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**Private credit
growth slows
further**



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League begins
today**



**Melting
Antarctic could
impact oceans
'for centuries'**



**A haunting
reminder of the
tragic past**

Shams sent to jail 35hrs after being picked up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly 35 hours after he was picked up from home, Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams was yesterday produced before a Dhaka court that sent him to jail in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

The uncertainties over his whereabouts came to an end when he was taken to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court premises around 8:30am.

Around six hours later, law enforcers brought Shams out of the prison cell on the court premises and walked him to a courtroom for a hearing on the case. He was wearing a blue polo shirt at the time.

Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiur Rahman, an unnamed photographer and unnamed others are also accused in the case.

Around 4:00am on Wednesday, he was picked up from his home in Ambagan area near Jahangirnagar University in Savar allegedly by the Criminal Investigation Department. Until yesterday, neither the CID nor any other law enforcement agencies admitted taking him.

At the court yesterday, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Tofazzal Hossain rejected Shams' bail petition and sent him to jail.

Around 3:30pm, Shams, a staff correspondent of the newspaper based in Savar, was then taken to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

The case drew widespread condemnations from journalist associations, rights and professional bodies at home and abroad.

However, ministers and Awami League leaders continued to criticise

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Police are walking Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams to a courtroom from a prison cell on the premises of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka. Since he was picked up by men in plainclothes around 4:00am on Wednesday, there were uncertainties over his whereabouts until he was brought to the court premises after nearly 35 hours. He is accused in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

DSA CASE AGAINST MATIUR

Noab, editors, rights bodies voice worries

STAR REPORT

Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (Noab) has termed the filing of cases against some journalists under the Digital Security Act over the last few days unacceptable.

"We think the use of sections of the Digital Security Act especially against Prothom Alo Editor and former Noab president Matiur Rahman is tantamount to harassing him and muzzling the bold journalism his newspaper does," Noab said in a statement yesterday.

It said the increasing use of the DSA against journalists is concerning. "We conveyed our reservations to the government high-ups about the DSA at different times."

Such a law is not consistent with the freedom of expression and free journalism, and it is also against the dream and system of building a progressive society, said Noab.

"We demand immediate withdrawal of the case against Matiur Rahman

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SULTANA'S DEATH IN RAB CUSTODY

Family won't file case, looks to HC

Enquiry cell quizzes 11 Rab-5 officials

ANWAR ALLI, back from Naogaon

The family of Sultana Jasmine, who died in Rab custody, said they would not go for any legal move seeking justice.

Her son or her sisters or brothers would not speak about the incident in public or talk to the press for at least six months, said Sultana's maternal uncle Nazmul Haque Montu yesterday.

"We didn't file any case and we don't want to lodge any."

Sultana, an office assistant of Naogaon's Chandipur union land office, died in the custody of Rab on March 24, two days after she was detained when she was on her way to work.

Her death triggered criticism from human rights groups and the High Court questioned under what authority Rab detained her when she was not accused in any case.

Meanwhile, Rab headquarters' enquiry cell yesterday called in 11 officials of Rab-5 to the battalion headquarters from its Joypurhat camp

for questioning.

The officials include a major and an assistant superintendent of police, said Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of legal and media wing of Rab.

The Daily Star correspondent talked to Montu in a parking garage in Naogaon town on Tuesday.

Montu said, "You will not hear a word from her [Sultana] son or any other family members other than me in six months. I'm unable to tell you the reason [behind this decision of not talking]. You must understand this."

"I heard that a proceeding began in the High Court. Our only hope of justice lies with the High Court proceedings."

Asked again yesterday evening, Montu said they were not even thinking about filing of any case.

Montu, who served 27 years as a ward councillor of Naogaon municipality, described their ordeal after Sultana's detention and events leading up to

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DSA misused in case of Sultana

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the Digital Security Act was misused in the incident of detaining Sultana Jasmine who died in Rab custody on March 24.

"I can clearly say that the woman was not facing any case filed under the Digital Security Act when she was picked up," he said.

The minister was replying to a query from a journalist at the Secretariat.

"The law is being misused in one or two incidents, and we are taking action," Anisul said.

Sultana, 41, an office assistant at Chandipur union land office in Naogaon, was detained on her way to the office by a patrol team of Rab-5 on March 22.

She died at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in Rab custody two days later.



RAPE, DEATH OF 12-YR-OLD

A poor family's cries for justice go unheeded

A year on, no culprit identified or arrested

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI and CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

"I will not work at this house anymore. They torture me. I will come back to you." This was what Iti Akter said to her mother Sarkis Akter in her last phone call in the evening of January 28 last year.

Sarkis was informed the next day that her daughter was being taken to Better Life Hospital in the capital's Rampura.

Sarkis, who is a domestic worker in the Rayerbazar area, then rushed to the hospital only to find her daughter dead.

"I saw my daughter in a white body bag. As I was crying and asking what happened to her, the people around me said my daughter had hung herself with a scarf," said Sarkis.

"But after seeing her body, I was convinced that something very bad had happened to my daughter who was as pure as a flower."

The 12-year-old was working as a domestic help at the flat of a lawyer couple, Rajin Ahmed and Iflat Jahan Chowdhury, in the East Hajipara area of Rampura in the capital. Rajin's father Kamal Uddin Ahmed, a retired bureaucrat, is the owner of the house.

According to a report at Better Life Hospital, the girl was dead when she was brought to the hospital at 4:50pm on January 29, 2022. "A case of hanging as described by the landlord, Kamal Uddin Ahmed; hanging mark on throat."

She died around 80 minutes before she was brought there, according to a police inquest report.

The police report also said her rectum was abnormal, suggesting that she had been raped.

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PROTHOM ALO

Ministers, AL leaders keep blasting it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ministers and ruling party leaders yesterday continued to blast Bangla daily Prothom Alo for an online report on March 26.

Coming down heavily on the paper, Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud said the base of the state was hit and the country's independence was mocked by the report.

"Circulating this kind of news against the state, society and Liberation War, according to everyone, is a digital crime. [committing] crime and journalism are not the same thing. If someone commits a crime, will he or she not be punished?" he said while speaking at a views-exchange meeting with journalists at his ministry in the Secretariat.

Replying to questions from reporters after attending an event at a city hotel, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam, said, "The Liberation War of Bangladesh, Language Movement and the sacrifices of 30 lakh people are not trivial matters that can be compared to anything. We all need to be responsible."

"No matter what, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government will take Bangladesh forward in the coming days ... And these comments, statements

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3



The rail line leading to the Padma Bridge near the Mawa Railway Station. Bangladesh Railway is expected to go for a trial run on the Mawa-Bhanga section on April 4 as the laying of rail line was completed on Wednesday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'BORROW MORE FROM NON-BANKS'

Bangladesh Bank said the government will have to borrow more from non-banking sources to finance its expenditures in a bid to contain higher inflation as the latter's bank borrowing surged. The government's domestic borrowing soared 72.3 percent year-on-year to Tk 42,717 crore in July-January of this fiscal year, with a major portion coming from banks.

BUSINESS

STORY ON BI

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SC BAR ASSOCIATION A section of lawyers seeks to hold fresh election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A section of Supreme Court lawyers yesterday announced they would hold a fresh election to the Supreme Court Bar Association on June 14 and 15, saying that what took place on March 15 and 16 was not an election.

They made the decision at a meeting at the SCBA Hall with former SCBA president M Amir Ul-Islam in the chair.

They formed an ad-interim committee with senior lawyer Mohammad Mohsen Rashid as the convener and Shah Ahmed Badal as the member secretary.

The committee will conduct the annual election in line with the SCBA constitution.

Eminent jurists Dr Kamal Hossain, M Amir-Ul-Islam, Mainul Hossain, Jamir Uddin Sircar, AF Hassan Ariff, Zainul Abedin, Habibur Rahman Bhuiyan, AJ Mohammad Ali, MK Rahman and Abu Sayeed Sagar were named as the advisory council members of the committee, said a press release signed by Shah Ahmed Badal.

Forms will soon be handed to lawyers to prepare a voter list.

The committee will meet the chief justice and conduct the routine tasks that include looking after SCBA bank accounts and its office.

SCBA officials and staff members will function under the ad-interim committee, the press release added.

On March 15 and 16, the SCBA election was held amid police assault on lawyers and journalists and clashes between pro-Awami League and pro-BNP lawyers.

Pro-BNP lawyers did not cast their votes, demanding cancellation of what they said was a “farce of an election”. The pro-AL lawyers’ panel, Bangabandhu Awami Ainjibi Parishad, won all 14 posts of the SCBA polls.

Asked about yesterday’s decisions,

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Boatloads of watermelon at Boithkata floating wholesale market in the Belua river of Pirojpur’s Nazirpur upazila. The market is only open on Saturdays and Tuesdays and watermelons from Bhola, Patuakhali and Barguna are sold there. Over 1 lakh watermelons worth Tk 1 crore are sold every day, say traders. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: KM HABIBUR RAHMAN

Philippine ferry fire kills 31

AFP, Manila

At least 31 people died and 230 were rescued after a fire engulfed a ferry in the southern Philippines, authorities said yesterday.

The Lady Mary Joy 3 was travelling from Zamboanga City on Mindanao Island to Jolo Island in Sulu province when the fire broke out late Wednesday, prompting passengers to jump overboard, disaster officer Nixon Alonzo said.

Rescuers, including the Philippine Coast Guard and fishermen, saved 195 passengers and 35 crew as the blaze ripped through the ferry off Baluk-Baluk Island in Basilan province.

Basilan Governor Jim Salliman said 31 bodies had been retrieved, including 18 found inside an air-conditioned cabin.

Photos released by the coast guard showed one of its vessels spraying water on the burning ferry as personnel in smaller boats plucked people from the dark water.

Firefighter Jayson Ahijon, who was among the passengers, said people panicked as fire and thick smoke overwhelmed the vessel.

Some jumped overboard before putting on life jackets. “It’s beyond my imagination, the fire was spreading so fast,” Ahijon, 36, said.

Ahijon said he and several coast guard officers helped other passengers to safety, including a baby they put in a bucket and lowered over the side of the boat.

The captain ran the vessel aground as the fire spread “so many more could survive since it would be easier to swim to shore”, Commodore Rejard Marfe from

the Philippine Coast Guard told AFP.

Salliman said at least three children, including a six-month-old baby, were among the dead.

Authorities also said 14 people were injured.

It is not clear how many people are still missing, Salliman said the number of passengers on the vessel exceeded the 205 listed in the ship’s manifest.

Marfe said four members of the coast guard and an unknown number of army personnel were on board but not listed in the manifest.

“We’re still getting the data in Coast Guard Station Zamboanga because that’s where they originated in order to determine if there are still missing people,” he said.

Marfe said coast guard investigators were on their way to inspect the ferry and determine the cause of the fire.

Survivors were taken to Zamboanga and Basilan, where the injured were treated for burns, Salliman said.

Shams sent to jail 35hrs

FROM PAGE 1

the paper and the reporter.

According to the document, the case was filed with Ramna Police Station at 11:10pm on Wednesday. Shams was still allegedly in CID custody then.

Early Wednesday, a Jubo League leader named Syed Golam Kibria first accused him in a case under the DSA filed with Tejgaon Police Station.

Shams was picked up less than two hours after the case was filed.

According to the first information report of the second case, a lawyer named Abdul Malek Mashur Malek, 61, accused Shams, Matiur and the unnamed others of using print, online, and electronic media to tarnish the image of the state.

During the hearing yesterday, Ehsanul Haque Shomaji, lawyer for the accused, told the court the complainant was not harmed by the news run by Prothom Alo and the state could take actions against the reporter if the news tarnished its image.

“If my client gets bail, he will not flee and hamper the investigation,” said the lawyer in his submission.

A prosecutor then said police arrested the accused on specific charges and the case was at the primary stage of investigation. The prosecutor appealed to the court to confine him in jail until the investigation is done.

Upon hearing from both sides, the magistrate turned down the bail plea.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said he heard more cases were being filed over a report published on Prothom Alo on Independence Day.

Shams, aged 37, is the younger brother of the slain Detective Branch assistant commissioner Robiul Karim, who died at the Holy Artisan Bakery during the terrorist attack on July 1, 2016.

RELEASED, YET NOT RELEASED

At 12:36am yesterday, Shams called a senior colleague at Prothom Alo and said a CID team was about to drop him off in front of the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

His colleagues rushed to the BICC, but could not find him there.

According to a forwarding letter by Ramna police submitted before the court yesterday, police arrested Shams near the BICC around 12:30am.

Contacted, Umme Salma, widow of Shams’ brother, said she did not understand why the CID dropped him off after midnight in a quiet place from where another agency picked him up.

Noab, editors, rights bodies voice worries

FROM PAGE 1

and release of Prothom Alo reporter Shamsuzzaman Shams. We also demand withdrawal of all cases against journalists,” read the statement, signed by Noab President AK Azad.

The Editors’ Council has expressed concern over the filing of the case against the Prothom Alo editor under the DSA and sending of its reporter to jail.

The council in a statement yesterday said they issued another statement on Wednesday demanding scrapping of all cases against journalists filed under the DSA.

“But it was unfortunate that Shamsuzzaman was sent to jail after his bail petition was rejected,” read the press release signed by Editors’ Council President Mahfuz Anam and General Secretary Dewan Hanif Mahmud.

A case was filed against daily Jugantaor Staff Reporter Mahbubul Alam Bablu under the DSA yesterday. “Editors’ Council thinks that filing of cases under the Digital Security Act one after another is a massive blow to the newspaper industry and freedom of expression,” said the release.

The law minister had talked about amending the DSA to prevent its misuse and also promised that the law won’t be used arbitrarily against journalists. But the Editors’ Council is observing with great concern that cases are being filed against journalists under this law even after the assurance, read the statement.

“These activities are clear examples of threat to the freedom of press,” the council said.

ARTICLE 19, an international human rights organisation, has expressed deep concern over the suing of the Prothom Alo editor under the DSA.

Faruq Faisel, regional director of ARTICLE 19 (South Asia), said, “Filing a case against Matiur Rahman under DSA is an example of weaponising law to victimise journalists, communicators and editors. It’s a clear signal of threat and fear to the media actors of the country.”

“This continuation of legal harassment by abusing legal instruments must be stopped as this kind of action is hampering the image of Bangladesh globally as a democratic country,” he said in a press statement.

Different international and local rights organisations yesterday also condemned the arrest of Shams and his production before a Dhaka court 35 hours after his detention.

The Media Freedom Coalition in Bangladesh said it was concerned by the recent reports of violence against and intimidation of journalists.

In a statement issued by 12 member states of the coalition, the MFC in Bangladesh pointed out recent instances, including the detention of journalist Shams, and urged the authorities to investigate the instances impartially.

“We, the undersigned members of the Media Freedom Coalition in Bangladesh, are concerned about recent reports of violence against and intimidation of journalists, including violence directed at reporters covering the Supreme Court elections, an assault on the brother of a London-based journalist for Al Jazeera, the attack on a Dhaka Tribune photojournalist, and the recent reported detention of a Prothom Alo journalist. We urge the authorities to investigate each of these instances promptly and impartially,” the statement said.

The signatories to the statement are Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the US.

The European Union in Bangladesh in a post on their verified Facebook page said, “Arrests of, and criminal proceedings against, journalists in any country warrant particular scrutiny and attention.”

‘CLEARLY AN ACT OF INTIMIDATION’

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has called for the immediate release of journalist Shams, who was arrested early Wednesday after being sued in a case filed under the DSA.

“Make no mistake, the arrest of Shamsuzzaman Shams and the case filed against Matiur Rahman have no legal basis and are clearly an act of intimidation by the government towards all journalists,” says the Paris-based organisation in a statement.

“We demand that the charges filed against them be dropped at once and, with less than a year to go to parliamentary elections, we call on Sheikh Hasina’s government to respect journalistic pluralism and independence, or else these elections will lack all democratic credibility.”

The RSF sent an email yesterday to Additional Inspector General of Police Mohammad Ali Mia, also the head of Criminal Investigation Department, asking on what evidence he based his decision to order Shams’ arrest, read the statement.

The email has so far remained unanswered while Shams has not been allowed to see a lawyer, it added.

Condemning the arrest of the Prothom Alo reporter, Transparency International Bangladesh in a statement demanded immediate and unconditional release of Shams and scrapping of the DSA.

“Shams was produced before the court 30 hours after he was picked up and the fact that he was missing in the meantime is condemnable,” TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said.

The arrest of journalist Shams not only violates his constitutional right to safety as a citizen but also sets a negative example of media control and punishment, the graft watchdog said.

According to law, if a person is legally detained, then s/he must be produced before a court within 24 hours of detention. But the law enforcement agency has clearly failed to do it, said the TIB executive director.

In addition, the case, for which the reporter was taken to the court, was filed more than 20 hours after he was picked up, he added.

If any media publishes a report that goes against the ethics of journalism, any aggrieved parties should address their concerns through the Bangladesh Press Council, said Iftekharuzzaman.

But the direct arrest of a reporter under non-bailable sections of the DSA, without regard for the Press Council, demonstrates the government’s intention to exert control over the media and punish those who express criticism or dissent. It is a violation of the freedom of the media, the TIB statement reads.

Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujon) said “repressive laws” like the DSA act are formulated to curb the freedom of mass media and expression. It also threatens journalists’ professional security.

Rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) in a statement said the act of picking up the Prothom Alo journalist without warrant is “repressive and encourages anti-liberation activities”.

Referring to the law minister’s previous assurance of adopting special caution before accepting cases against journalists under the DSA, the ASK said, “There was no reflection of it in the recent incidents. Rather, the comments of high-ups and responsible persons about the

2 run over by train in Joypurhat

BSS, Joypurhat

Two people were crushed under the wheels of a train in two separate places in the Joypurhat district yesterday.

Santahar Railway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mukter Hossain said a man was crushed under the Barendra Express in the Bagjana Khirarpukur area in Panchbibi upazila of the district last morning.

The victim could not be immediately unidentified, the OC added.

Meanwhile, an elderly woman was crushed under the Barenrade train near Teghor rail gate in Sadar upazila.

She was identified as Durgarani, 70.

Man to die for killing parents in Sylhet

BSS, Sylhet

A Sylhet court yesterday sentenced a man to death for killing his parents in 2020 in the district’s Golapganj upazila.

Senior Sessions Judge Moshir Rahman Chowdhury handed down the verdict to Atik Hossain Khan, 35, from Sunampur village of the Upazila.

According to the prosecution, on March 27 in 2020, Atik hacked his father Abdul Karim Khan and his mother Minara Begum to death over a land dispute.

Following the murder, Atik’s brother Delwar Hossain filed a case with Golapganj Police Station.

Fire breaks out at scrap material shop in Bhatara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out at a scrap material shop in the capital’s Bhatara area last afternoon.

The fire was brought under control around 3:45pm.

Four firefighting units rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control that originated at the tin-shed shop around 3:00pm, said Anisur Rahman, duty officer of the Fire Service and Civil Defence control room.

The cause of the fire could not be known immediately.

There were no reports of casualties.

JALLADKHAHA KILLING FIELD

A haunting reminder of the tragic past

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

It was just a regular water-pump house, but in 1971, the Pakistan army transformed into an embodiment of horror -- a mass killing field, where the officers killed and dumped countless bodies.

The epicentre of this horror are the wells that saw many martyrs' bodies fall into them.

For years, this dark chapter in history remained ignored, and its significance was almost lost into oblivion. It only gained attention in 1999, when several mass graves were discovered in the capital's Mirpur.

To uncover the truth, the Liberation War Museum collaborated with Bangladesh Army and conducted excavation work at the site that year. This later led to the establishment of Jalladkhana Killing Field Memorial in 2007.

During excavation, the remains of numerous victims were found.

KM Nasir Uddin, in-charge of the memorial, shared his memories with The Daily Star.

"Before excavating, we found that a family was still staying at the abandoned pump house. However, they

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This is one of the wells that witnessed the massacre carried out by the Pakistan army and its local collaborators in 1971. The Jalladkhana Killing Field Memorial in the capital's Mirpur sheds light on the crimes committed during the Liberation War, through many of the items displayed at the establishment.

PHOTO: STAR

SEDITION LAW

Lahore HC invalidates Section 124A

Petitions cite govts used it against rivals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Lahore High Court yesterday invalidated Section 124A of the Pakistan Penal Code [sedition law] calling it inconsistent with the country's constitution, reported Pakistan daily Dawn.

Justice Shahid Karim of the High Court invalidated the sedition law while dealing with a batch of petitions seeking to annul Section 124A of the PPC, on the ground that the law was being used by the governments in power against their rivals.

Justice Karim is the same judge who convicted Pakistan's former president General Pervez Musharraf in 2019 and sentenced him to death in absentia in the high treason case for subverting the constitution in 2007.

The petitions challenging Pakistan's sedition law argued that

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SHOE STORES OF WEST DHANMONDI

Where quality meets BUDGET

FEDA AL HOSSAIN

Road 8/A of West Dhanmondi, a bustling area in Dhaka, is an amazing place for those in search of quality shoes at affordable prices, and hence, worthy of paying a visit for your Eid shopping.

The road beside Kears Plaza leads to an area where a large number of shoe shops are found on both sides



process involves selecting the type of shoe, leather, colour, and design, which is then crafted by skilled artisans.

Shoe prices in the area range from Tk 500 for casual sandals to over Tk 5,000 for high-quality leather formal shoes or sneakers. Most stores specialise in leather shoes for both men and women, but some also offer artificial leather or alternative materials.

At a time when many people are struggling with the living cost, finding quality products at a reasonable price has become a top priority. As Eid approaches, these shops can be a boon for those who want to maintain their standard of living without breaking the bank before the festival.

"Let's say you have seen this really fancy pair of leather shoes at an upscale store that is priced around Tk 10,000. If you can show us the photograph of the shoe's design and specify any other modification, we will make that for you within Tk 3,000 to 4,000!" Shonjoy claimed. "We would just need at least seven days to make the shoes for you from scratch."

Every nook and cranny of Dhaka has stories waiting to be told. "My Dhaka" gives interested writers the platform to share experiences of city life. Only selected stories will make it to our print edition and digital platform. Send your Dhaka story (within 450 words) to raffat@thedailystar.net

If you can show us the photograph of the shoe's design and specify any other modification, we will make that for you within Tk 3,000 to 4,000!

SHONJOY, shop employee

of the street. Whether it is for formal occasions, casual outings, or just daily wear, the outlets have a plethora of footwear options.

"There are around 15 shops in this hub," said Shonjoy Robi Das, a sales representative of New Babul Shoe Store. "We have our own factory, and from there, we make shoes with locally sourced leather. Cost of everything has increased, and we aren't immune from this either. But still customers can get good deals here compared to products of different prominent brands, as we try to give people the best value for money."

The unique thing about New Babul Shoe Store and others in that cluster is the fact that they offer custom-made shoes too.

This means customers can get footwear tailored to their specific measurements and preferences. The

PREVENTING DEATH BY DROWNING

Ministry project sees little to no progress

NILIMA JAHAN

To address children's death by drowning, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in February 2022 approved a childcare development and safety project with a budget of Tk 271.82 crore, with an implementation period of January 2022 to December 2024.

The project, titled "Integrated Community Based Center for Child Care, Protection and Swim-Safe Facilities", aimed to set up 8,000 childcare centres for two lakh children under the age of five in 16 districts, initiate parenting sessions through the centres, and introduce 1,600 swimming facilities for 3.6 lakh children between the ages six and 10, in partnership with the high-quality instructional programme "Swim-Safe".

Bangladesh Shishu Academy (BSA) and the ministry received the responsibility to implement the project nationally. But BSA, which works under the ministry, has not yet been able to complete preparatory works, including selecting NGOs for collaboration. Meanwhile, more than one-third of the implementation duration has passed.

Contacted, Tariqul Islam Chowdhury, project manager at BSA, stated that despite receiving approval in February 2022, they received the government order from the ministry in May last year, for which they were unable to commence work.

"We have started our work in July 2022 and expect to commence full-scale operations once the NGOs are selected. The project may receive a total of 18 months to complete all works," he said.

Tariqul also mentioned that the project hired 16 assistant project managers last November to oversee the work of NGOs in 16 districts, and they have undergone a two-day orientation in two batches.

"In mid-February 2023, we hired a procurement specialist to draft the terms of reference for selecting NGOs. This process took time due to advertising in newspapers for the recruitment," he said.

On March 20, a cost-estimation committee was formed to approve the cost for eight packages in 16 districts, and upon its approval, the "expression of interest" will be released in April, he added.

The project received an allocation of

The responsibility of running the centres should be given to village mothers who can divide the work among themselves, as they know their kids best. Appointing salaried employees based on political favouritism is not an ideal solution to this, and is also destructive to our social capital.

GOWHER NAYEEM WAHRA
Disaster management specialist

Tk 10 crore for this fiscal year, and Tk 1.87 crore was spent in the first quarter of 2023.

Asked whether the money would remain unspent at the end of this fiscal, he stated that most of the funds would be disbursed to the selected NGOs by June this year.

According to Mir Masrur Zaman -- director of SoMaSHTE, an organisation that regularly analyses deaths by drowning based on national and local media reports -- said given the current circumstances, meeting the project's deadline seems unlikely.

"Extending the deadline and budget

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Exhibition on 1971 genocide being held at UN headquarters



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time in history, an exhibition displaying images and stories of the 1971 genocide started at the United Nations Headquarters in New York for three days.

The Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN organised the exhibition, titled "Remembering the victims of 1971 genocide in Bangladesh", in collaboration with Liberation War Museum, stated a press release.

The exhibition kicked off on Wednesday, featuring 27 photographs of the 1971 genocide along with a corresponding historical narrative, in commemoration of National Genocide Day on March 25.

Inaugurating the exhibition, Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen said, "It's a historic step in our efforts to garner international recognition of the horrendous genocide that was committed by the occupation army and their collaborators against our people in 1971."

Ambassador Muhammad A Muhith said, "We need more efforts to share the stories of our great Liberation War and the genocide among international audience."

"This will not only help us secure the much-needed recognition of the 1971 genocide but also raise awareness on the need to prevent genocide and other atrocity crimes," Muhith added.

Ambassadors, UN officials, eminent persons from the Bangladeshi community, including the family members of the freedom fighters and the martyrs, were present during the inaugural ceremony. The exhibition will end today.

DHAMRAI RAPE
BMP demands punishment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a statement released yesterday, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) voiced its outrage and concern over the rape and captivity of a female worker at the hands of a top official at Kalampur in Dhamrai, Dhaka.

They demanded the arrest of the criminals, an impartial investigation, and harsh punishment.

The statement mentioned the woman was allegedly held captive by the Gram Unnayan Karma's accounting officer for two days before she was raped.

The area manager supported the rapist, as evidenced by the statement.

Moreover, the organisation leaders stated that violence against women inside and outside

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Journalists and social activists of Savar and Dhamrai yesterday formed a human chain in front of the National Martyrs' Memorial, demanding immediate release of Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams, and withdrawal of cases filed against him and the daily's editor.

PHOTO: STAR

Lahore HC

FROM PAGE 3
the country's constitution gives every citizen the right to freedom of expression, however, the sedition law, a provision of colonial times, punishes speeches against governments with up to imprisonment for life.

The above-mentioned provision is identical to Section 124A of the Bangladesh Penal Code, and cases are often filed under the section against people.

The provision is also identical to Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, which was put in abeyance by the Indian Supreme Court last year (till the union government reconsiders the provision).

In an interim order, the Indian SC had urged the centre and state governments to refrain from registering any FIRs under the said provision while it was under re-consideration.

A bench comprising the Chief Justice of India NV Ramana, Justice Surya Kant and Justice Hima Kohli held that all pending trials, appeals and proceedings with respect to charges framed under Section 124A be kept in abeyance.



These youngsters in Sylhet Sadar upazila's Baurkandi area have found a new activity after the canals and beels filled with rainwater due to the recent rainfall. At different points of the day, they take a dip and enjoy their playtime together. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Having iftar together to beat loneliness

FROM PAGE 5
mosque to have our iftar. They consider us as their special guests."

Seventy-six-year-old Md Abu Tayeb, who has been living there for the last 12 years, said they usually have iftar alone and arrange everything on their own, but sometimes invite others. "We often invite people to iftar. I'm planning to invite some

of my friends within a few days."

"I miss having iftar with my family, but when I have iftar together here with the residents, I feel better," he added.

Mohsin Kabir, manager of Probin Nibash, said although there is a capacity of around 50 persons here, they host 36, as it is difficult to make residents share their rooms.

"A person has to provide Tk 6,000 to be admitted into the facility and Tk 3,000 for meals. However, most residents arrange their meals themselves," he said.

Mohsin said they do not provide iftar items to the residents, as most residents do not fast during Ramadan. "However, many organisations have volunteered to provide iftar

Implement

FROM PAGE 5
people in the country. Nazrana Yasmin Hira, project coordinator at MJF, highlighted the need to implement the treaty so that visually impaired persons can have the freedom to read books without any restrictions.

The speakers stressed the importance of amending the existing copyright law of the country to implement the treaty, which is a copyrighted method that removes barriers to creating published books in printed letters for the visually impaired and reading disabilities in an accessible manner.

Collaboration

FROM PAGE 5
Governance) Policy Entrepreneurs Inc, underscored the need to build solidarity among civil society leaders across South Asia, while Nadishani Perera, executive director of Transparency International Sri Lanka, said it was important for the civil society actors to work together to fight kleptocracy as kleptocrats have a transnational network.

"If we want to outsmart them, we need to work together," she said.

Mustafizur Rahman, distinguished fellow at Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said there are informal networks of corruption that are very much connected.

"There is a value chain of corruption which we will have to break. They may be informal but they are together in reinforcing a corrupt system. This is where non-state actors can come in and tackle the corrupt system," he suggested.

He emphasised learning from each other's experiences as every nation has its kind of economic

resilience.

"Sri Lanka was a leading country in South Asia in terms of per capita income. But we have seen how various policies deteriorated the economy and debt situation of Sri Lanka, leading it to bankruptcy. There are important lessons to be learnt from these," said Mustafizur, citing the example of how Bangladesh's reserves suffered due to the Ukraine-Russia war.

Diana Fernandez, deputy country representative of The Asia Foundation, moderated the webinar.

Ctg court

FROM PAGE 5
Assistant Superintendent of Police Abdus Salam Mia of CID Chattogram, also the investigation officer of the case, placed the final report to the court terming that Diaz died by suicide after being triggered by mental pressure and a failed relationship.

However, Diaz's family declined the claim.

Diaz was found in his flat near the Chittagong University campus on November 20, 2016. His family then filed a murder case against 10 BCL members of its CU unit and a former assistant proctor of the university.

HC verdict on GCC

FROM PAGE 5
On August 23 last year, the HC issued the rule asking officials concerned about the government to explain why the decision of suspending Zahangir should not be declared illegal.

The HC issued the rule following a writ petition filed by Zahangir, challenging the legality of his suspension order.

On November 25, 2021,

he was expelled from Awami League for making derogatory comments about the martyrs of the Liberation War. On the same day, he was suspended from the post of GCC.

Senior lawyers M Yusuf Hossain Humayun and MK Rahman and lawyer Belayet Hossain appeared for Zahangir while lawyer Sanjida Khanam argued for GCC.

Tangail's mass-killing ground to get due recognition

FROM PAGE 5
the army entered Tangail town after breaking the resistance of the freedom fighters at Goran-Satiachara in Mirzapur and built its base camp at Tangail Circuit House.

During the war time, the Pakistan army and their local collaborators used to detain and torture the freedom-seekers at the Circuit House premises almost every day.

Later, they would take them to the adjacent Water Tank area and kill them.

Such killings continued till December 11, the day the district was freed from the Pakistani forces.

"I was taken to the killing ground and made to stand in a line to be shot, but luckily, I survived," said Abul Kalam Azad Bir Bikram, a brave freedom fighter of Kaderia Bahini, who fought during the Liberation War.

"When I was about to be shot, there was a call on the wireless phone. After receiving the call, the warrant officer of the Pakistan army took me to the Circuit House, where I saw several reporters from different international media like Voice of America and BBC," Azad added.

But surprisingly, the

mass-killing ground of the martyrs had been lying in utter negligence for decades, as a silent witness of the brutal killings.

In 1996, the then Tangail district administration first took an initiative to detect the killing ground, and later, a small memorial plaque was constructed there in 2017.

Later on, then district administration constructed a new memorial plaque at the same spot in 2019.

Construction of a Liberation War Memorial Centre was a long-cherished demand of the freedom fighters as well as the local pro-liberation

forces.

As it could not release government funds, the district administration requested SM Nurul Alam Rezvi, chairman of Walton Hi-Tech Industries PCL, to construct the Bangabandhu and Liberation War Memorial Centre in 2020.

Rezvi, who hails from Tangail, gladly accepted the request and started construction work in December the same year.

Rezvi was later given a warm reception by the district administration in November last year.

Tangail Deputy Commissioner (DC) Jasim Uddin Haider said people of Tangail have played a

glorious role during the Liberation War.

The memorial centre is being constructed on government land, adjacent to the mass-killing ground, with the installation of a sculpture of Bangabandhu at its entrance, the DC said.

BMP demands

FROM PAGE 3
home creates obstacles in their careers, free movement and security, leading people to question the law and order situation of the country.

Currently, the victim is undergoing treatment at Padma General Hospital, the statement said.

Ministry project sees

FROM PAGE 3
may be necessary, resulting in a longer implementation period," he said.

Besides, as the project is supposed to receive funds and technical assistance from Bloomberg Philanthropies and Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Masrur expressed concerns about the possibility of development partners withdrawing their support due to this delay. He also said failure to allocate the budget of a government project inevitably influences the budget of the next year.

Masrur also recommended conducting awareness campaigns regarding the issue ahead of monsoon, as the incidents of drowning are more likely to occur during this time of the year.

Mohammad Ruhul Quddus, Bangladesh coordinator for Global Health Advocacy


Incubator, mentioned that despite its significance for the community and the children, the project could not make the expected progress so far.

"While it may be necessary to extend the project's implementation timeline, we are optimistic that expediting the activities would have a positive impact on children's safety," he said.

On the other hand, disaster management specialist Gowher Nayeem Wahra suggested that such projects are not sufficient to reduce drowning deaths, and local governments, especially the promising female ward members, should be engaged in supervising these community daycares.

Citing Kerala's Anganwadi rural childcare centre, Gowher suggested that the responsibility of running the centres should be given to village mothers who can divide the work among themselves, as they know their kids best.

"Appointing salaried employees based on political favouritism is not an ideal solution to this, and is also destructive to our social capital," he said.

**SKS Foundation**
College Road, Uttar Horin Singha, Gaibandha

Tender Notice

SKS Foundation is inviting tender from real supplier/vendor for purchasing goods for Solar Home System of "Expanding Livelihoods and Increasing Resilience to Flooding and River Erosion of 5000 Poor Island Households in Gaibandha District" supported by Andheri-Hilfe Bonn, Germany. Detail Terms and conditions, particulars and quantity will be mentioned in schedule. Schedule will collect from SKS Head Office, College road, Uttar Harin Singha, Gaibandha (Admin Department) from 31/03/2023 to 16/04/2023 (Last time-12:00pm on 16/04/2023). Rate of schedule: 500/- (Not returnable). It is requested to drop schedule in tender box on mention dates and tender will open at 1:00pm on 16/04/2023 in presence of bidder (if anybody present). Authority reserves the right to accept or cancel fully/partially all the schedules without assigning any reasons.

Chairperson-Procurement Committee
SKS Foundation, Gaibandha

CAREER OPPORTUNITY
Petroleum Engineer

East Coast Group, a dynamic & fast-growing organization, is looking for the position of a senior Petroleum Engineer who will work closely with internationally reputed EPCs being engaged by the group to develop its projects in the downstream sector of the Petroleum industry.

Candidates having a track record, experience in refinery, petrochemicals and or similar fields will be given priority. Attractive compensation packages will be offered to deserving application.

Interested candidates may forward the application to:

Salahuddin Ahmed
General Manager
Email: salah.uddin@mobilbd.com

For further queries:
+880258815895

**East Coast Group**


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

**ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়**
কম্পিউটার বিজ্ঞান ও প্রকৌশল বিভাগ

ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কম্পিউটার বিজ্ঞান ও প্রকৌশল বিভাগে পূর্ণকালীন (নিয়মিত) **M.Sc. in Computer Science and Engineering** বিষয়ে ভর্তির জন্য নির্ধারিত যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন শিক্ষার্থীদের নিকট হতে আবেদনপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। আত্মপ্রার্থী শিক্ষার্থীরা আগামী **১৫/০৫/২০২৩** তারিখ রোজ সোমবার এর মধ্যে **msadmission.cse.du.ac.bd** ওয়েবসাইটে সাইনআপ এর মাধ্যমে প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যপূরণ ও ফি জমা প্রদান করে আবেদন করতে পারবে। ভর্তি সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় তথ্য উল্লেখিত ওয়েবসাইটে পাওয়া যাবে।

যোগাযোগ: ০২ ২২৬৬৮৩০২৯, ০১৭২৮৬৩৬৯০৮ (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়)

**Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)**
Plot: E-4/B, Agargaon A/A, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
Phone: 22218331-33 Website: www.pksf.org.bd

e-GP Tender Notice (Goods)

PKSF invites e-Tender in the National e-GP System Portal ([http:// www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of following goods:

Tender ID No	Description	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Closing/Opening Date & Time
807918	Procurement of office equipment (21 nos. Desktop Computer, 8 nos. Laptop, 2 nos. Printer and 1 no. Digital camera) with related accessories	30-03-2023 & 15:00 PM	03-05-2023 & 14:00 PM

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

A.T.M. Hemayet-Ur-Rahman
Deputy General Manager (Admin)

**Padma Oil Company Limited**
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation)
Strand Road, Shadarghat, Chattogram
Ref: 28.22.0000.857.06.121.17/108

**2nd Corrigendum Notice**
FOR
"Engineering Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Jet A-1 Underground Pipeline from Main Installation of Padma Oil Company Limited, Guptakhal, Chattogram to Shah Amanat International Airport, Chattogram, Bangladesh on Turnkey Basis"
Ref. No. 857.06.101.17.007 Date: 09/01/2023

This is for information of all concerned that following amendments of Tender Notice have been made:

Sl. No.	Existing	Amended
14.	Tender last selling date 03/04/2023 upto 01:00pm	Tender last selling date 07/05/2023 upto 01:00pm
15.	Tender closing date and time 04/04/2023 at 02:00pm	Tender closing date and time 08/05/2023 at 02:00pm
16	Tender opening date and time 04/04/2023 at 02:30pm	Tender opening date and time 08/05/2023 at 03:00pm

All other terms and conditions of the tender document shall remain unchanged.

"সবাই মিলে গড়বো দেশ, দুর্নীতি মুক্ত বাংলাদেশ"

Md. Abdus Sobhan
General Manager (Ops & Planning) & Project Director- Jet A-1 Underground Pipeline from MI to SAIA

GD-596

Implement Marrakesh Treaty under Copyright Act

Speakers tell meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday urged the government to implement the Marrakesh Treaty under the Copyright Act as soon as possible.

They made the call at a consultation meeting titled, "Marrakesh Treaty Accession Progress and Way Forward", held at the Auditorium of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in the capital's Agargaon.

The event was organised by the Visually Impaired Peoples Society (VIPS), with the support of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and Sightsavers Bangladesh.

Daud Miah, NDC, registrar of copyrights at Bangladesh Copyrights Office, said Bangladesh signed and ratified the treaty and the work of formulating the copyright law of Bangladesh in line with it is almost final.

Md Jahangir Alam, general secretary of VIPS, described the treaty as a blessing for visually impaired people and emphasised that its effective implementation under the Copyright Act of Bangladesh would ensure the right and freedom to read books for over half a crore visually impaired

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

PRAYER TIMING

Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:45	12:30	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	
8	31		6:18	
9	01	4:29	6:18	
10	02	4:28	6:19	



Even at the age of 60, Beauty Begum, a resident of Jhalakathi district's Bhorotkathi area had been hard at work since 5:00am. She boils rice and sets them out to dry in batches in an open yard, to prepare puffed rice (locally called muri). For her strenuous labour from dawn to dusk, she earns between Tk 12,000 and 15,000 a month. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Tangail's mass-killing ground to get due recognition

Construction of memorial centre nearly complete

MIRZA SHAKIL

The Water Tank area in Tangail town, one of the main mass-killing grounds during the Liberation War in 1971, is finally getting due recognition after over 50 years of the country's independence.

The construction of "Bangabandhu and Liberation War Memorial Centre" in the area has almost come to an end.

Walton Hi-Tech Industries PCL, a private firm based in Tangail, is constructing the four-storey centre, the first of its kind in the district, spending Tk 6.18



Construction work of this four-storey Bangabandhu and Liberation War Memorial Centre at the mass killing ground near the Water Tank area in Tangail town is almost completed.

PHOTO: STAR

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

crore.

Tangail was known as one of the strongest dens of freedom fighters during the Liberation War, and the brave ones of the district made a wonderful contribution to freeing the country from the Pakistani occupational forces.

After the historic speech delivered by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 7 in 1971, Tangail Zila Swadhin Bangla Gono Mukti Parishad was formed, which gradually started organising the local youths.

On April 3, 1971, the Pakistan

HC verdict on GCC mayor's suspension April 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday deferred the verdict on whether Mohammad Zahangir Alam will get back the mayoral post of Gazipur City Corporation (GCC) to April 4.

The HC bench of Justice Zafar Ahmed and Justice Md Bashir Ullah was scheduled yesterday to deliver the judgement on the rule that questioned the legality of the government's action to suspend Zahangir from the GCC mayoral post.

However, the bench deferred the date yesterday after Deputy Attorney General Nawroz MR Chowdhury sought time from the court for submitting an affidavit on behalf of the ministry of local government, rural development and cooperatives opposing the rule before this court.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Collaboration, solidarity and learning crucial

Speakers tell webinar on fighting corruption in S Asia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Solidarity, collaboration and learning from each other are crucial to fight corruption in South Asia, as kleptocrats are globally interconnected, speakers told a webinar.

Civil society leaders stressed the need in the webinar organised by The Asia Foundation in collaboration with the US Department of State's Bureau for South and Central Asia Affairs yesterday.

They also shed light on the obstacles faced by civil society leaders across South Asia, including the wave of disinformation, the rise of populism, red-taped bureaucracy and political violence.

Anurag Acharya, director of Practice (Politics and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Having iftar together to beat loneliness

Residents of old-age home share their Ramadan experience

HELEMUL ALAM

Seventy-five-year-old Hosne Ara, a former government employee, was talking to one of her close relatives in a video call, sitting on a chair at Probin Nibash, an old age home. A box full of chickpeas was kept next to her as the time for iftar approached.

Hosne Ara chose to stay there to deal with her loneliness. She said she doesn't feel comfortable at her flat in Dhaka because no one is there with her. "I'm a widow and I don't have any children to keep me company."

"I came here around seven months back," she said. "I don't always feel good about staying here, but I like it better than being all alone in my flat."

Describing her experience, she added, "I don't have iftar alone in my room, because I love to share it with others. Around seven of us have our iftar here together on Wednesdays."

There's a distinct kind of bond that has developed among the group living there, as they prepare different iftar items and share them amongst each other.

Meanwhile, some residents have found their favourite community elsewhere, while others rely on their friends' company.

Mohammad Golam Rabbani, a retired official of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, said, "I, along with another resident of the old home, go to a nearby

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

ENVIRONMENT AWARD

3 individuals, 2 orgs nominated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment has nominated three individuals and two organisations for National Environment Award-2022 for their contribution in education, awareness-raising, research and technological innovation to conserve the environment.

The awardees were finalised in a meeting of a national committee formed to sort out awardees at the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change yesterday.

Three individuals are Jibananda Roy, sub-assistant agriculture officer of Batiaghata upazila, Khulna; Prof Abu Saleh Mohammad Wadudur Rahman, dean of the Faculty of Arts, Rangpur Begum Rokeya University; and SM Mofizul Islam, senior scientific officer and head of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, Satkhira.

The two institutions are Incepta Pharmaceuticals Limited and Bangladesh Environment and Development Society, Khulna.

BCL LEADER DIAZ MURDER

Ctg court orders further probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A court in Chattogram yesterday ordered Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) to further investigate the murder case of Bangladesh Chhatra League central leader Diaz Irfan Chowdhury.

Senior Judicial Magistrate Awlad Hossain Junaid ordered PBI to have the case investigated by a senior officer, after Diaz's mother Jaheda Amin lodged a non-confidence petition on the final report submitted by Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

"Following the petition, the court passed the order," said Public Prosecutor Advocate Ittefkar Saimul Chowdhury.

After investigating the case for six years, CID, in its final submitted report on February 24, said the murder case of BCL central leader Diaz Irfan Chowdhury has a "factual error".

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Brahmanbaria
Phone: 0851-59632
eebra@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.1213.406.14.259.21.433 Date: 29/03/2023
e-Tenders are invited in e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Brahmanbaria for the procurement of:

S.L. No.	Package No.	Tender ID	Name of the works
1.	24/egp/EE/RHD/ Brahmanbaria/2022-2023	806370	Repairing & SBST work at Ch. 42+367m to Ch. 47+000m of Bhulta- Araihaazar-Bancharampur-Nabinagar-Shibpur-Radhika Road (R-203) under Road Division, Brahmanbaria during the year 2022-2023.
2.	31/egp/EE/RHD/ Brahmanbaria/2022-2023	808096	Strengthening and DBSW Work at Ch. 60+500m to Ch. 61+500m of Cumilla (Mainamati)-Brahmanbaria (Sarail) Road (N-102) under Brahmanbaria Road Division during the year 2022-2023.
3.	32/egp/EE/RHD/ Brahmanbaria/2022-2023	808118	Strengthening and DBSW Work at Ch. 65+500m to Ch. 66+500m of Cumilla (Mainamati)-Brahmanbaria (Sarail) Road (N-102) under Brahmanbaria Road Division during the year 2022-2023.
4.	33egp/EE/RHD/ Brahmanbaria/2022-2023	808124	Strengthening and DBSW Work at Ch. 66+500m to Ch. 67+550m of Cumilla (Mainamati)-Brahmanbaria (Sarail) Road (N-102) under Brahmanbaria Road Division during the year 2022-2023.
5.	34/egp/EE/RHD/ Brahmanbaria/2022-2023	808132	Strengthening and DBSW Work at Ch. 76+000m to Ch. 76+599m and Ch. 82+300m to Ch. 82+682m of Cumilla (Mainamati)-Brahmanbaria (Sarail) Road (N-102) under Brahmanbaria Road Division during the year 2022-2023.
6.	35/egp/EE/RHD/ Brahmanbaria/2022-2023	808140	Strengthening and DBSW Work at Ch. 73+566m to Ch. 74+050m, Ch. 76+870m to Ch. 77+070m Bridge approach and Ch. 84+430m to Ch. 84+800m of Dhaka (Katchpur)-Bhairab-Jagadishpur-Shaistaganj-Sylhet-Tamabil-Jaffong Road (N-2) under Brahmanbaria Road Division during the year 2022-2023.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). e-Tender details can be downloaded from 28/03/2023 to 09/04/2023 & time 16:00 on e-GP System Portal <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd> for pursue. e-Tenders will be accepted only up to 10/04/2023 & time 12:00. Accepted tenders will be opened online immediately after 10/04/2023 & time 12:00.

Mir Nizam Uddin Ahmed
ID No. 602156
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Brahmanbaria

GD-593

Establishment Sheikh Kamal It Training & Incubation Center Project (14Nos)
Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA)
Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Division
ICT Tower, Agargaon, Dhaka.
www.bhtpa.gov.bd

Memo. No. 56.02.0000.032.99.050.23-57 Date: 30.03.2023

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

e-GP Tender ID	Tender/Proposal Document Last selling Date&Time	Tender/Proposal Closing Date&Time
798367	02-May-2023 16:00	03-May-2023 14:00

(Engr. Mohammad Atiqul Islam)
Project Director

30/03/2023

Barishal Govt. Women's College
College Education Development Project (Sub project-1111)
Agarpur Road, Barishal- 8200
Website: <https://bwc.gov.bd>

Memo No. 161/2022-23 Date: 29/03/2023

e-Tender Notice: 02/2022-2023

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of Supply	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	808615	Establishment of Campus Networking for Barishal Govt. Women's College, Barishal	16-Apr-2023 12:00	16-Apr-2023 13:00

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

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks' Branches up to 13-Apr-2023 16:00
Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Principal & IDGM
Barishal Govt. Women's College
Agarpur Road, Barishal
Barishal - 8200
Phone: 0431-64992
e-Mail: bgwcinfo@yahoo.com

GD- 594



Television industry buzzing with EID PROJECTS

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Very soon, Ramadan will end, and it will be time for Eid. This time of the year, artistes who work in TV dramas are mostly busy with shooting. Throughout different parts of the country, shooting is taking place for all the Eid dramas we will eventually see on screen. This is particularly the case for shooting houses in Uttara and Pubail, Gazipur.

The Daily Star ventured out to learn more about the shootings for Eid dramas, that we will see on our screens very soon.

In Pubail, Gazipur, one of the more popular locations is the Hasna Hena shooting house. Almost all throughout the year, shooting is taking place almost every day here. After visiting this house, we learned that the shooting of a seven episode drama is taking place there. The drama in question is being directed by Shakal Ahmed for this upcoming Eid.

Several well-known actors are acting in this drama, which has been written by Brindaban Das and titled, **Wada**. The cast includes Chanchal Chowdhury, Shahnaz Khushi, Masum Bashar, Shirin Alom, Selina Srabanti and others. The drama follows the story of a family.

Mosharraf Karim will also be seen in several dramas this Eid. Shakal Ahmed recently directed a one-hour drama with the actor in Pubail. In this project, Tania Brishty will be acting opposite Mosharraf Karim, while Waliul Haq Rumi will also be playing an important role. The name for the drama

has not been finalised.

Shamim Zaman has also directed another Eid drama featuring Mosharraf Karim. The name of the project is **Gariwala**.

Renowned actor Afzal Hossain has started shooting for a seven-part Eid serial for the upcoming festival. The serial has been titled **Pabnar Bhabna**, and Afzal Hossain will be playing his popular role, Choto Kaku. Afzal Hossain is playing the role of Choto Kaku in the drama, the story for which has been written by Faridur Reza Sagar.

Alongside Afzal Hossain, Masum Bashar, Tariq Anam Khan, Jayanta Chattopadhyay, Wahida Mollick Jolly, Somu Chowdhury and many others will also be acting in **Pabnar Bhabna**.

Deepa Khandakar and Shatabdi Wadud are also shooting for an Eid drama at the Dhanbari Zamindar house in the Tangail district. The shooting has been ongoing at the location for a few days now. The drama is being directed by Masud Chowdhury and the project's name is yet to be finalised.

Speaking about the project, Deepa Khandakar said, "Zamindar house has been chosen for the sake of the story. Shooting at this zamindar's house in Dhanbari has been a strange experience."



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Tariq Anam Khan also shot an Eid drama this week, titled **Pagla Sir**, in Uttara. The project has been directed by Asaduzzaman Asad and it has been written by Arif Khan Shadhin. Tariq Anam Khan will be playing the titular role of 'Pagla Sir'.

Speaking about the drama, Tariq Anam Khan said, "During Eid, we are all a little bit more busy shooting Eid dramas, as there is a large audience for such projects. We all end up working in very different stories and personally I enjoy playing so many different characters."

Chanchal Chowdhury has also finished

shooting a telefilm titled **Haath Safai**. The project has been directed by Tuhin Hossain. The actor has also completed the shooting for a seven-part serial called **Onko Sir**, which will be aired this upcoming Eid.

Chanchal Chowdhury shared his thoughts on his upcoming projects saying, "I always try to ensure the best quality performance whenever I act. Whether it's for a drama, a movie or an OTT project. The number of dramas I have shot so far for Eid have all given me a lot of joy. That is how I want to work."

Arif Khan has also directed a seven-part drama serial for this Eid. A number of stars including Ferdousi Majumder, Dilara Zaman, Dolly Zahur, Afsana Mimi, Sadia Islam Mou and Tahmeena Sultana Mou

have worked on this project. The drama has been written by Faria Hossain.

Speaking about the drama, Sadia Islam Mou said, "For the first time in my career, I worked with Mimi apa. There were many other legends present as well. I will be seen playing the role of a girl who has returned to the country from abroad."

Salahuddin Lavlu always directs several dramas for Eid, every year. This time, he just completed shooting for an Eid drama called **Kak Jochona**. Mamunur Rashid has written the story for the project, and he will also be seen on screen with the likes of Fazlur Rahman Babu and many others.

Speaking about the phenomenon of Eid dramas, Salahuddin Lavlu said, "The highest number of viewers watch dramas during the Eid holidays. Those of us who direct these dramas, keep the audience in mind. So, we try and ensure the project is up to the mark."

Actor Apurba has also shot another drama **Priyo Honeymoon**, for this year's Eid. Keya Payel will be seen opposite the actor, while Saikat Reza has directed the project.

The shooting of another seven-episode Eid drama, directed by Kaiser Ahmed, is ongoing in a village in Manikganj. The drama has been named **Bokulpur Eid Special**. Farzana Chobi, Waliul Haq Rumi and several other actors are also a part of this project.

In this way, artistes of TV dramas are spending a very busy time, shooting Eid dramas for audiences in various locations across Bangladesh, including Pubail, Uttara and Manikganj.

NEWS

51 begin serving

FROM PAGE 12

The ministry, meanwhile, has shared the protocol titled "Institutional Practice Guideline 2023".

According to the guideline, the service will be available from 3:00pm to 6:00pm every day, but the service cannot be closed until all the patients registered in a day are served.

A patient has to pay Tk 500 to get consultation from a professor, Tk 400 from an associate professor or senior consultant, Tk 300 from assistant professor or junior consultant or postgraduate physician, and Tk 200 from MBBS or BDS or equivalent qualified physicians.

A portion of the fees, Tk 25 to Tk 50 will be paid to the supporting staffers while an equal portion will be taken as service charge for hospitals.

In addition to the consultation services, patients will get diagnostics and laboratory, surgical, and procedures like endoscopy, colonoscopy, echocardiogram, etc.

The patient will pay Tk 1,000 for minor surgeries while Tk 1,500 for major ones.

If any patient requires hospital admission, respective physicians will arrange it, according to the protocol.

Each doctor of the hospitals will have to participate in the Institutional Practice twice a week.

No adjustment

FROM PAGE 12

Jahangir in the chair, the function was also addressed by Power Cell Director Mohammad Hossain, Dhaka Power Distribution Company Limited's Managing Director Bikash Dewan and Dhaka Electric Supply Company limited Managing Director Kausar Ameer Ali while FERB executive director Rishan Nasrullah conducted the event.

Responding to a question, Tawfiq Elahi said the government has set up a huge number of power generation plants from an advance thinking of serving the future load in industrial sector.

"We set up the power plants keeping in mind that some 100 economic zones are being established across the country. They will create a huge demand in power supply," he added.

The PM's energy advisor said that the government would not allow open-cut coal mining in order to protect the underground aquifer and also the top soil of the fertile lands that yield huge crops in the country.

It'll run for 2 more

FROM PAGE 12

within December this year.

Siddique said they earned Tk 6.2 crore by transporting 10.77 lakh passengers in the last three months.

During this period, the DMTCL spent Tk 7.33 crore for the operational cost that included electricity, manpower, and other related expenditures, he added.

The official also said the secretariat station currently presented a challenge because the secretariat's boundary wall needed to be moved

US, allies concerned

FROM PAGE 12

Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, 77, is serving 33 years in prison for various offences and dozens of her NLD allies are also in jail or have fled. The NLD had repeatedly ruled out running in the election, for which no date has been set, calling it illegitimate.

"We are seriously concerned that the exclusion of the NLD from the political process will make it even more difficult to improve the situation," Japan's foreign ministry said in a statement.

"Japan strongly urges Myanmar to immediately release NLD officials, including Suu Kyi, and to show a path toward a peaceful resolution of the issue in a manner that includes all parties concerned."

A spokesperson for Myanmar's military could not immediately be reached for comment. Its leader Min Aung Hlaing on Monday urged international critics to get behind his efforts to restore democracy.

A section of lawyers seeks

FROM PAGE 2

newly elected SCBA Secretary Md Abdun Nur Dulal told The Daily Star that a vested quarter has organised the so-called requisition meeting, which is not only illegal but also against the interest, discipline and constitution of the SCBA.

"The quarters have become ridiculous by organising the illegal and unnecessary requisition meeting, which we are not taking into account," he said, adding that SCBA executives were elected in the March 15-16 election through a proper legal

up to 15ft in order for the station to function properly.

He said they received the necessary approval for the work and would start soon.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the country's first metro rail partially on December 28 and the service was opened to public the following day.

At first, metro trains were operated between Uttara and Agargaon without any stoppages. The authorities opened five other stations gradually.

US State Department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel told reporters that the United States "strongly condemns" the decision to abolish 40 political parties.

"Any election without the participation of all stakeholders in Burma would not be and can not be considered free or fair," Patel said, using the Southeast Asian nation's former name.

Britain's foreign office criticised the dissolution of the NLD and other parties as an "assault on the rights and freedoms" of the Myanmar people.

"We condemn the military regime's politically motivated actions and their use of increasingly brutal tactics to sow fear and repress opposition," a foreign office spokesperson said.

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said it was seriously concerned about a further narrowing of political space in Myanmar due to tough election registration requirements.

and constitutional process.

Meanwhile, pro-BNP lawyers yesterday demonstrated on the SCBA premises, demanding a date to be fixed for holding a fresh election to the SCBA under an acceptable election conducting subcommittee.

In an apparent counter move, some pro-AL lawyers held a "peace meeting" in front of the SCBA president's office in protest of "pro-BNP lawyers snatching ballots and vandalising furniture on March 15 on the SCBA premises during the election."

A poor family's cries for justice

FROM PAGE 1

Police then sent the body to Dhaka Medical College mortuary for an autopsy.

After nearly 10 months, police informed Sarkis that the autopsy report had mentioned that her daughter had been raped before her death.

Three cases were filed over the incident between January 29 and November 22 last year, but police neither arrested anyone nor made any headway in the investigation.

The victim's parents have been alleging since her death that she was raped and then killed at her employer's flat.

"It has been a year since my child was raped and killed, but no culprits have been identified and arrested. Only Allah knows when we will see justice," said Iti's father Alamgir Mia, a rickshaw puller.

"To support our poor family, we sent her to work. But she had to suffer this kind of death within a few weeks," he told The Daily Star.

THE CASES

Iti's parents said they went to Rampura Police Station to file a murder case soon after seeing her body at the hospital. But the police registered an unnatural death case instead.

"I sent my daughter to work at the house of Iflat's parents in Dhanmondi. After around 20 days, she came back and stayed for a few days. I had to convince her to return to work. I learnt that she was working in Rampura when I talked to her for the last time," said Sarkis.

"If my daughter had died by suicide, why didn't they call the police and us to their house? I don't believe she killed herself."

On February 23 last year, Iti's father Alamgir filed a case with a Dhaka court accusing Rajin and Iflat of murder.

The court first asked the Criminal Investigation Department to probe the case. After the CID failed to come up with a report in nine months, the court asked the Police Bureau of Investigation to probe it, according to court documents.

PBI Sub-Inspector Nazim Uddin, who is investigating the murder case, told The Daily Star that he has been working on the case.

Meanwhile, the autopsy report was

prepared on October 26 by Towhida Begum, lecturer of forensic medicine at Dhaka Medical College.

It said, "Considering autopsy findings, chemical analysis, histopathological report of viscera, and microbiology and DNA analyses, the cause of death was asphyxia as a result of hanging, which is antemortem and suicidal in nature, but the sign of forceful sexual intercourse was present in the victim's body."

Asked why the report was delayed, Towhida said autopsy reports often get delayed because it takes longer to get the DNA report.

On November 22, around a month after the autopsy report came, Sarkis filed a case with Rampura Police Station over rape and suicide instigation, accusing unnamed individuals.

In the case statement Sarkis wrote her daughter worked in a house where Kamal Uddin Ahmed, his wife Kahinoor Kamal, son Rajin Ahmed, daughter-in-law Iflat Jahan Chowdhury and maid Rokeya live. Their driver, Monzur Alam frequently visits the house.

"I suspect my daughter was raped by a man living or visiting that house," the statement read.

Rampura police then submitted the First Information Report before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

Inspector Golam Mowla, who is investigating the case, has yet to file any report on the probe.

Asked, Golam Mowla said, "We are working on it [case], but we are yet to identify anyone in connection with it."

Sarkis on January 5 wrote a letter to the Inspector General of Police requesting that he order the PBI to probe it.

"I am very poor. I came to you [IGP] as I did not get any help from the police station. To get justice, I want the PBI to probe the case," she wrote in the letter.

A senior PBI official, wishing anonymity, said, "The PBI is now investigating the murder case filed with the court. When a case is filed with the court, there is no scope to arrest anyone unless a probe report is submitted to the court and the court issues an arrest warrant accepting the probe. But without arresting the

suspects, it will be tough to complete the probe.

"Another rape case was also filed with the police station over the same incident following the autopsy report several months after the incident. The cases should be merged for the sake of the investigation. The murder case should be merged with the rape case, and investigation should be done by one agency."

Contacted, Kamal Uddin Ahmed, owner of the flat where Iti worked, said, "Anyone can make a complaint, but there are agencies to investigate the complaint. Police are investigating the incident now. I don't want to say anything. Talk to the police."

"After we found her hanging. We brought her down and sent her to a nearby hospital immediately."

His son Rajin Ahmed said, "It's a pre-judicial matter. I don't want to comment on this. After her death, I heard the girl was forcibly sent to our house."

Govt using DSA

FROM PAGE 12

against journalists, including Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman, under the DSA is a severe blow to the freedom of expression," he observed.

Fakhrul alleged that the government has demonstrated that it wants to bury democracy forever by filing the DSA case against Matiur Rahman, editor of one of the country's leading newspaper.

By suing journalists under the DSA, he said the government wants to send out a message to the country's people that the government's activities cannot be criticised and opinions cannot be expressed freely.

"The Awami League government is continuing its terrible misrule in the country by indiscriminately repressing and suppressing the media, the fourth pillar of the state," the BNP leader said.

Fakhrul claimed the case against Matiur Rahman was undoubtedly filed at the behest of the government.

He also said the country's people and the media were in state of panic due to the killing and repression of journalists across the country.

CHINA-EU TIES

Ukraine ‘determining factor’: EU chief

AFP, Brussels

EU chief Ursula von der Leyen yesterday warned Beijing that its stance on Russia's war in Ukraine would determine Chinese-EU ties but said Europe was not looking to “decouple” from China.

The head of the European Commission will accompany French President Emmanuel Macron to Beijing next week as EU leaders reach out to China's Xi Jinping.

The visit -- and another by Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez starting yesterday -- comes after Xi staged a show of solidarity with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow last week.

“Far from being put off by the atrocious and illegal invasion of Ukraine, President Xi is maintaining his ‘no limits friendship’ with Putin's Russia,” von der Leyen said in a major policy address.

China has tried to position itself as a neutral mediator and pitched what it describes as a plan to help end the fighting.

But it has refused to condemn Moscow's war and there have been warnings from the West against any potential moves to send Russia arms.

Von der Leyen said any “viable” peace plan needed to be on Ukraine's terms and should not consolidate the Kremlin's grip over territories it has seized.

Asia must avoid chaos, conflicts

Warns Chinese premier

AGENCIES

Asia must avoid “chaos and conflicts” or the region's future will be lost, Chinese Premier Li Qiang has said.

Speaking to an international audience of political and business leaders yesterday, Li said China can be an “anchor for world peace” and stability, and will continue undertaking reforms and opening up.

“In this uncertain world, the certainty China offers is an anchor for world peace and development,” Li told the annual Boao Forum for Asia on China's Hainan Island. “This is the case in the past and will remain so in the future.”

Dozens of business leaders, including Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook, HSBC Chief Executive Noel Quinn, and Blackstone founder Stephen Schwarzman, are attending the forum, which comes as China faces heated competition with the United States as well as the task of reviving the world's second-largest economy after nearly three years of isolation under a tough “zero-Covid” policy, reports Al Jazeera online.



Israeli Arabs hold Palestinian flags as they take part in a “Land Day” rally, an annual commemoration of the killing of six Arab citizens by Israeli security forces in 1976 during protests against land confiscations, in Sakhnin, northern Israel yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Ministers, AL leaders keep blasting it

FROM PAGE 1

and interferences have never been an obstruction, and will never be.”

After a meeting with the home minister at the Secretariat, Law Minister Anisul Huq told reporters that the cases, which were filed and are being filed, are not against journalists; these are against wrongdoings.

If there is not enough information given in a case filed under the Digital Security Act and if it does not stand as a prima facie case, then it will be sent to a cell for scrutiny. After verification, a case will be registered.

“But the case that was filed under the Digital Security Act yesterday [Wednesday], if you see the clip of Ekattor Television,

you will get the information under which the case was lodged. In that case, there is no need to send it to the cell for scrutiny,” he added.

In a statement, Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said when the government is trying hard to deal with this financial situation, some identified quarters are hatching conspiracy against the government in an organised way.

“Echoing the voice of a newspaper, [BNP Secretary General] Mirza Fakhrul Alamgir has given unabashed support to a heinous act like child exploitation, which is a manifestation of hatred towards the Awami League,” Quader said.

Addressing a discussion organised by AL-led 14-party alliance, AL Joint General Secretary Mahbub ul Alam Hanif said Prothom Alo has to take the responsibility for the “false report”.

“Because this is not the first time, Prothom Alo has conspired against the Awami League several times,” he said.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said he has heard more cases are being filed over the Prothom Alo report.

“We are so far aware of two or three cases. We heard more cases are being filed ...” he said, replying to a query at the Secretariat.

Meanwhile, Jubo Mohila League, an associate body of the AL, held a rally at

Russell Square, protesting the “conspiracy” of Prothom Alo.

Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams was first sued under the Digital Security Act with Tejgaon Police Station early Wednesday, a couple of hours before he was picked up from his Savar home.

Later, Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiur Rahman, Shams, an unnamed assistant cameraman, and some other unnamed people were sued under the DSA with Ramna Police Station on Wednesday night.

Yesterday, a Dhaka court sent Shams to jail after police showed him arrested in the case filed with Ramna Police Station and produced him before it.

TEMPLE FLOOR COLLAPSE

12 dead after falling into Indore well

NDTV ONLINE

Twelve people have died after more than 30 people fell into a stepwell at an Indore temple yesterday morning. The roof of the well, which housed the shrine, had collapsed due to heavy footfall on the occasion of Ram Navami. Seventeen people have been rescued and many of them hospitalised as rescue work at India's Beleshwar Mahadev temple continues. The incident at Beleshwar Mahadev temple took place amid a rush of devotees on Ram Navami. Visuals from the spot indicate that the floor of the temple caved in owing to heavy footfall, throwing people into the well. The videos showed devotees being brought out using ropes and ladders. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan earlier said all efforts are being made to rescue those who fell into the well.

Family won't file case

FROM PAGE 1

her death.

One of his friends witnessed Sultana being picked up around 10:00am on March 22 and told him.

Montu went to the local police station and the detective branch but failed to trace her until 1:45pm when Sultana's son called.

“A Rab man called Sultana's son using her mobile phone to inform him about her hospitalisation,” he said.

Montu went to see her at the Naogaon hospital with one of Sultana's sisters and her husband, but they left after a while.

After 5:00pm that day, Montu received several calls from a Rab personnel who used Sultana's phone to ask him to visit the hospital again.

“I told the caller that we went to the hospital but we returned home due to bad behaviour of Rab men,” Montu said.

“The caller apologised and insisted we visit the hospital.”

Montu sent Sultana's brother-in-law to the hospital after iftar and on

his arrival, Rab men took Sultana to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

The Naogaon hospital authorities earlier said they referred Sultana to a better hospital at 3:55pm on March 22, but she left the hospital for Rajshahi at 7:00pm.

Around midnight on March 22, Sultana's brother-in-law called Montu to say that Sultana was taken to the ICU of RMCH immediately on arrival.

He told Montu that doctors detected haemorrhages but wanted to observe her for 72 hours before a surgery.

Sultana was put on life support two hours before her death at 10:00am on March 24, Montu said.

He said, “During her treatment, Rab men kept family members [her sisters, a brother, a brother-in-law, and her son] in a hotel in Rajshahi city ... but kept them under watch.”

Sultana was detained based on a verbal complaint of her boss, he said, adding that she was watched over and chased like a criminal.

“It is unjust.”

Bolsonaro returns to Brazil

AFP, Brasilia

Three months after leaving for the United States in the final hours of his term, Brazil's ex-president Jair Bolsonaro returned home yesterday to re-enter politics -- complicating life for his successor and nemesis, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

The far-right ex-army captain, who skipped town two days before Lula's inauguration on January 1, arrived back in Brasilia on a commercial flight from Orlando, Florida.

Scores of supporters waving the Brazilian flag -- one of Bolsonaro's symbols -- were at the airport arrival

area to welcome him, shouting and singing the national anthem, despite authorities' moves to block a planned welcome rally.

“We've been waiting for this moment for a long time. We've been looking forward to it since January 1,” Eva Melgaco, a 46-year-old beautician, told AFP.

However, Bolsonaro left discreetly through another exit. Flashing a thumbs up to TV cameras, he entered a motorcade that headed for the headquarters of his Liberal Party (PL), flanked by police cars. The homecoming is a high-stakes bet for Bolsonaro, who faces legal trouble on various fronts in Brazil.



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Bangladesh Bank
Common Services Department-1
(Equipment Section)
Head Office
Dhaka-1000
Website: www.bb.org.bd

Invitation for Re-Tenders

Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka

1	Ministry/Division	Not applicable		
2	Agency	Not applicable		
3	Procuring entity name	Bangladesh Bank		
4	Procuring entity code	Not used at present		
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka		
6	Invitation for	The Procurement of 55 (Fifty-Five) Pcs. Tablet PC for Bangladesh Bank, Head Office.		
7	Invitation Ref. No.	CSD (EQUIPMENT) 69(6)/2023-117		
8	Date	30/03/2023		

KEY INFORMATION

9	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method		
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FUNDING INFORMATION

10	Budget and source of funds	Own source		
11	Development partners (if applicable)	Not applicable		

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

12	Tender publication date			
13	Tender last selling date	Not applicable		
		Date	Time	
14	Tender closing date and time	13/04/2023	03:00pm	
15	Tender opening date and time	13/04/2023	03:15pm	
16	Name & address of the office(s)	Address: Common Services Department-1, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.		
	-Receiving tender document	BB website and hard copy of Tender Security		
	-Opening tender document	Common Services Department-1, 6th Floor, Annex-2 Building, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.		
17	Pre-tender meeting	Yes		
		Yes	Date	Time
			06/04/2023	11:30am

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

18	Brief eligibility of tenderer	Tenderers having 5 years overall business experience and minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of similar Goods of at least Two (2) contract(s) of similar nature successfully completed within the last Three (3) years.		
19	Brief description of goods or works	Supply, Installation, Commissioning of Fifty-Five (55) Pcs. Tablet PC for Bangladesh Bank, Head Office.		
20	Brief description of Related services	N/A		
21	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)
	1	Laptop	CSD-1	50,000/- (Pay Order only)
				Completion time in weeks/months from the date of contract signing
				8 weeks

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS


22	Name of official inviting tender	Shafayet Arefin		
23	Designation of official inviting tender	Director		
24	Address of official inviting tender	Common Services Department-1, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.		
25	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: 9530148	Fax: 9530441	E-mail: shafayet.arefin@bb.org.bd
26	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.			

DCP: 48/2023-867
Date: 30-03-2023

GD-597

ব্যাহকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়রানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Shafayet Arefin
Director
Phone: 9530148



Institute of Business Administration (IBA-JU)
Jahangirnagar University
Savar, Dhaka

Phone : PABX 02224491045-51, Ext-1448
Fax : 8802 22-4491052
E-mail : director.iba@univ.edu
Website : www.iba-ju.edu.bd

Contract No. IBA-JU/Build/387/1122

Date: 30-03-2023

e-Tender Notice

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

Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of the works/ package	Tender security (Taka in lakh)	Online tender notice publication date	Tender documents last selling date & time	Tender closing date & time	Tender opening date & time
01	808817	Construction of 8-Storeyed Foundation with 2-Storeyed Superstructure (Ground & First Floor) Including Civil with Finishing, Internal & External Plumbing and Internal Electrical Works with other related works for Institute of Business Administration (IBA-JU), Jahangirnagar University, Academic Building at Savar, Dhaka-1342, Bangladesh (Partial).	24.00	30-03-2023	27-04-2023 17:00	30-04-2023 13:00:00	30-04-2023 13:00:00

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

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches.

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

GD-595

Project Director
IBA-JU Academic Building
Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342

Lawfare on the press must stop

Prothom Alo incident exposes deeply upsetting approach to press freedom

We are deeply alarmed by the relentless lawfare (legal warfare) being waged against press freedom and the freedom of speech using various legal instruments. The latest victims of this are a reporter and the editor of *Prothom Alo*, who have been sued under the Digital Security Act (DSA) for “tarnishing the country’s image” using its platforms. The hint, of course, was to the daily’s May 26 publication of a report on the astronomical prices of food using a comment from a day labourer, which has since gone viral. The question is, how does the coverage of poor people’s struggles constitute a crime? This is nothing but an attempt to intimidate journalists and discredit the message so powerfully captured in said comment.

Reportedly, the general secretary of the ruling party called the report “politically motivated”. In all fairness, it is the DSA case that seems politically motivated. The report was done following standard journalistic practices, and *Prothom Alo* was quick to take appropriate action after an apparent inconsistency was pointed out in its social media post. That should have been the end of it. Anyone with the remotest idea of how the news media works would know that the reporter, Samsuzzaman Shams, was innocent of the “crimes” alleged by pro-AL factions. Yet, he was picked up from his house by officers of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). His whereabouts were kept hidden for about 20 hours. And two cases were filed against him before he was finally shown arrested in one and produced before court.

This elaborate charade to harass him reminds us of the legal mumbo jumbo in which another *Prothom Alo* reporter, Rozina Islam, was implicated not long ago. On Thursday afternoon, Shams was denied bail by the court and sent to jail. On Wednesday, a journalist of *Jugantor* was sued under the DSA for reporting on a railway syndicate operating in Chattogram. In mid-March, journalists covering the election of the Supreme Court Bar Association were assaulted by police. The frequency with which journalists are coming under attack, legally or physically, is really alarming.

The DSA, for obvious reasons, has emerged as the most preferred tool of repression of journalists and critical voices, as a review by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) has shown. The judiciary’s role in this regard has also been wanting. We expect the judiciary to stand in favour of journalists especially when they are harassed with trumped-up charges. Unfortunately, just like DSA, the entire legal infrastructure is being instrumentalised today to “chill critical reporting”, undermine press freedom, and encourage a culture of self-censorship. This is no doubt an affront to everything that we stand for as a nation. The question is, how long will the authorities ignore calls to create an environment in which the press can function without any fear of consequences?

Shams doesn’t deserve to be in jail. The *Prothom Alo* editor, Matiur Rahman, doesn’t deserve to have a DSA case filed against him. All such cases do not deserve to be entertained. We hope that the judiciary will stand with the press and take appropriate steps in this regard soon.

A sheer waste of public money

Why were the trauma centres built if they were to be left unused?

It is disappointing to learn about the numerous development projects taken up by the government that ended up *not* serving the public as promised because of lack of necessary research, proper planning, and execution. Although these projects failed to bring desired results, a lot of public money was spent on them. One example of this is the 21 trauma centres that were built in the last 20 years along our highways. According to a recent report by *Prothom Alo*, almost all of these centres remain inoperative as there is neither the manpower nor the equipment required to run them. The question is, why were these centres built then?

Reportedly, among these 21 trauma centres, 16 are currently inoperative, two have only outdoor units, while one is currently being used as the orthopaedic department of a district hospital. These centres were constructed along the highways with the aim to quickly transport and treat the injured in the event of a road crash, so that lives could be saved. But that purpose was defeated by the lack of initiative on the part of our health authorities. After the recent tragic road crash on the Dhaka-Bhanga expressway, we have seen how the injured had to be taken to several upazila health complexes and even to a private hospital near the expressway for treatment. If the nearby trauma centre were functional, the injured could get proper treatment on time. This is really frustrating.

And now, after spending around Tk 140 crore on the construction of these centres, the Director of Health Directorate (Hospitals and Clinics) is telling us that the idea of a trauma centre is not realistic in the context of Bangladesh, and that they are planning to repurpose these unutilised buildings. However, it is not clear why the government can’t put them to proper use by appointing the required manpower – doctors, nurses, pharmacists, technicians, etc. – and handing them proper equipment? Given the extremely high number of road crashes taking place on our highways, these centres can certainly play a great role in treating the injured. We think the government should consider this fact before abandoning these projects.

The fate of these trauma centres again exposes the sheer lack of accountability in our health department. If there was any accountability, such projects could not be taken without doing the necessary feasibility study. If there was any accountability, so much public money could not be wasted on projects doomed to failure. This is just one example of how lack of planning and execution has been plaguing many finished government projects. We have seen many such ill-planned projects undertaken by government institutions, including the railway ministry in the last few years alone. Such practices must stop. Those responsible for these projects must be held to account.

How did Sultana Jasmine die?



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

The medical certificate issued by Rajshahi Medical College Hospital mentions “irreversible cardiorespiratory failure due to intracerebral haemorrhage” as the cause of death of Sultana Jasmine, a union level land employee in Naogaon, who was picked up by a team of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and interrogated about being involved in an extortion scam. It was while in custody that Sultana allegedly “fell ill.” By the time she was taken to a hospital in Naogaon, her brain was already haemorrhaging. After being taken to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, Sultana died from an apparent stroke while in Rab custody. There was an injury mark on the side of her head.

There are many unexplained gaps in the story. The actual Digital Security Act (DSA) case against Sultana was filed 31 hours after she had been taken into custody. How could Rab pick her up without a case being filed against her?

Reportedly, the owner of the building where Sultana, a divorcee, lived with her son, said the house was being watched by a group of unidentified men. When the owner asked them why they were there, they said they were ‘from the government’ and that he or others ‘ought not to disturb their work.’

According to the plaintiff of the case, Enamul Haque, who is joint secretary at the office of Rajshahi divisional commissioner, it was when he came to Naogaon on official business that he came upon a Rab patrol team and told them how his Facebook account had been hacked and used to extort money with false promises of jobs, and that one of the individuals involved was Sultana Jasmine. Was it because of Haque’s position that he could just get Rab to interrogate Sultana without any case filed against her? What kind of interrogation did Rab members conduct that caused Sultana to have a “stroke” (as stated by the doctors) and fall, injuring her head (also stated by the doctors)? Was the bleeding in her brain due to the stroke or the fall, or both?



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

According to a report by this daily, the owner of the building where Sultana, a divorcee, lived with her son, said the house was being watched by a group of unidentified men. When the owner asked them why they were there, they said they were “from the government” and that he or others “ought not to disturb their work.” We can only guess who these “unidentified” men could be and why they persistently watched the house, even trying to enter it, though prevented by the landlord. Three of these men were present at Sultana’s burial on March 24; so were policemen and Rab officials. The antecedents of this death show that it was not just a spur-of-the-moment decision to pick up Sultana. Why, then, was the case not filed before she was picked up?

Even the High Court has questioned under what authority Rab picked up Sultana, as she wasn’t an accused in a case at the time. The High Court bench asked what happened to her between the time of her detention (11:50 am on March 22) and her being taken to the Naogaon hospital (1:15 pm the same day). Rab’s official statement regarding Sultana is that she fell ill while being taken to the police station. But it was almost an hour and a half before she was taken to the hospital.

According to Rab, after detaining Sultana, some of its members were busy printing documents from her phone at a nearby shop for an hour

and a half. Rab has also stated that it conducted “primary interrogation and evidence gathering in (the) presence of the complainant and witnesses.”

It will be hard to establish whether it was a stroke or a wound due to being hit on the head that led to a perfectly healthy woman to be dead within 48 hours of her being picked up. But the fact remains that she

up. Even if we are to believe that she did have a stroke, it only reaffirms how terrifying it is when Rab or any other law enforcement agency picks up a civilian and takes them away. And what about the head wound that was mentioned, which the latest Rab statement seems to deny? “We did not have any information of injury,” states a high official of Rab. Doesn’t this

contradict the statement of the leader of the medical board that conducted the autopsy a day after her death, that Sultana did have an injury to the head apart from the bleeding in her brain?

As civilians, we know that asking these questions will never bring any satisfactory answers. It may even be dangerous. But Sultana’s death only re-emphasises just how helpless we are at the hands of law enforcement members. Does this mean that, at any time, for any reason, anyone can be picked up from their home, office or from the streets, and whisked away in a microbus with no guarantee whatsoever of whether they will ever return to their loved ones? There are still many individuals languishing in jail, arrested under the notorious DSA that seems to have become a weapon of the powerful to “tame” anyone they consider their enemy.

The High Court has shown its integrity by raising the pertinent questions against Rab’s arbitrary acts. A Supreme Court lawyer has filed a public interest litigation, seeking the court’s directive to form a high-power committee to probe Sultana’s death. We can only hope that the court’s proactive intervention will bring to light what really happened to Sultana Jasmine, and if there has been any breach of her human rights, legal action will be taken against the officials involved.

A window of opportunity to phase out fossil fuels

Saber Hossain Chowdhury is a member of parliament in Bangladesh.

Ed Markey is a senator in the United States.

SABER HOSSAIN CHOWDHURY and ED MARKEY

Next week, the UN’s top experts on climate science will release a landmark report on climate change. Already, we are clear on what it will portend: a warming world, an unsure future, and a more severe climate chaos than we are already experiencing across the globe. We’re not yet on track to save ourselves from this dire destiny, which will require us to keep the world from warming more than 1.5 degrees Celsius – the threshold beyond which climate change will trigger the most devastating consequences.

That news will be no surprise for the people we represent: millions of Bangladeshis and US Americans already hit by floods, droughts, and other extreme weather events made worse by climate change.

But there’s a sliver of hope. The latest science says that it’s still narrowly possible to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, but only if we agree to phase out fossil fuels starting right now.

It’s the latest and direst warning that we need to drastically reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. The International Energy Agency

has already said that new oil and gas development needs to stop immediately. The reason is glaringly obvious: burning of coal, oil and gas has been the source of 80 percent of carbon dioxide emissions since the industrial revolution. It drives up the Earth’s temperature and creates a spiralling crisis of extreme weather, rising sea levels, disease, biodiversity loss, water stress and poverty.

The fossil fuel industry continues to put profits first, so we need leaders who will put the people first. That includes having leaders at international financial institutions like the World Bank, who will firmly commit to addressing climate change and to better supporting vulnerable nations – not double down on fossil fuel investments – as well as electing leaders in nations across the globe who will commit to working in concert to address this planetary crisis that knows no borders.

We need strong climate leadership in every hall of power, including in the boardrooms of multilateral development banks. Since the Paris Agreement was signed, the World Bank has continued to invest billions in fossil fuel projects. It has fallen behind on its already meagre climate commitments, which are less ambitious than the baseline targets set by other development banks. International financial institutions have a responsibility to meet the moment by ending fossil fuel funding and stepping up on climate aid to

vulnerable nations.

On the national level, we need heads of state to pick up the pace on talks to end fossil fuels and follow the example of those who are leading the way. Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and the European Parliament have endorsed the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. Colombia says it will ban new

The science is clear: developed nations like the United States are more responsible for emissions, and yet the nations most affected, like Bangladesh, are forced to foot the bill for the devastation wrought on their shores.

oil and gas exploration. Costa Rica and Denmark created the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, a growing cluster of countries driving forward the managed phaseout of oil and gas production.

That list needs to grow. And we need leaders who will uphold the promise made at last year’s COP27 to frontline nations by contributing meaningfully to an international Loss and Damage fund. The science is clear: developed nations like the United States are more responsible for emissions, and yet the nations most affected, like Bangladesh, are forced to foot the bill for the devastation wrought on their shores. We cannot continue to allow

wealthy countries to externalise the damage of their pollution spree.

Fossil fuels are a global addiction, and it will take a global effort to shake them.

As we work simultaneously on domestic efforts – from Bangladesh’s visionary Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan to the United States’ Inflation Reduction Act – we must commit as a global community to phase out fossil fuels. International cooperation, commitments, and treaties work because they provide accountability and set deadlines. A global commitment to phase out fossil fuels would inject urgency and decisiveness into a debate where we have no more time left to lose. It’s why we’re two of hundreds of parliamentarians from across the world who have joined the Parliamentarians Call for a Fossil Fuel Free Future, urging stronger international collaboration to end fossil fuels.

This year, a political opportunity to make that possible is on the horizon. The first Global Stocktake – a convention held by the United Nations to measure the progress of countries and other shareholders in meeting the goals established in the Paris Agreement – is our chance to get a reality check, hit the political reset button and put the world on a path to avoiding the most devastating consequences of climate change.

It’s time to end the cause of this carnage and seize the moment to phase out fossil fuels for good.



VISUAL:
BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

PERSECUTION OF JOURNALISTS

Condemnation isn't enough



BLACK, WHITE AND GREY
Ali Riaz
is distinguished professor of political science at Illinois State University and a non-resident senior fellow of the Atlantic Council. He is currently affiliated with the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute at Gothenburg University in Sweden as a visiting researcher.

ALI RIAZ

The way *Prothom Alo* correspondent Samsuzzaman Shams was picked up from his residence at around 4am on Wednesday by plain-clothed police, and later reported to have been arrested under the Digital Security Act (DSA), demonstrates the deeply disturbing state of freedom of expression in Bangladesh. This was followed up by more disconcerting news that a case has been filed against the editor of the newspaper, Matiur Rahman.

That Samsuzzaman's detention was not acknowledged by police for at least 18 hours after he was picked up is not something unique, but only the latest example of a pattern we have witnessed over the past decade. While police initially claimed no knowledge of his arrest, later Law Minister Anisul Huq and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader told the press that specific complaints had been filed against Samsuzzaman. According to the available information, Samsuzzaman was "arrested" in a case filed by a man named Syed Md Golam Kibria under the DSA with Tejgaon police station in Dhaka. The case against Matiur Rahman was filed under the same law by Abdul Malek, a lawyer of the Supreme Court.

No matter how much the ruling party claims that the large number of media outlets in the country is evidence of freedom of the press, incidents like these are enough to lay bare the real picture. Add to this the government's decision to close down newspapers supported by the opposition party and the cancellation of domain allocation of 191 online news portals based on the information of government intelligence agencies, and one can get a better picture.

The annual freedom of the press index published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in May 2022 shows that Bangladesh has slipped down 10 notches in a single year. Bangladesh was ranked 162nd out of 180 countries in the index, with a score of 36.63 in 2022. There is no reason to think that this year's report, expected to be published in May, will show any sign of improvement. This can be assumed from the fact that a recent human rights report released by the US Department of State highlighted the impediments to freedom of expression and the internet in Bangladesh. According to the report, the media, known to be critical of the government and the Awami League, have been harassed. Advertisements in those media have been cut. For this reason, many media houses have voluntarily avoided criticising the government.

Samsuzzaman's arrest has exposed the intimate relationship between the government and the ruling party supporters, including "journalists," "editors" and "media," who have been running a fierce campaign against him after the publication of a report on Independence Day. They can take

comfort in this arrest as a "success" of their campaign. But they not only jeopardised Samsuzzaman's safety as an individual, but also harmed Bangladesh's image and interests. Ironically, these individuals and media outlets are often concerned about the image of the country. Those who think that the way these supporters are explaining these actions will be acceptable to everyone live in an echo chamber.

The entire saga pertaining to the report in question is well-known. As explained by *Prothom Alo*, a "card" used for social media promotion was posted on Sunday quoting Zakir Hossain, a daily wage labourer, highlighting a news report on *Prothom Alo*'s Facebook page. Although Zakir Hossain's name and quote was used on the card, a picture of a child was attached to it (who was also quoted in the report). As the newspaper understood that the quote of one and a symbolic picture of the other could be misconstrued, it was removed from social media less than 17 minutes after it was posted. Later, the report was revised, and the amendment was mentioned and published online again. Nowhere in the report was it said that the highlighted statement was made by the child. Rather, it has been clearly stated that the quote belongs to Zakir Hossain. There was no factual error in this report. One can at best complain about not-so-ap visual, but that, too, is a stretch as using a symbolic picture with a report is not unusual in the media. Yet, the newspaper considered it an error, admitted the "mistake," and corrected it in a short time.

For more than a decade, legal and extra-legal measures have been employed by the government to muzzle the press. Common citizens have been subjected to harassment even for expressing the slightest dissent. Relatives of journalists have been detained, attacked, and harassed. For this, state agencies are being used in white clothes. Additionally, censorship has been "outsourced" or "franchised" to activists of the ruling party. Both offline and online, these forces are engaged in harassing and attacking people who hold contrarian views. It was well-known that these were perpetrated with the knowledge and consent of the government and the ruling party, but the arrest of Samsuzzaman has made it clear that the government and these activists collude in attacking dissenting voices and creating an environment of fear.

The dwindling state of freedom of expression is only one aspect of the overall political situation in the country. Another aspect of this situation is reflected in the arrest and death of Sultana Jasmine, an office assistant in the Rajshahi land office. She was picked up from the street in broad daylight while on her way to work, without a warrant, let alone a case filed against her. She "died" while in the custody of Rab. Incidents of custodial torture

have now become a normal affair, ignoring the clear directives of the High Court and flouting a law passed in 2013. The detention and "death" of Sultana Jasmine have once again shown the nature of the existing system of governance. They showed that the "verbal complaint" of an official of the government is sufficient to activate a force and act against a citizen. The presence of the said government official during "the interrogation" by Rab defies any logic or prevalent laws. But, there have been repeated attempts to justify the unlawful detention, so-called interrogation, the mysterious presence of an official, and the "sudden death" of an arrestee.

It is also worth noting that the legality of this detention is now being constructed through *post facto* filing of a case under the DSA. Needless to mention that the law, since its introduction in October 2018, has been criticised by human rights activists at home and abroad. I have demonstrated with data of 47 months, gathered under a project of the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) (January 2023), that the law is nothing short of a tool of persecution. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said on March 7 that under the DSA, "criminal sentences continue to be handed down against those exercising their rights to free expression and belief." The law has provided state agencies with the power to pick up anyone from the street, as was the case of Sultana Jasmine.

The incidents of being picked up by plain-clothed state actors, denied freedom of expression, being tortured, and dying in custody are essentially no different from the incidents of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. These are now commonplace because the country is being governed by imparting fear. Coercion and intimidation are at the heart of the system of governance. The 2023 annual report of the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), one of the world's leading research institutes on democracy, has once again called Bangladesh an "electoral autocracy." In each of the indicators used by V-Dem to measure the state of democracy in a country, the situation in Bangladesh has worsened in 2022 from the previous year. Another research organisation, The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), has been classifying Bangladesh as an autocracy for quite a few years. This kind of rule survives through the denial of the right to freedom of expression, assembly, and voting.

It is our moral duty to condemn the arrest of Samsuzzaman Shams and demand his immediate release. In an equal measure, we must condemn the case against Matiur Rahman. However, we must also remember that there is no alternative to repealing the law under which Samsuzzaman and many others have been detained over the past years. It also needs to be clearly stated that his release and even the withdrawal of the case against him are not enough. Until voices are raised against the prevalent system of governance, unless the unaccountable system of governance which rests on force and repression is challenged, incidents like these will be repeated.

On belonging

Yvonne Gavan
is a journalist, editor and podcaster, currently based in Bangladesh.

YVONNE GAVAN

There's something about moving – whether it's to a new town or a new continent – that always makes me seek out the familiar. And although I don't always notice when I'm doing it – or feeling it – this morning, when it starts to rain in Dhaka for the first time in months, wonderful light, clean rain, I find myself standing on the balcony, breathing in the scent of damp leaves and being transported back to the straggly meadows near where I grew up in England that seemed to shimmer after the rain, revelling in their bright green ness. I remember the fields so clearly that I can almost taste the tinny wet-earth smell and feel the slippery mud that squelched under my shoes. For an instant it's as though I'm there again, back in a place where I felt like I belonged.

Yet I wonder about belonging. Where its joy and relief live in my body. And whether it's also responsible for the moments of loneliness I've struggled with over the years – moments of disconnection and isolation tinged with sadness.

The first time I left London to live overseas with my young family was when we moved to the Caribbean with my husband's job. Everyone back home thought we'd won the relocation lottery and would repeatedly tell me how envious they were of the fact that I got to live next to white sandy beaches and take the kids to paddle in the clear, warm, turquoise sea after school.

Barbados was, and is, a stunningly beautiful island. Yet I struggled with homesickness. I missed my mum, my sisters and my friends – people who made me feel grounded, supported. I wasn't used to seeking out the familiar and became disconnected from myself, struggling to find a way back.

There was also a heaviness to the place. A dark atmosphere that felt particularly strong when I drove through the interior of the island, along narrow roads that cut through winding fields of sugar cane to the east coast, and

stood on the shore looking out over the Atlantic. I later learned that's where the slave ships used to come in, ships that contained people chained together for weeks in horizontal rows, packed in layers like dead fish – many of whom were dead by the time the boat landed.

The survivors are the – relatively close – ancestors of those who now belong to the island, its soft sea breezes and rangy coconut trees, its legacy of derelict cane factories and its dark history. Despite this deeply traumatic beginning, people who call themselves Barbadian today have accepted the land as theirs. And in a sort of enforced yet tender adoption, they, like many of the world's displaced people, have found themselves in the land, a home. And after four confusing,

I wonder about this when I find myself moving through Gulshan one day on a rickshaw. I pass a tea stall, noticing how tired and relieved some of the men gathered on the pavement look, how I've seen that look on faces so many times before, and I watch as a battered bus slows down and a frail old man starts to get off and nearly falls to the ground before a crowd of people rush over to help him. Then there is a dog lying asleep in the road near my building, unflinching, completely relaxed as the cars and rickshaws veer around her. As the evening call to prayer begins, a plaintive song that reminds me where I am, over and over again, I notice how witnessing these interactions makes me feel connected, safe. And I remember that everything changes when I see that we all

I stopped in my tracks when I saw that, among the sea of emerald shrubs, was a bright purple bush that looked so out of place I wondered if it had been spray painted as a joke. As I stood there gazing at it in all its purple glory, I realised this plant made everything else even more beautiful just by being there.



FILE PHOTO: SHAHARIAR TAKEE AFFINDI

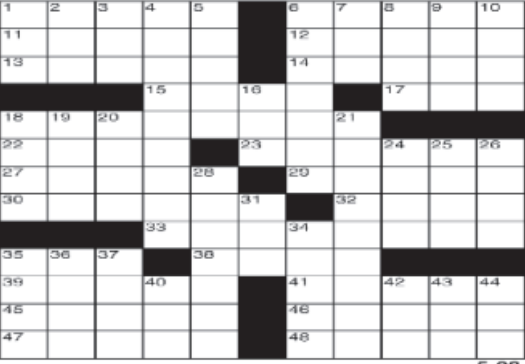
CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Half of a '60s rock group
6 Neck wrap
11 Even a little
12 Comic's forte
13 Release
14 Dwelling
15 Foreboding sign
17 Notice
18 Endorsement island
22 Indonesian
23 Battery ends
27 Pecks and pounds
29 Athlete's optimal effort
30 Giggling sound
32 – mater
33 With 35-Across, May

celebration
35 See 33-Across
38 Spelling on TV
39 Make ashamed
41 Book of maps
45 Skirmish
46 Use your head
47 Hearty dishes
48 Unoccupied

18 Border on
19 Glass section
20 Ballet bend
21 Slide rule quantity
24 Surrealist
25 Jane Austen novel
26 Barking beast
28 Is furious
31 Angsty rock
34 Make speeches
35 Reservoir makers
36 Assist in crime
37 New Haven school
40 Stitch
42 Sassy talk
43 Termite's kin
44 Kite site

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WEDNESDAY'S ANSWERS

C	H	A	S	M		A	C	T	U	P
H	A	G	U	E		F	I	O	N	A
A	L	A	R	M		T	A	P	E	R
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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

All You Need to Know about
Fire Safety Regulations
in Bangladesh

To prevent a spate of fatal fires, it is crucial to establish an effective authority for monitoring systems and collaboration at the local level, as it would not be feasible to control the fire concerns otherwise.

NOOR AFROSE

In the wake of two recent fire explosions in Narayanganj and Mogbazar, a surge of deadly fires has plagued the country with daily reports of fire explosions. From the Gulistan building explosion to the blasts at Science Lab and at Sitakundu, the country has witnessed a spate of deadly fires that have caused fear and anxiety among the people. With each new fire-related fatality, the public has grown increasingly alarmed and concerned about compliance with fire safety regulations. Considering this, this piece aims to illuminate the present legislative framework for fire safety and the reasons for non-compliance.

The first law worth noting in this context is the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC), 2020. This law has been subject to several amendments due to the past fire-related experiences. Part 4 of the Code covers the requirements for fire prevention. It specifies the general conditions of fire protection (Chapter 1), precautionary requirements (Chapter 2), provisions for exit (Chapter 3), and requirements necessary to minimise danger to life from fire, smoke, fumes, and so forth. Some of the vital fire safety provisions of the Code include:

- (a) Fire-resistant construction: The Code mandates that all buildings must be constructed with fire-resistant materials that can withstand the spread of fire (Part III);
- (b) Fire detection and alarm systems: The Code requires that buildings be equipped with fire detection and alarm systems that can detect smoke, heat, and fire and alert occupants in case of a fire (Part IV, Chapter 5);
- (c) Means of escape: The Code requires buildings to have multiple means of escape, such as staircases, corridors, and exits, to

enable occupants to evacuate quickly in case of a fire (Part IV, Chapter 3);

(d) Firefighting equipment: The Code mandates that buildings must be equipped with firefighting equipment such as fire extinguishers, fire hoses, and sprinkler systems to help control and extinguish fires (Part IV, Chapter 4);

(e) Smoke management systems: The Code requires buildings to have smoke management systems such as smoke vents, exhaust fans, and pressurisation systems to control the spread of smoke in case of a fire (Part IV, Chapter 3); and

(f) Fire drills and training: The Code mandates that building owners and occupants must conduct regular fire drills and training sessions to ensure that everyone is prepared to evacuate safely in case of a fire (Part 4, Chapter 1, Appendix B).

Then come the Fire Prevention and Extinguishing Act, 2003 and the Fire Prevention and Extinction Rules, 2014. Section 7 of the Act requires the approval of the Directorate General of Fire Service and Civil Defence for any structural design or layout of a multi-storied commercial building. Rule 22 of the 2014 Rules supplements the Act by requiring an occupancy certificate to ensure building compliance with safety requirements.

So, the question arises as to why there are still so many explosions despite the presence of such comprehensive laws. First, there is a lack of accountability due to the absence of an implementing authority. As per paragraph 12 of chapter 2 of part II of the Code, an authority has to be established who will work towards implementing the revised National Building Code, 2020. In the same chapter, it also mentions that there will be an office of building officials who will operate at the local levels. Unfortunately, such authorities

are yet to have been formed even after two years of adopting the Code. Secondly, experts have opined that certain National Building Code modifications have rendered the Code more vulnerable. In this context, high-rise buildings with more than 10 floors are exempt from specific safety standards, including firefighting pump houses.

Furthermore, owners' non-compliance of the rules becomes one of the most significant obstacles to enforcing these regulations. The preliminary finding of the February Gulshan fire incident revealed that the 13-storied building was built without a proper fire safety plan, according to the standards laid out in the Act. Also, deliberate neglect on the owner's part regarding fire extinguishers, emergency exits, and other safety measures is rampant and causes the death of many people. Finally, the BNBC recommends fire drills quarterly, once, or twice a year, depending on the building type, to quickly escape a structure in the event of a fire. However, such a drill never happens, not even once.

Last year, the fire service officials in Dhaka evaluated 1,162 buildings and labelled 136 of them, as "extremely risky" and 499 as "risky" (*The Dhaka Tribune*, 9 March 2023), which is a cause for major concern. To prevent a spate of fatal fires, it is crucial to establish an effective authority for monitoring systems and collaboration at the local level, as it would not be feasible to control the fire concerns otherwise. Hence, a holistic method must be taken. Lastly, the public in general need to be made aware of the issue and taught the basics of firefighting regularly.

The Writer is an Official Contributor, Law Desk, The Daily Star.

RIGHTS WATCH

Compensatory provisions for road accident victims

MD. NAFIS ANOWAR SANTO

Compensation to victims of road accidents has been a public demand. The Road Transport Rules, 2022 issued pursuant to the Road Transport Act, 2018 provides some clarity in this regard.

Chapter 8 of the 2022 Rules has elaborately discussed the provisions regarding compensation and treatment to road accident victims and also the insurance of motor vehicles.

According to rule 142, a financial assistance fund will be formed for road accident victims under a trustee board. As per rule 143, the owner of a bus, truck, and prime mover truck will pay Tk 1,500 a year for the fund, while the fee is Tk 750 for a minibus, minitruck and pickup.

Moreover, the 2022 Rules has also mentioned how much money the other vehicles' owners must pay to the compensation fund regulated by the trustee board. On the other hand, if any vehicle owner fails to pay the fee on time, he will have to pay a fine of Tk 50 for each month of delay.

Rules 144 and 145 have discussed the trustee board's duties and liabilities. The board will investigate and dispose of any complaint or grievance of the victims or the heirs of the deceased. Again, rules 146-148 have tried to analyse the administrative and procedural functions of the board.

As far as the amount of compensation is concerned, rule 149 has set up the minimum compensation for road accident victims.

If someone dies in a road accident, the one-time compensation will be at least Tk 500,000, and victims who lose a limb or suffer other life-changing injuries will receive financial assistance of at least Tk 300,000 each. Further, a victim likely to recover from injuries and return to normal life will get at least Tk 100,000. It is important to note that the trustee board can reduce or increase this amount of compensation with the government's prior approval.

Rule 150 has elaborated the procedure for disbursement of financial assistance, inquiry, application approval, and disbursement period. According to this rule, an application should be made in the prescribed form to the chairman of the trustee board within 30 days of the occurrence of the accident. The chairman of the board will form a probe committee within 10 days of receiving the application, and the committee will submit a report on the damages within 30 days of formation. Then the board will take measures to compensate the victim or the heirs of the deceased within 30 working days of receiving the report.

In case of disagreement with the original order, rule 152 has provided the scope for filing a review, and further, an appeal petition by an aggrieved person against the board's decision.

Next, if the decision of the appellate authority aggrieves any person, rule 153 has conferred upon him another opportunity to apply before an arbitrator, who will resolve the issue within 30 working days.

These legal provisions shall enlighten a road accident victim or the heirs of the deceased to secure payment of compensation.

The Writer is a Student of Law, University of Dhaka.



YOUR ADVOCATE

What to do when a domestic worker is a
victim of physical torture

This week Your Advocate is **Barrister Omar Khan Joy**, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh. He is the head of the chambers of a renowned law firm, namely, 'Legal Counsel', which has expertise mainly in commercial law, family law, labour law, land law, constitutional law, criminal law, and IPR.

Query:

I am a 30-year-old housewife in Khulna. A few days ago, an 11-year-old girl who works as a house-help at one of my neighbour's houses, told me about the physical tortures that have been inflicted on her. She is apparently physically beaten, and I have also seen physical marks on her body. Is there any way I can help her legally?

Sharmila, Khulna

Response:

Thank you very much for your query. I highly appreciate the fact that you have chosen to raise your voice against the abuse of a vulnerable domestic worker.

Although the Bangladesh Labour Act,



2006 largely regulates matters related to employment, the Act, unfortunately, does not include any provision in relation to domestic workers. As a result, domestic workers are often exploited, made to work

for excessive hours, subjected to verbal and physical abuse, and so on. However, Bangladesh is not the only country without a uniform law to protect domestic workers. In 2013, the International Labour

Organization (ILO) found in a study that only 10% of domestic workers worldwide receive protection under the general labour laws.

Upon realising the urgency of introducing a law to protect the rights of domestic workers, the government has adopted 'The Domestic Workers' Safety and Welfare Policy' in 2015. Unlike an Act of Parliament, a policy is not binding on the citizens, which means that the citizens are not obliged to follow the policy. This means one will not be punished if he/she fails to abide by a national policy. However, it is, of course, my recommendation that everyone follows the Policy as a guideline until an Act is passed for domestic workers.

The 2015 Policy recognises the jobs of domestic workers as 'labour', which ensures the protection of their rights. Moreover, it necessitates the welfare, entertainment, leisure, leaves, and congenial and decent working environment of domestic workers. As per the 2015 Policy, the minimum age of a domestic worker is 14 years, and the

worker can only engage in light work until he/she turns 18. Any indecent behaviour, physical, sexual or mental torture, is strictly prohibited.

Alternatively, a criminal case can be filed against the perpetrators under the Penal Code, 1860. They may be fined and/or imprisoned for up to 7 (seven) years, depending on the seriousness of the harm done to the domestic worker. Furthermore, the Prevention of Offences Against Women and Children Act, 2000 (Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman Ain, 2000) protects all oppressed children.

If you are unwilling to file a case, you can talk to your neighbour and inform them that their activities are considered to be criminal activities (offences) and request them to refrain from repeating any such activities. If the situation persists, you may inform any NGO, such as Ain O Salish Kendro (ASK), BLAST, etc. working with children's rights and it is very likely that they will take up the matter for further action.

‘We buried dreams of our children’

REUTERS, Jakarta

Indonesian players and fans were dismayed on Thursday after the country was dropped as host of the Under-20 soccer World Cup following outrage among politicians in the predominantly Muslim nation about Israel's participation.

FIFA made the call after Indonesia's football federation (PSSI) said it had cancelled the draw for the tournament because the governor of Bali refused to host Israel's team.

One Indonesian national team player blamed politicians.

"We sacrificed our time, thoughts, sweat and even blood. But it suddenly failed due to your political reasons," striker Rabbani Tasnim Siddiq said on Instagram.

Another player, Hokky Caraka, said he had lost the chance to fulfil a "life goal to make my parents proud, scoring goals in the U-20 World Cup".

The stripping of the hosting rights also means Indonesia loses its automatic berth in the tournament.

"We have buried the dreams of our own children," coach Nova Arianto said.

Neymar goes ‘from a million to zero’

AGENCIES

Neymar could not get rid of his misfortunes even off the pitch as the Paris Saint Germain forward's Twitter account was hacked and he suffered a big loss while playing poker.

The Brazilian forward is out for the season due to his ankle surgery in March, and is using some of his free time to indulge in his passion for poker.

Neymar often tries his luck in online games on his Twitch platform. In doing so on this occasion, he threw away a staggering amount of money. Not that the Brazil international seemed to care.

According to reports from Brazilian outlet Globo Esporte, he lost 1 million in just an hour, causing him to fake cry and scream while a mock Titanic theme played in the background.

In a couple of seconds we saw a range of mock emotions as his crying turned into laughter.

One of his fellow players commented that he went "from a million to zero in 60 minutes", and Neymar responded by jokingly saying he would put it on YouTube.

Neymar also saw his Twitter account hacked on the same night he suffered the big loss. Among the messages was a directed profanity towards a Brazilian news outlet, which is uncharacteristic of the usually calm and collected footballer.



“When my pattern of play is aggressive, I would also want my partner to play the same way. It makes things easier for both of us. You wouldn’t know how [easily] runs are being scored when batting with Liton [Das]”

Rony Talukdar on Thursday credited his fellow Bangladesh opener Liton Das' aggressive approach for the Tigers' recent success at the top of the order in T20Is.

Tigers look to maintain intensity in final T20I

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan had already given the cue that there may be changes in the line-up for the third and final T20I against Ireland, but what he would not want to see change is the hunger and drive from his players. If that intensity is carried forward, more records may tumble in the third T20I today.

It has been evident that the Tigers have had the mental edge against Ireland this series, having successfully shown aggression in all three departments. The Irish were the only side to beat England in the T20I World Cup last year, so a lack of intensity will allow the visitors to gain a foothold ahead of the away series in England in May.

"If we go to Australia or England and they are 2-0 up, they will look to go 3-0. We will not be complacent. Maybe we'll try new guys, but they will be just as hungry to score runs or get wickets," Shakib had said after the series-clinching second T20I.

The Tigers are undergoing a purple patch in T20Is, which includes a historic 3-0 whitewash of England in their previous series, and Shakib would not like to see that slip in the final T20I.

The pace attack has been tremendous in the last few series and only a bit of tinkering might be possible. It may be likely that Shoriful Islam gets into the side considering the need to manage Taskin Ahmed's workload.

The bigger question is whether the Tigers will play leg-spinner Rishad Hossain to reinvigorate the outlook of the side for the future.

When it comes to leg spin, Bangladesh have been afraid for a while. In domestic games, leg-spinners are not the attacking options that they are usually intended to be. Without performances to back him up, Rishad will have to make way as well. But from the team's perspective, a leg spinner playing without fear is the priority.

The opening slots have been promising in the recent two series. Rony Talukdar has been able to reciprocate the management's faith by showing that he can come out and attack during the Powerplay. Like Rony, others have been given the licence to play without the fear of being dropped.

"We play to the plan which the team management gives us.



The basic plan is to stay positive and show that intent. The team management is trying to emphasise one thing in the dressing room and that is being able to play fearless cricket. That's our main task," Rony said yesterday.

The openers have been able to find a similar groove in their approach this series and open possibilities with lofty Powerplay ambitions. For Rony, their aggression was not founded on swinging their bats at anything that comes their way.

"We talk a lot and try to play according to the merit of the ball and focus on playing proper cricketing shots. If you can rotate the strike with positive intent, there is more chance that the innings will be big," he said.

The batting order has found more flexibility as well. Shakib promoted himself up the order in the last match and such changes could be the norm.

"We make our plans match by match. The plans aren't made for how to play series against England or series against Ireland. If we could go in a similar vein, it will work for us in the future. As a team, the team management wants to boost the idea of playing aggressively," he said about the constant urge to go forward.

Alfaz laments lack of spirit

SPORTS REPORTER

Except for suspended Sri Lanka, all subcontinent nations grabbed the opportunity to play international friendlies in the FIFA window in March to assess their performances ahead of the upcoming SAFF Championship, slated for June 23 to July 3 in India.

Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Bhutan had played a maximum of two matches apiece. 106-ranked India predictably registered wins against two strong sides in Myanmar and Kyrgyzstan while Nepal defeated Laos before being held by Bhutan. Elsewhere, Maldives beat Pakistan in the two side's only match in the FIFA window.

Meanwhile, hosts Bangladesh beat Seychelles first up 1-0 before a dismal performance allowed the visitors to bounce back with a victory by an identical margin in Sylhet.

The defeat to Seychelles had triggered scrutiny towards the Bangladesh booters. Their latest performance remained subpar despite having prepared for nearly two weeks in Saudi Arabia, where they played two practice matches, before facing the East African nation, comprising a majority of amateur players who can only afford to focus on the sport on weekends.

Bangladesh legend Alfaz Ahmed lamented the approach of the players for having lacked "mentality" and "commitment", and the former



national striker specifically criticised the tactics of head coach Javier Cabrera.

"I will blame everyone, including the coach, for the defeat in the second match but we have to accept the defeat because such upset happens in football," said Alfaz, who is also the head coach of Mohammedan Sporting Club.

Alfaz was baffled by the defensive formation from the onset and he thinks the subsequent substitutions were odd enough for Cabrera to be "held accountable" for game plan.

"What did he [Cabrera] want to execute in the second match? The coach should be asked why he sent Jamal Bhuiyan in the second half after choosing two defensive midfielders in the starting eleven.

"I think the team went on the back foot after Robitul was substituted by Jamal. Two wings also did not work effectively despite sending Mohammedan Ibrahim, who was instrumental in the couple of previous matches by scoring goals.

"Before playing the second match, the players got an idea about the opponents. They should play attacking football on the back of the first match win but they played with two defensive midfielders, leaving Suman Reza as the lone forward in th attacking third," opined Alfaz.

He remains unwilling to bank on Cabrera's charges to go the distance at the upcoming regional extravaganza. "Seychelles may be ahead of Bangladesh in terms of physicality, but ... if we put such a poor display on the back of good preparation, then we don't see any hope for this team. There was no spirit among the boys," said Alfaz, adding if Bangladesh can grow as a team in remaining weeks, there could be a possibility to go beyond the group stage of the SAFF Championship.



Skippers of nine Indian Premier League (IPL) outfits, barring Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma, pose with the trophy in Ahmedabad on Thursday ahead of the highly anticipated 16th edition of the money-spinning league. Rohit's absence, however, has sparked some hilarious banter between Mumbai Indians and their rival fans on social media.

PHOTO: BCCI

Back to familiar format, IPL begins today

REUTERS, Bengaluru

Gujarat Titans begin the defence of their Indian Premier League (IPL) title against four-times champions Chennai Super Kings on Friday as the Twenty20 tournament returns to its traditional home-and-away format after a gap of four years.

The 2020 edition of the money-spinning league and the second half of the 2021 tournament took place in the United Arab Emirates as India battled the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last year's expanded 10-team event was held mostly in Mumbai and Pune. This time the IPL is also set to see three Bangladesh players feature -- Shakib Al Hasan and Liton Das for Kolkata Knight Riders and Mustafizur Rahman for Delhi Capitals. This is the highest participation in the money-spinning from Bangladesh. However, Liton and Shakib might miss a few games for KKR as the duo are yet to be released by the cricket board of Bangladesh, who are scheduled to play a one-off Test against Ireland from April 4.

Ahmedabad side Gujarat, one of the two expansion teams along with Lucknow, capped a fairytale debut season by defeating inaugural champions Rajasthan Royals in front of around 100,000 fans in the final at home.

Hardik Pandya's side are the bookmakers' favourites to retain the

trophy but five-times champions Mumbai Indians -- the most successful IPL outfit -- and Chennai will aim to reclaim the crown in the 16th edition of the event.

Home support could play a major role and Chennai's fans served up a reminder of what teams have missed with a thunderous round of applause for Mahendra Singh Dhoni during a recent practice session amid media speculation it could be his last IPL.

While a return to familiar settings will be a welcome boost for teams, they will need to quickly master the new rule that adds another strategic dimension to the game.

For the first time IPL sides will be allowed to make a tactical substitution with an "Impact Player" coming in to bat or bowl as needed.

Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting said the move would also negate the need for all-rounders.

With one eye on that tournament, India captain Rohit Sharma has suggested his national team players should consider skipping some IPL games to manage their workload.

Top Indian players Rishabh Pant (Delhi), Jasprit Bumrah (Mumbai) and Shreyas Iyer (Kolkata Knight Riders) are missing the IPL this year due to injury, while England batsman Jonny Bairstow (Punjab) is still recovering from surgery.





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ENERGY PRICES

No adjustment until global market stable

Says PM's energy adviser

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister's Energy Adviser Dr Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury has said though the prices of petroleum and gas are declining in the international market, the government would not go for downward adjustment in power and gas tariffs until a stable situation is created.

He made the remarks while unveiling a publication titled Empowering Bangladesh by Forum for Energy Reporters Bangladesh (FERB) at DPDC Conference Room in Biduyt Bhaban in the city yesterday.

"It's not clear how long such a declining trend in fuel prices will continue. But if a stable situation comes only then the government would think of downward adjustment," he told reporters.

He, however, said the government has been overcoming the dollar crisis as export earnings and inflow of remittances are increasing.

"The inflow of remittances shows a positive trend while exports are rising," he added.

With FERB president Shamim

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



With excavators, the BIWTA is dredging the Turag river in the capital's Gabtoli to improve navigability. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

METRO RAIL

It'll run for 2 more hrs from April 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The metro rail will operate from 8:00am to 2:00pm starting April 5 as the authority has decided to increase operation time and begin full-fledged operation in July.

Currently, the metro rail services are available from 8:30am to 12:30pm.

MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd, revealed this information at a press conference at the DMTCL office in the capital yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Uttara South and Shewrapara stations will be open to the public from today, the managing director added.

He also said the performance test on the viaduct from Agargaon to Motijheel will start in July and they were hopeful about meeting their target to start operation of this section of the MRT Line 6

Govt using DSA to gag the media

Alleges Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

Voicing deep concern over journalists getting sued one after another, including Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman, under the Digital Security Act, BNP yesterday said the government was carrying out extreme repression using the "black law" to gag media.

In a statement, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam demanded the immediate repeal of the DSA and the withdrawal of all cases filed against journalists.

After law enforcers picked up Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams early Wednesday, Fakhrul said a DSA case was filed against the editor of the newspaper, Matiur Rahman.

Besides, he said a Jubo League leader filed another DSA case against Daily Jugantor's Special Correspondent and former general secretary of Crime Reporters' Association Mahbub Alam Lavlu in Chattogram.

The BNP leader strongly protested and denounced the filing of DSA cases against the journalists on "false charges".

"Filing of cases one after the other

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

BATTLE FOR BAKHMUT

Ukraine admits Russian gains

Moscow detains US reporter on espionage charges

REUTERS, Kyiv

Ukraine acknowledged some Russian gains inside the eastern battlefield city of Bakhmut, while insisting yesterday that it was inflicting greater losses on the Russian attackers than its own forces were taking in defence.

In a potential escalation of Russia's diplomatic feud with the United States, Moscow's FSB security service said it had arrested an American reporter for The Wall Street Journal, Evan Gershkovich, on suspicion of spying for Washington.

The newspaper denied the allegations and demanded the immediate release of "trusted and dedicated reporter" Gershkovich. There was no immediate response from Washington.

Gershkovich, a 31-year-old who has worked in Russia as a journalist for six years, is the highest-profile American arrested there since basketball star Brittney Griner, who was freed in December after 10 months in jail on drugs charges.

The FSB said it arrested Gershkovich

in the Urals industrial city of Yekaterinburg. He was brought to Moscow, where a court at a closed hearing ordered him held in pre-trial detention until May 29.

The TASS state news agency said he pleaded not guilty. The authorities released no evidence publicly, and TASS said the case had been marked "top

"Enemy forces had a degree of success in their actions aimed at storming the city of Bakhmut."

General Staff of the Ukrainian armed forces

secret". Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said he believed Gershkovich had been "caught red-handed".

The small mining city of Bakhmut has been the site of the bloodiest infantry battle in Europe since World War Two as Russian forces have sought their first victory since mid-2022 in a huge winter assault.

GOVT HOSPITALS

51 begin serving outpatients after working hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 51 public hospitals have started serving outpatients after regular working hours in exchange for fees, read a press release.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque inaugurated the new service -- Institutional Practice -- from his office at the Secretariat through videoconferencing yesterday noon.

Top officials of the health ministry, health directorate and the hospitals also joined the event.

Of the healthcare facilities, 12 were district hospitals and 39 upazila health complexes.

Addressing the event, the minister said, "We think the introduction of this system will benefit mass people. So, we have started piloting it in 51 hospitals. If people like it, we will expand it to all public hospitals within this year."

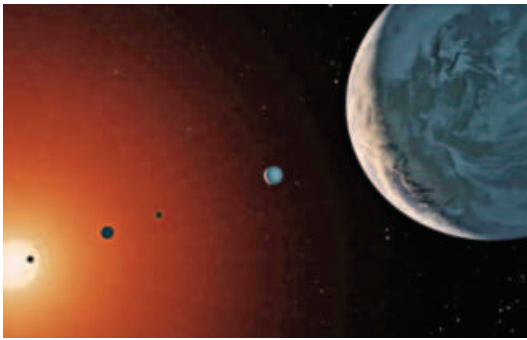
He also informed that the new system will operate in accordance with a protocol which has already been adopted.

"The protocol has every detail of how a healthcare staff will work in this afternoon service," the minister said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Earth-sized planet devoid of atmosphere

Finds Webb telescope



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The new James Webb Space Telescope observations of a far away solar system thought to have water found that its innermost planet is devoid of atmosphere, an advance that could lead to better ways of determining whether such celestial bodies host life.

An international team of scientists behind the discovery said the results mark an important step in determining whether planets orbiting small active stars can sustain atmospheres needed to support life.

The findings, published in the journal Nature, indicate that the dayside of the exoplanet Trappist-1b -- about 40 light years from Earth -- has a temperature of about 500 kelvins, or 450 degrees Fahrenheit, and suggests that it has no significant atmosphere.

The study also marks the first detection of any form of light emitted by an exoplanet as small, and as cool as, the rocky planets in our own solar system.

"These observations really take advantage of Webb's mid-infrared capability. No previous telescopes have had the sensitivity to measure such dim mid-infrared light," study co-author Thomas Greene said.

Astronomers discovered the planet system orbiting an ultracool red dwarf star (or M dwarf) in 2017.

Later observations revealed that its innermost planet Trappist-1b has an orbital distance about one hundredth that of Earth's, receiving about four times the amount of energy that Earth gets from the Sun.

While trappist-1b is not within the system's habitable zone, researchers say observations of the planet can provide important information about its sibling planets, as well as those of other M-dwarf systems.



OF GOLDS AND GREENS ... A golden-fronted leafbird perched on a flowering plant in Habiganj's Satchari National Park. These bulbul-sized birds' range extends from the Indian subcontinent and south-western China to south-east Asia and Sumatra, and they generally prefer tropical areas as their habitat. Tiny but territorial, golden-fronted leafbirds will not tolerate other species in their zone. They prefer being in the comfort of their own kind and tend to stay in pairs. What makes them striking is the various colours in their plumage -- the green feathers extending to the dark face bordered with a yellow throat, a blue chin, and a spectacular orange finish on the forehead, for which they are called "golden-fronted". Their calls are like fluid chirps -- if you can mimic it, they will chirp right back at you!

PHOTO: MD RIDWANUR RAHMAN

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

SUU KYI'S PARTY

US, allies concerned over its dissolution

REUTERS

The United States, Britain, Japan and Australia on Wednesday expressed their concern over the dissolution of Myanmar's former ruling party and urged a more inclusive process to return the country to democracy.

Myanmar's ruling junta on Tuesday disbanded Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) and 39 other parties over their failure to meet a deadline to register for an election that is set to extend the army's grip on power.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since a military coup in early 2021 that upended a decade of tentative democracy, with a bloody crackdown on protests giving rise to an armed struggle against the junta. More than a million people have been displaced by fighting, according to the United Nations.