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# Admissions Open

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Classroom



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Science Lab



Indoor Skating



Courtyard



Parents' Lounge

## Next budget to be 12pc bigger

REJAUl KARIM BYRON and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government is set to present a 12 percent bigger budget for fiscal 2023-24, the last of the Awami League government's present tenure, as it looks to juggle austerity and growth ambitions. "The proposed budget size for the upcoming fiscal year is not that big," Planning Minister MA Mannan told The Daily Star yesterday.

Were the economic conditions the same as in pre-pandemic years, the budget size would have been Tk 8.9 lakh crore.

"But we are in a tight situation. So, the budget size has decreased."

Besides, progressively bigger budgets are presented every year only for funds to remain unspent at the end of the fiscal year.

"We want to implement the budget fully," he added.

Of the total budget of Tk 759,955 crore, the highest allocations have been kept for interest payment and subsidy expenditure, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

Two separate meetings of the Fiscal Coordination Council and Resource Committee were held yesterday to discuss the upcoming budget. Both meetings were presided over by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal.

The targets for revenue earning, budget deficit and social spending would be set in line with the International Monetary Fund's prescription.

But the budget size and the others targets will be finalised by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"They [IMF] have some recommendations as they are our friend and a think-tank. We think that what they are saying is for our good. They can ask us to reduce subsidies. But subsidy

for some sectors like agriculture is very much needed for food security," Mannan said.

The target for GDP growth is likely to be 7.5 percent, much higher than the forecasts of multilateral lenders.

In the latest edition of the Asian Development Outlook, the Asian Development Bank said GDP growth is projected to slow to 5.3 percent this fiscal year and then edge back up to 6.5 percent in fiscal 2023-24.

Similarly, the World Bank in its latest

### FY24 BUDGET IN A NUTSHELL

- Total budget Tk **759,955**cr
- ADP Tk **263,000**cr
- Revenue target Tk **500,000**cr
- NBR target Tk **430,000**cr
- GDP growth target **7.5%**
- Inflation target **6%**

publication 'South Asia Economic Focus, Expanding Opportunities: Toward Inclusive Growth' said real GDP growth in fiscal 2022-23 will decelerate to 5.2 percent and then bounce back to 6.2 percent next fiscal year.

"The GDP growth target is achievable. We know many learned people are not agreeing with us. But we will not argue with them. There are challenges, but I think we have enough economic strength to face those," Mannan said.

The inflation target for the next fiscal

### WAR CRIMES IN UKRAINE

## Bangladesh abstains from UN voting

16 other countries including India, Pakistan didn't vote

AGENCIES

A total of 17 countries, including Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, abstained from voting on a UN resolution for the extension of the mandate of the investigation into possible war crimes committed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The resolution was adopted as 28 countries supported the extension of the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine by a year while only two countries – China and Eritrea – were against it.

After the voting, Sergiy Kyslytsya, the Ukrainian permanent representative to the UN, tweeted, "We salute delegations @ UN HRC that supported draft Res Situation of human rights in Ukraine stemming from the Russian aggression - Extension of the mandate of Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine. We note just 2 del's were against. War crimes accountability now!"

In a report published last month, the commission found that crimes committed by Russian forces in Ukraine, including the use of torture and attacks against



“Education and skill development should be top priority for the young generation. But I think the most important virtues are empathy and kindness. We should start doing good to people from a very young age.”

ROKIA AFZAL RAHMAN (1941-2023)

## GOODBYE, GENTLE SOUL

MAHFUZ ANAM

On meeting Rokia Afzal Rahman for the first time, one would most likely be disarmed by her demeanour. But within minutes, one was also likely to be overwhelmed by the breadth of her views, the command over facts and the clarity of her arguments, especially those dealing with business and women's rights issues. An exceptional combination of charm and professional abilities made her a natural leader. She was a most sought-after collaborator for most business ventures. As her reputation spread, she was invited to join the board of many companies, but she chose the ones that gave priority to women and the socially disadvantaged. She was literally everywhere – leading business groups, advising the youth on how to move forward, and helping struggling women entrepreneurs find their footing. She was the beacon of hope for women in business as a whole.

Then there was the Rokia Rahman who was relentless in empowering women. She knew that the most effective way to

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■ MORE ON PAGE 9 AND B1 ■

## A trailblazer for women in business

MAHMUDUL HASAN

A pioneering businesswoman, a champion of women's entrepreneurship, a mentor and guide – Rokia Afzal Rahman's exit from the world has left a trail of bereft loved ones, friends, relatives and admirers.

She passed away at the Mt Elizabeth Novena Hospital in Singapore on Wednesday at the age of 82. She is survived by her two daughters Erum Mariam and Faiza Rahman, and son Imran Faiz Rahman.

It was Rokia's vision and

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## Govt to help Bangabazar businesses recoup losses Says PM



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the government will provide assistance to the Bangabazar businesspeople as much as possible after assessing damages caused by Tuesday's fire.

The PM was addressing a programme at the Gono Bhaban yesterday. The event

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## BANGABAZAR FIRE RISK

# Everyone knew but no one bothered

HELEMUL ALAM, SAJJAD HOSSAIN and DIPAN NANDY

A six-year-old city corporation initiative to build a 10-storey shopping mall at Bangabazar never saw the light of day because of disagreements between the shop owners and the corporation.

Despite the glaring lack of fire safety at the market filled with flammable goods, nothing was done about it.

After deciding to construct the building, Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) finalised a design and hired a contractor for the construction work.

But owners of shops at the three-storey building made of wood and corrugated iron sheets opposed the move because the then mayor Sayeed Khokon did not make a rehabilitation offer to them.

According to DSCC officials, the High Court issued a status quo order on the property after the traders filed two writ petitions in 2017.

Tuesday's devastating fire was not the first at Bangabazar Shopping Complex.

It was gutted several times before, said Russell Sabrin, chief estate officer at the DSCC.

The city corporation's plan was to accommodate the traders in the new building, he said.

But the traders were not willing to forgo their business during the construction of the building.

Belayet Hossain, vice-president of Bangabazar Unit-Ka Owners Association, said the shop owners always insisted that they would not leave unless they were rehabilitated.

**SMOLDERING DEBRIS** Firefighters were still working at the site yesterday to completely put out the fire.

Smoke was still emitting from the piles of clothes at the site. Many roads in the area remained closed to traffic for the second day yesterday.

The fire that originated around 6:10am on Tuesday burned down at least 2,931 shops full of clothes and ruined the livelihood of several thousand traders just weeks before Eid.

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Bangabazar Shopping Complex was still smouldering yesterday after a devastating fire gutted it on Tuesday. Many shop owners said they may slide into poverty after losing their investments.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## We Deeply Mourn



Mirza Ejaz Ahmed

01 September 1957 – 04 April 2023

ONE Bank Family deeply mourns the sad demise of Mr. Mirza Ejaz Ahmed, the former Director and Managing Director of ONE Bank Limited. He breathed his last on Tuesday, April 4, 2023. Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Razi'un (Truly, to Allah we belong and truly to Him we shall return).

He is survived by his family and a host of well-wishers. We, ONE Bank Family, pray for the salvation of the departed soul. We express our profound sympathy to the bereaved family and remember him with much honour and fondness.



**ONE Bank**  
LIMITED

## Critical views against govt can't be termed 'anti-establishment'

Observes Indian SC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court today observed that critical views against the government cannot be termed as "anti-establishment" as an independent press is necessary for a robust democracy.

The court made the observation as it set aside the government's refusal of security clearance to a news channel, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

The SC bench, headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, quashed the Kerala High Court order which had upheld the Indian government's decision to ban Malayalam language news channel MediaOne's telecast on security grounds.

The top court said the Indian Home Ministry raised national security claims in "thin air" without facts.

The state cannot impose unreasonable restrictions on the press as it would have a chilling effect on the freedom of the media, the bench said adding "national security claims cannot be made out of thin air and there must be material facts backing it."

## MADARIPUR ROAD CRASH

### Why families of 19 victims won't be compensated?

HC seeks explanation from authorities concerned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain why they should not be directed to give adequate compensation to the families of 19 victims who died in Madaripur road accident on March 19.

In the rule, the court also asked the respondents to show causes why they should not be ordered to ensure the safety of people who move on the roads and why their inaction to

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina poses with the vegetables that were grown in Tungipara as part of her own special initiative. The vegetables were brought all the way to the Gono Bhaban for her to inspect. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

## ELECTRIC VEHICLES

# Govt finally makes guideline for registration, operation

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government has finally approved a guideline for the registration and operation of electric vehicles.

It aims to have at least 30 percent vehicles electric by 2030, according to a Road Transport and Highways Division circular issued on Tuesday.

Electric Motor Vehicle Registration and Operation Guideline 2023 will come into effect after a gazette of the guideline is published in a few days, said Nur Mohammad Mazumder, chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority.

The development comes more than four years after a draft guideline was submitted

to the division in November 2018. The division then sent a four-member delegation to India to gain experience. The guideline was formulated as per section 124 of the Road Transport Act 2018.

As per the guideline, electric vehicles are those that are run by one or more electric motors powered by electric charge or rechargeable batteries. Battery-run rickshaws, vans and bicycles are not in this category.

Moreover, the battery-run easy-bikes, which saw a sharp rise over the years, will be outside the purview of this guideline, said the BRTA chairman.

Only the models of vehicles approved by the government committee will be

considered electric vehicles, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

WHY THE GUIDELINE?

The importance of electric vehicles is growing. Bangladesh, under Nationally Determined Contribution, has promised to reduce emission of 3.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide from the transport sector by 2030, reads the guideline.

In this given situation, at least 30 percent motor vehicles will have to be electric ones by 2030, it added.

Currently, BRTA provides registration and receives fees from electric vehicles following an executive order by the Road Transport and Highways Division, said a

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## Officer's body recovered from family planning headquarters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The body of a family planning officer, whose salary had been stopped for over two years, was found hanging in the accountant's room at the Directorate General of Family Planning headquarters in the capital.

Manowarul Islam, of Bogura, was a medical officer of the DGFP. He used to live in the capital's Narinda area with his wife, two daughters, and a son.

A divisional enquiry was underway against him for an allegation of financial misappropriation when he was attached to Raipura upazila family planning office in Narsingdi, according to police.

The law enforcers recovered the body on Tuesday from room no 1201 on the 12th floor of the DGFP headquarters in Karwanbazar.

The body was sent to Shaheed Shuhrawardy Medical College Hospital for autopsy that night.

Shah Alam, inspector (investigation) of Teigaon Police Station, said, "We primarily suspect it to be a death by suicide." He said they were investigating to see if it could be something else.

After autopsy, the body was handed over to the relatives yesterday, sources at the hospital said last night.

Manowarul's brother Monirul Haque, however, claimed that his brother was killed.

An unnatural death case was lodged with the police station, said the inspector.

The Daily Star could not reach DGFP officials for comments.

## AL leader seeks to file case under DSA against journo

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An Awami League leader of Rangpur at a court sought to lodge a case under Digital Security Act against a journalist and two others yesterday.

The court directed the Police Bureau of Investigation to file a report after investigation.

Zakaria Alam Shiplu, general secretary of Tajhat Thana AL and councillor of ward 15 of Rangpur City Corporation, said Jamuna TV reporter Mazharul Mannan Rangpur and ex-RCC councillors Shafiqul Islam Shahi and Nur Mohammad had a report run against him on April 1 and 2 with false allegations that tarnished his and his party's image.

## Govt to help

FROM PAGE 1

was organised to receive Tk 316.91 crore as first and second instalments of the loan provided by the government for the construction of Padma Bridge.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader handed a cheque of Tk 316,90,97,049 to the PM for the loan instalments. The loan was taken from Bangladesh Bank at a low interest rate under an agreement signed between the Finance Division and the Bangladesh Bridge Authority.

Termining the Bangabazar fire a very tragic incident, Hasina said it is too much to bear the suffering of so many businesspeople ahead of the Eid.

She said the government had taken up a project to construct a planned market at Bangabazar following the fires in 1995 and 2018. But some people obstructed the move and filed a writ petition with the High Court, which put a stay order in place, the PM added.

If the process was not halted at that time, the government could have built a good market there, and such a terrible accident would not have happened, Hasina added.

The PM, however, criticised some unruly people who attacked the Fire Service headquarters nearby.

Firefighters rushed to the scene after the fire broke out.

The premier said she asked the authorities to identify the attackers and take proper action against them.

Hasina said if anyone attacks members or vehicles of the fire service or other public properties in future, they won't be spared.

## Bangladesh abstains

FROM PAGE 1

the country's energy infrastructure, could constitute crimes against humanity, reports Reuters.

Russia, which refused to address the Human Rights Council on Tuesday, vigorously denies committing atrocities or targeting civilians in Ukraine.

"The scope and brutality of Russia's atrocities in Ukraine are simply beyond any human comprehension," Ukraine's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Yevheniia Filipenko, told the council ahead of the vote.

"We strongly believe that the continued work of the commission in further investigating, documenting and reporting human rights violations and international crimes committed against the people in Ukraine could save more innocent lives [and] could contribute to accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims."

## Goodbye, gentle soul

FROM PAGE 1

assist women was to make them financially independent and hence devoted her energy to making them enter business as she was very confident about women's business abilities and opened institutions for entrepreneurship training and funding.

It was this Rokia Rahman that became the chairperson of the Mediaworld, the owning company of The Daily Star, in 2002, at the demise of her husband, Azimur Rahman, a highly respected business person and the founding chair of Mediaworld. The Daily Star got a new chair and I got a new guide and over time a committed fellow traveller for free media and a personal friend. As the

CEO of the company, my interaction with the new chair was both regular and intense. There were two things that struck me immediately and have grown deeper over the 21 years while she ran Mediaworld – her exceptional business acumen and respect for free media.

With her extraordinary business expertise, she guided The Daily Star's revenue growth and made the paper financially strong. She insisted on the highest standard in accounting and strove to bring the most innovative business practices to the organisation. It would be a different kind of pride that she would exude while receiving the highest taxpayer award as the company's chair.

Her empathy for the staff was both deep and natural. After her occasional meeting with me and the senior members of the administration at the office, she would go down to the newsroom and engage with both senior and junior colleagues to enquire about their family situation. She unflinchingly attended our annual staff day celebrations and spend hours with us.

Like her husband and other members of the Board, her commitment to the freedom of press, independent journalism and to the independence of the institution of the editor was total. She never hesitated to personally call and often visit me to extend her full support through all the legal and

political harassments that I faced while running this paper. For me, she was a great source of courage. She was most regular in communicating her sincere appreciation for the bold journalism that this paper practised. Her trust in the editor was unquestioned and never during her 21 years of chairmanship was any question ever raised about the editorial position that the paper took.

Roki to her friends and Roki Bhabhi to her admirers including me, she was the epitome of gentleness, care and courtesy. With the never-fading smile on her face, inexhaustible energy, and tremendous sensitivity to other people's feelings, she would lead business bodies, participate in

women empowerment activities, innovate new ways to assist struggling businesses, especially women entrepreneurs, extend a helping hand to young people lost in the corporate world and reach out to people and organisations devoted to helping the underprivileged.

Her elegance stood out wherever she went. Her integrity and honesty captured most people she interacted with and her humility and modesty made people wonder how could a single individual have so many qualities. The Almighty was indeed most generous in endowing her with many magnificent qualities. We pray to Him now that she be Blessed with Eternal Peace.

## A trailblazer for women in business

FROM PAGE 1

entrepreneurial prowess that left an indelible mark on the country's business community, inspiring others to pursue their dreams. She was determined to help women entrepreneurs break barriers and succeed in a male-dominated business world.

Rokia was the vice president of International Chamber of Commerce – ICC, Bangladesh. She was the chairman of RR and Arlinks groups of companies. She was also the chairman of MIDAS Financing Limited.

She undertook initiatives in different sectors and left a lasting legacy in the media, insurance, real estate, and financial institute sectors. In 2001, she became an adviser to the caretaker government.

Rokia's career, however, started with a job at a commercial bank in 1962 – pre-independence period.

At the time, women working in banks was a rarity and Rokia became one of the very few female bankers. Within two years, she became the first woman bank manager of the country and also led the first female-only customer branch in Dhaka.

After a few years of banking Rokia took another bold decision: to leave the career she had worked so hard to build and look after her children.

But the entrepreneurial spirit that lay dormant in her could not be ignored for long.

In 1980, she ventured into the agro-based industry, setting up a cold storage in Munshiganj.

But the path to success was riddled with unexpected obstacles. Remembering that time, she had said in an interview that she would

have to cross a river on a public launch to visit her business.

"It was a three-hour journey from Dhaka, but it was a beautiful experience. I used to have jhaalmuri (spicy puffed rice) and other mouthwatering foods during the journey."

"However, I sometimes experienced storms. I would be terrified when the launch would sway to one side and everyone would rush to the doors so that they could jump into river in case the situation got worse."

Of the 15 cold storage owners in that area, she was the only woman.

"The villagers were eager to help me, but they wondered if a woman could actually run a business."

But soon enough they realised how serious and capable she was as they benefitted from her cold storage, which allowed them to store their produce all year round.

In 1982, she joined the board of MIDAS, which provides loans to SMEs.

Rokia helped the MIDAS board implement her idea of collateral-free loans for women entrepreneurs.

"In 1991, we launched a collateral-free loans project and we got tremendous response. Many women started to set up boutique businesses. We used to inspire the new loan takers by telling the success stories of others women," she said in an interview.

"Although many big businesses default on their loans, our recovery rate was almost 100 percent. A woman even came to pay her installment by rickshaw during a hartal."

Rokia also helped MIDAS introduce marketing assistance for women entrepreneurs by launching

MIDAS Mini Mart and MIDAS Trade Fair.

Apart from her achievements in business, she championed the cause of women by helping countless of them become self-reliant.

In 1994, the first Women Entrepreneurs Association was formed in Bangladesh with Rokia as the founder president. She was also the founder president of Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs launched in 2006. She formed Women in Small Enterprises to further help women get a firm footing in small enterprises and industries.

For the women she helped succeed, she was a torchbearer and guardian angel.

Sadequa Hassan Sejuti, an entrepreneur who closely worked with Rokia for many years, said, "The women who came to get assistance from her were never turned away. When a new woman entrepreneur would come to show their first products, she would collect most of the pieces as their first buyer."

"She would also leave no stone unturned to market and brand those products."

Mentioning Rokia's innate humility when interacting with people despite having such a stellar career herself, Sejuti said, "We have lost an idol, a legend."

Her family members too said she would always keep in touch with the farmers she worked with and treated everyone equally, whether they were village farmers, top business leaders or government officials.

But for Rokia, there were more positions waiting for her to fill. She was a staunch supporter of

<b>LARGEST ONLINE BRANCH NETWORK</b>	<b>LARGEST PRIVATE COMMERCIAL BANK</b>	<b>FIRST BANGALEE BANK</b>
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## Road crashes killed 564, injured 1,094 last month

**Finds report**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 486 road accidents occurred, resulting in 564 fatalities and 1,094 injuries in March this year, according to a report by Road Safety Foundation.

According to the foundation, a total of 194 people lost their lives in motorcycle crashes, and of them, 88 were women and 73 children. This accounts for 34.39 percent of total deaths during the reported period. The motorcycle accident rate was found to be 36.83 percent.

Additionally, 107 pedestrians lost their lives in accidents, accounting for 18.97 percent of the total deaths. Eighty-one drivers and helpers also lost their lives, making up 14.36 percent of the total deaths.

The report gathered information from various sources – including nine national dailies, seven online news portals, and electronic media.

Furthermore, the report noted that six waterway accidents claimed the lives of eight people, while 19 railway accidents caused the death of 16 people and injuries to four others.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity documented 487 road accidents, which led to 538 deaths and 1,138 injuries.

The report also documented 53 train accidents, resulting in 47 fatalities and 15 injuries, as well as nine waterway accidents, which claimed seven lives and caused

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**PRAYER TIMING**  
**APRIL 6**

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:29	12:45	4:45	6:20	7:45
JAMAAT 4:39	1:15	5:00	6:30	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

**SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING**

RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IFTAR
14	06		6:20
15	07	4:23	6:21
16	08	4:22	6:21

## Fire service to identify risky markets

DIPAN NANDY and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Fire Service and Civil Defence will start a survey to identify risky market buildings in the capital from today, said its director general Brig Gen Md Main Uddin.

"We will survey as per Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC)," he said yesterday.

"A market, building or an establishment is supposed to have enough exits and entrance points, and fire safety measures in proportion with the number of people who visit or stay there," he said while talking with reporters in front of the fire service headquarters, after visiting Bangabazar, which burnt to ashes in a devastating fire on Tuesday.

Main said fire service members, along with market owners, will conduct a survey and tell the market authorities about their next course of action.

He said, "We will start the survey from Gausia Market in the capital's New Market area, and Rajdhani Super Market in Tikatuli, as we think those may be vulnerable to fire."

In reply to a query, the fire official said they have a list of risky markets and buildings, but he could not immediately say how many are on the list.

"Fire hydrant systems exist in all developed cities. But these mechanisms only exist in some Dhaka factories," he added.

In a building, a fire hydrant system is a safety measure or emergency equipment that provides a source of water to assist firefighters during a fire, according to fire service officials.

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Students of Dhaka University's fine arts faculty gear up for Pahela Baishakh celebrations, as they were busy making colourful masks yesterday, ahead of Mangal Shobhajatra. These items will bring a vibrant look to the traditional procession that is brought out on every Bangla new year.

## Quick work visa for right amount of bribe

7 recruiters bribed two Saudi diplomats Tk 154cr, finds CID

SHARIFUL ISLAM

A syndicate of seven Bangladeshi recruitment agencies reportedly sent Tk 154 crore to Saudi Arabia as bribe for two diplomats who used to work at the Saudi embassy in Dhaka. In return, a huge number of work visas were issued for Bangladeshi migration-seekers, revealed an investigation by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

CID has also found that the bribe money was sent through two money exchangers in the capital's Gulshan and Banani. Owners of the seven agencies and an organised gang used to invite the two Saudi nationals to a Gulshan hotel, give presents and arrange parties for them.

In exchange, the Saudi embassy officials set a rule so that one recruiting agency cannot submit more than 20 visa applications in a week and an agency can submit

**Sources said the Saudi embassy in Dhaka started charging recruiting agencies \$220 to \$250 for every work visa about a year ago. The embassy stopped taking the charge after the two Saudi diplomats returned to the gulf country after they were suspended two and a half months ago.**

applications only once a week, but exempted the seven agencies from this rule. These seven were allowed to submit as many applications as they wanted. The embassy used to issue work visas against their applications when the two officials were working in Dhaka, CID officials said.

Identities of three of the seven agency owners have already come to light after they were arrested in Saudi Arabia. The three are – ZU Sayed, proprietor of United Manpower Consultancy; Ashraf Uddin Akanda, managing partner of O Sons International; and Mohammad Nasir Uddin, proprietor of Narcissus.

Six other Bangladeshi nationals – Alamgeer Hussain Khan, Shafeeq Al Islam Shahjahan, Al Ameen Khan, Zaid Uosied Maly, Abul Kalam Mohammed Rafeeq Al Islam, and Aziz Al Haq – were also arrested in the middle-eastern country in connection with the alleged corruption.

The CID officials, however, did not disclose the names of the four recruiting agencies and their owners linked with the crime. They also did not reveal the names and addresses of the two money exchangers for the sake of investigation.

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## JS GOLDEN JUBILEE Parliament to open special session today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special session of the parliament begins today marking the 50th anniversary of the legislature.

This will also be the 22nd session of 11th Jatiya Sangsad.

The special session is likely to continue for four working days, said sources at the parliament secretariat.

President Abdul Hamid will deliver a memorial speech in the house highlighting the country's achievement and the role of the parliament on April 7.

A resolution on the president's speech will be adopted in JS following discussion of lawmakers, added the source. While talking to reporters on Monday, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury recalled the day when the Jatiya Sangsad sat for the first time on April 7 in 1973. "In continuation of this, we are going to celebrate the golden jubilee of parliament in 2023. That is why April 7 is an important

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

## 'We lost a role model of women empowerment'

Tributes from all quarters after Rokia Afzal's demise

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The country has lost a champion of women's empowerment with the demise of Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairperson of Mediaworld Ltd, the owner company of The Daily Star.

Eminent citizens and head of organisations said Rokia was an integral actor in advancing the role of women in business and a stalwart supporter of free media.

Rokia Afzal Rahman, 82, passed away peacefully in her sleep at Mt Elizabeth Novena Hospital in Singapore, where she was undergoing treatment.

Prime Minister's Private Sector Industry and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman expressed profound shock and sorrow at her death.

TIB's Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman in a statement said her death caused irreparable loss to the country. "She will be remembered as an inspiration because of her hard work and patriotism."

Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in a statement, said, "We are deeply saddened at the passing away of Rokia Afzal Rahman. BWCCI has lost a dear friend and comrade."

Management and Resources Development Initiative said Rokia will be remembered for her

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## CONDOLENCE MESSAGE



Rokia Afzal Rahman

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) is deeply saddened by the passing of the esteemed female entrepreneur Ms. Rokia Afzal Rahman. She breathed her last on Wednesday, 5 April 2023 at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital in Singapore at 2:00 am Singapore time. Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajeun.

Ms. Rahman was the President of MCCI in 2013 and 2014 and the President of Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) in 1998-99, 2009-2010, and 2010-2011. Under her dynamic leadership, MCCI celebrated its 110th anniversary in 2014, an event graced by the late Indian former President, Mr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam.

An iconic business leader involved in the development of several women's associations, Ms. Rahman had vast experience spanning multiple sectors. She was also a former Adviser (minister) to the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh in 2001.

MCCI expresses its deepest condolences to Ms. Rahman's bereaved family and humbly requests all to pray for her departed soul. May Allah grant her Jannatul Firdous and bless her family with sabr.



Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka

**Owners of the seven agencies and an organised gang used to invite the two Saudi nationals to a Gulshan hotel, give presents and arrange parties for them.**

## CLEAN ENERGY

# Country needs \$1.53-1.71bn a year to reach target: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs between \$1.53 billion and \$1.71 billion of annual investment from 2024 to 2041 to meet the ambitious target of producing 40 percent of power from clean energy sources by 2041.

The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) yesterday estimated the figure in a study, saying that the country's existing power system can incorporate 1,700 megawatts (MW) to 3,400 MW of solar power and 2,500 to 4,000 MW of wind power.

However, the total cost did not include the cost for grid modernisation and storage facilities.

The study, titled "Charting an Electricity Sector Transition Pathway for Bangladesh", also mentioned that the country could manage such

investments with the help of funding channels, including local resources and international sources like multilateral agencies, climate funds and global pension, private equity and infrastructure funds.

"The government should translate the renewable-energy policy target into a year-wise action plan, backed by a monitoring mechanism to track its progress," said the study's author Shafiqul Alam, energy finance analyst at IEEFA.

Last year, high prices of fossil fuel and increased power generation costs led to a subsidy burden of \$2.82 billion, a steep rise of 152 percent from the previous year, and 301 percent from fiscal 2019-20.

Besides, Bangladesh Power Development Board saw a massive 33.7

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## We Mourn



We are deeply saddened to inform that, our honorable Board Chairman Ms. Rokia Afzal Rahman breathed her last at 02:00 am Wednesday at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital, Singapore.

The Board of Directors and all employees of MIDAS Financing Limited deeply mourn on her demise. We are praying to almighty Allah SWT for her eternal peace. Our heart-felt condolences to the bereaved family.

Her janaza will be held at Gulshan Azad Masjid on Friday 7th April after Asr' prayer at 5:00 pm.



মাইডাস ফাইন্যান্সিং লিমিটেড  
MIDAS FINANCING LIMITED

### Sufia Chowdhury passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sufia Chowdhury, wife of retired professor Abdul Mannan, breathed her last at her residence in Sarishabari upazila of Jamalpur on Tuesday. She was 72.

She left behind her son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren to mourn her death. Sufia Chowdhury is the mother of Pallab Mohaimen, head of New Initiative at Prothom Alo.

She was laid to rest at the central graveyard of Sharishabari after a namaz-e-janaza on Tuesday evening.

Jatiya Press Club and Bangladesh ICT Journalist Forum expressed their condolences.



### Ex-Fareast stocks

FROM PAGE 5 being the chairman of Fareast Stocks and Bonds, misused his power and acquired illegal wealth.

CID mentioned that inaccurate information about deposits was found in an audit report.

Besides, Khalek's family built a second home abroad with the embezzled amount.

"From 2010 to 2019, they moved a hefty amount of money from the institution using various strategies... We have so far found that Tk 116 crore has been laundered," Monirul said.

### Parliament to open

FROM PAGE 3 day for parliament," she said.

In addition to the special session, year-long events are planned throughout the year to commemorate the golden jubilee of Jatiya Sangsad.

"We are thinking of a mutual exchange of views between the senior parliamentarians and the young generation," the speaker said.

### Fire service to identify

FROM PAGE 3

"We are continuously holding talks with the home ministry and Rajuk to implement the fire-hydrant system," said the DG.

Four years ago, fire service declared that Bangabazar Shopping Complex was at risk of fire.

In reply to a comment that risk notices are not working, the DG said, "Our job is to identify the risky buildings and notify."

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said businesses should vacate complexes that fire service identifies as risky.

The other accused are - Tarafdar Jahangir Alam, Zahidul Haque, Fazlul Haque, Abul Kashem Molla, Rashed Mohammad Mazhar, Khushruha Sultana Shilpi, Sheikh Yusuf Ali, Mahbuba Sultana, Dilruba Sultana, Nazrul Islam, Mizanur Rahman Mustafa and Kazi Shahriar.

### Cop was 'negligent'

FROM PAGE 5 recovered the decomposed body of a fourth-grader who went missing from Pahartali on March 21. Her body was found inside a plastic sack in a pond in Alamtara Murgir Farm area.

PBI said she was raped before being strangled to death and later dumped into the pond on the night of March 21.

The victim's family complained about the non-cooperation of local police in investigating the missing diary. SI Dulal was given charge to investigate the incident.

The victim's mother lodged a case accusing a suspect with Woman and Child Repression Prevention Tribunal on March 28. After her body was recovered, her parents alleged that during investigation, Dulal showed negligence.

### Road crashes killed

FROM PAGE 3 injuries to 14 individuals. Two people remained missing as a result of these waterway accidents.

In addition, 163 people lost their lives, and 97 were injured in 152 bike crashes. The statement from Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, signed by the its secretary general Mozammel Haque

and Child Repression Prevention Tribunal on March 28. After her body was recovered, her parents alleged that during investigation, Dulal showed negligence. Dulal had said, "The girl has fled with someone she was having an affair with." Her parent also alleged that local police a let suspect named Rubel go after interrogating him for a few hours. However, PBI arrested Rubel, a street vendor, in this connection before recovering the victim's body.

After the allegations of negligence were made, Dulal was closed to Dampira police lines and an internal probe against him began.

### We lost a role model

FROM PAGE 3 pioneering role in female entrepreneurship.

Business Initiative Leading Development in a press release said Rokia was instrumental in the development of business, trade and economy of the country.

### Damaged embankment

FROM PAGE 5 Sumon Chandra Pal said due to the lack of proper monitoring and feud among the samity members, the previous monitoring committee was dissolved last year.

Later, a three-member ad-hoc committee, headed by Upazila Cooperative Officer Enamul Haque, was formed to address the issue.

Shyamol Nandi, former secretary of the cooperative samity, was asked to hand the relevant documents over to the ad-hoc body, but he is yet to do that.

Contacted, Shyamol said the matter is now pending with the High Court.

Kalmakanda Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Asaduzzaman said they held a meeting recently at the local lawmaker's

### Country needs \$1.53-1.71bn

FROM PAGE 3 percent increase in power generation cost the last year.

"With no immediate respite from the rising power generation cost, the government has adopted a strategy to pass the cost on to the consumers. As part of that, the government raised the tariffs of electricity since the start of this year," the study said.

According to the study, a

lack of success in renewable energy deployment over a decade raised concerns about the real possibility of implementing renewable energy in a broader scale in the country.

It identified the challenges that worked as the reasons behind the failure, including limited planning, land constraints, doubts over the potential of renewable energy, the lack of suitable finance, absence

of standard renewable energy procurement process, and insufficient institutional capacity.

Currently, Bangladesh has 23,482 MW electricity generation capacity, including 49 percent from gas-fired, 32 percent from fuel-run, 11 percent from coal-fired plants, and 5 percent from cross-border imports. The share of on-grid renewable energy is only 2.5 percent (489 MW).

### Quick work visa for right amount

FROM PAGE 3 Mohammad Basir Uddin, special superintendent of police (inquiry) of CID's financial crime unit, said they have started an investigation and after scrutinising the findings, a money-laundering case will be filed if they get evidence of the crime.

Meanwhile, many agencies had a huge number of passports to process, which is why they were desperate to get the visas issued within a certain period. Some officials saw this desperation as an opportunity and started to charge extra.

Sources said the Saudi embassy in Dhaka started charging recruiting agencies \$220 to \$250 for every work visa about a year ago. The embassy stopped taking the charge after the two Saudi diplomats returned to the gulf country after they were suspended two and a half months ago.

The Saudi anti-corruption authority recently arrested the two - former deputy ambassador Abdullah Falah Mudhahi Al-Shammari and former deputy head of the consular section Khaled Nasser Ayed Al-Qahntani of the embassy.

Two Saudi home ministry officials and a Palestinian have also been arrested for their involvement in illegal visa trading and money smuggling outside the country.

Bangladesh's labour recruitment to Saudi Arabia surged phenomenally last year, with a total of 6,12,412 migrating to the country. In the first two months of this year, 85,319 migrated there.

Interestingly, migrant remittance from the country, where some 20 lakh Bangladeshis work, declined over the last two quarters.

### BCL leader

FROM PAGE 5 Tuesday, when some local youths called and took him to the school grounds. At one stage of an argument, Choton was stabbed in the stomach. The miscreants escaped when locals rushed to the spot, he said.

There was a dispute over land between the families of slain Choton and Rakid. It was initially reported that Choton was killed over a land dispute, the OC said.

"The body has been sent to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital morgue for post-mortem. The victim's family will lodge a case," he added.

### Shirt Makers Group

Mr. Mirza Ejaz Ahmed is survived by his loving son and daughter. His legacy and impact on the lives of those around him will forever be remembered and cherished. He will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Obituary section for Mirza Ejaz Ahmed, including photo, text of death, and funeral arrangements.

Advertisement for Sirajul Islam Choudhury, a writer and editor, with contact information.

Bride Wanted advertisement seeking a partner for a retired senior government official.

Building & Land Sale/Long Time Rent advertisement for two buildings in Dhaka.

Old Vehicle Sale Tender Notice from Puls Trading Far East Limited.

Advertisement for Bangladesh Applied Science University, Dhaka, regarding a tender notice.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh e-Tender Notice (OTM) for procurement of works.

Advertisement from Bangladesh Government regarding a tender notice for a project.

Tender Notice from North South University regarding procurement of printing and convocation materials.

RAPE, MURDER OF SCHOOLGIRL

# Cop was 'negligent' while investigating

**Finds internal police report**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

An internal probe of police reportedly found that the sub-inspector who investigated the missing diary filed for a fourth-grader, who was raped and murdered in Chattogram's Pahartali area last month, showed sheer negligence and unprofessional attitude during investigation.

A source inside Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) headquarters confirmed that Additional Deputy Commissioner Asif Mohiuddin submitted his internal probe-report findings, stating that sub-inspector Dulal

Mia is guilty of utter negligence. Asif recorded the statement of 12 persons in this regard.

Contacted, Asif told the newspaper, "It's a sensitive issue, and during investigation, you have to be more professional. I have sent the probe report to my superiors." He, however, declined to disclose any information about the findings.

The report, which was submitted to the CMP commissioner on Tuesday, suggested taking departmental action against Dulal.

On the morning of March 29, Police Bureau of Investigation's (PBI) Chattogram metro unit

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



**A doa mahfil for Rokia Afzal Rahman -- chairperson of Mediaworld Ltd, the owning company of The Daily Star -- was held before iftar at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. She breathed her last at Mt Elizabeth Novena Hospital in Singapore earlier in the day.**

PHOTO: STAR

TK 116CR LAUNDERING

# Ex-Fareast stocks chairman, relatives among 17 sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has sued 17 people -- including MA Khalek, former chairman of Fareast Stocks and Bonds Limited -- for allegedly laundering Tk 116 crore through fake deposits.

Khalek's wife Sabiha Khalek, son Shahrir Khaled Russo, daughter Sharwat Khaled, and her husband Tanvirul Haque reportedly played a role in the entire laundering process. Apart from that, Khalek along with his relatives and associates caused a financial loss of Tk 585 crore to the organisation, according to CID.

CID filed a case under money laundering act on Tuesday with Motijheel Police Station, said Inspector Monirul Islam of Organised Crime (Financial Crime Squad) at CID.

According to the case statement, Khalek, while

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

BCL leader killed in Lalmonirhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Miscreants killed a former Chhatra League leader in Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila on Tuesday night.

The incident took place in the grounds of Jamirbari Govt Primary School in the upazila's Shrutidhar village.

Locals took Abu Musa Choton (36), who was vice president of Kaliganj upazila unit BCL, to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, where he died, said OC of Kaliganj Police Station Golam Rasul.

Police detained a youth, Rakid Islam Palash (25) from the upazila's Bhotmari union, on Tuesday night, the OC said.

OC Golam said Choton was at home after iftar on

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

# Damaged embankment threatens croplands

MD AMINUL ISLAM, *Netrakona*

Hundreds of farmers in Netrakona's Kalmakanda and Barhatta upazilas are facing a serious threat, as several damaged parts of the 10-kilometre-long flood-protection embankment, stretching from Ambari to Hirakanda of Kalmakanda's Pogla union, are yet to be completely repaired.

Funded by Japan International Cooperative Agency (Jica), the embankment was built under the supervision of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), spending Tk 1.84 crore in 2019, to protect boro fields from flash floods.

However, about one and a half kilometres of the dam, stretching from Charulia to Pathanpara area, suffered a serious blow during last year's flood, locals said.

The embankment got damaged at different points as several holes

developed on it due to heavy rainfall, they added.

However, Jica stopped releasing funds for the repair work, following a conflict among members of Dashdar Ranigaon Water Management Cooperative Samity, local farmers alleged.

Although the upcoming monsoon is much closer, the broken portions are yet to be completely repaired. Farmers fear that their standing boro fields might get affected by the flash flood this year.

Farmer Ashraf Ali of Ranigaon village said it is quite unfortunate as they are gradually becoming victims of personal feuds among members of the cooperative society.

The cooperative society was formed so that farmers could get benefits through proper monitoring, but now they are worried about whether they will be able to harvest their crops or not.

Boro is the main crop of people living in the haor areas, and they will lose everything if a flash flood affects their boro fields.

Pogla Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Mozammel Haque said if the embankment is not repaired immediately, boro fields on about 1,500 acres of land in different haor areas, including Manduria, Pitua, Chatgaon, Barbanda and Dogra Beel, might get badly affected during the monsoon.

During a recent visit to the area, local lawmaker Manu Majumder talked to the farmers and locals and assured them of repairing the structure as soon as possible, the chairman said.

Residents said members of the cooperative society are divided into two groups for their personal interest.

District Cooperative Officer

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



**GRIDLOCK AT TIKATOLI... Commuters suffer in traffic jams at this intersection in Tikatoli area on a hot Ramadan afternoon. According to passers-by, vehicles coming from opposite directions are to blame for contributing to the congestion on this road. This photo was taken yesterday.**

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

# Injured PUST students handed over to families

**BCL, proctor allege them of being involved with Shibir**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

At last three injured students of Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST), who were allegedly tortured by BCL activists, were handed over to their families.

BCL men allegedly tortured the three students at a residential hall on Tuesday night and early Wednesday, on allegations against the three being involved with Chhatra Shibir.

The three injured are -- Golam Rahman Joy, a master's student of public administration; Asadul Islam, a senior-year student of English; and Azizul Haque, a third-year student of engineering.

According to sources, a group of BCL men suddenly charged the three students when they were at Shaheed Minar compound on Tuesday night.

They then took the three to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall and allegedly tortured them.

Around 3:00am, the proctor called the police and handed the injured over to them.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

TK 10 LAKH BRIBE

# Rajshahi income tax officer sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

A Rajshahi court yesterday sent an income tax official to jail over receiving Tk 10-lakh bribe from a physician.

The court of Rajshahi metropolitan sessions judge rejected the bail prayer of the official, Mohibul Islam Bhuiyan, and ordered to send him to jail, said Amir Hossain, an additional director of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Earlier in a raid at the income tax commissioner's office on Tuesday, ACC of Rajshahi arrested Bhuiyan.

The ACC team caught him red-handed when he was taking Tk 10 lakh from Fatima Siddika, a physician. A nine-member ACC team conducted the raid, and staffers of the office scuffled with the team at that time.

Later, Aminul Islam, a deputy director of the divisional office of ACC, filed a case against Bhuiyan

with the integrated district office of Rajshahi ACC.

Describing the case, ACC's Amir said Bhuiyan called Fatima at his office a month ago and demanded Tk 8 lakh in exchange for reducing her income tax.

When Fatima declined to pay, Bhuiyan threatened her of reopening and reevaluating five years of her tax files.

As Fatima ignored the threats, he reopened five years of her files and demanded Tk 2 crore bribe to settle the matter.

On March 29, Fatima contacted ACC in Dhaka.

With knowledge of the ACC officials, Fatima continued bargaining with Bhuiyan, who agreed to settle for Tk 50 lakh.

She went to Bhuiyan's office on Tuesday and paid him Tk 10 lakh, and ACC officials caught Bhuiyan.

ACC placed Bhuiyan before the metropolitan sessions judge's court yesterday noon.

# Six get death penalty for abducting, raping college student

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Natore*

A Natore court yesterday sentenced six people to death and four to life imprisonment for abducting and raping a college student over 10 years ago.

The court also fined each one of the convicts Tk 1 lakh.

Those who got death penalty are -- Md Sabbir Ahmed, Md Rezaunul Rabbi, Md Nazmul Haque, Md Rajibul Hasan, Md Ripon and Md Shahidul.

Md Monirul Islam, Md Khairul Islam, Md Ataul Islam Ataur and Md Rezaul Karim received life-term imprisonment on the day.

Judge Muhammad Abdur Rahim of Natore Women and Child Abuse Prevention Tribunal gave the verdict.

According to case documents, on October 19, 2012, the victim left for college for urgent work and met Sabbir Ahmed on the way.

Later that same day, the convicts took the girl to the Eidgaon field of the district's Mirzapur area, and then raped her multiple times.

Locals then rescued the girl in an unconscious state, and police arrested the group.

On October 20 that year, the girl's father filed a case with Singra police station.

Court's Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) Advocate Anisur Rahman said that after almost 10 years of investigation and evidence gathering, the court finally gave the verdict.

Besides, the court acquitted a person, as he was not involved in this incident.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Project Director (Temporary)  
SASEC- Integrated Trade Facilitation  
Sector Development Project: NBR Part  
IDEB Building (9th Floor)  
160/A, Kakrail VIP Road, Dhaka-1000

File No: 08.01.0000.003.06.001.22/42 Date: 05/04/2023

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (REOI) FOR DETAILED DESIGN CONSULTING SERVICES (DDC) FOR BIBIBAZAR, BIROL, DARSHANA, SHEORA, SONAHAT, AND TEKNAF BCPs (Firms selection)**  
(Quality and Cost Based Selection) [International] [Lump-sum based]

**Project Title:** Loan 4178-BAN: South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Integrated Trade Facilitation Sector Development Project: NBR Part


**Assignment:** Detailed Design Consulting Services for Bibibazar, Birol, Darshana, Sheora, Sonahat, and Teknaf BCPs

**Package No:** NBR/CS-02

- The Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a loan (Loan 4178-BAN) from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to partly finance the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Integrated Trade Facilitation Sector Development Program (SDP). The National Board of Revenue (NBR) under the Internal Resource Division of Ministry of Finance and the Bangladesh Land Port Authority (BLPA) under Ministry of Shipping will implement the project part of the SDP, which will build Integrated Land Customs Stations (LCSs) and Land Ports (LPs) at Akhaura, Sonamasjid, Tamabil border-crossing points (BCPs), and prepare detailed designs of the central customs facilities, and integrated LCSs and LPs at other BCPs. Part of project financing will be used to engage a Detailed Design Consulting (DDC) firm to provide consulting services for detailed design of Bibibazar, Birol, Darshana, Sheora, Sonahat, and Teknaf BCPs.
- The PIU of "SASEC Integrated Trade Facilitation Sector Development Project: NBR Part" ("the Client"), now invites Expression of Interest (EOI) in English from reputed eligible international consulting firms ("the interested Consultant") from ADB member countries for short-listing in order to provide consulting services in the area of "Detailed Design Consulting Services (DDC)".
- The scope of the consulting services ("the Services") is to prepare detailed designs of the central customs facilities in Dhaka, and integrated LCSs and LPs at other BCPs including Bibibazar, Birol, Darshana, Sheora, Sonahat, and Teknaf as outlined in the Development Project Proposal (DPP) of GOB and Project Administrative Manual (PAM) of ADB.
- The DDC Firm among others will carry out the following tasks:
  - prepare detailed designs of the central customs facilities in Dhaka, and integrated LCSs and LPs at other BCPs including Bibibazar, Birol, Darshana, Sheora, Sonahat, and Teknaf based on the engineering designs prepared by the Project Preparatory Consultant (PPC) engaged under TA 9879-BAN: SASEC Integrated Trade Facilitation SDP;
  - make necessary update of the economic and financial analysis, initial environmental examinations (IEEs), resettlement plans, indigenous peoples plans, gender assessment report and gender action plan, and climate risk assessment and vulnerability reports prepared by PPC, in accordance with the prepared detailed designs; and
  - prepare bidding documents for works and goods following ADB's standard bidding documents.

Details tasks and responsibilities of Consultant are available in Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Services.

- The PIU will conduct the short-listing of the interested consulting firms for the above-mentioned Service. The firms should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The key qualifications and experiences of the Consulting firms required are as follows:
  - Technical Competence: general experience, specific experience in similar assignments (detailed design/detailed design review consulting services with comparable scale and technical specifications. Firms with previous experience in the integrated trade facilitation infrastructure development sector will be given preference);
  - Geographic Experience: experience in similar geographic area;
  - Summary of relevant permanent professional employees and resource persons;
  - Experience in working with Multilateral Development Banks - MDBs (i.e. ADB, World Bank etc.).
- Expected date for commencement of the Services is December 2023 and it is to be implemented over 18 calendar months from the commencement date. It is anticipated that 190 person-months by National Key experts and 155 person-months of Non-key experts will be required.
- The Consulting Firm will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method following the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Procurement Policy (2017, as amended from time to time) and the Procurement Regulations for ADB Borrowers (2017, as amended from time to time).
- According to the latest ADB procurement regulations, the REOI for this Consultant Service has been published electronically in the ADB Consultant Management System (CMS) which can be accessed through the following link:  
[https://selfservice.adb.org/IOA\\_HTML/adb/xcrs/jsp/ADBCsmFwd.jsp?sel=187342](https://selfservice.adb.org/IOA_HTML/adb/xcrs/jsp/ADBCsmFwd.jsp?sel=187342)  
The interested consulting firms are hereby advised to access the REOI through the above link. If any contradiction is found between ADB CMS website notice and newspapers & other website notice, information on CMS notice shall prevail. The Consultants shall have to submit their EOIs electronically through the ADB CMS by 11:59 PM (Manila local time) on 15 May 2023. For technical inquiries/assistance, the interested consulting firms may seek advice by emailing to the following email address: [cmshelp@adb.org](mailto:cmshelp@adb.org).
- Offline submission of EOIs is **NOT** allowed.
- A Consulting Firm may associate with other firms to enhance its qualifications, clearly indicating whether the association is in the form of a Joint Venture (JV) or a sub-consultancy. In case of a JV, all the partners in the JV shall be individually and jointly liable for the entire contract. The EOI should mention the qualifications and experiences of each member of the association as well as contribution of each member in delivering the Services. If a Joint Venture submits an EOI, they must submit a Memo of Intent to form a Joint Venture that explicitly identifies the lead entity entitled to conduct all business on behalf of the joint venture and commits to submitting a joint venture agreement on required terms and conditions if shortlisted.
- The Consulting services contract award and signing will be subject to ADB's approval. The EOI submitted by a consulting firm will be rejected if it or its associated firm has been debarred by GoB or the ADB.
- Further information can be obtained at the address of the undersigned given below during office hours preferably by email.
- The Client will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by the Firm(s) in connection with the preparation or submission of the EOI.
- The Client reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal without assigning any reason.

  
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GD-640



# JAYA AHSAN'S love letter from Japan

**The gorgeous Jaya Ahsan has transcended the boundaries of Bangladesh and India with her powerful performances on the silver screen. The actress who is a travel enthusiast by heart, has arrived in Japan for the first time and is fully enchanted by the scenic beauties and big landscapes. Straight from Japan, the 'Debi' actress tells her own account and how she fell in love with the enamouring Cherry flowers.**

SHAH ALAM SHAHU

It's a magical time in Japan as Cherry Blossoms are blooming all over the country. You are drawn towards the pink blossoms which captivate your visions. This is the first time that I have come to Japan with my family and I am completely engrossed by the fragrance of Cherry flowers.



I have a strong desire to see the heritages of various countries. The first thing that I saw when I came to Japan was a volcano. I have also visited various museums including the Mori Art Museum and Tokyo Digital Museum, among others.

I had a wonderful time experiencing the beauty of Tokyo and also got to see Japan's Highest Mountain, Mount Fuji for the first time.

The people in Japan are so friendly and nice. There is a hotel called Isaka, which is run by a family. They only take about 5-7 people as guests. We had a great time chatting and savouring away their yummy delicacies. It was quite a unique experience and I will cherish it forever.

Waking up in the morning, the first thing that I do is watch the sunrise and sunset, as it really calms your mind. I have also seen the sun rise and set from the top of Mount Fuji. Its picturesque beauty is forever captured in my heart.

I will be going to Hiroshima to experience something new. Let's see what new adventures I add this time to my book of memories.

Narrated by Jaya Ahsan



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF JAYA AHSAN

## High Court demands response from Hoichoi over 'Buker Moddhe Agun'

**Buker Moddhe Agun** is allegedly based on the life and mysterious death of Salman Shah. In response to a petition by the actor's mother, the High Court has issued a ruling yesterday, questioning why the series wasn't declared illegal and barred from broadcasting?



According to the High Court ruling, director Taneem Rahman Angshu alongside the Chairman of Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, the Chairman of National Broadcasting Authority, the Secretary of Information and Broadcasting Ministry, and the Director of the Hoichoi Bangladesh have been asked to respond to this rule.

## Marvel releases Bangla trailer for new Spiderman film

After *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, fans were quite eager to see the sequel of the animated film, titled *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*.

While they eagerly wait for the film's release, a new Bangla dubbed trailer - which was released on April 4 - took the audience by surprise.



# NEWS

## Why families

FROM PAGE 2  
ensure the safety of people, fitness license of vehicles and drivers should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries at the ministries of road, transport and bridges; home; finance; and health; deputy commissioner and superintendent of police in Madaripur; chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority; and managing director of Emad Paribahan whose bus caused the accident, among others, have been made respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu issued the rule following a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) seeking necessary directives.

Senior Advocate Manzill Murshid appeared for the writ petitioner.

## All 3 accused

FROM PAGE 14  
terrorist operation in the building in Shibbari area of Dakshin Surma upazila.

On the evening of March 25, 2017, two grenades exploded around 400 metres away from Atia Mahal when the drive was going on. Seven people, including Rab's intelligence wing director Lt Col Abul Kalam Azad and two police officers, died in the attack.

Later, Rab, SWAT and Bangladesh Army took part in the operation.

After the army-led "Operation Twilight", bodies of four people, including a woman, were recovered from inside the building.

Three cases were filed with Moglabazar Police Station after the operation. One was lodged under the Anti-Terrorism Act and two others in connections with bomb blast and murder.

Initially investigated by the police, the cases were later transferred to Police Bureau of Investigation for further investigation.

On July 14, 2019, PBI filed the final report with the court in two cases related to bomb blast and murder, and requested it to dismiss the cases.

On September 7 that year, PBI submitted charge sheet of the case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act to the court, accusing three people.

That year, Jahurul and his wife Argina were arrested in Chattogram's Sitakunda and Hasan in Cumilla in separate anti-terrorist operations. Later, they were shown arrested in the case.

## They must act to protect rights, liberty of people

FROM PAGE 14  
Sultana, 41, an office assistant of Naogaon's Chandipur union land office, died on March 24, two days after she was detained by some Rab officials on her way to work.

The HC yesterday directed the cabinet secretary to form a high-powered committee, including a district judge and chief judicial magistrate of Naogaon, to probe the detention of Sultana, her death, and other relevant issues.

The court also ordered the government to remove the Rab officials who were involved in the picking up of Sultana and to attach them to the Rab headquarters.

The probe committee was asked to submit the report to the court within 60 days.

The court also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain as to why Sultana's detention by Rab officials without any case

should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

In the rule, the court asked officials concerned why they should not be directed to take action against the Rab personnel who picked up Sultana.

The HC bench issued the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Manoj Kumar Bhowmick.

He filed the petition on March 28 seeking HC directive on the government to form a committee led by a retired judge of the court to probe the incident mentioned in the March 27 report of The Daily Star headlined "Sued under DSA: Woman dies in Rab custody".

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin vehemently opposed the petition, saying that the petition was not acceptable as the government has taken action.

## US is our biggest friend

FROM PAGE 14  
US secretary of state has invited him. "Of course, we're very lucky to get invited three times in a row."

Asked what will be discussed in the meeting with the US secretary of state, Momen said the Rohingya issue and bilateral trade would come up.

In reply to a query about the US concern regarding democracy in Bangladesh, the foreign minister

said, "We fought for democracy. Three million people gave their lives to uphold democracy and human rights. Therefore, we don't need lessons on democracy."

"We want a fair election. America also wants that. We don't disagree with that. We have already made necessary institutional arrangements to ensure a free and fair election," Momen added.

## Webb telescope

FROM PAGE 14  
astronomers' understanding of the early universe.

In two studies published in the Nature Astronomy journal, astronomers revealed they have "unambiguously detected" the four most distant galaxies ever observed.

The galaxies date from 300 to 500 million years after the Big Bang more than 13 billion years ago, when the universe was just two percent of its current age.

That means the galaxies are from what is called "the epoch of reionisation," a period when the first stars are believed to have emerged.

The epoch came directly after the cosmic dark ages brought about by the Big Bang.

Stephane Charlot, a researcher at the Astrophysics Institute of Paris and co-author of the two new studies, told AFP that the farthest galaxy - called JADES-GS-z13-O - formed 320 million years after the Big Bang.

That is the greatest distance ever observed by astronomers, he said.

The Webb telescope also confirmed the existence of JADES-GS-z10-O, which dates from 450 million years after the Big Bang and had previously been spotted by the Hubble Space Telescope.

## Biman pilot dodges probe

FROM PAGE 14  
(Science) or equivalent with physics and mathematics mandatory.

Sadia is the wife of Captain Sazid Ahmed who was recently removed from the post of chief of training following allegations of irregularities including harassment of female cockpit crew, sources at Biman said.

Biman Managing Director and CEO Shafiqul Azim yesterday said the probe body had asked Sadia to appear before it on March 30 and respond to the allegations against her.

"But instead of appearing before the committee, she sent an email that she is abroad," added the Biman boss.

The Daily Star received a copy of the email in which Sadia said, "[sic] My family life and safety was at a serious stake. As a result I became very sick and was later

diagnosed with nerve entrapment with a requirement of immediate treatment. At that point I was not been able to handle all this harassment including all social pressures in this health condition and decided to leave the country for the time being."

After The Daily Star report that Sadia forged her certificate was found to be true, Biman suspended her and launched a thorough probe, said the Biman MD.

"As she didn't appear before the probe body, the committee will take actions against her in line with the rules," he said.

The Biman chief also said they have already requested CAAB to take action against Sadia.

"As a carrier, we cannot revoke her licence. It is the jurisdiction of CAAB

as it issues the licences to pilots," said the Biman MD.

Shafiqul vowed that they would follow due process. "Good governance must be established in Biman. We will bring everything on track."

Even though Sadia said she has left the country, a number of sources in the carrier told this newspaper that she was actually in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, a section of Biman officials was critical of CAAB for seeking an explanation from the carrier for appointing Captain Ishtiaque Hossain as chief of planning and scheduling.

"CAAB has nothing to do with this appointment. A competent person like Capt Ishtiaque is very necessary for Biman," said a senior pilot of Biman.

## Crucial in tackling fire incidents, yet not protected

FROM PAGE 14  
The aviation regulator did not even taken permission from Rajuk to fill the around 30-acre pond, which had long been used as a water retention pond for Ashkona, Uttarkhan and Dakshinkhan areas.

However, Caab Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman had told The Daily Star that they were implementing the project without affecting the environment.

According to a 2019 study by the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), the central Dhaka area lost 3,440 acres out of 9,556 acres of its flood flow zones, water retention areas, and water bodies since the publication of Dhaka's DAP in 2010.

Urban planning expert Adil Mohammad Khan said water bodies are supposed to cover Dhaka city's 12 to 15 percent area considering its population but the coverage in central Dhaka area is only around five percent.

"We didn't feel the necessity of protecting area-based ponds even though different structures have been constructed filling ponds over the years. We have also built roads and box culverts on canals destroying the water network," he said.

According to planning standards,

there should be at least one pond in a small ward and three in a big ward, he said.

Ponds should be protected not only in the capital but also in other cities and towns, and the government will have to take necessary immediate steps in this regard, said Adil, also a former general secretary of BIP.

"A new provision has been incorporated in the DAP 2022 for transfer of development rights. Using these rights, we can even protect private ponds," he said.

Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said a pond or an alternative hydrant system is a must in a particular area, but unfortunately there is no hydrant system in the capital and the ponds are also being filled.

Since wetland protection act-2000 came into force, there is no scope for filling a single pond or water body, but the law is not enforced, he added.

"The main reason for filling ponds in Dhaka city is that the owners think they will get high prices for those. But they don't understand their actual value."

"For the greater interest of Dhaka city, we have to think anew to protect our ponds and all other water bodies," he said.

## Next budget

FROM PAGE 1  
year would be 6 percent, up from this fiscal year's target of 5.6 percent.

Both the ADB and the WB forecasted inflation to be upwards of 6 percent next fiscal year. The WB's projection is 6.5 percent and the ADB's is 6.6 percent.

The budget for the annual development programme would be Tk 263,000 crore, up 6.9 percent from this year's allocation.

The allocation for interest payment will be 27 percent more at Tk 102,376 crore on the back of the depreciation of the taka.

"For the same reason, the allocation for interest payment rose by Tk 9,638 crore in this year's revised budget," said a finance ministry official.

Subsidy expenditure was also increased in the revised budget and will increase in the upcoming budget too.

In the original budget for this year, Tk 81,000 crore was kept for subsidy expenditure; it was topped up by Tk 21,000 in the revised budget.

In fiscal 2023-24, subsidy expenses would take up Tk 100,134 crore.

The total revenue collection target would be Tk 500,000 crore, which is 15 percent more than this fiscal year's.

Of the sum, the National Board of Revenue has been tasked with fetching Tk 430,000 crore, which is 16.2 percent more than this year.



BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

# Love and caste collide

'Pyre' by Perumal Murugan, trans. Aniruddhan Vasudevan (Pushkin Press, 2022), longlisted for the International Booker Prize 2023

SHAHRIAR SHAAMS

Coming from a family that boasts numerous elopements spanning generations, perhaps I am uniquely suited to talk about Perumal Murugan's *Pyre*. I have seen, first-hand, the shake-ups of loyalty, the attempts to disinherit one's own and the clear revulsion that stories of runaway love bring. Murugan's novel is, in this regard, a familiar read that takes on these issues with memorable simplicity. Translated from the Tamil by

where social taboos regarding sex are relaxed. The literary merits of the book failed to surpass right-wing propaganda, as is usually the case, and the book came under fire for being "controversial". Murugan, in dramatic fashion, even quit writing. In a Facebook post, he said, "Perumal Murugan the writer is dead. As he is no God, he is not going to resurrect himself. He also has no faith in rebirth. An ordinary teacher, he will live as P. Murugan. Leave him alone."

Fortunately, after a High Court ruling that

Kumaresan comforts his wife that the hostilities are temporary. "For a few days," he advises her, "take off your ears and keep them aside. Put them back on only while talking to me....everything will be all right."

Yet, that is often easier said than done. Kumaresan's naivety soon catches up on him and he starts to drink, frustrating Saroja even more, who feels as if "all her certainties [are] collapsing." Her dependence on Kumaresan worries her, though she continues to believe in his advice.

Meanwhile, casteism colours the villagers' ability to accept the new couple. It affects every decision in their village. Kumaresan himself had been barred as a child from working with the day-labourers, for he would be mixing with men from other castes. Murugan deftly renders the inhumanity of caste discrimination through Saroja's ordeal. We are never told which castes they belong to, though it is certain they are from the South. The ambiguity helps Murugan's realist take on the issue of caste; eschewing any ray of hope, he settles for despair. As Saroja faces the village's snark daily, we see her wait for the better times culminating in a pastoral savagery that is hauntingly biblical.

The singeing heat, the "vast expanses of arid land," the large rock that dominates the landscape of the book all simulate the tone of Saroja's helplessness in her new environment. Murugan is essentially a writer of great sentimental talent, possessing a realism found in the likes of Bibhutibhusan. That is *Pyre's* gift to literature: Murugan's adeptness in marrying the psychological anguish of his characters with the social realism of familial bonds. Aniruddhan Vasudevan's English version has excelled in sifting up the story's humanist, regional essence (from soda shops to *kuzhambu* dishes) from the usual contextual entanglements of translation.

Melancholy and brutal, one wonders if Saroja's jam started the moment she decided on the need for obedience as a way of navigating through her new community. Perhaps she should have held her ground from the start. Perhaps, to crack the boulder of caste, class, and colour, one mustn't tap light in hopes of chipping it away incrementally but to take a hammer and swing at it with violence in mind.

Shahriar Shaams has written and translated for *SUSPECT*, *Third Lane*, *Adda*, *Six Seasons Review*, *Arts & Letters*, and *Jamini*.  
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DESIGN: HRISHIK ROY

Aniruddhan Vasudevan, *Pyre* is a love story that is a thrill in the vein of Murugan's contemporary, Vivek Shambhag's Kannada novel, *Ghachar Ghochar* (2015), though it is darker, far more serious and nerve-racking in how it accelerates toward its mordant end.

It is the story of young lovers, Kumaresan and Saroja, who get secretly married and run away to Kumaresan's village to start a new life. Murugan has written before about the intricate tragedies of domestic life and how they bring about the worst of our community. In his novel *One Part Woman* (2010), through which I first discovered the author, a couple is unable to have children, a predicament that leads them to consider going to the festival of an androgynous god

dismissed any need for him to apologise or withdraw his book, he *did* resurrect.

*Pyre's* beauty lies in the gradually ascending intensity of its story. Kumaresan's mother, a widow since the age of 20, claims victimhood for this act of "betrayal" her son has committed. Her actions mimic pitch-perfectly how some mothers react to situations of this order in the sub-continent: "I had thought my son would earn some money and walk with his head held high among the people here. But he has thrown fire on me. If he had been killed in a road accident somewhere, I would've written it off as my destiny," she cries, "What did you do to bewitch my son?"

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

# BADRUDDIN

# UMAR: The life and works of a revolutionary

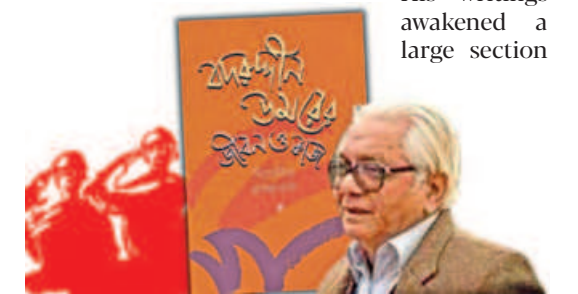
'Badruddin Umarer Jibon o Kaj: Nivedita Prabandhabali' ed. CR Abrar, Omar Tarek Chowdhury, Golam Mustafa, Chowdhury Mufad Ahmad (Bangla Gobeshona Prokashona, 2022)

PRIYAM PRITIM PAUL

Badruddin Umar—a prominent writer, thinker, historian, and political visionary, who turned 91 years old in 2022. This book was published on this occasion to commemorate his eventful life and works. As the editors rightly mention, it took such a long time to attempt this book because a section of our society, who grabbed power and position of the state for years, are uncomfortable with the candour in Umar's writings and opinions.

Badruddin Umar studied Philosophy at Dhaka University, and Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford University, resigning from Rajshahi University as a faculty member to be an active leftist political activist in 1968 when he was just 37 years old. Before his resignation, he wrote three remarkable books, *Sampradayikata* (1966), *Sangskritir Sangkat* (1974), and *Sangskritik Sampradayikata* (1975), which shook the limits and narrowness of the ideology of then Pakistan.

His writings awakened a large section



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

of the budding educated youth to achieve a broader perspective of thinking. This produced much tension among the military and civil bureaucracy of East Pakistan, and Monayer Khan put pressure upon the Vice Chancellor of Rajshahi University to keep Umar silent. Besides, Umar's books on the language movement have been established as classics for years, in which he delineates the entire movement through a broader Marxist perspective. His is a lifelong method to perceive the problems of society and nation.

*Badruddin Umarer Jibon o Kaj* is an excellent collection of essays, articles and recollections about Umar written by many renowned national and international scholars. It starts with a review of *Sampradayikata* by prominent critic and dramatist Kazi Abdul Wadud, who greets Umar's essays with a critical mind when he mentions that, in the golden age of Hinduism and Islam, religions were not perceived as being so overwhelmingly divine as they are now. This short review signifies a great literary savant who was able to properly recognise a young genius of the new age who would lead the intellectual endeavour of this land for decades.

Although Umar has been famous for his unabashed positions on Marxist analysis, his three books played a crucial role in forming Bengali nationalist thought in the Pakistan period based on an anti-communal attitude, as Professor Sanat Kumar Saha states in the book. Umar put importance in acknowledging Chandidas, Vidyashagor, Bankim Chandra, Micheal Madhusudhan, Tagore, Sharat Chandra, Atulprasad, and Abanindra as integral parts of our culture and conveyed that until we recognise that, our cultural heritage will not be forceful enough to create something worthwhile.

Professor Shahidul Islam, in the book, draws an effective comment in this regard. He notes that although Awami League has gained momentum through Bangladeshi nationalism, his generation had learned about it from the writings of Umar, even in his awareness of the limitations of nationalism. Umar's arguments and judgements have been grounded in the truth of history, and he has held the rare capacity to be honest and sincere in his long course of political and social life. Thus Professor Serajul Islam Chowdhury rightly argues that Umar has the audacity to reject according to his own class's attitude, desire, or fascination, and these rejections have served the purposes of making an egalitarian society. Apart from his critical analysis of class, Umar was much aware of the environmental issues when this topic was not familiar in this land.

Professor Khaliqzamm Elias states that the journey of the Banglali Muslim has not matured even after witnessing the creation of two states—this has been a core of Umar's writing. This book has been a genuine effort to commemorate the lifelong revolutionary behind such ideas.

Priyam Pritim Paul is pursuing his PhD at South Asian University, New Delhi.

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

# Homegrown heroine

'The Divining Thread' by Anjum N Chowdhury (HarperCollins, 2022) creates an original, immersive new world

SABRINA FATMA AHMAD

Over the past ten years or so, a confluence of factors such as the rise of social media 'societies' like Bookstagram and Booktok, and the popularity of events like the Dhaka Lit Fest, have created ideal conditions for Bangladeshi writers writing in English to publish, share and sell their work in an unprecedented way. This has allowed for a whole slew of bold, fresh material to arise from this region, across all genres, challenging existing notions of what Bangladeshi literature should look like.

The return of the DLF allowed me to discover a bunch of these voices, and Anjum N Chowdhury's *The Divining Thread* was one such treasure. It is a tiny novella that unfolds like one of those enchanting papercraft dioramas. Zarene is the daughter of a wealthy merchant, betrothed to a prince. On her way to her wedding, she spots a village girl wearing the most exquisite ghagra. Zarene, who has something of an obsession with handloom fabrics, is so enchanted by the outfit that it costs her her marriage, and sets her out on a journey filled with adventures, discoveries and self-realisation.

"The thing about fairy tales is that they're all about morality," Anjum has said of her inspiration for *The Divining Thread*, continuing, "One trope kept popping up that really bothered me—the self-sacrificing girl is virtuous and thus deserves the prince, while the materialistic girl who likes nice things does not deserve the prince. Meanwhile, nobody is holding the prince accountable."

And so, this story, which originally began as a short story, features a headstrong heroine putting her desires above what society expects of her, in order to realise her destiny. And no one is letting any princes off the hook either! While there are some familiar tropes, the story itself will take you to unexpected places. You look at the size of the book and

expect Disney's *Frozen*, and end up with something closer to Brandon Sanderson's *Mistborn* books, but South Asian. Anjum Chowdhury has lived in Dhaka, Delhi and Kathmandu, and she weaves cultural and folkloric elements of each place into the fabric of the narrative to create a truly original fantasy setting, and I for one, cannot wait to see what she does next.

*The Divining Thread* is available at Batighar and Bookworm.

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



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

FEATURE

# War in the waters

EMRAN MAHFUZ, TRANS.

HRISHIK ROY

Even after 52 years of Bangladesh's independence, many memories and incidents of the Liberation War remain undocumented. A lot of these stories are being recorded through individual initiatives, uncovering previously unknown chapters of the war. An individual who has witnessed many such incidents is Md. Enamul Haque, a freedom fighter naval commando who participated in several operations of the war, including Operation Jackpot.

Operation Jackpot was the first—and allegedly best—campaign of naval commandos during the Liberation War of 1971, a deadly blow against the Pakistani invasion forces carried out on August 16, 1971, at Chittagong and Mongla sea ports and Chandpur and Narayanganj ports simultaneously. Twenty five ships carrying food and oil from different countries were sunk, including arms-laden ships from Pakistan.

Haque's book, *Operation Jackpot: Ek Noucommandor Ohonkar* (Nympha Publications, 2023) discusses his experiences as a freedom fighter, as well as his personal life, the background of the War, the inspiring figure of Bangabandhu, and his display of patriotism through dangerous and often life-threatening operations during the Liberation War.

Speaking about his experiences during the war, Haque recalled, "One day, a few Indian officers in the camp called some of us and asked if

anyone among us had swum in the sea. I raised my hand. They asked if anyone had swum in large rivers and a few others raised their hands. They selected 17 of us and took us to another camp, where a captain spoke to each of us. He said, 'This is a suicidal squad—death is certain here. Instead, you should return to the previous camp and train yourself for fighting inside the country.'"

"I said to him that I am aware that death is certain in war, which is why I was there. I wanted to give my life for the country's independence," he said.

Writer Selina Hossain has written in the book's introduction, "While this is Enam's first attempt at writing prose and there are a few limitations because of it, the publication will be widely read due to the subject matter. The book shows that Enamul Haque's involvement in this operation made the movement of the Pakistani invasion forces uncertain. It introduced Bangladesh's liberation war and freedom fighters to the whole world. Such audacity is rarely seen in wars across history. As a result, the book in question is similar to a historical document, thanks to the author's anecdotes."

"However," she added, "I think the quality of editing required for this type of book has to be maintained. It is the responsibility of the publisher as well as the author."

Read the rest of this article on *The Daily Star* website and on *Daily Star Books' Facebook, Instagram and Twitter*.



## Padma rail service closer than ever

### Trial run of first train marks key step in connecting Dhaka with Jashore

We are delighted to see the successful trial run of a special train from Faridpur's Bhanga area to Munshiganj's Mawa area via the Padma Bridge, the first train to cross the mighty river after about nine months of the inauguration of the road section of the bridge. With that, the 6.15km-long multipurpose bridge project, with a four-lane highway on the upper deck and a single-track railway on the lower deck, reaches an important milestone. Commercial operation will not begin until September, when the prime minister is expected to inaugurate the 82km-long Dhaka-Bhanga rail line via the bridge. By June next year, the planned 169km-long rail line connecting Dhaka with Jashore is expected to be finished.

It brings us immense joy to know we're inching closer to that goal and the possibility that it holds. Reportedly, the first train journey was conducted in a festive manner, with the railways minister and the local lawmaker in attendance. People were seen greeting the passengers with cheers on the way. Many stood near their houses or railway tracks and captured the scene on mobile phones. School children were also seen waving to train passengers. Speaking to journalists after inaugurating the trial run of the first train, the railways minister said: "With this journey, Padma Bridge has reached full fruition."

The Tk 39,247 crore Padma Bridge Rail Link Project is an important part of the vision surrounding the Padma Bridge. Once the entire 169km-long rail line with its 20 stations is opened to the public, the distance from Dhaka to Jashore would decrease by 200km, and the travel time would be halved – from about 10 hours to five. Together with the newly established highway connectivity, it will lead to not just much faster communication between the capital and the 21 southwestern districts of Bangladesh, it will also expedite the economic transformation of this region, which is already underway. As an expert has mentioned, economic activities – i.e. fish trade, food processing, tourism, trade of jute and other agricultural products, etc. – will increase more due to the reduced cost of doing business. The government will also need to establish industrial zones, and ensure sufficient supply of electricity, gas and other resources to encourage the establishment of garments, leather goods, cement, pharmaceuticals and textile industries, which will open up employment opportunities for millions of people and reduce poverty in the region.

However, without building the necessary industries and supportive infrastructure to take advantage of the increasing connectivity, the Padma Bridge, which is only 40km away from Dhaka, cannot reach its full potential. We, therefore, urge the authorities to take appropriate steps in this connection to support our vision for the southwest, which demands greater policy support in terms of economic and administrative expansions. Moreover, they should ensure that the rail link project is completed on time and within budget.

## Break the syndicate of ambulance owners

### They are forcing patients to pay almost double the usual fare

At a time when people are finding it difficult to bear even regular healthcare expenses due to the extremely high cost of living, it is disheartening to know that a syndicate of ambulance operators is holding patients hostage at public hospitals by forcing them to use their service, often with double the usual fare. According to a report by this daily, members of two ambulance owners' associations have combined to form the syndicate that operates in every public hospital of the country to make sure that no ambulance from outside their network can take patients to their destinations.

For instance, when patients from Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) want to go back to their respective districts, they are forced to use the services of these two associations, paying extra money. If an ambulance from outside the capital somehow carries any patient out of a hospital in Dhaka, the syndicate takes half the fare as its cut. This has become the general practice, with the hospital authorities turning a blind eye.

An ambulance owner from Kushtia told our correspondent that as soon as patients are taken inside DMCH from ambulances, they are driven out of the hospital premises by the syndicate members to eliminate competition. And a patient's father, who was trying to hire an ambulance to go back to Noakhali from DMCH, said that while an ambulance from Noakhali would cost him Tk 3,000 for the ride back home, the ambulances available in DMCH would charge him around Tk 6,000. This is nothing but extortion. At a time when people are already left high and dry by their increasing medical bills, the syndicate is just worsening their misery.

It should be noted that over the last decade, people's out-of-pocket spending on healthcare has increased significantly. According to the Bangladesh National Health Accounts (BNHA) 1997-2020 data, such expenditure rose from 62 percent in 2012 to 68.5 percent in 2020. This is in addition to the astronomical prices of nearly every commodity, food item, utility or service that people are forced to pay. Unfortunately, the government's effort in this regard has been nothing short of disappointing. Even though the government promised to bring down out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure to 32 percent by 2032, it is most likely to remain a pipe dream given the present reality.

The ambulance menace is just an example of how mismanaged and poorly governed the public health sector is. The question is, why would people have to struggle even to access basic healthcare? Why would they have to sell their assets or borrow money to come to the capital for treatment? Why can't patients get healthcare at affordable prices in their own districts? Clearly, the government has a lot to do to ensure that the middle and low income people can afford healthcare.

As regards the cartel of ambulance associations, we urge the public hospital authorities to take effective steps against them so that they cannot exploit patients. Patients must be spared the extra financial burden during these difficult times.

# The myriad gaps in our fire safety measures



Dr Syeda Sultana Razia is professor at the Department of Chemical Engineering in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

SYEDA SULTANA RAZIA

At least 10 fire incidents occur in Dhaka city daily, according to Fire Service data. As such, it is not all too surprising that we regularly hear of or see fire incidents happening around us. In fact, the available data and statistics also confirm the possibility of such frequency of fires breaking out. So what are the causes behind this apparent increase in the number of fire incidents in the country?

If we take the Bangabazar fire as an example, it was four years ago that the Fire Service had declared the complex to be at risk for fires. Over the years, several fire incidents have in fact occurred at this site, too. There is no denying, by any parties, that this complex was at risk of such a fire. Now, who's to be held responsible for the oversight in not preventing the Bangabazar fire? The designated city corporation? Or the market authorities? Did these parties take any measures to prevent this risky location from catching fire? Such things must be investigated thoroughly.

We usually tend to try to hold someone or an entity responsible for such fires. In doing so, we forget to also identify the causes behind the fires. In the Bangabazar fire case,



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

on individual authorities to enforce fire safety measures, no amount of awareness will be enough to prevent these tragedies.

Among the recent fire incidents, we have also seen a prevalence of explosions or blasts (such as in the Gulistan blast of March 7), which multiplies the impacts of a fire. It must be kept in mind that whenever gases or chemicals are involved, there is a very high chance of an explosion occurring. In people's homes, gas leakages and subsequent accumulation of gas can easily result in a blast and fire incident. Allowing adequate air circulation can prevent this from happening. However, this is made difficult by compact spaces in newer buildings and the fact that mercaptan (an odorous chemical added to gas to make leaks detectable) is not added to gas. Given that leakages from LPG cylinders (used in many households for cooking purposes) are undetectable and cause fires, authorities must consider adding mercaptan to the gas as a preventive measure.

As for preventing explosions at chemical storage factories or facilities, many related internationally-practised

of hazardous ammonia, the products stored require defined methods of handling. But process safety – which focuses on preventing fires, explosions, and chemical accidents in facilities dealing with hazardous chemicals or materials – is markedly absent from our laws. These facilities having the clearance of all regulatory authorities means very little in terms of explosion or fire prevention.

Another issue of concern is that, when an explosion does occur at a facility storing hazardous chemicals, the firefighters who respond to these incidents are never equipped with information on whether dangerous chemicals are involved or not and in what types or quantities. This makes emergency management of fires deadly dangerous for firefighters. The need of the hour is a national database of businesses which are manufacturing or importing chemicals, where these chemicals are being stored, and how they are being used.

We often see truckloads of flammable chemicals being transported through busy daytime roads. This itself represents the

gap in our laws regarding the safe transportation of hazardous materials. The haphazard way in which the drivers and staff of vehicles carrying chemicals or gas cylinders handle the goods also sparks concern as to how adequately trained they are for the job.

When a business sets out to work with hazardous chemicals, there are at least 20 or so regulatory organisations which must first provide clearance

to said business. However, when a massive explosion or fire incident occurs involving the business, none of these regulatory authorities accept any responsibility. Given this reality, when it comes to the safe handling and usage of hazardous chemicals, the need for a single regulatory body cannot be stressed enough.

Moreover, Bangladesh's import of chemicals has been increasing year by year thanks to the growth of the RMG and pharmaceutical industries. But how and where are these huge quantities and varieties of chemicals stored? There must be a separate authority overseeing the registration, handling, and storage of these chemicals in order to ensure safety.

Keeping in mind Bangladesh's imminent graduation out of the least developed countries (LDC) status, it would be fruitful to use whatever subsidies we are granted (while still being an LDC) to progress the sustainable management of chemicals nationwide.

Transcribed and translated by Afia Jahin.



SCAN TO WATCH INTERVIEW

what might have been the reasons behind the complex authorities not taking the steps to prevent the fire? Was it an intentional oversight or were they simply unable to carry out these measures for one reason or another?

Another factor to consider in terms of fire incidents is awareness. Notably, the most recent fire incidents which garnered attention have taken place in both commercial and residential establishments, in older buildings and newly-constructed ones. Do these newer buildings have adequate fire safety measures in place, such as fire alarms and regular fire drills? More importantly, have our laws made enough room for fire safety to be adequately ensured? After all, fire safety awareness must have a top-down approach. If the relevant government bodies do not put pressure

## NO EVMS IN GENERAL POLLS

# Can ballots ensure free and fair elections?



THE STREET VIEW

Mohammad Al-Masum Molla is chief reporter at The Daily Star.

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The Election Commission has done an about-face on their previously resolute decision to use Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in the upcoming 12th parliamentary elections of Bangladesh, citing "a lack of funds" from the government and strong reservations from some of the political parties as reasons for doing so. Until this sudden change of heart, the commission had appeared rather adamant on using the technology in the elections. According to media reports, the EC meeting on Monday did not dwell much on the sensitivities around EVMs. In fact, when asked if there was a political dimension behind this sudden change of mind, the EC secretary failed – wittingly or not – to shed light on the matter.

EVMs are an eventuality; sooner or later, elections in Bangladesh, with nearly 100 million voters, will have no option but to resort to using electronic voting methods. However, there should be little doubt that, for the moment, the Election Commission's decision to not use EVMs is a good move in the

context of the existing national polity. This change in course warrants some examination, though, to ascertain if it is for the right reasons.

The Election Commission did not pay heed to the political parties previously when they expressed strong reservations about the use of EVMs during their dialogues last year. However, the latest decision, commendable as it may be, has come late and fails to address the core challenge this commission faces – credibility with the political parties – especially since the change of heart has not been explained elaborately. Had the commission taken this same decision immediately after their dialogues with the parties, they would have earned more trust, which remains a major impediment for the electoral authority to hold an inclusive election. The commission had, in fact, mentioned in their roadmap that gaining trust was a major challenge. Unfortunately, they missed an opportunity with EVMs.

The change of course regarding EVM use has not been able to sway

the main political opposition camp, BNP, in the slightest. The party said it was least bothered about EVMs and concerned only about the nature of the election-time government. And in this particular issue, the Election Commission has nothing to do really. Despite its limitations, the EC invited the BNP and its like-minded parties for informal talks, which the BNP rejected, calling it "meaningless." Now, we have to see how the other political parties react to the EC invitation in light of its new decision, which certainly provides some food for thought for the parties.

It seems that the Election Commission is giving an impression of becoming increasingly pliable, apparently with some flexibility for the political parties, in order to hold an inclusive election. But is it too little, too late to reduce the distance with the political parties?

If anyone is wondering whether this EVM decision will sway things in the Election Commission's favour, they are in for a rude awakening. It won't. EVMs were used in six constituencies during the 11th parliamentary elections in 2018, and paper ballots were used in the rest. We all know what happened.

The Election Commission has also said that although EVMs will not be deployed during the general polls, they will be used in all five city corporation elections, the biggest elections before the general elections.

If the commission had decided to use paper ballots in those polls as well, it would provide a good opportunity to see how things would pan out and what possible challenges could emerge.

According to the US Department of State's 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the 2018 elections were neither free nor fair, because they were marred by serious irregularities, including ballot box stuffing and intimidation of opposition polling agents and voters.

There are also reports that ballots were stuffed even before the election day. We can remember that Jatiya Party (JaPa) General Secretary Mujibul Haque Chunnunnu, during a dialogue with the Election Commission on July 31 last year, said, "We are proposing that the ballot paper be delivered on the morning of the election. This way, there would not be any issue of stuffing ballot boxes the night before. What can I say, even I have allowed such activities. It is not right."

A genuinely inclusive election depends on a wide range of factors, many of which the Election Commission cannot even begin to address. The decision not to use EVMs is a good start, but it will certainly not be enough. The commission needs to do much more. For now, though, they have earned the ability to at least claim that they are being sincere about getting all quarters to participate in the elections.

## TRIBUTE TO ROKIA AFZAL RAHMAN



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

## My dearest ROKI



Shahnaz Rahman  
is the chairperson and managing  
director of Transcom Group.

SHAHNAZ RAHMAN

On April 5, 2023, I lost my dearest friend, confidant, and someone who was family to my husband and I: Rokia Afzal. Known to me, fondly, as Roki.

My husband, Shamim (Latifur Rahman) and I, were extremely fond of both Roki and Harun bhai. Our strong bond was formed over the years as we went through some of the most wonderful times together while also standing strong by each other during the most trying times.

Over the years, Roki did not simply remain my closest friend, but was also a sister to both my husband and myself. I always admired her amiability, coupled with her drive to make an impact. I had the honour of serving on multiple boards with Roki, from *The Daily Star* (where she was chairman), Reliance Insurance Ltd, *Prothom Alo*, and Bangladesh Lamps Ltd. Roki's presence across both my personal and professional lives was nothing short of an absolute pleasure; it felt good to go through it all together.

As I think of Roki, her infectious smile, glowing energy, and caring nature flood my mind with beautiful memories. From all the times we travelled with the ICC delegation, to our first safari together in South Africa, to when Roki was one of the few selected speakers at Shamim and my 50th anniversary. I feel blessed to have shared all those moments with her. Roki was not just a friend; she was family.

We had lost Harun bhai too soon, and it was then that Shamim and I had the privilege of standing by Roki. I feel that she found comfort and strength in us that helped move her forward. Little did I know that decades later, when I was to lose my husband, I in turn would lean on Roki as my crutch.

During a time when I felt more comfortable limiting social interactions, it was Roki's compassion, empathy, and unstinting support that gave me comfort. It was only Roki and Didi (Anita Chowdhury) whom I found some solace in speaking to after my husband's passing. I never imagined I'd lose them both so soon one after another.

I dearly miss Roki's presence and the light she brought into every room she entered. When I spoke to her recently, she was being cautious about visitors. But in the same breath, she said, "Joyu, when you get back to Dhaka, I will see you."

That was my relationship with Roki, nothing could come between us.

I, along with many others, will miss Roki terribly. Her warmth and kindness will never be forgotten. Lots of my love and affection to my dear Roki, until we meet again in the hereafter.

## A Life Well-Lived



Mahbubur Rahman  
is president of the International  
Chamber of Commerce Bangladesh,  
and chairman and CEO of ETBL  
Holdings Limited.

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN

I am deeply shocked and grieved at the sad demise of ICC Bangladesh Vice-President Rokia Afzal Rahman, an illustrious business personality in Bangladesh and a former adviser to the caretaker government. She was the president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) for two consecutive terms in 2013 and 2014. She was the founder president of the Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (BFWE).

I knew Rokia Bhabhi, as I used to call her, and her husband Harun Bhai for a long time. Harun Bhai was a prominent businessman in the then East Pakistan among Bangalee entrepreneurs.

Rokia Afzal Rahman was one of the most famous icons of women empowerment in Bangladesh. In post-liberation Bangladesh, she played a big role in developing agriculture and industry. Over 15,000 farmers in Munshiganj have worked with her. With MIDAS Financing Limited, she endeavoured to create women entrepreneurs, and in the process played an instrumental role in Bangladesh's economy.

She reflected on her journey of becoming the first woman bank manager of the country in 1964 to becoming a well-known entrepreneur, all the while paving the way for women with drive and determination.

In 1980, when she started a cold storage business for potatoes in Munshiganj, local farmers were initially apprehensive as she was a woman. Her persistence led the farmers to take a chance, and eventually the business flourished. Rokia remains the sole woman in the region to own and operate a cold storage.

She joined the board of MIDAS Financing Limited in 1982, where she advocated to raise the borrowing cap without any mortgage from Tk 2 lakh to Tk 25 lakh. The benefits of MIDAS' borrowing schemes have benefited women across generations.

Her firm commitment to affect substantive social change led her to become an adviser to the caretaker government of

the country, in charge of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Social Welfare, and Ministry of Culture.

With time, Rokia made her mark in diverse sectors including media, insurance, real estate, and power. She was the chairperson of Mediaworld Limited, which publishes *The Daily Star*.

Rokia maintained a strong collaboration with the Ministry of Planning, and

**She joined the board of MIDAS Financing Limited in 1982, where she advocated to raise the borrowing cap without any mortgage from Tk 2 lakh to Tk 25 lakh.**

associations like the Women Entrepreneurs' Association (WEA), Women in Small Enterprises (WISE), Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (BFWE), and several other renowned NGOs where she was a board member. She was also the founder chairman of Presidency University and former chairperson of Asian University for Women.

Her notable presence in international development platforms includes her membership of the Business Advisory Council at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and her membership of the South Asia Women's Network (SWAN). In 1991, she was recognised as one of the Leading Women Entrepreneurs of the World in Monte Carlo. In 2003, she was recognised as the Businessperson of the Year by the American Chamber; she also received the Priyadarshani Award in India.

## A torchbearer for women's economic empowerment



Shaheen Anam  
is the executive director  
of Manusher Jono  
Foundation (MJF).

SHAHEEN ANAM

Her grace was talked about in social circles. We often wondered how she always managed to look so elegant, so properly attired for every occasion. To many of us, she was an inspiration, a mentor who embodied the values and traditions of a South Asian woman, and at the same time was so modern, progressive and forward-looking.

Rokia Afzal Rahman, lovingly known as Roki Apa, passed away peacefully in the early morning of April 5, leaving so many of us shocked and dismayed. It will take a long time to really fathom the loss and void created by her demise. In a world fractured by self-interest and intense rivalry, she stood out as a unifying force, bringing divergent groups and opinions together to come to consensus on issues that were closest to her heart, one of which was women's economic empowerment.

Rokia Afzal started her career as a banking professional in 1962 when few women ventured into the profession. She became the first female bank manager in Bangladesh in 1964. She later entered the world of business and rose in stature to become one of the most respected entrepreneurs in the country, heading 11 different companies. She was elected the president of Bangladesh Employers' Federation and president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and served as the chairperson of

MIDAS.

However, what made her stand out from the rest was her focus on building institutions to assist women to become economically independent. She believed that women's emancipation lay in their economic solvency. To this end, she set up the Women Entrepreneurs Association (WEA) in 1994. WEA's primary objective

**Rokia Afzal started her career as a banking professional in 1962 when few women ventured into the profession. She became the first female bank manager in Bangladesh in 1964.**

was to build skills of micro and small women entrepreneurs to manage their business better to make maximum profits. Thousands of women received training on financial management, book-keeping and sound business practices through the WEA.

She also founded the Women in Small Enterprises (WISE) to further upgrade

and promote women in small enterprises and business. She would travel to remote villages to meet women to help them come out of their cycle of poverty and attain economic independence. She encouraged women to speak out about their problems in running their businesses. Being well-connected in the business world, Rokia Afzal also initiated a number of policy changes for women to get easy access to credit and much needed skills development.

In August 2006, she founded the Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (BFWE). The BFWE works with five million women, most of whom are in small towns and rural areas. This was a major step forward in bringing a large number of women into small businesses. The proliferation and success of women's small enterprises all over Bangladesh today can be largely credited to the pioneering effort of Rokia Afzal Rahman.

With her demise, Bangladesh has lost one of its leading women entrepreneurs who not only promoted her own business, but worked relentlessly to make others, especially women, self-reliant. She dreamt of a Bangladesh with less inequality, where everyone would live with dignity. She also believed in regional cooperation and built close relationships with many across the region. She was an active member of the South Asia Women's Network (SWAN) and was loved and admired as a beloved SWAN sister.

Roki Apa, you will be missed, but your legacy of empowering women economically will live on. You have left behind institutions that will carry forward your wonderful work. At a personal level, my family and I will miss your affection, your care and your ever smiling beautiful face. Rest in peace, Apa. You lived a life of principle, of giving and sharing.

US 'going to hell'

Trump attacks hush money case in Mar-a-Lago speech

AFP, Washington

Donald Trump offered a full-throated defense of his conduct Tuesday in his first public remarks since being charged over hush money payments to a porn star, blasting the criminal prosecution as "an insult to our country."

Hours earlier the 76-year-old former US president pleaded not guilty to 34 felony counts in a dramatic hearing in New York that transfixed the nation -- and began the countdown to the first ever criminal trial of an American president.

"I never thought anything like this could happen in America -- never thought it could happen," Trump told an audience of several hundred donors, political allies and other supporters after returning to Mar-a-Lago, his beachfront mansion in southern Florida.

"The only crime that I've committed is to fearlessly defend our nation from those who seek to destroy it... It's an insult to our country," he said.

"Our country is going to hell".

Trump -- the frontrunner in the race for the 2024 Republican nomination -- said from a stage festooned with American flags in an opulent gold and cream ballroom that "radical left" prosecutors were out to get him "at any cost."

The bizarrely celebratory mood in the room seemed at odds with the gravity of the day's events in Manhattan.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg is prosecuting Trump for cooking his company's books to hide payments he arranged for adult film actress Stormy Daniels days before the 2016 election, to cover up an alleged sexual encounter a decade earlier.

The twice-impeached Republican is the first sitting or former American president to be criminally indicted.



Migrants travel in an inflatable boat across the English Channel, bound for Dover on the south coast of England. More than 45,000 migrants arrived in the UK last year by crossing the English Channel on small boats.

PHOTO: AFP

Taliban signals UN female ban

Reuters, United Nations

The United Nations told some 3,300 Afghan staff not to come to work in Afghanistan for the next two days after the Taliban authorities signalled on Tuesday that they would enforce a ban on Afghan women working for the world body.

UN officials in Afghanistan "received word of an order

by the de facto authorities that bans female national staff members of the United Nations from working," UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told reporters in New York.

The UN is looking into impacts and will meet with Afghan foreign ministry officials in Kabul to seek further clarity, he said. About 400 Afghan women work for

the UN. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres yesterday strongly condemned the ban and called for the decision to be immediately revoked.

"This is a violation of the inalienable fundamental human rights of women," UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said. "Female staff members are essential for the United Nations operations."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Deputy Director District Dairy Farm, Sylhet Department of Livestock Services (DLS) Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

Invitation for e-Tender

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

Table with 5 columns: Sl. No., Tender ID & Reference No., Name of tender, Last selling date and time, Closing and opening date & time.

Md. Shahidul Islam Deputy Director District Dairy Farm, Sylhet 01324-290662

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD Road Division, Barishal Tel: 0431-64185, Fax: 0431-61844 E-mail: eebar@rhd.gov.bd

Memo No. 35.01.0651.403.07.019.19-1294 Dated: 02.04.2023

Invitation for e-Tender

Table with 2 columns: Invitation Reference No., Tender ID, Name of works, Qualification criteria, Tender document price, Tender security amount, Tender document last selling, Last date and time for tender security submission, Tender closing date and time, Tender opening date and time.

01. This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline and hard copy will be accepted. 02. To submit e-Tender, visit to the National e-GP Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

Masud/Mahmud Sumon ID No. 602165 Executive Engineer, RHD Road Division, Barishal

Everyone knew

FROM PAGE 1 Twelve fire engines were still working there yesterday.

"Our probe committee is working to identify the cause of the fire," fire service Director General Brig Gen Md Main Uddin told reporters.

Helal Uddin, who lost his shop, said, "It is impossible to recover from the loss. If the government does not support us, it will be hard for me to even make a living."

Dozens of poor women and children were seen scavenging for clothes that can be used.

One of the women, Aklima Aktar, said she was looking for something that was not badly burnt. "The good ones have already been taken," she said in the afternoon.

Another woman named Kamrun Nahar said she was looking for something to wear.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday met the shop owners' association leaders at the Nagar Bhaban and

promised to give them financial support from the city corporation funds.

Meanwhile, clothes stored at the adjacent Anexo Tower were not completely damaged and traders were moving them elsewhere throughout yesterday.

"We cannot take this risk. I will remove everything from this store as soon as possible," said a trader named Delwar Hossain.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said that the city corporation will make Bangabazar a modern and safe market.

A decision will be made about the rehabilitation of traders, the minister told reporters after visiting the burnt-down market, adding that the city corporation has appointed a contractor for the job.

He also said the city corporation would come up with a logical decision regarding the affected traders.

Govt finally

FROM PAGE 2 Existing unsafe electric vehicles have to be retrofitted following a safe model issued by the government-approved entities.

No electric vehicles with a top speed below 30kmph would be allowed to operate on the national and regional highways, it reads.

Dealers, agents, local manufacturers or producers will not hand over electric three-wheelers or motorcycles to owners without registration, it said.

Different government agencies, including the National Board of Revenue, will announce special incentives to popularise electric vehicles.

Registration of an electric vehicle will be given for a specific period following the "economic life" of the vehicle and the registration will be scrapped after the time expires.

All laws and rules and guidelines of the transport sector will be applicable for drivers of the electric vehicles.

Ukraine may pull out of Bakhmut

Says President Zelensky

REUTERS, Kyiv

President Volodymyr Zelensky yesterday thanked Poland for its "historic" help in rallying Western support for Ukraine during a visit to Warsaw and said Ukrainian troops were still fighting for Bakhmut in the east but could withdraw if they risked being cut off.

Poland has provided vital weaponry to Kyiv since Russia's invasion and taken in millions of Ukrainian refugees. During Zelensky's visit, Warsaw announced it would send 10 more MiG fighter jets to Kyiv on top of four provided earlier.

Zelensky said Ukrainian troops faced a really difficult situation in Bakhmut and Kyiv would take "corresponding" decisions to protect them if they risk being cut off by Russian invasion forces.

Bakhmut, in Ukraine's mainly Russian-occupied Donetsk province, has proven one of the bloodiest and longest battles of Russia's invasion, now in its 14th month.

French President Emmanuel Macron, meanwhile, was visiting China.

Both Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, due in Beijing shortly after him, have said they want to persuade China to use its influence over Russia to bring peace in Ukraine, or to at least deter Beijing from directly supporting Moscow in the conflict.

Official notice from Bangladesh Government regarding tender information, including details on bidding procedures, tender documents, and contact information for the Barishal Road Division.

## Biden eyes AI dangers

REUTERS, WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden said on Tuesday it remains to be seen whether artificial intelligence (AI) is dangerous, but underscored that technology companies had a responsibility to ensure their products were safe before making them public.

Biden told science and technology advisers that AI could help in addressing disease and climate change, but it was also important to address potential risks to society, national security and the economy.

"Tech companies have a responsibility, in my view, to make sure their products are safe before making them public," he said at the start of a meeting of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST).

When asked if AI was dangerous, he said, "It remains to be seen. It could be."



Israeli security forces remove Palestinian Muslim worshippers sitting on the grounds of the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem, early yesterday, during the holy month of Ramadan. PHOTO: AFP

## UKRAINE PEACE

### China has 'major role' to play: Macron

AFP, Beijing

French President Emmanuel Macron said yesterday that China had a "major role" to play in finding a path to peace in Ukraine, as he kicked off a three-day visit to Beijing.

Speaking at a gathering of the French community in Beijing ahead of a meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping today, Macron said France would seek to work with China "in this shared responsibility for peace and stability" in Ukraine.

"China, with its close relationship with Russia, which has been reaffirmed in recent days, can play a major role," he said, noting Beijing's stated opposition to the use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine as well as its proposal for peace between Kyiv and Moscow.

The French president's first trip to China in four years is set to be dominated by the conflict in Ukraine, with an official from his office telling reporters he would seek to stand firm in talks with Xi.

Macron's aims also include preserving and rebalancing China's trade ties with Europe. "We must not disassociate ourselves, separate ourselves from China," Macron told Beijing's French community.

## AL-AQSA MOSQUE COMPOUND

# Israeli police attack worshippers

More than 350 arrested; Arab League condemns; cross-border rockets fired from Gaza

REUTERS, GAZA/JERUSALEM

Israeli police entered Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque in force before dawn yesterday and clashed with worshippers, drawing condemnation from Arab countries and a furious reaction in the occupied West Bank and crossborder strikes in Gaza.

The incident, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and on the eve of the Jewish Passover, came amid fears that tensions built up during a year of escalating Israeli Palestinian violence could be unleashed at the Al-Aqsa mosque, known to Jews as the Temple Mount.

Palestinian militants fired at least nine rockets from Gaza into Israel overnight, prompting air strikes from Israel which hit what it said were weapon production sites for the Islamist group Hamas, which controls the blockaded coastal enclave.

Hamas did not claim responsibility for the rocket attacks but said these were in response to the Israeli raid on Al-Aqsa, where clashes in 2021 set off a 10-day war with Gaza.

As ground-shaking explosions from the airstrikes rocked Gaza, witnesses said Israeli tanks also shelled Hamas positions. "We are not interested in an escalation, but we are ready for any scenario," IDF

spokesman Daniel Hagari said.

As day broke, with international efforts underway to de-escalate the situation, tensions appeared to have calmed in Al-Aqsa, where large crowds of worshippers spent the night as is common during Ramadan.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said 12 Palestinians had sustained wounds during the raid, including from rubber-tipped bullets and beatings, in clashes with



police. It added that Israeli forces had prevented its medics from reaching the area.

Israeli police said in a statement that security units were forced to enter the compound after what it called masked agitators locked themselves inside the mosque with fireworks, sticks and stones.

It said more than 350 people who had barricaded themselves inside were arrested and removed.

Thousands of worshippers spent the night in the mosque

compound, amid fears of possible clashes with Jewish visitors to the site, which they revere as the Temple Mount, the site of Judaism's two ancient Temples.

Under the longstanding "status quo" arrangement governing the area, which Israel says it maintains, non-Muslims can visit but only Muslims are allowed to worship in the mosque compound. Jewish visitors have increasingly prayed more or less openly at the site in defiance of the rules.

The Waqf, the Jordanian-appointed Islamic organisation that manages the complex, considered the third holiest site in the Muslim world, described the police actions as a "flagrant assault on the identity and the function of the mosque as a place of worship for Muslims alone".

The incident drew a sharp reaction from Arab countries. Jordan and Egypt, both involved in recent US-backed efforts to de-escalate tensions between Israel and the Palestinians, issued separate statements strongly condemning the incident, while Saudi Arabia, with whom Israel hopes to normalise ties, said Israel's "storming" of Al-Aqsa undermined peace efforts.

The Palestinian Authority leadership said Israel's crossing of "red lines" at the holy sites risked an "explosion".

## YEMEN CONFLICT

### Iran welcomes US call to back peace process

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday welcomed a US call to help end the long-running conflict in Yemen by backing a peace process, one year after a United Nations brokered truce dramatically reduced fighting.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict have multiplied since the Yemeni government's main foreign backer Saudi Arabia signed a Chinese brokered deal to restore relations with Iran last month.

US special envoy for Yemen Timothy Lenderking said Tuesday that Washington "would like to see the Iranians show support for the political process that we hope is coming".

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani described the envoy's call as "gratifying", stressing that Tehran had been "striving for a peace process since the beginning of the war".

Sunday marked the first anniversary of the UN-brokered truce between the Yemeni government and the Iran-backed rebels.

UN Yemen envoy Hans Grundberg described it as a "moment of hope" as the truce was largely holding despite lapsing in October.

## NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT

# Ardern delivers final speech

AFP, Wellington

Former New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern bowed out of parliament yesterday, making an impassioned plea during her tearful final speech to "please take the politics out of climate change".

Ardern shocked New Zealand earlier this year when she announced she was stepping down as prime minister and retiring from politics, saying she no longer had "enough in the tank".

Draped in a korowai – a traditional Maori feather cloak – Ardern recalled her humble beginnings in a working class family, and how she never expected to lead the country.

"It was a cross between a sense of duty to steer a moving freight train... and being hit by one," she quipped during her valedictory address.

"And that's probably because my internal reluctance to lead was matched only by a huge sense of responsibility."

Ardern steered New Zealand through natural disasters, the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2019 Christchurch mosque massacre – in which a white supremacist gunman killed 51 Muslim worshippers.

But she singled out the climate crisis as the defining issue of her time in politics.

"Climate change is a crisis. It is upon us," she said.

"And so one of the very few things I will ask of this house on my departure is that you please take the politics out of climate change."

The 42-year-old, once the youngest woman leader in the world, choked up at several points during the speech, which she started and finished in the Maori language.

## FISHING BOAT OFF MALTA

### 440 migrants rescued: MSF

AFP, Rome

More than 400 migrants have been rescued from a boat off Malta after an 11-hour operation, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said yesterday after its ship responded to a distress alert. While heading to shelter in the Mediterranean due to bad weather, MSF's rescue ship the Geo Barents received the distress signal, the charity tweeted. The Geo Barents finally reached the boat at 4:00 am Tuesday "after more than 10 hours of navigation in a stormy sea", MSF said. "Unfortunately, the weather did not allow our team to directly perform the rescue, which could have endangered the lives of the people and those of the MSF team," it said.

## US House speaker meets Taiwan leader

AFP, Los Angeles



US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy was set to sit down with Taiwan's president yesterday for a highly symbolic meeting in California that has already prompted outrage and dire warnings from China. The meeting outside Los Angeles comes on what is technically a stopover for President

Tsai Ing-wen, after her two-country trip in Latin America to visit Taiwan's few remaining official allies. A pro-China demonstration also gathered nearby chanting "One China", as Tsai arrived Tuesday evening, following her Central American tour. Beijing claims Taiwan as its own territory and balks at any official contact Taipei has with other countries. This week, it warned McCarthy, a Republican and California native who is second in line to the US presidency, that he was "playing with fire" by meeting Tsai. "China is strongly opposed to the US arranging for Tsai Ing-wen to transit through its territory..." Foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told reporters.

## Japan to fund overseas defence projects

REUTERS, TOKYO

Japan yesterday said it plans to offer countries financial assistance to help them bolster their defences, marking its first unambiguous departure from rules that forbid the use of international aid for military purposes.

Japan's Overseas Security Assistance (OSA) will be managed separately from the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) programme that for decades has funded roads, dams and other civilian infrastructure, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said at a regular news conference.

"By enhancing their security and deterrence capabilities, OSA aims to deepen our security cooperation with the countries, to create a desirable security environment for Japan," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

The change comes as Japan undertakes its biggest military build-up since World War Two in a marked shift away from the pacifism that is set out in its constitution and has dominated its political discourse for decades.

Any aid under the new arrangement will not be used to buy lethal weapons that recipients could use in conflicts with other countries in accordance with three principles that govern arms exports, the foreign ministry said.

Specific projects are expected to include satellite communication and radio systems for maritime surveillance, and preparations are underway for the first aid to be finalised within this fiscal year, the ministry said. The first recipients will likely be the Philippines, Malaysia, Bangladesh, or Fiji.



Police remove activists of the environmental group "Last Generation" (Letzte Generation) sitting on the ground to block a street in front of a banner reading "More democracy: Society Council now", during a protest for climate change in Berlin's Charlottenburg district, Germany yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## US, S Korea hold air drills

AFP, Seoul


South Korea and the United States yesterday staged joint air drills involving at least one US nuclear-capable B-52H strategic bomber, Seoul's military said.

North Korea views such exercises as rehearsals for invasion, and has responded to other recent drills with a spate of increasingly provocative banned weapons tests.

In recent weeks it has tested what state media described as an underwater nuclear-capable drone, and carried out the launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile.

Officials in Seoul and Washington have warned since early 2022 that North Korea may conduct its seventh nuclear test.

The United States and South, have ramped up defence cooperation in light of the growing threats.



## Bangladesh Bank

Head Office  
Dhaka  
Web: <https://www.bb.org.bd>

### Invitation for Tenders

1	Procuring entity name	Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
2	Invitation for	Procurement of 02 (Two) High Configuration Desktop Computers for Bangladesh Bank, Head Office.
3	Invitation Ref. No.	CSD-1(EQUIPMENT)69(3)/2023-118
4	Date	03/04/2023
5	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method.
6	Budget and source of funds	Own Source.

**PARTICULAR INFORMATION**

	Date	Time
7	Tender publication date	05/04/2023
8	Tender closing date and time	18/04/2023 12:00pm
9	Tender opening date and time	18/04/2023 12:15pm
10	Name & address of the office(s)	Address
11	-Receiving tender document	e-Tender at BB website ( <a href="https://etender.bb.org.bd/">https://etender.bb.org.bd/</a> ).
12	-Opening tender document	Common Services Department-1, 6th Floor, Annex-2 Building, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
13	-Pre-tender meeting	N/A.


**INFORMATION FOR TENDERER**

14	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.			
15	Brief description of goods or works	Supply, Installation, Commissioning of 02 (two) High Configuration Desktop Computers for Bangladesh Bank, Head Office.			
16	Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time in days/weeks from the date of contract signing
1	High Configuration Desktop Computer	CSD-1	20,000/-	30 days	

**PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS**

17	Name of official inviting tender	Shafayet Arefin.
18	Designation & address of official inviting tender	Director (CSD-1), Common Services Department-1, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
19	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: 9530148 Fax: 9564117 E-mail: shafayet.arefin@bb.org.bd
20	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.	

DCP: 48/2023-102  
Date: 05/04/2023

  
**Shafayet Arefin**  
 Director (CSD-1)  
 Phone: 9530148  
 E-mail: shafayet.arefin@bb.org.bd

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

GD-637

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Agriculture  
Barind Multipurpose Development Authority  
Head Office  
"Barind Bhaban" Rajshahi-6000

02588862668, 0258886;  
ফোন: ৬৮-০২৫৮৮৬১৮৯৭  
Web: [www.bmda.gov.bd](http://www.bmda.gov.bd)  
Email: bmdaha@bmda.gov.bd

কৃষিই সমৃদ্ধি  
শুভম

Memo No. BMDA/ED/EIECD/05/2022-23/2395

Date: 04.04.2023

### e-Tender Notice (Goods)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Supply of 250mm outer dia. uPVC Pipe & moulded fittings. As described below.

Sl No.	e Tender ID No. (Total tender 11 numbers)	Tender document last selling/ downloading date and time	Tender closing date & time	Tender opening date and time
01	809949, 810070, 810092, 810157, 810159, 810162, 810163, 810164, 810165, 810166, 810167	26/04/2023 16.00	27/04/2023 13.00	27/04/2023 13.00

Name of goods: Supply of 250mm outer dia. uPVC Pipe & moulded fittings.  
Name of Project: Enhancement of Command area and Irrigation efficiency through extension of subsurface Irrigation channel and piloting of Drip Irrigation system" Project (EIECD).

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 tender registered in CPTU 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](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

  
**Project Director**  
 EIECD, BMDA, Rajshahi  
 Phone: 02588862618

GD-629

## Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board

Unit Office  
Bandarban  
[www.chtdb.gov.bd](http://www.chtdb.gov.bd)

Memo No. 29.31.0000.013.07.113.20.972

Date: 04/04/2023

### e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concerned that following tenders have published through e-GP Portal.

Tender ID & Reference No.	Name of works	Type method	Publishing date/ closing date
ID No. 808203, 29.31.0000.013.07.113.20/2022-23/221001100-086.	Vertical Extension of Library Building (2nd Floor) and Construction of Guardian Shade at Bandarban Collectorate School and College.	NCT, OTM	04-Apr-2023 09:00:00, 18-Apr-2023 16:00:00
ID No. 808200, 29.31.0000.013.07.113.20/2022-23/221001100-089.	Construction of Dormitory at Hafezghona CHTDB R/A-02 in Bandarban Sadar Upazila.	NCT, OTM	04-Apr-2023 09:00:00, 18-Apr-2023 16:00:00
ID No. 808206, 29.31.0000.013.07.113.20/2022-23/221001100-083.	Construction of Boundary Wall and Retaining Wall of Master Para Poparung Buddha Bihar of Lama Upazila.	NCT, OTM	03-Apr-2023 09:00:00, 18-Apr-2023 16:00:00
ID No. 808205, 29.31.0000.013.20/2022-23/221001100-084.	Construction of Water Fountain in Badarban Bazar Mosjid.	NCT, OTM	03-Apr-2023 09:00:00, 18-Apr-2023 16:00:00
ID No. 797780, 29.31.0000.021.99.006.19/2022-2023/224246600-02.	Construction of Right Pavement including Earthwork, RCC Retaining Wall and Drain in Ruma Portion at CH 16.85 km from Rowanchari Upazila Sadar to Ruma Upazila in Bandarban Hill District.	NCT, OTM	03-Apr-2023 09:00:00, 18-Apr-2023 16:00:00

This interested firms/person may visit the website: (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) to get the details of the tender. 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. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

  
**Abu Bin Mohammad Yeaser Arafat**  
 Executive Engineer  
 CHTDB, Bandarban  
 Phone No. 0361-62303  
[xen-ban@chtdb.gov.bd](mailto:xen-ban@chtdb.gov.bd)

GD-630

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

### Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Executive Engineer  
District: Rangamati  
[www.lged.gov.bd](http://www.lged.gov.bd)

১৫০  
Bangladesh

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি  
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি।

Memo No.-46.02.8400.000.07.002.2022-305


Date : 04 /04/2023

### e-Tender Notice No-18/2022-23

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of Construction under Detail Package information is available in tender notice under e-GP system portal. 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. Detailed Description of Works, Tender ID & Dropping Schedule are as follows:

Sl No	Name of Work	Tender ID	Procurement Method	Documents Selling Last Date and Time	Tender Opening Date and Time
1	GSID-2/RMT/SBW-25 Improvement of Safchori Shoshan, Wagga Union, Latitude:22.545172, Longitude:92.119643	811921	LTM	26-Apr-2023 17:00	27-Apr-2023 12:00
2	GSID-2/RMT/DW-23 Improvement of Kangalchari Arjya Buddha Bihar, Sabekhong Union, Latitude:22.88994, Longitude:92.010461	811922	LTM	26-Apr-2023 17:00	27-Apr-2023 12:00
3	GSID-2/RMT/SBW-24 Improvement of Karengatali Jame Mosque, Bangaltoli Union, Latitude:23.1326, Longitude:92.1115	811923	LTM	26-Apr-2023 17:00	27-Apr-2023 12:00
4	SSSWRDP/Ran/WD-44/2022-23 Part-A Construction of Jubolaxmi Rajnagar Khal Weir-1 ( 1 bay-8.00m X 1.20m) at ch.1+250km. Part-B Construction of Jubolaxmi Rajnagar Khal weir-2 ( 1 bay-5.00m X 1.50m) at ch. 2+625 km. Part-C: Const. of WMCA office (12.0mx6.0m) [SP No-62042] Under Langadu Upazila, Dist- Rangamati.	811984	OTM	02-May-2023 17:00	03-May-2023 12:00

Further information and guidelines is available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

  
**(Ahmed Shafi)**  
 Executive Engineer  
 LGED, Rangamati.  
[xen.rangamati@lged.gov.bd](mailto:xen.rangamati@lged.gov.bd)

GD-632

## GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

### Department of Immigration and Passports

E-7, Agargaon, Sher-e-Banglanagar, Dhaka-1207  
[www.dip.gov.bd](http://www.dip.gov.bd)

### Invitation for Enlistment

SL NO	Description	Detail
1.	Ministry/Division	Security Service Division, Ministry of Home Affairs(MOHA), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
2.	Agency	Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP)
3.	Procuring Entity Name	Director General, Department of Immigration and Passports, Agargaon, Dhaka
4.	Procuring Entity Code	N/A
5.	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka, Bangladesh
6.	Invitation for	Enlistment of Firm for the supply of items mentioned in SL-17.
7.	Invitation Ref No.	58.01.0000.102.07.013.20-245
8.	Date	04/04/2023.

**KEY INFORMATION**

9.	Procurement Method	Limited Tendering Method.
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**FUNDING INFORMATION**

10.	Budget and Source of Funds	Government of Bangladesh(GOB)
11.	Development Partners	None

**PARTICULAR INFORMATION**

12.	Programme Code	N/A
13.	Programme Name	N/A
14.	Application Closing Date and Time	07/05/2023 at 1:00 PM (BST).
15.	Name & Address of the office	
	Application Form Availability	Assistant Director (Procurement) Room No-9004, Department of Immigration & Passport, E-7 Shre-e Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.
	Receiving Application Form	Assistant Director (Procurement), Room No-9004, Department of Immigration & Passport, E-7 Shre-e Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.

**INFORMATION FOR APPLICATION**

16.	Eligibility of Applicant	w) Vat Registration Certificate with last year pay slip of the Suppliers. x) TIN Certificate of the Supplier. y) Up-to-date Trade License. z) Proprietorship/Partnership/Limited Company ie. Concerned Commercial Documents (Photocopy) of the supplier should be included. aa) Money Receipt of purchase of Tender Documents. bb) Proof of Solvency from bank as supplier, issued within 3 month. cc) Supplier must confirm that he has legal Capacity to enter into a contract under the authority with valid Power of Attorney. dd) At least 2 year's experience certificate for the Supply of similar goods and related services. ee) The minimum amount of supplied Goods is at least BDT 5 million within a year. ff) The minimum amount of liquid assets or working capital or credit facility of the Tenderer: BDT 5 million. gg) Those who are enlisted previous year can renew their enlistment by fulfilling new criteria.
17.	Brief Description of Goods and related Service.	u) Supply of Stationary items. v) Supply of furniture and fixer. w) Supply of computer, Printer, UPS & related spare. x) Supply of Generator, other machineries & spare parts. y) Supply of Air Condition (AC) & spare parts. z) Supply of network Items & spares. aa) Supply of spares for Personalization machine. bb) Supply for printing, publishing and related services. cc) Software dd) And other related goods and spares.
18.	Brief Description of Related or Physical Services	(a) In the time of installation/use if any difficulty arises the supplier will bound to solve the problem. (b) All enlisted firm must attend for selected categories tender (while contact with them via phone, mail or letter)
19.	Price of Application Form (TK)	2000.00 Payable with treasury Chalan (Code No: 1-7375-0000-2366)

**PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS**

20.	Name of Official inviting Application	Director General.
21.	Designation of Official Inviting Application	Director General.
22.	Address of Official Inviting Application	Department of Immigration & Passport, E-7 Shre-e Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.
23.	Contact details of Official inviting Application	Telephone No: 02-9135568

The procuring entity reserves the right to reject any or all the Application without assigning any reason.

  
**(Abu Nayem Masum)**  
 Deputy Director (Procurement)  
 For Director General

GD-631

## Crisis man Mushfiqur delivers yet again

SPORTS REPORTER

A display of sheer determination and focus from Mushfiqur Rahim underlined why the experienced wicketkeeper-batter is still rated as one of the best Bangladeshi batters in the longest format of the game.

Mushfiqur yet again emerged as the crisis man for the Tigers when the hosts found themselves in a spot of bother after resuming the second day of the lone Test against Ireland. But the 36-year-old stood strong and registered a magnificent century to help Bangladesh take a healthy first-innings lead and eye a win by the end of the third day.

The dependable Mushfiqur registered his tenth Test hundred with a mix of composure and aggression.

After losing Mominul Haque early in the day, the hosts were struggling on 40 for three. Mushfiqur and skipper Shakib Al Hasan then steadied the ship for Bangladesh. Although Shakib played the role of the aggressor, Mushfiqur was rock solid at the other end with his temperament and bided his time.



However, he also made sure to dispatch deliveries according to the merit of the ball. Whether it was an on-drive to pacer Mark Adair or his sweeps and reverse sweeps to disrupt the rhythm of the spinners - Mushfiqur showed an array of strokes across the ground.

While Shakib missed out his hundred and was dismissed for 87, Mushfiqur went on to reach his century off 135 deliveries.

"It was amazing. Again, we were in a little bit of trouble with him at the other end and, Mushy generally comes good when the chips are down. He sticks in there and makes sure he gets his call for us and got the score going nicely," Bangladesh batting coach Jamie Siddons said yesterday.

"Again, he was aggressive when it was required. When the bad ball was there, he put it away. But very disciplined around his defence and his leaving game. So, I was really happy with that. In Test cricket, we need to have that." Mushfiqur made sure the Tigers had taken a substantial lead and gained a measure of control on the visitors before being dismissed for a 166-ball 126 that featured 15 fours and a six.

It was Mushfiqur's third hundred in the last year. With ten centuries, he now equals Tamim Iqbal as the Bangladeshi with the second-most centuries in Tests. If he continues to perform in this manner, it is only a matter of time before Mushfiqur surpasses Mominul's eleven hundreds in Tests.



It was another Shakib Al Hasan masterclass on the second day of the one-off Test against Ireland in Mirpur yesterday as the premier all-rounder starred with bat and ball to help his side take control of the match. The Bangladesh captain scored a 94-ball 87 and followed it up by taking two quick wickets late in the day.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Tigers happy about progressing game quicker

SPORTS REPORTER

Taking the game forward or progressing the game quicker was the idea and Bangladesh put a strong foot forward in that regard on the second day of the one-off Test against Ireland.

The Tigers have been looking to make an impact with aggression in all three formats and the Ireland Test provided them with a platform to go forward with that line of thinking in Tests following forays in ODIs and T20Is.

The combination tried to have a positive impact in said approach, picking six batters and three spinners along with three pacers. Mehedi Hasan Miraz at number seven allowed the team management to try the combination and three spinners allowed them to take advantage of the conditions in Mirpur without overlooking the effect of providing pacers with Test experience on home surfaces.

Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Liton Das and Mehedi appeared to embody the approach of scoring runs quickly.

A155-run lead following a first innings total of 369 put Bangladesh in a commanding position to go and win the match on the third day, having already picked up four wickets on day two.

When Mominul Haque was uncharacteristically bowled down his leg side in the 12th over, there was a bit of bother but Bangladesh appeared to take on the challenge through the intent they were trying to portray.

Shakib dispatched the very first ball through the covers, one knee on the

**SCORES IN BRIEF**

Bangladesh vs Ireland  
Only Test, Day 2

**IRELAND:**  
First innings 214 and second innings -27 for four in 17 overs (Moor 10 not out; Shakib 2-11, Taijul 2-7)

**BANGLADESH:**  
First Innings-369 all out in 80.3 overs (Mushfiqur 126, Shakib 87; McBrine 6-118, Adair 2-64)

ground in a picturesque shot. He reached his fifty off just 45 deliveries, playing some brilliant shots, helped by Ireland's inexperienced attack which gave him room.

"He scored quickly but he didn't hit the ball in the air a lot. I thought he was the pick of our batsmen today. He was very disciplined and when we lost three wickets, he held up really well and put a big partnership together which put us in a really good position at the end of the day," batting coach Jamie Siddons said of Shakib's innings yesterday.

Shakib tried a reckless sweep from well outside his off stump to be denied his ton. While Mushfiqur Rahim stuck to his approach, he too tied to dictate terms

and did so successfully to pick up his 10th Test ton. Liton's approach was closer to Shakib's and he missed out on what would have been a quickfire fifty.

In particular, Shakib and Mushfiqur's counter-attacking approach proved the catalyst for progression and that aggressive approach.

Asked to remark on the approach from the batters, Siddons was careful in separating fast scoring from the loss of wickets, especially the last five wickets falling for less than 50.

"Yeah, pretty aggressive I thought. We were served up a few bad balls so it was good that the boys were really involved to put them away. The scoring rate went up quickly, which took the game forward pretty fast. Happy with the way we batted. One got a hundred but four players probably should have.

"Five for fifty in the last session probably the only downer on the day," he said.

Asked to comment on the roles of the six batters, Siddons reminded that Mehedi is now a 'proper all-rounder'. "As an all-rounder, he's sitting beautifully at number seven. I think that's what's happening underneath that makes that look little bit thin."

That means the tail needed to wag more to validate the approach. "We need to get better, Taijul [Islam] needs to be a better player than that if we're going to only play seven batsman," he said about the longer tail. But in terms of progressing the game, Tigers will find merits in being able to dominate proceedings.

## 'One of my greatest achievements'



SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza yesterday became the first cricketer from Bangladesh to be handed honorary lifetime membership by the prestigious Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), the custodians of the game's laws.

The honour had previously been bestowed on former BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury and former BCB general secretary Raisuddin Ahmed.

Prominent former cricketers such as MS Dhoni, Eoin Morgan, Kevin Pietersen, Yuvraj Singh, Dale Steyn and Ross Taylor were named in the new list. "Mashrafe Mortaza enjoyed a 19 year career with Bangladesh as an impactful bowling all-rounder," MCC quoted in the press release.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) also congratulated the former captain for being the 'first international cricketer of the country to have been bestowed with the privilege.'

Mashrafe posted on Facebook that it was one of his greatest achievements.

"MCC's honorary lifetime membership is one of my greatest achievements in cricket," the speedster who is still going strong in domestic cricket, wrote. "Being in the same list as Dhoni, Kevin Pietersen, Yuvraj Singh, Dale Steyn, Ross Taylor and Eoin Morgan is a matter of great happiness. It is also recognition for Bangladesh cricket. I hope everyone will pray that I can uphold Bangladesh cricket's values in the future as well."

19 cricketers were named on this year's list, including representatives from eight of the 12 Test-playing nations. "The names that have been announced today are some of the greatest international players of modern times, and we are privileged to now count them as valued members of our club," the MCC statement read.

## KKR sign Roy to fill Shakib and Iyer void

REUTERS, New Delhi

Kolkata Knight Riders have signed England opener Jason Roy for the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL), the organisers said on Wednesday, to bolster their batting lineup weakened by the absence of Shreyas Iyer and Shakib Al Hasan.

Kolkata captain Iyer has been ruled out of entire IPL with a lower back injury which would require surgery and keep him out of the World Test Championship final against Australia in June as well.

All-rounder Shakib, currently leading Bangladesh in a one-off test against Ireland in Mirpur, has also conveyed his unavailability citing national team commitments.

Kolkata spent \$341,671 to buy Roy, who played the 2021 season for Sunrisers Hyderabad, the IPL organisers said in a statement.

## 'History repeats itself' as Lukaku racially abused

AFP, MILAN

Romelu Lukaku said Wednesday that history was repeating itself in Italian football after the Inter Milan striker was subjected to monkey chants by Juventus fans during the two teams' stormy cup clash.

Lukaku scored a stoppage-time penalty which secured Inter a 1-1 draw in Tuesday's first leg of the semifinal between Italy's most widely supported clubs, a game that ended with three players sent off and the two teams at each other's throats.

One of those red cards was for an incredulous Lukaku, who was dismissed for a second booking for his celebrations following his dramatic equaliser, before which he was abused by a small number of home supporters.

The Belgium striker held his finger to his mouth as he has after scoring for his country and told Juve supporters to "shut up" while being mobbed by his joyous teammates.

On Wednesday Lukaku said on Instagram: "History repeats itself. Been through it in 2019... and 2023 again..." referring to when three-and-a-half years ago Inter's hardcore ultras told him that monkey chants



directed at him by Cagliari fans were not racist.

A star-studded list of names from across the globe have come out in support of Lukaku, sending him their best and offering messages of general support.

It was not initially clear that he

had been abused and neither Inter coach Simone Inzaghi nor his Juve counterpart Massimiliano Allegri mentioned racist chanting while discussing a post-match row which led to Samir Handanovic and Juan Cuadrado also being dismissed and continued as the players headed into the tunnel.

That led to Juve goalkeeper Mattia Perin labelling Lukaku's shushing of the Bianconeri supporters behind the goal as a mark of disrespect.

"We have to be the first to set an example, but in these games it's difficult to hold back," Perin told Sky Sport Italia. "It's a lack of respect to celebrate under the Curva of the opposing team."

However, Michael Yormark, the president of Roc Nation Sports International who represent Lukaku, demanded late on Tuesday an apology from Juve for "hostile and disgusting racist abuse" the 29-year-old received from some home supporters "before, during and after the penalty".

Juve said they were working with police to "identify those responsible" while Serie A put out a statement condemning "all instances of racism" after yet another weekend featuring offensive chanting from supporters.



Lionel Messi, who returned to Paris Saint-Germain training yesterday ahead of their away fixture against Nice on Saturday, has the media busy speculating on whether he would move out of PSG next season. The Argentine was jeered by home fans in PSG's 1-0 defeat to Lyon in their last game on Monday, leading to French World Cup-winner Emmanuel Petit advising Messi to "get out" of the Parisian club, while compatriot Thierry Henry said, "Messi should return to Barcelona and finish his career there."

PHOTO: TWITTER

## SULTANA'S DEATH

# They must act to protect rights, liberty of people

Says HC on law enforcers, orders withdrawal of Rab members involved in detaining her

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ordering the formation of a committee to probe the detention of Sultana Jasmine by Rab, the High Court yesterday said law enforcers must act to protect the people's fundamental rights and personal liberty.

The constitution, which is the supreme law of the country, has guaranteed "right to protection of law"; "protection of right to life and personal liberty"; and "safeguards as to arrest and detention", said the bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Muhammad Mahbub Ul Islam.

These fundamental rights of the citizens cannot be breached in any manner, it said.

The bench made the observations during the hearing on a writ petition that challenged the legality of Rab picking up Sultana of Naogaon when she was not accused in any case.



SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Bangladesh batting stalwart Mushfiqur Rahim celebrates his 10th Test hundred as Liton Das applauds during the second day of the one-off Test against Ireland in Mirpur yesterday. Bangladesh pushed Ireland to a corner by the end of the day, leaving the visitors at 27 for four, after taking a 155-run first-innings lead.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## ATIA MAHAL RAID

# All 3 accused acquitted in case under anti-terror act

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Sylhet tribunal yesterday acquitted all three accused in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act after an anti-militant operation in Atia Mahal of Dakshin Surma upazila six years ago.

The three are Jahurul Haque alias Jasim, his wife Argina alias Razia and Md Hasan.

Anti-terrorism Special Tribunal Judge Muhammad Nurul Amin Biplob delivered the verdict, said Muminur Rahman, special public prosecutor of the court.

Muminur said the court completed hearing arguments on March 14. Twenty-one witnesses out of 33 testified before the court, he said.

On March 23, 2017, police launched an anti-

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

## Biman pilot dodges probe, 'leaves country'

RASHIDUL HASAN

Sadia Ahmed, a first officer of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, who was suspended for forging her educational certificate, reportedly left the country without appearing before a Biman probe body.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) has asked Biman to suspend her "privilege of the licence" so that she cannot fly any commercial aircraft at home or abroad.

"The CAAB is yet to revoke her licence as we will have to follow some legal procedure and investigation," a top official of the regulatory authority told The Daily Star.

Wishing anonymity, the official also said that following a report by The Daily Star on March 1 about irregularities in hiring pilots, CAAB asked the national flag carrier to investigate Sadia and submit a report to it.

Sadia had submitted a forged educational certificate that said she was a student of science group during her Higher Secondary Certificate exams.

Data retrieved from the Dhaka education board shows that she was a student of humanities, and she passed with second division from Shaheed Anwar Girls' College with Bangla, English, civics, psychology, and home economics.

The CAAB rulebook mandates that all commercial pilots must have an educational qualification of HSC



Sadia Ahmed

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

## PONDS IN DHAKA CITY

# Crucial in tackling fire incidents, yet not protected

HELEMUL ALAM

In every fire incident, water bodies, especially ponds, can play an important role in putting out the flames. And yet there is no proper initiative to protect ponds in Dhaka.

Experts say ponds not only play a vital role in dousing flames but also enhance the beauty of their surroundings, create a healthy atmosphere and ease waterlogging.

Tuesday's fire at Bangabazar proved the importance of ponds again as firefighters fought the blaze with water from a pond at Dhaka University's Shahidullah Hall when they were facing scarcity of water.

A total of 3,464 ponds has been marked on the recently published Detailed Area Plan 2022 of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) in its 1,528sqkm jurisdiction.

Of them, 1,188 are in Gazipur region; 1,002 in Narayanganj region; 609 in Kaliganj and Rugganj regions; 277 in Keraniganj region; 205 in central Dhaka region; and 183 in Savar region.

Rajuk Chairman Anisur Rahman Miah told The Daily Star that the

water bodies conservation act-2000 stipulates that even the privately owned ponds cannot be filled and that's why the Rajuk was taking initiatives in this regard.

Anisur said they would also request different organisations to protect their ponds.

Some 65 ponds were marked on the map of the undivided Dhaka city corporation based on a survey carried out between 2003 and 2011. The ponds were located in 28 out of 90 wards.

This correspondent visited all the 65 locations of the ponds in 2017, but found many of those were already filled. Some more were filled later in the name of urbanisation.

According to the Playground, Open Spaces, Gardens, and Water Bodies Conservation Act 2000, no one can fill water bodies or stop the natural flow of water.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) last year filled a large water body to the east of the Hajj Camp in the capital's Ashkona for a housing project for its officials and employees.

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## US is our biggest friend

# Says Momen

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said the United States is Bangladesh's biggest friend, one of the biggest investors, and export destinations.

Momen is set to leave for the US tomorrow where he is scheduled to meet US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Washington on April 10.

"America is the only country who provided 100 million vaccines for free during the Covid-19 pandemic. They even supported us the most after the Rohingya influx. Other countries have helped us as well. But I'll express gratitude when I meet him," Momen said while addressing the media after a comic book unveiling in the capital.

He said he would visit the US this time as the



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## Webb telescope discovers oldest galaxies ever observed

AFP, Paris

The James Webb Space Telescope has discovered the four most distant galaxies ever observed, one of which formed just 320 million years after the Big Bang when the universe was still in its infancy, new research said on Tuesday.

The Webb telescope has unleashed a torrent of scientific discovery since becoming operational last year, peering farther than ever before into the universe's distant reaches — which also means it is looking back in time.

By the time light from the most distant galaxies reaches Earth, it has been stretched by the expansion of the universe and shifted to the infrared region of the light spectrum.

The Webb telescope's NIRC2 instrument has an unprecedented ability to detect this infrared light, allowing it to quickly spot a range of never-before-seen galaxies — some of which could reshape

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PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

A portion of a recently constructed embankment has washed away into the Dhaki river in Gunari village at Sutarkhali union of Khulna's Dacope upazila. If river erosion continues like this, the embankment, built by the WDB between 2016 and the end of 2022 at the cost of Tk 220 crore, at least 60,000 people of the upazila's Sutarkhali and Kamarkhola unions will be heavily affected. The photo was taken recently.