endeavour to provide support in these areas for all students to preserve good mental health.

It is also important to conduct more studies regularly to track students' mental health status. At the same time, the stigma surrounding mental health challenges needs to be brought out in the open and discussed widely to normalise a condition that exists in all societies. In academia, administrators are urged to develop a keen eye on students' mental health challenges and extend a warm and reassuring hand to those in need of counselling. Their challenge is to nurture students holistically, not just academically.

This op-ed, the second of a four-part series, is the result of faculty-student collaboration designed to impact higher education in Bangladesh.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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- 13 Burglar's bane
- 14 Become
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- 19 "Ocean's Eleven" and "Cape Fear"
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- 4 Ride the waves
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- 6 Back, at sea
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- 9 Crooked
- 10 Trims
- 11 Dye, say
- 12 Notes
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- 14 Sine qua —
- 15 Cochise's people
- 16 Death on the Nile" sleuth
- 17 With enthusiasm
- 18 Unattached
- 19 Most wise
- 20 Stylish
- 21 Bordeaux buddy
- 22 Sine qua —
- 23 Cochise's people
- 24 Death on the Nile" sleuth
- 25 With enthusiasm
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- 31 Cochise's people
- 32 Death on the Nile" sleuth
- 33 Unattached
- 34 Stylish
- 35 Bordeaux buddy
- 36 Chapel reply
- 37 Lair



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



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Indonesia in FIFA talks over Israel protests

AFP, Jakarta

Indonesian President Joko Widodo said Tuesday he was sending the country's football association chief for talks with FIFA about its hosting of the Under-20 World Cup after the draw was mixed following protests over Israel's participation.

The two countries do not have formal diplomatic relations, and support for the Palestinian cause in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation runs high, fueling local opposition to hosting the Israeli team.

"I have sent (Indonesian Football Association) PSSI chief Erick Thohir to meet with FIFA team to look for the best solution," Widodo said in a livestreamed speech.

He did not specify when Thohir would fly to FIFA headquarter in Switzerland or which FIFA officials he would meet.

Fixtures for the 24-nation tournament beginning in May were due to be chosen on Friday in Bali, but FIFA cancelled the event without reason or setting a new date.

'Russian participation works'

REUTERS, Lausanne

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach on Tuesday defended plans to get Russian and Belarusian athletes back into competitions as neutrals, saying their participation "works" despite the ongoing war in Ukraine.

The IOC sanctioned Russia and Belarus after the February 2022 invasion but is now eager to see athletes come back across all sports and have a chance to qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympics.

It has set out a pathway for these competitors to earn Olympic slots through Asian qualifying and left it up to international federations to decide on organisation, but has faced headwinds, with Ukraine threatening to boycott the Paris Games should they compete there, even as neutrals.

"Participation of athletes with Russian and Belarusian passports in international competitions works," Bach said.

"We see this almost every day in a number of sports, most prominently in tennis but also in cycling, in some table tennis competitions."

Russians and Belarusians have been competing as neutrals in some sports. Their presence at some events, such as tennis tournaments, has triggered angry reactions from some other athletes.

Bach said politics could not be a part of sports competitions and athletes should not be punished for their passports.

'No difference' between hosts' pros and Seychelles' amateurs

SPORTS REPORTER from Sylhet

The amateur footballers of Seychelles attempted to cheer up their Bangladeshi counterparts, clapping and chanting 'come on men' while the dejected hosts walked to the podium after suffering a 1-0 defeat to the visitors in the second of two friendlies between the sides at the Sylhet District Stadium yesterday.

England-based defender Michael Ian Mancienne had struck the decisive goal from the penalty spot in the 61st minute after defender Saad Uddin fouled Daryle Bertrand inside the box.

Although Bangladesh won the prior friendly last week by an identical 1-0 margin, the defeat in the second game was a momentous occasion for Seychelles, whose squad largely consists of part-time footballers that have full-time careers off the field.

Visiting coach Neville Both, who is a full-time PE teacher, was ecstatic with the result and afterwards rubbed the notion that Bangladesh's footballers were better.

"There was no difference between the two sides. Even if they are professional footballers, I didn't see any difference. The only thing was that they were playing at home, so we wanted to sit back and let them circulate the ball. As soon as they arrived in dangerous areas, they lost possession. So,



Unlike the rest of his team members, Bangladesh Test and T20I skipper Shakib Al Hasan had a busy schedule in Chattogram yesterday. While the Tigers' T20I squad enjoyed a rest day on Tuesday, Shakib appeared for a commercial shooting at the port city's CRB area. After winning the first game by 22 runs, Bangladesh are scheduled to play the second of their three-match T20I series against Ireland at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium today.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Mahmud's body mechanics similar to Shoaib Akhtar'

SPORTS REPORTER

As Bangladesh look to seal the three-match T20I series against Ireland when they meet for the second game in Chattogram today, a lot of focus will once again be on the Tigers' growing pace-bowling unit.

There has been a burgeoning belief in and about the Tigers' pace-bowling unit in recent times and it was Taskin Ahmed who stood tall in the first T20I, registering career best figures of four for 16 to restrict Ireland to 81 for five in chase of a revised 104 run target from eight overs (DLS method).

Another young seamer, Hasan Mahmud, continued to impress with his skills. With his ability to bowl quick, the cricketer from Laxmipur has emerged as the go-to for the Tigers in the white-ball formats, adding variety to the pace battery.

The 23-year-old has matured immensely since making his T20I debut three years ago and appears to welcome the challenge of putting himself in pressure situations.

That much was evident in the first T20I when Irish openers Paul Stirling and Ross Adair came out with an attacking mindset and amassed 32 runs in the first two overs.

Skipper Shakib Al Hasan then handed the ball to Mahmud and the seamer managed to absorb the pressure before conjuring a well-directed yorker that bowled Adair to rock the visitors and bring Bangladesh back into the game.

Local pace-bowling coach Mahbub Ali Zaki worked with Mahmud during his age-level days and informed that the youngster had always been among a rare breed of seamers.



"I have seen him right from the under-16 days and we immediately marked him as a rare find for our pace-bowling department. He has got the same elements as Taskin, who has strong wrist position. Why we termed him rare is because of the hyper-extension in terms of his body mechanics. It is pretty similar to Shoaib Akhtar. Mahmud has a snap wrist, which

helps him get sharper cuts into the batter and makes him more lethal as a pacer," Zaki told The Daily Star yesterday.

He has also shown vast improvement under the guidance of Bangladesh's pace-bowling coach Allan Donald, but according to Zaki there are still a lot of areas that Mahmud needs to work on, chief among them fitness.

"I think he still needs to work a lot on his fitness since he is an injury-prone pacer like Taskin. But Mahmud's body is not similar to Taskin's. He is more of a Mustafizur Rahman, who requires a different level of fitness. He is more of a hip-dominant bowler so it is important for Mahmud to continuously do strength training. I am sure he is following that under the national staff," he said.

The lack of venom in the Tigers' pace-bowling unit in the past has hurt Bangladesh badly. However, the current lot of pacers have started to create the culture of healthy competition within the team and that has started to reap rewards.

It will be crucial for someone like Mahmud to keep improving and, according to Zaki, the international cricketer requires something extra that must be worked on continuously.

"Look, we can see how capable our bowlers are, but we cannot be complacent. Taskin can be a great example. Despite having all the talent, he has seen the lowest of lows in his career. But not everyone is lucky enough to make a comeback like Taskin. For Mahmud, these are still early days and the more he plays and takes care of himself, the better he will be in the coming days," Zaki added.

Russia clinch SAFF U-17 Women's title

SPORTS REPORTER

Russia clinched the title of the SAFF U-17 Women's Championship with a hundred per cent record following a 2-0 win over India in the final match of round robin format at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Russia, who are suspended from playing in UEFA and FIFA-sanctioned events since the country's invasion of Ukraine last year, were invited by the SAFF as guest participants in the five-team championship. And the European nation cruised to the title with 12 points from four games, following the win over India last night.

Bangladesh, meanwhile, finished runners up with seven points after being held to a 1-1 draw by Nepal in their last match earlier yesterday.

The hosts got on the backfoot early, conceding an 8th-minute lead, with Senu Pariyar finishing a solo move with a fantastic finish. The girls in red and green, though, scored a well-deserved equaliser in the 75th minute of the game, Sagorika turning home Trishna Ran's cross from in front of goal.

India, despite the defeat, finished third with six points while Nepal finished fourth with four points. Bhutan ended the championship without collecting a single point.



Anamul shines for Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Anamul Haque Bijoy, who has recently lost his place in the national side, continued his good form in the domestic circuit as his blistering unbeaten fifty propelled Abahani to a thumping 10-wicket victory over Rupganj Tigers Cricket Club in their Dhaka Premier League encounter at the Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah yesterday.

After bundling out Rupganj for a meagre 127 for 10 in 37.2 overs, Anamul smashed an unbeaten 63 ball 80, laced with seven boundaries and five maximums, while Mohammad Naim played second fiddle with an unbeaten 52 ball 43 to see Abahani cruise to victory with 30.5 overs to spare.

With 312 runs in five matches at 104 average, Anamul remains the third highest scorer in DPL so far. Naim, who has also been out of the national side, is the top scorer in the tournament, with 355 runs in five games.

Meanwhile, at the BKSP-4 Ground, City Club registered their first victory of the tournament, beating Dhaka Leopards by six wickets. Fifties from Shahriar Komol and Rayan Rafsan saw City chase down the 163-run target with 30 balls to spare.

Brothers Union also tasted victory for the first time in the tournament. Chasing a 287-run target, Anisul Islam hit a 114-ball 107, featuring eight boundaries and five maximums, while Sabir Hossen scored a 69-ball 62 as Brothers got over the line with just a ball in hand.



Argentina captain Lionel Messi stands next to a life-size statue of himself holding a replica of the World Cup trophy, unveiled at the South American Football Federation (CONMEBOL) headquarters in Luque, Paraguay on Monday. Messi was honoured by CONMEBOL for his achievement and his statue will stand alongside those of his predecessor, Diego Maradona, and Brazil great Pele at the South American federation's museum.

PHOTO: AFP



after the match. "We wanted to win but we conceded a stupid penalty again. We are repeating history by giving away stupid penalties. And we did it again. That's why they won the match."

Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera drafted

Robiul Hasan and Suman Reza in place of Jamal Bhuiyan and Aminur Rahman Sajib respectively, but the 192nd-ranked hosts failed to live up the billing against a 199th-ranked opponent that featured only two full-time footballers.

"I am not happy because I believe we could have done better than what we did in both matches. We deserved to win both games and two wins would have boosted the boys," Cabrera said.

After going behind, Bangladesh sent on

forwards Eleta Kingsley and Matin Mia but could not equalise despite getting a couple of chances.



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ANY SHAPE AND
SIZE AS PER DESIGN

BSRM
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BSRM
building a safer nation



SHAH CEMENT
THE MOST LOVED BRAND

BEST BRAND AWARD WINNER EVERY YEAR

BEST BRAND AWARD 2022

DU beset with gang crimes

'Proloy Gang' is not the only one, there are others; inter-hall probe body formed

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL with MASHFIQ MIZAN

Two more student gangs -- "Nishachor" and "Bhai Brothers" -- had been carrying out criminal activities on Dhaka University campus for several years, say students.

A section of third-year honours students, who lived in "gono rooms" during their first year at residential halls, had formed the gangs.

The gang members ran their activities through Facebook messenger and WhatsApp groups. They roamed around the campus at night and got involved in various crimes including taking drugs, harassing women, and mugging in the Central Shaheed Minar, Suhrawardy Udyan, Fuller Road, and Curzon Hall areas, said students.

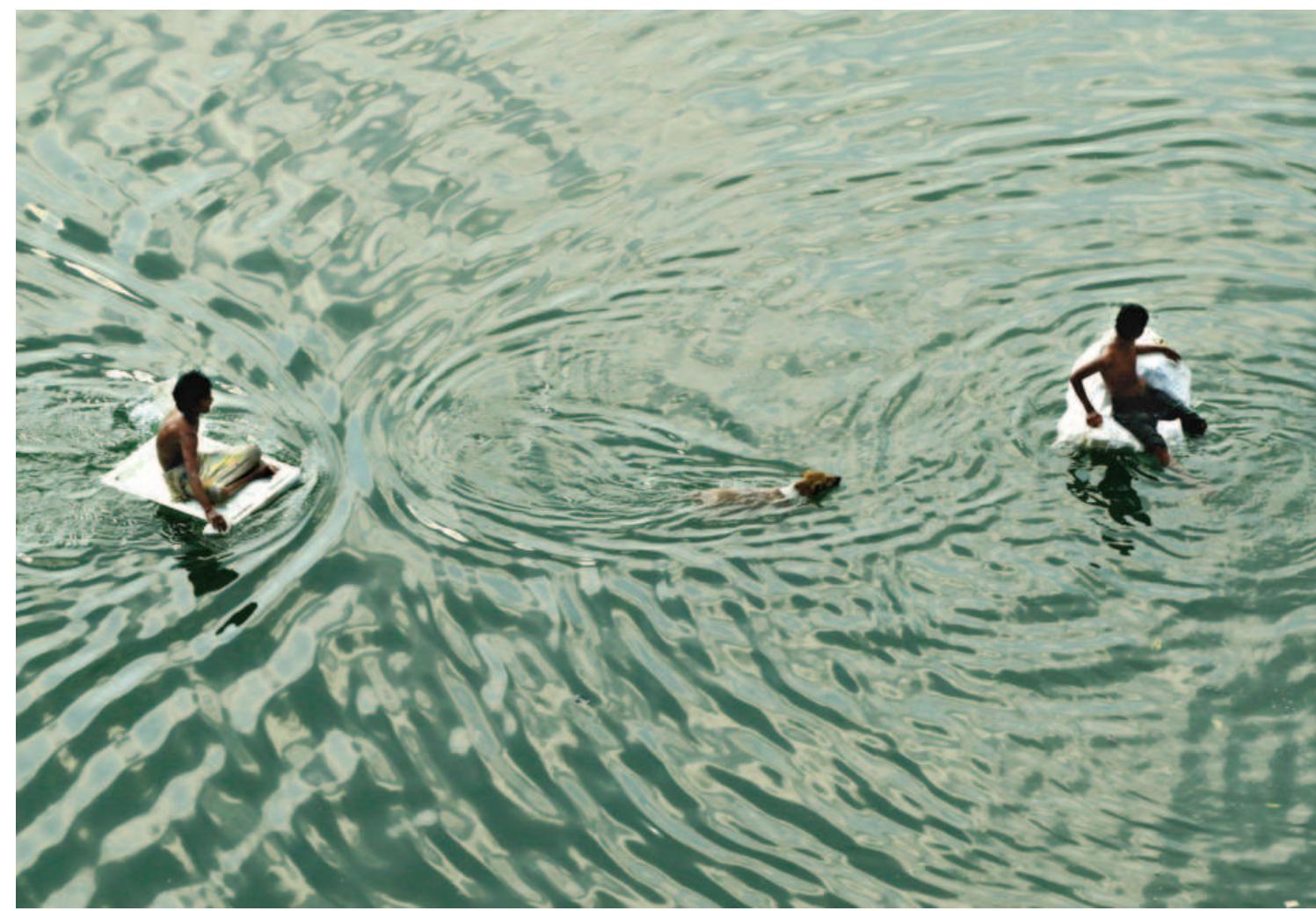
Meanwhile, the DU yesterday suspended two members of "Proloy gang", which came under the spotlight after its members beat up Zubair Ibne Humayun, a criminology student, on campus on Saturday evening.

The DU provost standing committee formed an inter-hall probe body, headed by Salimullah Muslim Hall Provost Prof Iqbal Rouf Mamiun, to identify the members of "Proloy gang". The committee was asked to submit its report in seven working days.

Many members of "Proloy gang" are druggies, involved in mugging and beating up of DU students, said general students.

The DU in a statement yesterday said Naimur Rahman Durjjoy of anthropology department and Sakib Ferdous

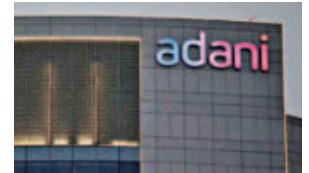
SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



These two boys and their furry friend are making a splash in the Surma river on a scorching hot day near the Keane Bridge in Sylhet city. It looks like they're having a blast on their Styrofoam boards.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Adani buys 49pc stakes in another Indian media outlet



OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

After buying NDTV, embattled billionaire Gautam Adani's AMG Media Networks Limited (AMNL) has acquired about 49 percent stake in another Indian news platform.

AMNL bought the stake in digital business news platform Quintillion Business Media Pvt Ltd (QBML) for nearly 48 crore rupees.

"AMNL has completed the acquisition of 49 percent equity stake in QBML," Adani Enterprises Ltd said in a mandatory filing with the stock exchange.

"The transaction was completed on March 27 for Rs 47.84 crore," it said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

ONLINE NEWS OUTLETS 33 at risk of spreading disinformation Finds study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An analysis of thirty-three news domains of Bangladesh media has found that all of them are at medium to high risk of disinforming their online users, according to a report published yesterday.

Of them, at least 16 sites are at high risk of spreading disinformation because of a lack of transparent checks and balances and the absence of policies to ensure accuracy.

The report titled "Disinformation Risk Assessment: The Online News Market in Bangladesh" is based on a study conducted by Digitally Right, in partnership with the Global Disinformation Index (GDI), between July and December 2022.

The study analysed around 700 articles published in the mainstream media based on two pillars -- content and operational pillars.

The content pillar assessed the domains based on nine indicators, including news bias, headline accuracy, sensationalism, and attribution. All 33 sites performed well in these indicators scoring 86 out of 100 on an average.

However, the domains performed poorly in the six indicators under operational pillar, including ownership information, editorial guideline, post publication correction policy, and fact checking policy. The average score was 29.

Shafiqul Alam, bureau chief at AFP, Dhaka; Ayesha Kabir, head of English, Prothom Alo; Talat Mamun, executive director, Channel 24; and Saiful Alam Chowdhury, associate professor, Dhaka University, shared their insights during presentation of the report through an webinar.

Digitally Right's founder Miraj Ahmed Chowdhury moderated the event.



US DEBATE CONTEST Bangladeshi schoolboy breaks all records

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

A Bangladeshi student has become the best debater by winning 144 consecutive debates, breaking all the records of the US government's parliamentary debate tournament organised by the White House.

The international competition titled "Finding World Future Leaders" was held virtually from February 27 to March 14, said a statement released by the White House.

Shah Muhammad Rakib Hasan, a tenth grader at Rangpur Police Lines

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

CTG-COX'S BAZAR HIGHWAY

RHD moves to get rid of bottlenecks

To build bypass roads, flyover under Japan-funded project

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The Roads and Highways Department will build 24km of bypass roads and a flyover on Chattogram Cox's Bazar highway to eliminate bottlenecks in five town areas.

A feasibility study of the project, which will be financed by Japan, has been done and the department is now working on the project proposal.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency is set to sign today an agreement with the Bangladesh government regarding the finance for this and two other projects.

The total amount will be around Tk 12,814 crore. The other projects are Matarbari Port Development and technical assistance for construction of a dual-gauge double rail line between Joydebpur and Ishwardi, a source said.

The government is working on a two-pronged approach to improve traffic flow on Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway as congestion and crashes are becoming increasingly common due to heavy traffic, said officials.

One is to rid the highway of

bottlenecks within the next few years because the number of vehicles will significantly rise once the Matarbari Deep Sea Port in Maheshkhali comes into operation in 2026.

The other is to widen the entire highway into a four-lane expressway that will be under a Public Private Partnership model. It will be under a government-to-government initiative with Japan, a RHD source said.

Under the first of the aforementioned, JICA-appointed consultants who did a feasibility study recommended four bypasses and a flyover to rid the road of five major bottlenecks.

According to a document, there will be the 5.4km Patiya bypass, 3.3km Dohazari bypass, 5.1km Lohagara bypass, 6.8km Chakaria bypass, and 3.5km Keranihat flyover.

The bypasses will be four lanes with a 2.5metre wide breakdown lane on each side, said Interim Project Director Shyamal Kumar Bhattacharya.

The flyover will be six lanes, he told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that a Development Project Proposal (DPP) will be prepared soon.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Scientists find water inside glass beads on Moon

AFP, Paris

Scientists have discovered water inside tiny beads of glass scattered across the Moon, suggesting that one day it could be extracted and used by the explorers of tomorrow.

The Moon was long believed to be dry, but over the last few decades several missions have shown there is water both on the surface and trapped inside minerals.

Mahesh Anand, a professor of planetary science and exploration at the UK's Open University, told AFP on Monday that water molecules could be seen "hopping over the lunar surface" when it was sunny.

"But we didn't know where exactly it was coming from," said Anand, a co-author of a new study published in the journal Nature Geoscience.

The study, carried out by a team led by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said that the glass beads are "probably the dominant reservoir involved in the lunar surface water cycle".

The team polished and analysed 117 glass beads which were scooped up by China's Chang'e 5 spacecraft in December 2020 and brought back to Earth.

The beads are formed by tiny meteorites that bombard the surface of the Moon, which lacks the protection of an atmosphere.

13 Jamaat men held in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gulshan police on Monday night arrested 13 leaders and activists of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, including two women, from Dhaka's Shahjadpur area.

The arrestees are Hussain Bin Mansur, Mufti Rahmatullah Bin Tofazzal Hossain, his wife Jesmin Akter, AKM Abdus Salam, Abdullah Al Mahfuz, Saimum Jami, Hafizur Rahman, Anjum Bin Kamal, Nur Mohammad Monir, Salahuddin Sabir, Abdur Nur, Nasir Uddin, and Sahera Akter.

Police claimed that the Jamaat members were holding a meeting to plan subversive activities while their lawyer said they were performing Isha prayer when police detained them.

A Dhaka Court yesterday granted one day remand for each after sub-inspector Ohidul Islam of Gulshan Police Station produced them before it with a seven-



Buses pick up passengers blocking the ramp of Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover in the capital's Gulistan yesterday. Inter-district buses parked in the area also choke the road.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Myanmar junta dissolves Suu Kyi's NLD party

REUTERS

The ousted ruling party of Myanmar's former leader Aung San Suu Kyi was among 40 political parties dissolved yesterday, after they failed to meet a registration deadline for an election set to perpetuate the military's political dominance.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) is among dozens of parties that held parliamentary seats in the past decade that were severely weakened by the military's 2021 coup and crackdown on its opponents.

Many of the parties are unable or unwilling to contest the election, which has widely been dismissed by critics as a sham.

In a live broadcast late yesterday, state-run Myawaddy TV said 63 parties had registered for the election at local or national level and named 40 parties that were automatically disbanded for failure to sign up.

The polls, for which no date has been announced, are almost certain to be swept by the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), a military proxy that was trounced by the NLD in the 2015 election and in a 2020 vote that the generals eventually voided, citing unaddressed irregularities.

The hugely popular Nobel laureate Suu Kyi is among scores of NLD officials currently in prison. She has been found guilty of multiple counts of corruption, a breach of a state secrets law and incitement, among other crimes.

The NLD has previously declared the polls as legitimate and refused to register.