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TO KNOW

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FIRE-RAVAGED BANGABAZAR

Traders can run shops in the open

DSCC to make temporary arrangements before Eid

MD ABBAS and DIPAN NANDY

Traders of the burnt-down Bangabazar Shopping Complex will erect makeshift shops on the ground to resume their business ahead of Eid.

The traders want to erect a marquee on the 21,250 square feet ground and set up shops on mats or papers as soon as the city corporation removes the charred remains of the wood-and-corrugated-iron-sheet building that was burnt to the ground on Tuesday.

The shop owners association leaders will meet officials of Dhaka South City Corporation on Sunday to decide how the arrangements can be made, said Jahirul Islam, president of Bangabazar Complex.

Ashikul Islam, another leader, said the traders now want to recover from the losses as much as possible ahead of the holidays and look forward to being rehabilitated.

The shop owners, who have always been averse to the city corporation's plan to make a 10-storey shopping mall in the place, are now more open to the idea, he added.

The association may even withdraw a writ petition it filed with the High Court to halt the city corporation initiative, he said.

But the process has to be fair, he added.

Mohammad Rony, a shop owner who suffered a significant loss, said, "Clothes worth Tk 25 lakh were completely burnt. If the government lends a hand, we may be able to start over."

Rakon Uddin, who owned two shops and two warehouses, said, "I have been running the business for 20 years. During Eids, I used to help poor people. But after losing about Tk 30 lakh, I am the one seeking handouts before Eid."

Meanwhile, Salman F Rahman, the prime minister's private industries and investment adviser, visited the site yesterday and said the place would be cleaned.

"Traders will be able to temporarily open their businesses, following laws and regulations," he said.

He added that the traders listed by the city corporation will be compensated within three to four days.

A DSCC committee making the list with the help of the owners' association was asked to submit its report by Sunday.

Dhaka Readymade Garments Bebooshayee Samabay Samity organised a human chain on the rubble and urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to rehabilitate the traders.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh told reporters

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The shop owners, who have always been averse to the city corporation's plan to make a 10-storey shopping mall in the place, are now more open to the idea.



The Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar decorated with colourful lights on the occasion of Bangladesh National Parliament's golden jubilee today. The first session of parliament was held at the then Sangsad Bhaban in Tejgaon on April 7, 1973, with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as its first Leader. The photo was taken last night.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Jail, fine for 'illegal' strike

Says bill placed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bill was placed in parliament yesterday with a provision of punishment for enforcing "illegal" strikes that affect essential services.

The Essential Services Bill 2023 proposed a maximum one-year jail and a fine of Tk 1 lakh for violation of the law.

Once the bill is passed by the Jatiya Sangsad, the government will be able to declare any service essential for a maximum of six months whenever necessary, according to the proposed law.

After the declaration, enforcement of strike or shutting off and announcement of layoff in that service would be illegal and those would be punishable offences, the bill proposed.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Only journalists can protect journalism

Others will never do, as they only want to use us

MAHFUZ ANAM

This piece is not to contest but to contend, not to rebut but to debate, not to counter

but to inquire, not to make sweeping judgement without facts, but to judge on the basis of facts, not to put labels because it suits one's point of view, but to categorise the issue as it confronts us. Most importantly, it is not to point a finger at others, but to point a finger at ourselves to ask what the state of our beloved profession is, to pursue which we risk our lives and livelihoods.

Finally, this piece is to most earnestly and humbly encourage my fellow journalists to introspect, to ask, to search – in their work, but more importantly in their hearts and minds – as to where objective journalism ends and political journalism begins.

This piece is also to sincerely urge my fellow journalists to think most seriously about how to address the problems of mistakes that inevitably occur in print, electronic and online media.

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THE THIRD VIEW



In the rubble of Bangabazar market a labourer scavenges for a pair of jeans his son may be able to wear. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Adani Power chapter begins in Bangladesh

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh has started to receive about 750 megawatts of electricity from the Adani power plant in India yesterday, putting to bed the suspense surrounding the start of the cross-border transmission.

Commercial production at the power plant, located in an Indian village about 100km from the Bangladesh border, began after a successful 14-day reliability test that ended yesterday, The Daily Star has learnt from top officials

of the ministry of power, energy and natural resources and Adani Group. They spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Reliability test is the continuous uninterrupted operation of the entire facility for 72 hours at maximum load.

The reliability test was conducted in presence of a technical committee of the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB).

"They [Adani Power] are eligible to announce the commercial operation date," Power Secretary

Habibur Rahman told The Daily Star.

However, some procedures need to be completed before an official start date is announced, he added.

Power Grid Company of Bangladesh data showed that Jharkhand's Godda power plant was supplying about 750 megawatts of electricity on average since April 1.

The power plant, which is on 425 hectares of land in the Indian eastern state of Jharkhand's

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Rana Plaza owner gets HC bail

No bar for his release in murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted bail to Sohel Rana, the owner of Rana Plaza, which collapsed in April 2013, claiming at least 1,136 lives.

The bench of Justice Md Akram Hossain Chowdhury and Justice Mohammad Ali passed the bail order in a murder case against Sohel and many other, after a hearing on a rule questioning why he should not be granted bail.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Sohel's lawyer Md Qamrul Islam said there is, as of now, no legal bar to his client's release from jail following the HC order.

"If the government files an appeal with the Supreme Court's Appellate Division challenging the bail order, and if the apex court stays the HC verdict that granted the bail, Sohel cannot walk out from jail."

He added Sohel is not the owner of Rana Plaza. His father Abdul Khaleq, who purchased the land and got the plan for constructing the building from Rajdhami Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), was the owner.

Meanwhile, Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Mohiuddin Dewan, who opposed the bail petition,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

"This will threaten vulnerable Afghans who depend on humanitarian assistance. We urge the Taliban to... reverse this decision."

Antony Blinken condemns Taliban ban on Afghan women working for UN



NAT'L ELECTION

Its legitimacy may go down to zero if not participatory

Says CEC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi

Habibul Awal has said if the major political parties do not participate in the next general election, there will be no crisis

over the election's legitimacy, but its legitimacy may "go

down to zero".

"Use of EVMs or ballot papers is not a challenge for the election. The biggest challenge is the political crisis. Whether the major parties will take part or not is a big challenge," he said while talking with reporters at his office yesterday.

The BNP and some other political parties have announced that they would not join the next parliamentary polls, due by late December, if it is held under the incumbent government.

Habibul called upon the political parties to resolve the current crisis through discussions.

About the EC's decision to not use electronic voting machines in the next general election, the CEC said it is not possible to ensure 100 percent free and fair elections regardless of the use of EVMs or ballot papers.

"But if the election is conducted using EVMs, it is safer."

He said that the EC decided to use ballot papers in the election and there was no pressure from anyone in this regard.

"It is entirely our decision. It has not been done under pressure from anyone. The decision was not taken to make the BNP interested in the election.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

We Deeply Mourn



We are deeply saddened by the demise of Ms. Rokia Afzal Rahman. She breathed her last on Wednesday, 5th April 2023 at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital at 2:00am Singapore time. Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajeun.

We are praying for the salvation of her departed soul and our profound sympathy to the bereaved family.

Ms. Rokia Afzal Rahman is survived by her loving son, daughters, sons-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandchildren and a host of well-wishers.

Her Namaz-E-Janaza will be held at Gulshan Azad Masjid on Friday 7th April after Asr prayer at 5:00 pm. She will be laid to rest at Banani Graveyard.

Rinks GROUP

A group of DU students demand scrapping of DSA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of Dhaka University students yesterday demanded scrapping of the Digital Security Act and withdrawal of all cases filed under the act.

They also demanded justice for Sultana Jasmine who died in Rab custody recently. She was picked up before a case was filed against her under the DSA.

The students raised the demands at a rally, organised under the banner of general students, in front of the Raju Memorial Sculpture on the campus.

Students alleged that the government formulated the DSA for giving protection to corrupt people and suppress dissenting voices.

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No question of scrapping DSA

Says info minister

UNB, Dhaka

Comparing the Digital Security Act with the ones in the US and Australia, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said that Bangladesh's DSA is better than that of those countries.

He also ruled out any possibility of scrapping the DSA despite demands from many rights and journalists' groups and civil society.

"There is no question of scrapping the DSA," he said.

The minister came up with the remarks while talking to representatives of Crime Reporters Association in a views exchange meeting at his ministry in the capital.

He said, "The law ministry is working so that journalists are not subjected to harassment due to the DSA, and our law is easier compared to the US."

Hasan informed that the DSA of the US allows a maximum punishment of 20 years of jail sentence while there is no such long sentence in the DSA in Bangladesh.

Comparing the DSA with the one in the US, the information minister said there is a provision of life imprisonment in the US if someone dies for any digital crime, but the DSA in Bangladesh is easier for similar crimes.

"To provide digital security to people the Act was enacted, and every country has such law. Australia's Cyber Act is rougher," he said.

The information minister said they are more vigilant to protect journalists so that they are not subjected to harassment under the DSA.

He said that media people are now being less harassed compared to the past.

Replying to a question, he said the journalists will have to work with courage while threats come from outside while discharging duties.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Debutant Lorcan Tucker celebrates his hundred during the third day of Ireland's one-off Test against hosts Bangladesh in Mirpur yesterday. The 26-year-old right-hander became only the second Irishman to hit a Test century after Kevin O'Brien and his 108-run innings helped the visitors to stage a brilliant fightback to finish the day at 286-8 in their second innings, taking 131 runs lead.

Revised budget up 2.5pc amid austerity

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

The finance ministry has already finalised the revised budget for this fiscal year and the concerned ministries are informed about it but it will not be made public until June.

But as per section 12 of the Public Money and Budget Management Act 2009, the finance ministry is supposed to place the revised budget before the parliament by March and only after approval would the concerned ministries learn of their new allocations.

The government has not been following this for 13 years now: the revised budget is placed along with the new budget in June and the supplementary budget is passed within a few days.

As in previous years, the finance division informed the revised allocation to the respective ministries in the last week of March. The Daily Star has learnt from officials involved with the proceedings.

When the revised budget was first placed in the parliament as per the law, former lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta opposed it saying it was unconstitutional.

Since then, the finance ministry

refrained from placing the budget before the parliament.

A former high official of the finance ministry suggested either following the act properly or repealing the respective sections of the law.

Meanwhile, the revised budget fixed for this fiscal year is Tk 660,508 crore, down 2.5 percent from the original budget.

About Tk 21,000 crore allocation was increased for agriculture, power and food subsidy and Tk 9,638 crore for interest payment.

Though the government took various austerity measures, the operating budget has been increased by 0.21 percent to Tk 432,942 crore in the revised allocation.

But the development budget allocation has been reduced by 7.51 percent to Tk 227,566 crore.

The allocation for the annual development programme has shrunk by Tk 18,500 crore.

About Tk 21,000 crore allocation was increased for agriculture, power and food subsidy and Tk 9,638 crore for interest

payment.

Due to the ongoing austerity measures policy, about Tk 6,470 crore has been reduced from the goods, service and resource procurement and public works.

About Tk 1,093 crore was reduced in the salary and allowance and Tk 7,585 crore was curtailed from the allocation for investment on shares and equity.

The government has kept the target of Tk 433,000 crore based on the receipts for the first nine months of the fiscal year, officials say.

The revenue target for the National Board of Revenue remains unchanged at Tk 370,000 crore. In the first eight months, the NBR could collect 53 percent of the target, up 2 percentage points year-on-year.

In the nine months, only 27 percent of the non-NBR revenue target of Tk 18,000 crore was collected. The collection trend was similar last year. Even after the low achievement, the collection target was retained.

The total non-tax revenue target was fixed at Tk 45,000 crore. About 54 percent was collected in the first nine months of the current fiscal. At this point last fiscal year, 51 percent of the total target was collected.

Reason with Russia for Ukraine peace

Macron tells Xi during talks in Beijing

REUTERS, Beijing

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday urged Chinese President Xi Jinping to reason with close ally Russia and help end the Ukraine war, while Xi responded by saying he hoped the two sides could hold peace negotiations as soon as possible.

In closely-watched talks in Beijing, which also involve EU chief Ursula von der Leyen, Macron said the West must engage Beijing to help end the crisis and prevent "spiralling" tensions that could split global powers into warring blocs.

"The Russian aggression in Ukraine has dealt a blow to (international) stability," Macron told Xi, standing alongside the Chinese president outside the Great Hall of the People at the start of their meeting.

"I know I can count on you to bring back Russia to reason and everyone back to the negotiating table."

In comments after his meeting with Macron, Xi called for Ukraine and Russia to resume peace talks and find a political solution to the conflict.

France said the discussions between the leaders were "frank and constructive," while China described them as "friendly" and "in-depth".

Macron also asked Xi to press



Russia to comply with international rules on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said he will station tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine's neighbour Belarus, a move seen as a dangerous escalation in the bloody year-long conflict.

Xi said all countries should respect commitments on not using nuclear weapons and "nuclear war shouldn't be waged", without mentioning Russia. He called on the international community to "refrain from any action that would lead to further deterioration of the crisis or even to it getting out of control".

Ursula von der Leyen welcomed Xi's stated willingness to hold talks with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Russia-Ukraine war, said the CEC.

Another proposal was prepared seeking Tk 1,200 crore for refurbishing the existing usable EVMs, but the government didn't agree, he said.

Habibul said that election commissioners were split over using EVMs in the national election.

"We were also divided. We discussed in a democratic manner. Two of our commissioners said

"It was interesting to hear that President Xi reiterated his willingness to speak when conditions and time are right," Von der Leyen said.

Some analysts had suggested that Macron and von der Leyen may adopt a "good cop, bad cop" role in Beijing with the convivial Frenchman promoting a "reset" in ties and the EU chief laying out the thornier issues and red lines in those relations.

In the battlefield, Ukrainian and Russian forces battled in the streets of Bakhmut, eastern Ukraine's devastated "fortress" city, and Ukrainian soldiers said they were ready to launch their long-anticipated counter-offensive once the weather improves.

"The battles for Bakhmut continue," said Andriy Yermak, a senior adviser to Zelensky.

"They are underway in the streets, enemy attempts to encircle the city are failing. Our command fully control the situation with the defensive 'fortress'," he said, using the nickname Zelensky gave to the city.

The leader of Russia's private Wagner militia, Yevgeny Prigozhin, said fighting was continuing in the west of the city.

"It must be said clearly that the enemy is not going anywhere," he said on his Telegram channel.

we can hold elections in 25 to 30 constituencies [using EVM]."

The CEC said they would try their level best to hold the next Jatiya Sangsad polls in free and fair manner.

He said it is relatively easier to control vote-rigging when EVMs are used.

Habibul also said that question does not arise about midterm polls.

Adani Power chapter

FROM PAGE 1

Godda district, produced 685MW of electricity in peak time during the day and 749MW in the evening peak time, data shows.

The electricity that is coming -- through a dedicated transmission line of approximately 106km up to the Indian border -- is from the first unit of the 1,600MW ultra-supercritical plant. The second unit will start production soon, according to Adani Group officials.

PDB is obliged to take 34 percent of the power generated by the plant every year over the 25-year contracted period.

The price of electricity from the



plant, which was built at an estimated cost of Rs 14,816 crore, would be \$0.1363 per kilowatt-hour at the current coal rate in the international market, Adani Group said in a statement on April 2.

The energy cost would be \$0.0939

per kilowatt-hour and the capacity charge \$0.0424 per kWh, according to the statement.

"Adani Godda is willing to indicate that its delivered price would never be higher than its peer independent power producers, namely Rampal, Matarbari and S Alam stations," it wrote.

However, BPDB officials declined to comment on the pricing issue.

The prices of coal for Godda will be fixed based on the average price of two indexes -- the Indonesian HBA Index and the Australian Global Coal Newcastle Index, according to the power purchase agreement between Adani Group and PDB.

5 to die for killing expatriate worker

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

A Cumilla court sentenced five people to death in the 2017 murder case filed over the killing of an expatriate worker.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Nasrin Jahan passed the verdict yesterday around 11:00am.

The convicts are Lipi Akter, Rahmat Ullah Roni, Kamal Hossain, Tajul Islam, and Md Sajib, said Assistant Public Prosecutor Jahid Hasan.

On August 1, 2017, the body of Akbar Hossain Babul was recovered from a roadside ditch in the Mudafforgonj area of the Cumilla-Noakhali highway.

Sheikh Milton Rahman, the then sub-inspector of Laksham Police Station, filed the case accusing five people as per the victim's wife's statement.

Of them, four confessed in court under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

2 killed in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Two people riding on a motorcycle died Wednesday night after they crashed into a truck in Sylhet's Mitrimahal area on the Sylhet-Companiganj regional highway around 10:00pm.

Pulok Ray, of Sylhet's Shibbari area, died on the spot, and Faisal Ahmed of Sylhet's Shahparan, died hours later while receiving treatment at the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

The motorcycle crashed into a goods-laden truck after the truck first collided head on with a police van from Companiganj Police Station, said Hillol Roy, officer-in-charge of Companiganj Police Station.

Five police personnel were injured in the incident, he added.

"The truck fled the spot after the accident. We are trying to track it down," the OC said.

Mother jailed for life in child's murder case

BSS, Lakshmipur

A Lakshmipur court yesterday sentenced a woman to life imprisonment for killing her three-year-old son in Laharkandi union under the district's Sadar upazila in 2021.

Sabina Yesmin Shilpi was also fined Tk 10,000, which in default, she would have to spend another year in jail.

District and Sessions Judge Md Rahibul Islam delivered the verdict in the afternoon.

On the night of September 26, 2021, Sabina Yesmin Shilpi killed her son with a sharp blade and she tried to commit suicide at her house.

5 'robbers' arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police arrested five people while they were allegedly preparing for robbery in Dinajpur Sadar upazila early hours of yesterday.

The arrested are Rubel Hossain, Jahidul Islam, Anwarul Islam, Siam Islam, and Sajal Islam, all of whom were from Sadar upazila.

They were accused in multiple criminal cases with different police stations in Dinajpur, said Superintendent of Police Shah Iftekhar Ahmed.

"Acting on a tip-off about a group of men preparing to rob a house in Kornal village, a police team conducted a drive there and arrested five people and seized sharp weapons from their possession around 2:00am," he added.

Its legitimacy may go down

FROM PAGE 1

We didn't think in that way."

The CEC said a political party was expecting that EVMs would be used in all 300 parliamentary seats. But after hearing everything, the EC decided to use EVMs in maximum 150 seats, he added.

A Tk 9,000 crore project was taken up to buy additional 2 lakh EVMs, but the government could not approve it due the situation arising from the

AFTERMATH OF THE BLAZE

Dark days ahead for traders of Bangabazar

Business unlikely to bounce back, they fear

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Nur Alam, 60, a seasoned trader of Bangabazar, is still traumatised by the fire that took place there 28 years ago, in the same way as the recent one. During that time, it took him only a year to bounce back. However, this time he is doubtful whether that can happen.

"I lost everything in the 1995 fire. But the market came back to business in just two months and I was able to recover from the losses," he said.

Amir Hossen, 65, another trader running his business in the market for years, echoed the same.

On Tuesday, a massive fire razed the Bangabazar clothing market to the ground, gutting thousands of shops and driving the traders towards a financial meltdown.

Traders say that back in 1995, business was small in scale, so it was easier for the businesspeople to bounce back, but now, the trade in Bangabazar has proliferated to such an extent that they fear it will take a long time to get back to the previous situation.

For example, Zakir Hossain, who started out small but now is a big supplier to Bangabazar, is in significant financial trouble.

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Gausia market at risk of catching fire

Says fire service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gausia market in the capital's New Market area is at risk of witnessing a fire incident, said fire service officials after visiting the market for a survey yesterday.

A mock drill in 2020 identified risk factors at the market, and those aspects have been improved only slightly, Md Bazlur Rashid, assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defence, told reporters on the spot, adding that the present fire-fighting system is not sufficient.

Bazlur also said there is insufficient water in the market's water reservoirs.

"There are fire extinguishers in the market but fire-fighting equipment like fire hydrants, hose reels on every floor, landing valves,

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As the sun glistens over the Padma river, two fishers make their way across a char, a temporary sandbar formed by the river's ever-shifting currents. With their nets slung over their shoulders and the sound of rushing water in their ears, these men navigate the terrain in search of the day's catch. For generations, communities along the Padma have relied on fishing as a way of life, adapting to the unpredictable rhythms of the river and its bountiful offerings. With each step, these fishers carry on a tradition passed down from their ancestors, connecting them to the natural world and the rhythms of the earth. This photo was taken recently in Munshiganj, which borders Dhaka.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Janaza of Rokia Afzal Rahman today

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The namaz-e-janaza of noted entrepreneur Rokia Afzal Rahman will be held in the capital's Gulshan Azad Masjid today after Asr prayers.

She will be laid to rest at Banani graveyard the same day. Her body was scheduled to be flown to the capital late yesterday from Singapore, accompanied by her two daughters, son and grandchild.

Meanwhile, the business community, female

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PRAYER TIMING					
APRIL 7					
Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4:28	12:30	4:45	6:20	7:45	
JAMAAT 4:38	1:15	5:00	6:30	8:15	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					
SEHRI, IF TAR TIMING					
RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IF TAR		
15	07		6:20		
16	08	4:22	6:21		
17	09	4:21	6:21		



MY DHAKA

Sewing magic into clothes

RBR

Let me ask you a puzzler: who is the most sought-after person in Dhaka during this month of Ramadan? I know without a blink of an eye you would say your tailor, and my-oh-my, are they a busy lot or what?

The wish to wear exclusive, trending outfits during the Eid festivity by both men and women makes tailors the busiest people during Ramadan. There are plenty of ready-made options, yet, as soon as Shab-e-Barat ends, people start to crowd their local tailoring shops.

Branded shops carry generic designs, whereas, your tailor will give you the exact measurements and designs you fancy; they would even add a few ideas of their own.

Fast fashion, store-bought clothes are all okay, but the Eid panjabi has to be special. The fresh as daisy white morning dress with distinctive marks of your designing abilities -- one that will set you apart from others -- has to be custom-made. There is a constant need for good tailors because they deliver exclusivity.

The famous men's panjabi and sherwani tailor, Bashir Uddin of New Market, stops taking orders from the first week of Ramadan. Like most other tailors, they are overlooked because traditionalists



prefer a bespoke panjabi over store-bought, nonspecific ones.

Abdul Rob's tailoring shop in Purana Paltan is a tiny room where there is a makeshift double bunk, almost like a bad duplex idea. The lower part has space for the "cutting master", along with stacks of unstitched fabrics. The sound of their machine is the only constant in this stuffy work area where stitching, sewing, and embroidery are all done with clockwork precision.

Even the tailors who set up shop under the canopy of a big tree near a bazaar are busy. Shortening the length of your new jeans or khakis, fixing the rough tear on your old chikankari panjabi, making new bathroom or kitchen curtains, or sewing

new household rags and pillow cases -- the chores add on as Eid approaches.

Tailors become like elves from that one fairytale, doing the impossible in the shortest time. They all work way past midnight, finish their sehri and retire for the day at the break of dawn to start all over from noon. The scenario is the same throughout the city. Deliveries continue until the frenzied last hour of chandraat, the eve of Eid.

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

Glenrich Int'l School launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With an underlying message to prepare the learners for the future world, STS Group yesterday launched Glenrich International School (GIS).

Glenrich will follow the Cambridge curriculum, with a goal of making students learn about scholastic subjects, while at the same time, be encouraged to pursue creative pursuits.

Education Minister Dipu Moni inaugurated the school at the capital's Badda area yesterday.

In her inaugural speech, she said, "Over the last decade, Bangladesh has made notable progress in expanding access to education. If we get international quality education in the country, it is very good for our students."

"Students here should learn about Bangladesh, its language, history and culture. Students who

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



MONEY LAUNDERING JP lawmaker calls out finance minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party lawmaker Kazi Firoz Rashid yesterday came down heavily on the finance minister, along with other ministers, for his failure to stop money laundering.

"Who will be held responsible for money laundering? The minister [finance] doesn't remain present [in parliament]. [I] don't even know the responsibilities of the ministers. Who does what, there's no accountability. As banks are not accountable, ministers are also not accountable," he said.

The MP said this while speaking on a point of order.

He said Bangladesh Bank and the banking department of the finance ministry will decide how the banks will run. They should be held accountable.

He demanded the formation of an investigation committee to find out why people's money is being looted and who is responsible.

Citing news about looting Tk 1,000 crore by the former chairman of South Bangla Bank Amzad Hossain, the lawmaker said Amzad is living in the United States, bought several houses and is doing business there with the money he smuggled.

"He did not do this alone. Bangladesh Bank regularly audits every bank. Tk 1,000 crore was not laundered in one day. What did Bangladesh Bank and the Ministry of Finance do?" questioned Rashid.



With the ongoing month of Ramadan, the city's roads are usually clogged with even more traffic at certain hours, like when people are rushing to get home for iftar. This photo was taken in the capital's Kakrail yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



As banks are not accountable, ministers are also not accountable.

KAZI FIROZ RASHID
Jatiya Party lawmaker

SALE

18000 SFT. OFFICE SPACE
(ON ONE FLOOR)

22 CAR PARKING
GULSHAN AVENUE
STUNNING VIEW OF HATIRJHEEL

01913531497

Man hacked to death ‘by rivals’

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Nganj

A man accused in 16 cases – including some centring murder and robbery – was hacked to death allegedly by his rivals in Fatullah, Narayanganj yesterday. The deceased – Afzal Hossain, 42 – was from West Deobhog’s Banglabazar area of Kashipur union.

His brother Mozammel Hossain alleged that Afzal had a conflict with a local thug who along with his accomplices picked him up while he was going to appear before a court in a drug-related case.

Later, they hacked him to death, he said.

Locals said Afzal was the thug’s associate once. Recently, a dispute arose between them over establishing supremacy in the area.

Fatullah Police Station Officer-in-Charge Rizaul Hoque said Afzal – who was arrested several times earlier in more than a dozen of cases – was murdered by his opponents over previous conflicts.

The body was sent to Narayanganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy. Filing of a case was underway in connection with the killing.

Bangladesh elected to UN Commission on Status of Women

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has been unanimously elected a member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) for a four-year term, 2024-2028.

The election was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York yesterday.

Along with Bangladesh, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Mali, Romania, Bolivia, Brazil, and Colombia have also been elected to this body.

“Bangladesh is a role model for gender equality and women empowerment. This election demonstrates the recognition of Bangladesh’s steadfast commitment to achieving gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment,” Ambassador Muhammad Abdul Muhith, permanent representative of Bangladesh to the UN, said after the election.

Over the past decade, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has made significant strides in reducing gender disparity in education, health, and political representation, and in increasing women’s access to economic opportunities.

Bangladesh is committed to further advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the election to the CSW will provide a platform to showcase its achievements and share best practices.

The CSW is the principal global intergovernmental body of the United Nations exclusively dedicated to promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, comprising 45 members.

Every year, during its two-week session, member states, civil society and other stakeholders gather at United Nations Headquarters to evaluate progress in gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and advancement of women worldwide.

Bangladesh was a member of this Commission from 2019 to 2023.

SC clears way for HC

FROM PAGE 5

universities to get their pending writ petitions heard and disposed of by HC as early as possible.

An eight-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique passed the dismissal orders after hearing arguments on the review petitions.

Other seven judges of the bench are Justice Md Nuruzzaman; Justice Obaidul Hassan; Justice Borhanuddin; Justice M Enayetur Rahim; Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam; Justice Md Abu Zafar Siddique, and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim. Details of the SC order could not be known as its full text has not been released yet.

However, private universities’ lawyers Barrister Omar Sadat and Barrister Mohammad Sakhwat Hossain said following the SC order, their clients won’t need to pay any income tax till the HC disposes of the writ petitions.

The apex court didn’t alter its previous directive in 2021 that asked the National Board of Revenue not to demand or collect any income tax from private universities across the country until further orders, they said.

Sakhawat Hossain said around 100 writ petitions have been filed with the HC since 2008 regarding the government decision on imposing income tax

on private educational institutions, including private universities and private medical, dental and engineering colleges.

There are 98 private universities in Bangladesh, and among them, 84 of them with 4.5 lakh students are currently active, he added.

Meanwhile, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told reporters that the private universities must pay income tax in accordance with the Finance Act.

Additional Attorney General Sk Md Morshed told this correspondent that the HC couldn’t hold hearings and dispose of the pending writ petitions due to pendency of the review petitions which were pending with the SC regarding similar issues.

Now, HC can adjudicate the writ petitions, he added.

Thieves in

FROM PAGE 5

took away a laptop and two phones,” he said.

The Gulshan DC said Afsana is the gang’s ringleader. Law enforcers arrested her in front of the check-post near Gulshan police station around 9:00pm on Wednesday. Based on information provided by her, they later arrested the rest from different areas. Afsana has 14 cases and two warrants against her, filed with different police stations, including the Gulshan one.

Pay some, get so much more

FROM PAGE 5

deposits in exchange for appointments in different schools or hospitals but also for appointments in his institute.

For instance, Ahsanul took Tk 5 lakh as a deposit from one Rajib Al Khandker in exchange for an appointment as the deputy managing director of “Rajshahi Digital Business Plus Limited” with a monthly salary of Tk 25,000.

With a promise of paying

double benefits, Ahsanul also took Tk 25,000 from one Golam Sakline for his institute’s projects, read the investigation’s findings.

However, Ahsanul suspended operations of all the projects taken under the institute after February 20, 2013, as his investors started demanding their money back.

Although the institute’s activities were suspended, investigators found that Ahsanul built a

three-storey building in Rajshahi’s Bilsimla area on a seven-decimal land with the embezzled money.

The couple also bought four-storey buildings on five acres of land in the same area spending Tk 2 crore, found CID’s investigation.

“Zinnat remarried as Ahsanul was in jail for a long time. Both Zinnat and Ahsnaul are currently on the run. Drives are underway to arrest the two,” said Moniruzzaman.

Glenrich Int’l School launched

FROM PAGE 3

don’t know about their roots, can’t be students,” she said.

She suggested adding scholarships for students who require aid for admission at the institution.

Matt Cannell, acting British high commissioner to Bangladesh, said, “It gives me immense pleasure that this school

will follow the Cambridge curriculum.”

Ramesh Mudgal, principal of Glenrich International School, said, “The world is changing rapidly, so we need to change the way of education for our children to keep pace with that,” he added.

Speakers at the programme said students will also get a French

language course, along with robotics education.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi; Deputy Minister Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury; Steve Plisinski, director of International Schools Services, USA; CEO of STS Group Manas Singh; and Prof Md Mashiur Rahman, vice-chancellor of National University, also spoke at the programme.

Dark days ahead for traders

FROM PAGE 3

He lost Tk 4 lakh of clothing in the recent fire. Furthermore, he has given clothing items worth Tk 18 lakh to traders of Bangabazar on credit and has items worth Tk 30 lakh in his warehouse. “If there is no business in Bangabazar, who will I sell to? How will I get back my money?” he asked.

To recoup losses, traders now want to restart their

business immediately. As the concrete market that Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) plans to build there will take a lot of time, they want an alternative solution for the time being, possibly setting up shop at the open space.

In the least, they want a way to continue doing business during Ramadan, a time when the business peaks.

Abdur Rahman,

president of Mohanagar Shopping Complex at Bangabazar, told The Daily Star, “We are exerting all our efforts to re-open the market as soon as possible. We will meet the DSCC mayor so that we can run our businesses for the rest of our Ramadan days.”

At least 2,931 shops burnt to ashes in the recent fire, which required 48 units of firefighters to douse the blaze.

Janaza of Rokia Afzal

FROM PAGE 3

entrepreneurs and noted individuals from all sectors are mourning the loss of the iconic businesswoman. Tributes are still pouring in from colleagues, friends, admirers, and organisations.

Nobel Laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus expressed condolences on the death of Rokia. “I am deeply saddened by the loss of my best friend and close associate Rokia Afzal Rahman. She was not only a friend, but was my frequent adviser and encourager,” he said in a condolence message.

“She enthusiastically embraced my concept of social business from the beginning and tried to convey it to the business community. Her compassion for the poverty-afflicted women in Bangladesh and... contribution to women’s empowerment is unparalleled,” read the message.

The executive board of the International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh

(ICC-B) expressed deep condolences on the demise of Rokia, who was the vice president of ICC-B.

“During her tenure as vice president, she extended her guidance and support for carrying out various activities, including organising several international conferences in Dhaka,” ICC-B said in a press release.

She also attended various seminars and workshops of the organisation both at home and abroad.

ACI Chairman M Anis Ud Dowla also expressed his condolences.

“In her death I have lost a sincere friend, the community has lost an effective leader and the society lost a benevolent person. We pray to Allah for her eternal peace,” said Anis in his message. Rokia passed away at Mt Elizabeth Novena Hospital in Singapore on Wednesday at the age of 82. She is survived by her two daughters, a son, sons-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandchildren and a host of well-wishers.

Rangpur journo sued

FROM PAGE 5

from local and national newspapers and TV channels took part in the human chain in front of Rangpur Press Club from 11:00am to 12:00pm.

The speakers alleged that Shiplu grabbed land forging documents and he was involved in drug trading. He filed the case after Jamuna TV aired a report against him on April 1.

Contacted, Shiplu said the report was false and fabricated and it tarnished his and his party’s image.



Career Opportunity

BRAC is an international development organisation founded in Bangladesh that partners with over 100 million people living with inequality and poverty globally to create sustainable opportunities to realise potential.

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Job Location : BRAC Head Office

Application Deadline : 15 April 2023

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(ক) ৫ম তলা ২৭০০ স্কয়ার ফিট (আবাসিক অগ্রাধিকার)
(খ) নিচতলা ২৫০০ স্কয়ার ফিট (জিম অগ্রাধিকার)
যোগাযোগ: ০১৮৭৩-৯৪৫২৬৪
০১৭২০-৩৮৮৫২১

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Nabiganj, Habiganj
www.lqed.gov.bd

Tender Notice Number: 08/2022-2023

e-Tender Notice (Open Tendering Method)

Memo No. 46.02.3677.000.14.001.23-181 Date: 06/04/2023


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

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of work	Last date and time of document selling	Date and time of closing & opening
804326	e-Tender/PEDP-4/HAB/NAB/2022-23/W1-03796	Construction of additional classroom Rasulganj GPS under PEDP4.	30-04-2023 11:00	30-04-2023 15:00


This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for more details please contact support desk contact numbers.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the e-GP Portal and also from e-mail: ue.nabiganj@lqed.gov.bd or call to 0832856108.

Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.



Sabbir Ahmed
Upazila Engineer
Nabiganj, Habiganj
Phone # +0832856108



"শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
আম শহরের উন্নতি"



Construction of the Khulna-Mongla broad-gauge rail line goes on in full swing aiming to meet the revised deadline of its inauguration. Once installed, this 64.75-km line is expected to establish a direct connection between the port and the capital, thereby enhancing regional rail connectivity. This photo was taken in Khulna's area yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Thieves in the guise of doctors, nurses

Gulshan police arrest six of gang

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They used to enter buildings in posh areas of Dhaka wearing aprons and masks, carrying identity cards, to pose as doctors and nurses. Unlike actual physicians, their motives were insidious.

Using their disguise, they steal valuables from the flats and flee the scene.

Gulshan police arrested six members of such a gang from different areas of the capital on Wednesday, Abdul Ahad, deputy commissioner of DMP's Gulshan Division, told a press briefing yesterday.

The arrestees are — Afsana Akhtar Esha alias Mim, 22; Tanmoy Biswas, 30; Swapan Sheikh, 45; Nurul Islam, 27; Kalim Uddin Kalu, 40; and Mokhlesur Rahman, 51.

During the arrest, six laptops, 10 phones and two bags were seized from their possession.

The gang used to target houses where the occupants are either sick or elderly, and few in number.

Jahedul Islam, a businessman and a victim of the gang, recounted how Afsana entered his home on January 25, posing as a physiotherapist for his mother.

"My house is very secure. We have a housekeeper as well as CCTV. I went out of home for only three minutes to drop my child for school. Meanwhile, she

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

'Pay some, get so much more'

Couple embezzled Tk 39 crore through fraudulent schemes, finds CID

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Taking a deposit of Tk 3 lakh, he first gave the depositor an appointment for the post of an assistant teacher in a school with a monthly salary of Tk 18,000.

After appointing the teachers, he used to seek funds to set up the school.

All these moves were made under the banner of "Rajshahi Digital Business Plus Limited". Formed on July 14, 2010, the institute's target was taking up projects to address basic rights like food, clothing, education, medical care, and employment.

Its founder Md Ahsanul Azim, now 44, established a school in Rajshahi named "Rajshahi Digital Plus Model School" from grade one to six on January 11.

However, the school's operations stopped within a short time.

On September 18, 2012, Ahsanul founded a hospital named "Rajshahi Digital Plus Model Hospital" under a healthcare project in Rajshahi. This hospital, too, stopped its operations after some days.

Ahsanul used to allure people by saying if they invest in education or health projects, they would get back double the benefits after a certain period.

Following the strategy, Ahsanul and his wife Zinnat Fatema, now 38, embezzled around Tk 39 crore from different people through their fraudulent schemes.

The financial crime unit of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) claimed to have found evidence of the couple embezzling a huge sum, after their three-year-long investigation.

A charge sheet was also submitted against the couple to a Rajshahi court yesterday, in a case filed with Rajpara

police station of Rajshahi on March 20, 2020.

CID brought money-laundering charges against the couple as they transferred the sum from the said institute's account to other accounts. With the money, they bought properties and shares in the stock market, according to the investigation's findings.

Inspector Md Moniruzzaman of CID's financial crime unit confirmed the development to The Daily Star yesterday.

"We have confiscated two four-storey buildings and seized 30 bank accounts from the accused," he said.

Although the institute's activities were suspended, investigators found that Ahsanul built a three-storey building in Rajshahi's Bilsimla area on a seven-decimal land with the embezzled money. The couple also bought four-storey buildings on five acres of land in the same area spending Tk 2 crore.

He mentioned that Ahsanul is wanted in at least 20 to 25 other cases related to fraudulence. He was arrested earlier in 2020 and was in Rajshahi jail, said Moniruzzaman.

Later, Ahsanul was transferred to Bogura jail and got bailed out from there, said the official.

As a huge number of people were looking for Ahsanul to get their money back, he went into hiding immediately after securing bail, he said.

According to the investigation's findings, Ahsanul not only takes

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Rangpur journo sued under DSA

Fellows form human chain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Journalists formed a human chain in Rangpur yesterday, demanding withdrawal of a case filed against one of their fellows under Digital Security Act.

Zakaria Alam Shiplu, a councillor of ward-15 in the city and general secretary of Tajhat unit of Awami League, filed the case with cyber tribunal in Rangpur on Wednesday against Sarkar Majharul Mannan, staff reporter of Jamuna Television in Rangpur, and two others.

Following the complaint, Judge Abdul Mojib ordered Police Bureau of Investigation to submit a report after investigation, said Rurul Amin Talukar, public prosecutor of the court.

Yesterday, journalists

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

INCOME TAX ON PRIVATE UNIVS SC clears way for HC to hear petitions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday cleared way for the High Court to hear and dispose of nearly 100 pending writ petitions centring the imposition of 15 percent income tax on private universities.

The apex court dismissed five separate review petitions against its observation that earlier said HC will individually hear and dispose of the writ petitions that challenged the decisions of then caretaker government and elected governments regarding collection of income tax from private institutions.

Yesterday, SC asked the lawyers for the private

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Cancel Prothom Alo's registration' Demand Duta, other orgs at human chain

DU CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Dhaka University Teachers Association and members of various organisations demanded the cancellation of Prothom Alo's registration for "practising yellow journalism".

The demand was raised at a human chain held yesterday at the capital's Central Shaheed Minar, under a common banner of "Shadhinota Socheton Nagorik Samaj".

Speakers addressing the human chain demanded the cancellation of the newspaper's

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার					
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ					
অধিনায়কের কার্যালয়					
৯ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন					
যোলাশহর, চট্টগ্রাম					
উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)					
স্মারক নং-এপিবি(৯)/বার্ষিক টেন্ডার-২০২৩-২০২৪/৩৩৫২			তারিখ: ০৫/০৪/২০২৩খ্রিঃ		
এতদ্বারা "দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ এবং রেগুলেশনস-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত-২০০৯, ২০১৬ ও ২০১৮)" এর বিধান মোতাবেক ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে ৯ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, চট্টগ্রামের নিম্নলিখিত লটভিত্তিক কাজের জন্য প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী ঠিকাদারের নিকট হতে নিজস্ব প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে সীলমোহরকৃত মুখবন্ধ খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।					
০১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	:	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/ পুলিশ বিভাগ।		
০২.	সংস্থা	:	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।		
০৩.	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	:	অধিনায়ক (অ্যাডিশনাল ডিআইজি), ৯ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, যোলাশহর, চট্টগ্রাম।		
০৪.	কি কারণে দরপত্র আহ্বান	:	"লট-১" কোড নং-৩২৫২১০৮ স্বাস্থ্য বিধান সামগ্রী, "লট-২" কোড নং-৩২৫২১০৫ অন্যান্য মনিহারি, "লট-৩" কোড নং-৩২৫৬১০৩ ব্যবহার্য দ্রব্যাদি সরবরাহ, "লট-৪" কোড নং-৩২৫৬১০৬ এপিবিএন অফিসার ও ফোর্সের কমব্যাট পোশাক সেলাই, "লট-৫" ফোর্সের টাটকা রেশন সামগ্রী, "লট-৬" জ্বালানী কাঠ সরবরাহ, "লট-৭" গম পিষাই (ক্রাসিং), "লট-৮" কুলি, "লট-৯" উপ-পরিবহন কুলি এবং "লট-১০" রেশন স্টোরের খালি চটের ও প্রাঙ্কিকের বস্তা (পুরাতন) নিলামে বিক্রয়।		
০৫.	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি স্মারক নম্বর	:	স্মারক নং-এপিবি(৯)/বার্ষিক টেন্ডার-২০২৩-২০২৪/৩৩৫২		
০৬.	তারিখ	:	০৫/০৪/২০২৩খ্রিঃ।		
কাজের নামঃ		:	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)।		
অর্থের উৎসঃ		:			
০৮.	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	:	রাজস্ব খাত।		
তথ্যাদিঃ					
০৯.	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	:	১১/০৪/২০২৩খ্রিঃ এর মধ্যে।		
১০.	দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	:	পরিকার্য দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ হতে "লট-১ হতে ৪" আগামী ২৫/০৪/২০২৩খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত এবং "লট-৫ হতে ১০" আগামী ০২/০৫/২০২৩খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত প্রতিটি কার্যদিবসে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ের মধ্যে।		
১১.	দরপত্র তফসিল জমা দেয়ার তারিখ ও সময়	:	"লট-১ হতে ৪" আগামী ২৬/০৪/২০২৩খ্রিঃ এবং "লট-৫ হতে ১০" আগামী ০৩/০৫/২০২৩খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২:৩০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে।		
১২.	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	:	"লট-১ হতে ৪" আগামী ২৬/০৪/২০২৩খ্রিঃ এবং "লট-৫ হতে ১০" আগামী ০৩/০৫/২০২৩খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২:৩০ ঘটিকায় (দরদাতাদের সম্মুখে যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।		
১৩.	দরপত্র মূল্যায়ন কমিটির (টিইসি) সভার তারিখ	:	"লট-১ হতে ৪" আগামী ৩০/০৪/২০২৩খ্রিঃ এবং "লট-৫ হতে ১০" আগামী ০৭/০৫/২০২৩খ্রিঃ বেলা ১১:০০ ঘটিকায়।		
অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানাঃ					
১৪.	দরপত্র ডকুমেন্ট/ দরপত্র তফসিল (সিডিউল) বিক্রয়কারী অফিস	:	১। ডিআইজি (প্রশাসন), এপিবিএন হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, উত্তরা, ঢাকা। ২। অধিনায়ক (অ্যাডিশনাল ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়, ৯ এপিবিএন, যোলাশহর, চট্টগ্রাম। ৩। পুলিশ সুপার এর কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম জেলা।		
১৫.	দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	:	অধিনায়ক (অ্যাডিশনাল ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়, ৯ এপিবিএন, যোলাশহর, চট্টগ্রাম।		
১৬.	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	:	অধিনায়ক (অ্যাডিশনাল ডিআইজি) এর কার্যালয়, ৯ এপিবিএন, যোলাশহর, চট্টগ্রাম।		
দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত তথ্যঃ					
১৭.	দরপত্র যোগ্যতা	:	(ক) নাগরিকত্ব/জাতীয় সনদপত্র (খ) ভাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র (গ) হালনাগাদ বৈধ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স (ঘ) ডিআইএন নম্বর উল্লেখসহ হালনাগাদ আয়কর সনদপত্র (ঙ) যে কোন তফসীলভুক্ত বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক হতে হালসনের সর্বশেষ ০৬ মাসের আর্থিক স্বচ্ছলতা সনদপত্র (চ) ফর্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানের মালিকানা সনদপত্র (ছ) কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা সনদপত্র (জ) ফর্ম/প্রতিষ্ঠানটি কোনো তালিকাভুক্ত নহেন মর্মে প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে অঙ্গীকারনামা (ঝ) সদ্যতোলা ০১ কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সভায়্যিত রঙিন ছবি। অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী দরপত্র তফসিলে উল্লেখ থাকবে। দরপত্র তফসিল ক্রয়ের জন্য প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর স্বাক্ষরে আবেদন করতে হবে।		
১৮. কাজের বিবরণঃ					
লট নং	বিবরণ	পরিমাণ	সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	দরপত্র আমানত (আনেষ্টিম্যান) (ফেডরযোগ্য)	কাজের সময়সীমা
লট-১	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে কোড নং- ৩২৫২১০৮ "স্বাস্থ্য বিধান সামগ্রী" সরবরাহ।		=৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা)	=৩৫,০০০/- (পঁয়ত্রিশ হাজার টাকা)	
লট-২	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে কোড নং- ৩২৫৫২০৫ "অন্যান্য মনিহারি" সরবরাহ।		=৫০০/- (পাঁচশত টাকা)	=২৫,০০০/- (পঁচিশ হাজার টাকা)	
লট-৩	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে কোড নং- ৩২৫৬১০৩ "ব্যবহার্য দ্রব্যাদি" সরবরাহ।		=১,০০০/- (এক হাজার টাকা)	=১,২০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ বিশ হাজার টাকা)	
লট-৪	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে কোড নং- ৩২৫৬১০৬ এপিবিএন অফিসার ও ফোর্সের "কমব্যাট পোশাক" সেলাই।	চাহিদাপত্র অনুযায়ী	=৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা)	=৪০,০০০/- (চল্লিশ হাজার টাকা)	১ জুলাই ২০২৩ হতে ৩০ জুন ২০২৪ পর্যন্ত
লট-৫	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে ফোর্সের টাটকা রেশন সামগ্রী সরবরাহ।		=৪,০০০/- (চার হাজার টাকা)	=৯,০০,০০০/- (নয় লক্ষ টাকা)	
লট-৬	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে জ্বালানী কাঠ সরবরাহ।		=১,০০০/- (এক হাজার টাকা)	=১,০০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ টাকা)	
লট-৭	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে গম পিষাই (ক্রাসিং)		=৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা)	=৫০,০০০/- (পঞ্চাশ হাজার টাকা)	
লট-৮	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে শুকনো রেশন সামগ্রী উঠানো ও নামানোর কুলি		=৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ টাকা)	=৪০,০০০/- (চল্লিশ হাজার টাকা)	
লট-৯	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে শুকনো রেশন সামগ্রী উঠানো ও নামানোর উপ-পরিবহন কুলি		=৪০০/- (চারশত টাকা)	=৩০,০০০/- (ত্রিশ হাজার টাকা)	
লট-১০	রেশন স্টোরের খালি চটের ও প্রাঙ্কিকের বস্তা (পুরাতন) নিলামে বিক্রয়।	এপ্রিল/২০২৩ পর্যন্ত রেশন স্টোরের সংরক্ষিত বস্তা	=৪০০/- (চারশত টাকা)	=১৫,০০০/- (পনেরো হাজার টাকা)	
দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর নামঃ					
১৯.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	:	মোহাম্মদ কামরুজ্জামান।		
২০.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	:	অধিনায়ক (অ্যাডিশনাল ডিআইজি)।		
২১.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	:	৯ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, যোলাশহর, চট্টগ্রাম।		
২২.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	:	ফোনঃ ০২-৪১৩৮০০৮৪, E-mail: co9ap@police.gov.bd		
২৩ বিশেষ শর্তাবলীঃ					
ক) নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।					
খ) যে কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।					
গ) "দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ এবং রেগুলেশনস-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত-২০০৯, ২০১৬ ও ২০১৮)" এর বিধি মোতাবেক সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।					
স্বাক্ষরিত/-					
মোহাম্মদ কামরুজ্জামান					
বিশি-৭৪০৫১০১৯৪১					
অধিনায়ক (অ্যাডিশনাল ডিআইজি)					
৯ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন					
যোলাশহর, চট্টগ্রাম					
☎ ০২-৪১৩৮০০৮৪ ০২-৪১৩৮০০৮২					
📠 ০১৩২০-১৯২৫০০					
E-mail: co9ap@police.gov.bd					
জিডি-৬৪৪					

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh		
Office of the Executive Engineer (RHD)		
Road Division, Pirojpur		
E-mail: pirdivisionrhd@gmail.com		
Memo No. 35.01.7980.462.07.001.20-899	Date: 04/04/2023	
Amendment/Corrigendum-01		
Due to unavoidable circumstances the following amendment has been done for the tender ID 798158 and 798233 as below.		
Tender ID & Package No.	798158 e-GP/Pird/ADP/01/2022-2023	
	As per tender	As per Corrigendum
Tender last selling date and time	11/04/2023 16:00	13/04/2023 16:00
Tender closing & opening date and time	12/04/2023 12:00	16/04/2023 12:00
Tender ID & Package No.	798233 e-GP/Pird/ADP/02/2022-2023	
	As per tender	As per Corrigendum
Tender last selling date and time	11/04/2023 16:00	13/04/2023 16:00
Tender closing & opening date and time	12/04/2023 12:15	16/04/2023 12:15
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd). For more details please contact e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).		
 Tanvir Ahmed ID No. 602308 Executive Engineer (CC), RHD Road Division, Pirojpur		
GD-642		

‘Even after all these years, fans are kind to me’

NOBLE

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Adil Hossain Noble has dominated the world of modeling for many years in the nineties. He is also a seasoned actor, who has appeared in various TV commercials and shows on special occasions.

Nowadays, however, his appearances in the media are quite sporadic. We catch up with the star to learn more.

Your fans miss watching you on the screen. Do you ever miss them?

Yes, I miss them a lot. However, I can't do that much work because I don't get offers that are to my liking. As I also work full-time, I don't get enough time for shooting, despite numerous offers.

A few days ago, while at the airport, some people asked me, why is my work so sporadic? I face this question wherever I go. I also want to work more, but I am waiting for scripts that are truly different.

You still hold the top spot among the country's male models. What are your thoughts on this?

I am grateful to the Almighty and my audience for giving me such support and love throughout my career. A few days before Ramadan, Mou and I participated in a fashion show. At the beginning of our careers, we used to do fashion shows together a lot. After all these years, both of us got on the stage for a short time. Even though there were many models on the stage, when we walked on the ramp, the audience got ecstatic seeing us together.

What is she like as a co-artist?

Mou is very helpful and professional. Whenever we both do something, she always supports me to give my best. This is how a co-artist should be.

How much love do you get from expatriates when you visit abroad?

I can't describe in words how much they shower me with love when I go abroad. A few days ago, when I was visiting Stockholm, I had dinner at a Bengali restaurant. When I proceeded to pay my bills, the restaurant authorities told me

that they wouldn't take payments from me. I was very surprised. Then, I learned that the owner saw me on his CCTV camera from his home. He is a big fan of mine, and that is why he won't take my money!

I went to Italy once. It was raining. As soon as I got out of the car, a Bangladeshi expatriate came running with an umbrella. I was overwhelmed with his gesture. Even after all these years, fans have been nothing but kind to me.

How did you spend your Eid during childhood?

I spent most of Eids of my childhood in Chittagong. I used to have a lot of friends there. We used to decide together how we will spend Eid and what we would do. That life will never come back.

How are you going to spend Eid this year?

I will spend Eid with my family in Dhaka this year. I plan to perform my Eid prayers with my father and younger brother in the morning. Then, I will spend some time with the family in the afternoon. Maybe, I will go out in the evening to hang out with my friends.



PHOTO: COLORS MAGAZINE

Arbaaz Khan coming to Bangladesh today



Salman Khan's eldest brother and actor Arbaaz Khan is coming to Bangladesh today. He will be launching the second outlet of 'Being Human Clothing Bangladesh' in Dhanmondi.

'Being Human Clothing' announced the news on their Facebook page. The first 25 customers will win a free Salman Khan statement bracelet, during its inauguration in Dhanmondi.

'Being Human Clothing Bangladesh' first outlet was launched on September 15 last year. Sohail Khan, and Salman's nephew, Ayaan Agnihotri, alongside the CEO of 'Being Human', Sanjeev Rao, launched the store.

Mim buys burnt clothes to aid Bangabazar victims



After Tahsan and Bubly, Bidya Sinha Mim has come forward to buy burnt clothes to financially help the sellers who have been affected by the recent Bangabazar fire.

Bidyanondo posted the news on their official Facebook page. The actress has brought a dress for the price of 100 articles of clothing.

Earlier on, Bidya Sinha Mim was present at the inaugural ceremony of the 'Happiness store' run by Bidyanondo Foundation, which provides grocery items for lower income citizens at a cheaper cost.

COUNTRYWIDE

Banana cultivation shows bright prospect



PHOTO: HRIDOYE NATI O MANUSH

Shykh Seraj talks to some banana farmers at Kutubpur Banana Bazaar in Tangail's Sakhipur upazila.

SHYKH SERAJ

Agriculture in Tangail region has changed a lot in the last three decades.

Once the land of this region was unfit for any cultivation. Back then, it wasn't possible to grow crops due to uneven land surface and lack of irrigation facilities.

In the early 80s, the topography of Tangail's Sakhipur, Ghatail, Basail and Madhupur upazila were almost the same.

But nowadays, a great variety of fruits has reached the region. Alongside pineapple, banana has now become a cash crop for many local farmers.

Different varieties of bananas like Sagar, Chinichampa, Shabri and Bangla Kabri are now being cultivated in different upazilas of the district.

Meanwhile, Kutubpur Banana Bazaar, located in Sakhipur upazila, has become a famous banana market for both the buyers and sellers in the region.

While visiting the banana market, one can see a different kind of busyness around the market area in the morning.

Farmers are seen bringing

bananas on bicycles or rickshaw-vans while rows of bicycles, full of bunches of bananas, are parked at different spots.

One of the banana farmers said it costs Tk 180 to Tk 200 to produce a bunch of bananas. They sell each bunch of bananas to the wholesalers for Tk 400 and make a profit of Tk 200.

It has been calculated that about 500 banana trees can be planted in 35 decimals of land and growers can make a profit up to Tk 1 lakh from those trees.

Although banana cultivation started on a small scale in Tangail, Sakhipur has now become one of the major regions of banana farming due to proper irrigation facilities.

Farmers across the country follow various techniques as they have their own sustainable methods of ripening and marketing this fruit.

Banana farmers and traders at Kutubpur Banana Bazar said they grow bananas keeping people's health in mind.

The good news is that many young entrepreneurs are also getting involved in banana farming nowadays.

I got the chance to go to Kutubpur Banana Bazar again after a long time.

Farmers said some of them sold the bananas directly from their orchard, while most of them sell their produces at Kutubpur Bazar.

Each bunch contains at least 100 to 120 bananas and local wholesalers pay Tk 400 to Tk 450 for each bunch.

On an average each banana costs Tk 3.5 to Tk 4, but the retail price of each banana is not less than Tk 8 to Tk 10.

Banana farmers in Tangail region are happy as proper irrigation facilities and a little guidance have taken them far way.

I was talking to some of the elderly farmers, who remembered the old days.

Once there was a cry for water in Tangail region.

Tangail Agricultural Development Project (TADP) has brought not only irrigation facilities but prosperity to the people of the area. This has been a blessing for the farming community in the region.

I believe, the kind of high-value crops that are now being produced in the hilly soil of Tangail is a model for other regions of the country.

I hope, as a predominantly fruit-growing area, local farmers will witness more prosperity in near future.

Advance bus

FROM PAGE 12

however, are being sold at the counters.

Kamalapur Railway Station and other major stations usually remain jam packed ahead of Eid. Some holidaymakers even wait for 30 to 40 hours for tickets.

The railway authorities have decided to sell all tickets online to reduce public sufferings, they said.

Many people, however, have pointed out that the practice of selling all Eid tickets online might deprive those who have little knowledge of using internet.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Bus Truck Owners Association took the decision of selling tickets from today, said Suvener Ghosh, joint secretary of the association, on Wednesday.

Tickets of April 16 and afterwards will be sold through online and at counters, he added.

Multiple major bus operators, however, started selling tickets on their websites earlier.

DU students

FROM PAGE 2

Leaders and activists of leftist student organisations took part in the rally.

Speaking at the rally, Meghmalla Basu, a student of the peace and conflict studies, said the previous BNP-Jamaat government founded the Rab. They thought that they would pursue their own interests by using the force and they did it until 2005, he added.

In its 2008 electoral manifesto, the then opposition Awami League said that they would disband Rab, but they turned the force into their "ultimate weapon", the student alleged.

Sarcophagus

FROM PAGE 12

mummies abroad.

Ramses II, also known as Ramses the Great, ruled for more than 60 years during the 13th century BC and oversaw major military conquests and monumental construction projects, while also finding time to father more than 100 children.

"In short, he was an extraordinary king," said Lhoyer.

France has 54 antiquities teams working in Egypt, an official said — the most of the 25 countries who currently have research teams there.

The 'yellow-painted cedar-wood sarcophagus, which depicts the recumbent king in bright colours with his arms crossed on his chest holding a sceptre and whip, was not actually Ramses II's original coffin.

Iran, KSA vow

FROM PAGE 12

and exchanged opinions with the emphasis on the official resumption of bilateral relations and the executive steps towards the reopening of the embassies and consulates of the two countries", Iran's foreign ministry said in a statement.

Saudi state TV channel Al Ekhbariya aired footage of the pair shaking hands in front of Saudi and Iranian flags and then talking and smiling.

In a readout from state broadcaster CCTV, Beijing hailed "the first official meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries in more than seven years" and Beijing's "active mediation" in the diplomacy.

Under last month's agreement, the two countries are to reopen their embassies and missions within two months and implement security and economic cooperation deals signed more than 20 years ago.

Saudi Arabia severed relations with Iran in January 2016, after protesters attacked its embassy in Tehran and consulate in the Iranian city of

Mashhad over Riyadh's execution of the Saudi opposition Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr.

Talks between the foreign ministers are expected to be followed by Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's visit to Riyadh.

Raisi accepted an invitation from Saudi Arabia's King Salman, Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber said on Monday.

Iran and Saudi Arabia support rival sides in several conflict zones across the region, including in Yemen, where the Huthi rebels are backed by Tehran and Riyadh leads a military coalition supporting the government.

The two sides also vie for influence in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.

Riyadh's traditional ally Washington welcomed the detente agreement, but said it remains to be seen whether the Iranians will "honour their side of the deal".

China's success in bringing Iran and Saudi Arabia together has challenged the United States' long standing role as the main outside power broker in the Middle East.

Tangail AL leader sued

FROM PAGE 12

using the same threat, the victim alleges in the case statement.

When she became pregnant, he continuously pressured her to abort the child.

Abortion is illegal in Bangladesh under most situations.

On March 29 this year, Boro Moni picked up the girl from her house and took her to his father-in-law's house. He and his wife then tortured her and threatened to kill her if she didn't consent to abortion.

Around 2:00am yesterday, the pregnant teenager filed a case against the couple.

She also alleged, "I went to the police station around 2:00pm yesterday [Wednesday], but they were hesitant to record my case as the accused are influential. They finally lodged it around 12 hours later, at 2:00am [yesterday]."

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday evening over the phone, she said, "Now, I am getting phone calls from unknown callers, who are threatening me in various ways."

However, Md Abdus Salam, officer-in-charge of Tangail Sadar Police Station, denied the allegation that police delayed the filing of the case. "It was recorded around 10:00pm on Wednesday."

Asked why the accused was not arrested till last evening, he said, "We are investigating the case and will act as per the law."

Inspector Habibur Rahman, who is also the investigation officer of the case, yesterday said the victim was sent to Tangail General Hospital for medical tests.

Dr Sadequr Rahman, hospital superintendent, said the tests were conducted by a three-member board, headed by a gynaecologist.

Tanvir Ahmed, court inspector of Tangail police, said the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Meske Jannat Ripa recorded the victim's statement yesterday.

Contacted yesterday, Boro Moni denied the allegations and said his political rivals were conspiring against him.

PROVINCIAL SNAP POLLS

Pak parliament
rejects SC order

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's parliament yesterday rejected a Supreme Court order to conduct provincial snap polls, in the latest move in a power struggle between the government and the top court amid political and economic instability.

The top court had on Tuesday ruled illegal the government's move to delay the snap polls in two provinces where former prime minister Imran Khan had dissolved his local governments earlier this year.

The Speaker, in a live broadcast, said a motion was adopted by a majority of lawmakers to reject the court decision by a three-member panel headed by the chief justice and to demand a full court panel consisting of all judges hear the case.

The court's Tuesday order said elections in two provinces should go ahead despite government reluctance to hold the votes now as it struggles with an economic crisis and a political challenge from the opposition.

It gave a date of May 14 for voting in Punjab province, and a pending date for voting in Khyber Pakkhtunkhwa province due to some technical issues.

Israel intercepts
rocket fired
from Lebanon

Retaliates with strikes

AFP, Jerusalem

The Israeli army said it intercepted rocket fire from Lebanon yesterday, a day after clashes between Israeli police and Palestinians inside Islam's third-holiest site drew warnings of retaliation from around the region.

"A rocket was fired from Lebanon into Israeli territory and was successfully intercepted," an army statement said as Israeli media reported a "salvo" of projectiles had been fired.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, which came amid heightened tensions after Israeli police clashed with Palestinians inside Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque before dawn Wednesday and again in the evening.

In response to the rocket fire, Israel struck targets in southern Lebanon, said Lebanon's National News Agency without reporting any casualties. According to the report, Israeli artillery fired "several shells from its positions on the border" towards the outskirts of two villages.

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu was "receiving continuous updates about the security situation and will conduct an assessment with the heads of the security establishment," his office said.



Protesters set garbage bins on fire during clashes at a demonstration as part of the eleventh day of nationwide strikes and protests against French government's pension reform, in Paris, France yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

TSAI-MCCARTHY MEETING

China deploys warships near Taiwan

AFP, Taipei

China deployed warships through waters around Taiwan yesterday as it vowed a "firm and forceful" response to the island's president meeting US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy.

Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen held talks with McCarthy in Los Angeles on Wednesday, expressing gratitude afterwards for the meeting that included other US lawmakers.

"Their presence and unwavering support reassure the people of Taiwan that we are not isolated and we are not alone," Tsai told reporters.

China had repeatedly warned both sides the meeting should not take place, and deployed an aircraft carrier through waters southeast of Taiwan hours before the talks.

Three additional warships were detected in waters separating the island from mainland China, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence said yesterday morning.

An anti-submarine helicopter had also crossed the island's air defence identification zone, according to the ministry.

And China deployed coastguard vessels for unusual patrols that sparked a protest from Taiwan.

Despite Taiwan having been ruled separately for more than 70 years, China views it as part of its territory and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if necessary.

China carried out its largest-ever air and sea exercises around Taiwan following a visit in August last year by McCarthy's predecessor, Nancy Pelosi, to

the island.

China then deployed warships, missiles and fighter jets into the waters and skies around Taiwan.

Its response to the McCarthy meeting has so far been on a much lower level, but still left Taiwan on high alert.

Taiwan's defence minister described the timing of the deployment of the Shandong, one of just two Chinese aircraft carriers, as "sensitive".

"When an aircraft carrier comes out, there are usually takeoffs and landings for aircraft but we have not found any takeoff or landing. We will keep watching," Chiu Kuo-cheng told reporters.

When asked if Shandong's deployment was a prelude to Chinese military exercises, Chiu said: "We are not ruling this out".

India, China spar
over visas for
their journalists

REUTERS, New Delhi/Beijing

India and China broke into fresh diplomatic sparring yesterday, accusing each other of creating visa hassles for their journalists posted in New Delhi and Beijing. The exchange came days after India objected to China renaming or "standardizing" names of 11 locations in the eastern state of Arunchal Pradesh, which China calls southern Tibet and claims as its territory.

Indian newspapers reported this week that two Indian journalists posted in Beijing were barred from returning to their jobs in the Chinese capital from India. Correspondents for The Hindu newspaper and state broadcaster Prasar Bharati were told on Tuesday that their visas have been frozen, an Indian source familiar with the issue told Reuters. Asked about the visa suspensions, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said yesterday that Chinese journalists have received unfair and discriminatory treatment in India for a long time, and a Xinhua journalist was recently asked to leave India by March 31. "China has always treated Indian journalists well," Mao said. Chinese authorities have been in touch with the Indian government, which did not respond "nor correct the mistake", she said.

DENGUE, CHIKUNGUNYA

Climate change
spurring surge

AFP, Geneva

The World Health Organization warned Wednesday that dengue and other diseases caused by mosquito-borne arboviruses were spreading far faster and further amid climate change, warning global outbreaks could be looming. Experts with the United Nations health agency sounded the alarm over swelling numbers of cases of dengue and chikungunya, and warned new epidemics of Zika could also be expected. All three are caused by arboviruses carried by Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, which have been spreading into new territory as the planet warms. "Climate change has played a key role in facilitating the spread of the vector mosquitoes," said Raman Velayudhan, who coordinates WHO's dengue and arbovirus initiative.

“It is no secret that today the peace we have maintained and the democracy which (we) have worked hard to build are facing unprecedented challenges.”

Taiwanese President
Tsai Ing-wen

Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization (SPARRSO)
Mohakash Biggyan Bhaban
Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
Bangladesh.

Invitation for Tender

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH					
01	Ministry/Division		Ministry of Defence		
02	Agency		Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization (SPARRSO)		
03	Procurement Entity Name		Chairman, Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization (SPARRSO)		
04	Procuring Entity Code		N/A		
05	Procuring Entity District		Dhaka, Bangladesh		
06	Invitation for		GR18: Procurement of Online UPS		
07	Invitation Ref. No.		23.04.0000.013.07.043.22-609		
08	Date		06/04/2023		
KEY INFORMATION					
09	Procurement Method		Open Tendering Method (National)		
FUNDING INFORMATION					
10	Budget and Source of Funds		GoB		
11	Development Partners (if applicable)		N/A		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
14	Tender Package No.		GR3/FY 22-23		
15	Tender Name		GR18: Procurement of Online UPS		
16	Tender Publication date		07/04/2023		
17	Tender Last Selling Date		18/04/2023		
18	Tender closing Date & Time		20/04/2023, 12:00 PM		
19	Opening Date and Time (if different from 18)		20 /04/2023, 12:30PM		
Name and Address of the Office (if different from 18)		Address			
20	Selling Tender Document		SPARRSO, Agargaon Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.		
	Receiving Tender Document		-do-		
	Opening Tender Document		SPARRSO, Agargaon Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
21	Eligibility of Tenderer		As per schedule		
22	Brief Description of Goods		As per Schedule of Requirement / Tender Documents		
23	Price of Tender Document (Tk.)		Tk 500/- (Five Hundred) Taka Non Refundable		
24	Lot	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time in Weeks
	Single lot	GR18: Procurement of Online UPS	SPARRSO	BDT. 15,000/-	4 Weeks
28	Designation of Official Inviting Tender				
	Store and Procurement officer (Additional Charge)				
29	Address of Official Inviting Tender				
	SPARRSO, Mohakash Biggyan Bhaban, Agargaon, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.				
30	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender				
	Tel:+880248113308, E-mail: spo@sparrso.gov.bd				
31	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.				

Rubel Kanti Dey
Store and Procurement officers
(Additional Charge)
SPARRSO

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

Memo No. 172 /2022-23

Date: 05/04/2023

e-Tender Notice: 03/2022-2023

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of Supply	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	813583	Procurement & Installation of On-grid Solar Panel for Barishal Govt. Women's College	27/04/2023 12:00	27/04/2023 12:00

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

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks' Branches up to 26/04/2023 16:00

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

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

GD-641

Drastic action a must to reduce fire risks

Bangabazar fire a reminder that many markets and buildings remain at risk

Tuesday's devastating fire at Bangabazar was not the first such incident recorded there, nor was it the only one of this scale. But it serves as a reminder – if new reminders were at all needed – that safety risks are built in the very model of urbanisation followed by Bangladesh, where building codes and fire safety regulations are seldom enforced. For example, before the Bangabazar market fire, which gutted nearly 3,000 shops full of clothes, building authorities were sent notices on 10 occasions over the last four years. The fire safety department also put up a banner there with warnings of fire risks. But business interests triumphed over safety requirements, to disturbing consequences.

In 2019, the fire service department carried out a survey on 3,786 institutions and establishments across the country, and found that 541 shopping complexes and markets were at high risk. Bangabazar was one of them. It is not just markets and commercial establishments, but a large number of residential buildings in major cities are also believed to be at high risk of accidents because of their lack of structural and electrical safety – either they were not constructed following buildings code, or are poorly maintained, or have no fire safety system in place. The possibility of building fires or collapses literally lurks at every corner, as some of the recent incidents have shown.

The Bangabazar incident serves up several other lessons as well. For example, the risk of dilapidated buildings. Reportedly, 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 over rehabilitation of traders for the duration of the construction work. The Dhaka South City Corporation had apparently finalised the design and even hired a contractor. But construction couldn't begin because of a stay order from the High Court. Had this issue been resolved and traders been rehabilitated to make way for the new building, Tuesday's tragedy could have been certainly averted.

Another issue brought forth by the Bangabazar fire is the declining number of ponds and wetlands in major cities, especially in Dhaka. While urban water bodies are filled to construct buildings and marketplaces, their absence is most acutely felt when there is a fire in one of those buildings and there is no water nearby to douse it, as it happened in case of Bangabazar. The irony of the situation is inescapable. Ponds not only play a vital role in dousing flames but also create a healthy atmosphere and ease waterlogging. Unfortunately, there are few ponds left in central Dhaka, which is an issue that will continue to put us in trouble if not addressed urgently.

Having witnessed the consequence of inaction or delaying action in case of fire safety, we really have no alternative but to act immediately. We urge the authorities to prepare a comprehensive work plan to address the safety of buildings and markets identified as risky by Rajuk and the fire department. They must try to find a way to overcome legal and logistical issues that are working as impediments. The safety of citizens must be prioritised.

Ensure road safety before Eid holiday

Govt must fully implement road safety act, prevent crashes and deaths

When it comes to the frequency of road crashes in Bangladesh, things only seem to be going downhill. Last month, according to a just released estimate by Road Safety Foundation (RSF), 564 people died in 486 road crashes. This is quite similar to what the situation was a year ago, when the RSF reported the deaths of 589 people in 458 crashes, meaning that there has been no progress during this time. And if we take into account the 2022 casualties – 7,713 deaths in total – we can see that an average of 21 people die on our roads every day. Many of these victims are children and young people, whose lives have been rudely cut short because of the prevalence of unfit vehicles and reckless drivers.

In this column, we have repeatedly highlighted the sad plight of our roads and the endless suffering of travellers. Yet, there has been little action, beyond the occasional lip service and cosmetic changes, to reverse this scenario. This is most clearly illustrated by the total lack of effect of the Road Transport Act 2018, which even after over four years remains trapped in a legal quagmire. The question is, why is the government doing nothing to fully implement it? Why are frequent interruptions being allowed to get in the way of its being effective? Why are the demands of transport leaders (for less strict regulations and reduced penalties) being entertained? While this is happening, unfit vehicles and unlicensed drivers continue to create a havoc on our roads.

This is certainly not the kind of situation we want to see going into another Eid holiday in about two weeks. Historically, this has been the time of the year when, with many thousands of people travelling across the country, most road crashes occur, and consequently most deaths. According to RSF data, last year, highway travels during the extended Eid-ul-Fitr holiday between April 25 and May 8 resulted in the deaths of 376, with about 1,500 people injured, which is really shocking. Given that motorcycle accidents made up 41.48 percent of the total fatalities in 2022, this should be an area for the government to work on with priority ahead of the upcoming Eid journey. We don't want to see a repeat of what happened during past Eid holidays. Any tragedy is certainly avoidable if the authorities are sincere and proactive in preventing it.

To that end, we urge the government to fully implement the Road Transport Act. They must ensure that the rules are properly enforced, and that those found in breach of them are held accountable as per the law. The failure of the relevant authorities, including Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) or the ministry governing it, has already set us back as a country, dealing a huge blow to thousands of families. This must stop.

Only journalists can protect journalism

Others will never do, as they only want to use us



THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of
The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

FROM PAGE 1

On an average, the legacy media – others may do less – publishes nearly 250-300 reports every 24 hours. If we include photographs, cartoons (political types are conspicuously absent these days, leading to the question as to why), infographics, photo captions, etc., the number reaches nearly 350. If we add multimedia content to that, we climb to an even higher figure. To tackle such a huge number of items – from gathering facts, writing, editing, to page setting, inserting photos, caption writing, audio recording, filming – is a Himalayan task, to say the least. It is to the enormous credit of our journalist colleagues that mistakes occur only very rarely. If “to err is human,” then mistakes will occur however hard we try. And hence, we must address it urgently.

There are, however, tried and tested and universally accepted laid down rules to handle mistakes made by media outlets. These have come after

followed while castigating *Prothom Alo*? Would we be wrong to further conclude that it was not *Prothom Alo* that had an agenda, but others – and the agenda was to intimidate an independent voice and force it towards greater self-censorship?

The case in hand is as follows. The editor of *Prothom Alo* was sued under the anti-media Digital Security Act (DSA). The newspaper's Savar correspondent was literally kidnapped when, at dawn, law enforcement members mostly in plain clothes descended in a gang-like fashion on his house. They picked him up without a warrant, did not tell the victim or his family why he was being taken in, and where he was being taken to. He was kept incommunicado for the next 30 hours. He was then produced before a court and sent to jail.

The question before the journalists should have been: what was his crime? Misreporting? Which part of his report was false? The whole controversy centred around the use of a photo of a

their longstanding “agenda,” which is to destabilise our “independence and make our Liberation War questionable.” A quote from one day-labourer juxtaposed on a photo of a child can do all that? Are the claims based on facts or any content analysis of the paper? Where is this coming from? If the accusers are correct, then we must be reading different newspapers. According to *Prothom Alo* critics, after 50 years of establishment of our state, our Liberation War and our independence remain so fragile, so weak, so full of doubt that one report sets these foundational pillars tottering? Are they not making a mockery of everything we stand for? This is when we are about to graduate into the Developing Country status. Who is damaging Bangladesh's reputation?

On the other side, what is the long-term track record of *Prothom Alo*? Ever since its inception, it has been a staunch supporter of everything Bangladesh stands for – our Language Movement, the movements of the 50s, 60s and 70s, our Liberation War, Bangabandhu's seminal role, secularism, democracy, political, economic and cultural rights of the people, etc. Its role against extremism is second to none. It celebrates our economic growth and every other success far more enthusiastically than many of its critics.

The government, the ruling party, and those who have issued the recent

All the talk of *Prothom Alo*'s so-called controversial role on issues relating to our Liberation War, independence struggle and Bangladesh's economic success has no basis in facts. Whatever critical reporting the paper did and does fall within its moral and professional role of keeping power accountable. It is not for nothing that *Prothom Alo* has gained such public acceptance and adulation both at home and among Bangladeshis abroad.

As the heading of my piece states, only we journalists can protect our profession. Everybody else, in the name of helping journalism, wants to use us. When the government extends a helping hand, it wants journalists to toe its line. When the business community offers help, the price is to overlook their bending of the law. When law enforcers act friendly, they want us to soften our reports on their circumvention of the rules. When politicians praise us, it is only because they are not, at that moment, on the buttered side of the bread and are certain to sing the opposite tune once in power. And the story goes on. Nobody wants us to be independent, to be objective and say the truth. And that's where our challenge lies. And that's why we must be together in spite of our differences.

That does not mean we will not differ, sometimes even vigorously so on social, cultural and, most importantly, political



Somebody can claim that reporting on Bangabazar fire, road accidents, adulterated medicine, air pollution, sound pollution, river encroachment, arsenic in water, unbridled corruption, most bus and truck drivers having fake licences and their vehicles having no fitness certificates, all directly or indirectly impinge on the image of the country. But is reporting on them demeaning our independence?

many trials and errors and on the basis of decades of experience from across the world. Do we follow them? If not, should we not? And shouldn't we, the journalists, be at the forefront to demand adherence to said rules? Are we doing so? Or are we busy demonising our fellow journalists for mistakes that are easily explainable journalistically?

That should lead the journalists to this question: what triggered such frenzied activism among some of us to denigrate our most prestigious Bangla daily? Was the coverage of the “mistake” of *Prothom Alo* done journalistically? Was the search for *Prothom Alo*'s so-called “motives” factually founded? Why did “opinions” start to be treated like “facts”? Why was a newspaper not judged by its long track record, but only by one or two mistakes, which were then interpreted according to the views of the critics without reference to facts? Would it be totally illogical on our part to conclude that no journalistic norms were

boy and the quote that belonged to a day-labourer, which was clearly attributed. As journalists, do we not know that a reporter is neither responsible for the heading of a story nor for its display? In none of the statements, save that of the DRU, were questions asked as to why the said reporter was denied all his constitutional rights when he was “picked up” without any legal basis whatsoever. So do our rights stand for nothing when a high-up orders one of us to be “picked up”? Shouldn't journalists have asked that question?

The statements condemned *Prothom Alo* for “damaging the image of the country.” Shouldn't journalists raise their voice in unison that no citizen, let alone a fellow journalist, can be sued or arrested on such an imprecise, undefined and subjective notion as “damaging the image”? A law by definition cannot be vague. It has to be clear, unambiguous, and specific. Otherwise, it's not a law but an instrument of harassment and oppression, as the DSA has become.

More fundamentally, what is “damaging the image” to a politician could easily be “investigative reporting” to a journalist. Somebody can claim that reporting on Bangabazar fire, road accidents, adulterated medicine, air pollution, sound pollution, river encroachment, arsenic in water, unbridled corruption, most bus and truck drivers having fake licences and their vehicles having no fitness certificates, all directly or indirectly impinge on the image of the country. But is reporting on them demeaning our independence? If, as journalists, we do not see the public interest in all this, then why call ourselves journalists? We might as well close shop and open PR agencies.

The accusers of *Prothom Alo* argue that it was not a mistake they made, but a deliberate action in fulfilment of

statements have forgotten the role *Prothom Alo* played during BNP's rule in highlighting corruption and exposing the excesses committed by Tareque Zia and Hawa Bhaban. They have forgotten the newspaper's role in exposing the heinous attempt to divert the investigation into the assassination attempt on the present prime minister. Who exposed the “Joj Mia” ploy? Could any other paper do the exposés that it did? *Prothom Alo* exposed the BNP government's nefarious attempt to shield the unearthing of the plot behind the death of 24 Awami Leaguers, including the party's women's wing leader Ivy Rahman, in the same incident. Who exposed the voter list fraud? Who repeatedly wrote about the Hawa Bhaban and Bangabhaban connection during Iajuddin Ahmed's presidency? What was *Prothom Alo*'s role during the BDR mutiny, which was a clear and present danger to the newly formed Awami League government?

Prothom Alo played the usual role that an independent media plays – that of a “watchdog” on the power of the day. The paper has played the same professional role during the Awami League's 14-year tenure. The Awami League leaders and ministers may forget that. But should the journalists?

It is my view that *Prothom Alo*'s mistake (which can itself be debated in a journalism class. However, I am accepting it for the sake of my arguments) was turned into a political ploy to demonise a professional media outlet and pressurise it to change its independent stance. Otherwise, how could the “Bashanti” issue (concerning a photograph published in *Ittefaq* in 1974) suddenly come up. On what basis is the comparison being done with the recent piece in *Prothom Alo*? It was deliberately done to drive fear and bring partisan political factors into play to confuse us.

issues. As journalists, we may hold diametrically opposite political views, but we can never allow those differences to affect our journalism. As Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a US senator from New York, once said, “You are entitled to your opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts.”

I am in my twilight years of journalism. Perhaps only a few years of it are still left. I started with *The Bangladesh Observer* in April 1972, immediately on return from the most glorious phase of my life when, with millions of others, it was my proud privilege to be a member of the Mukti Bahini. After co-founding it, I have spent the last 32 years with *The Daily Star*. So I can claim to have a modicum of experience as a journalist.

Since my time is limited, it is my younger colleagues who will face the future, and it is to them I have addressed this piece. I unreservedly and unequivocally say that journalism is one of the noblest of professions there is. Like education, a society needs journalism to grow intellectually, democratically, equitably, and justly. It needs it to ensure fairness and to give protection to individuals and groups that power oppresses. It needs it to keep leaders in check and administrators accountable. Most importantly, society needs journalism to enjoy all the beauty that freedom offers.

Condemn me to your heart's content if you find what I have said above unacceptable, but please don't fail to ask the questions I have raised, the most vital of which is: are we, as journalists, able to think freely, or are we being clouded by prejudice, politics and financial interest?

The answer to it will determine the future of our journalism. Please remember: only journalists can protect journalism.



The primary healthcare system in Bangladesh must be strengthened to be able to provide generalised healthcare services to everyone at the grassroots level.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

WORLD HEALTH DAY 2023

Let’s fix primary healthcare first



Dr Md Nuruzzaman Khan
is a public health expert and assistant
professor of population science at Jatiya
Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University.

MD NURUZZAMAN KHAN

This year’s theme for World Health Day, “Health for All,” aligns with the World Health Organization’s (WHO) overarching mission and holds particular significance for countries like Bangladesh which are striving towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the crucial goal of ensuring health and well-being for all by 2030.

Bangladesh has made remarkable strides in improving the health and well-being of its citizens, with life expectancy increasing from 52 years in 1971 to 72 years at present. One key contributor to this achievement has been the growth of the healthcare services sector, which now operates on a three-tiered system.

At the top level of this system, specialised care is available in large urban centres. At the secondary level, district-level care is provided mainly in cities, while primary healthcare (PHC) is provided at the grassroots level, through the upazila health complex (UHC), union health and family welfare centre (UHFWC), and community clinic, located at sub-district, union, and village levels, respectively.

But when it comes to healthcare service provision, secondary- and tertiary-level facilities are major providers, despite only comprising 20 percent of the country’s healthcare infrastructure. They even offer basic services that could effectively be provided at the PHC facilities. Consequently, people tend to rely on urban healthcare services, resulting in overcrowding, long wait times, and increased healthcare costs for patients.

Those living in the rural areas face even greater difficulties accessing healthcare due to transportation challenges and associated costs. Furthermore, the increased pressure on secondary- and tertiary-level

facilities often hinders access to specialised care for those in need.

To address this issue, Bangladesh must prioritise the development of PHC facilities to ensure that the majority of healthcare services are available there, and people only need to move to secondary- or tertiary-level facilities, as well as the urban areas, for specialised care only. Achieving this goal will require addressing structural challenges and changing the current focus.

The first improvement should address the challenges in PHC facilities that hinder access to services from the UHC, UHFWC, and community clinics. Insufficient funding is a major issue leading to a shortage of essential medicines and diagnostic tools. PHC facilities also suffer from insufficient infrastructure, including a lack of reliable electricity supply and inadequate space to provide services to patients. Staff shortages are also common at these facilities, with only 43 percent having adequate staffing. These existing challenges are often accompanied by the availability of infrastructure that is not aligned with the field-level needs, or healthcare facilities are unable to use them due to a lack of other necessary infrastructure and/or skilled manpower.

These challenges faced by PHC facilities often lead to healthcare personnel opting to work in urban healthcare centres. Added to that is the lack of interest among healthcare personnel in working at these facilities, which are located in rural areas, due to the lack of basic amenities such as electricity, safe water, and accessible transportation, which can make living and working conditions challenging. Lack of career growth opportunities in upazila and rural areas, as well as concerns about personal safety and security,

also contribute to the reluctance of healthcare professionals to work there. As a result, these facilities often face understaffing issues, although the government has taken strong initiatives to ensure the presence of healthcare personnel by providing permanent postings for two years to every newly recruited healthcare personnel.

Along with these structural challenges, the focus on PHC facilities is also problematic, contributing to a major population movement to urban areas to access services. The current focus of these institutions is to provide curative maternal, child, and neonatal healthcare, as it was before the 2000s. However, this focus is less relevant nowadays as Bangladesh has achieved significant progress in improving maternal and child health, particularly during the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) period from 2000 to 2015 (although it is still important).

On the other hand, we are now facing a rapid increase in non-communicable diseases. According to the most recent estimates, around one in every 10 people in Bangladesh is diabetic, and around one in three is hypertensive. Most importantly, around half of them are undiagnosed, and they are usually diagnosed at a very later stage when healthcare professionals have limited treatment options. The prevalence of these diseases is rising rapidly in both rural and urban areas, and among people of all age groups. These non-curable conditions require long-term care, which most people do not have, making preventive care (which should be ensured through PHC facilities as they are located close to homes) crucial in addressing these challenges. But this is not evident in the services provided by primary healthcare facilities, though the country officially acknowledged its importance in the 1990s.

After 52 years of independence, the country’s health profile has changed significantly. The government needs to understand this change and respond accordingly to ensure that health services are available as per citizens’ current needs, rather than following a usual trend. Unfortunately, this priority is mostly absent at policy and programme levels.

ChatGPT and Writing: A Deadly Combination!



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Department of English and Modern
Languages in North South University.

MOHAMMAD SHAMSUZZAMAN

Someone of Indian origin emailed me in 2014 with some queries from Saudi Arabia, where he was teaching at a university. I was then a PhD candidate at a university in Christchurch, New Zealand. He was interested in a PhD programme at the same university and needed further information. I sent him a detailed response, addressing all his queries to the best of my knowledge. I bumped into someone several months later in the corridor of our college compound. He said that he was the one who emailed me from Saudi Arabia. He thanked me for the detailed response and said, “I’ve not met a non-native speaker yet writing so well in English.” Flattered, I said smugly, “I’m a composition professional.” He burst my bubble immediately, “Why do you need to learn to write? Machines will do that soon.” I laughed it out. Writing is inherently a human attribute. Machines can’t write.

Neither can ChatGPT (Generative Pre-Trained Transformers). While grammar is a non-negotiable requirement, a piece of writing is not a syntactic structure. It’s, instead, a semantic sculpture. There’s always something elegantly unusual with an authentic piece of writing. Language and grammar are the two pieces of the big puzzle that writing is. Writing is the generation of thoughts – filtered through vision, imagination, and intuition – that touch and transform. Writing that endures doesn’t replicate any model of thought and language. It renews language to create a new model of thought. Since the last week of November this past year, when OpenAI launched ChatGPT, writing seemed re-defined. Flaccid prose that is clinically precise is being passed off as writing. And writing ability is attributed to machines without cognition and sensation. That’s an egregious error as to what it takes to accomplish a piece of writing. There’s nothing magical or mysterious about writing.

sentence is an experiential entity given its Latin root, *sententia*, which means sentimental thinking. The generation of a sentence presupposes an understanding of and engagement with the physical world. Plonking down words in a formulaic fashion severely falls short of the definition of a sentence, because one must understand the meaning behind those words. ChatGPT doesn’t. It generates words based on a given input. Besides, Joe Moran claims in *First You Write a Sentence* that a sentence is more than its meaning. It’s also a metrical structure, where logic and lyric as well as sense and sound meet. A sentence is music created by thyme, rhythm, and pausing. That music is heard only in the head, though. ChatGPT is a language model that has nothing to do with sound (and image). As such, what ChatGPT regurgitates is not writing per se. It’s just a tantalising transcription.

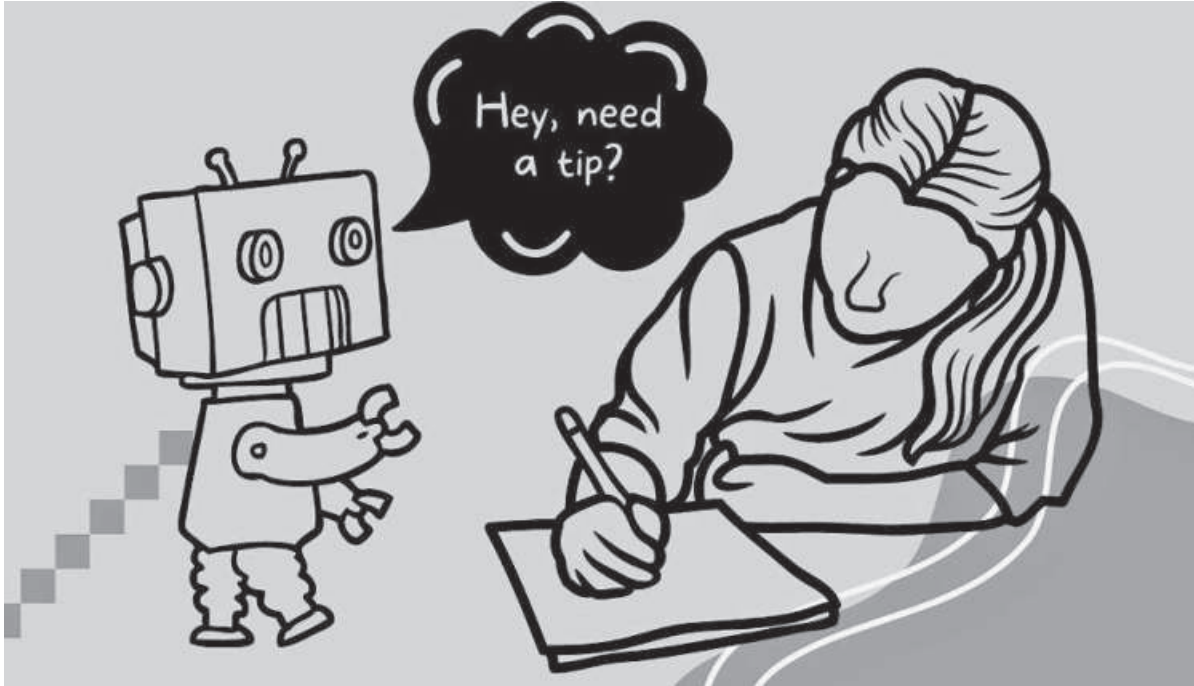
So, it snares. As they claim, ChatGPT is a deep-learning tool. Essentially, though, it’s a toy for deep-faking, for Ian Bogost argues in his article, “ChatGPT Is Dumber Than You Think,” in *The Atlantic*, that it’s less about persuasive writing and more about superb bullshitting. It’s logically dysfunctional and is terrible at maths. It cites false quotations and references. It’s a half-baked app. Fixing it to the precision seems apparently unlikely, because the software is already a juggernaut. Even its creators don’t know how it works and why. That’s what Ian Bogost and Steven Pinker believe. ChatGPT, then, is a carefully crafted confusion. DeepMind CEO and co-founder Demis Hassabis, one of the pioneers of artificial intelligence, urges caution against artificial intelligence in his interview with *Time* this past January. He warns, “We are the guinea pigs.” We’re both addicted to and imprisoned by technology. Crises mount.

Compromising with the skill and quality of writing is indeed

Anderson argues that good prose has never been in infinite supply in that good prose is one of the most challenging things to produce in the known universe. For the large language model that ChatGPT is, the generation of quality prose is contingent upon ingesting quality prose, which are books written by better writers. Anderson cites the finding of a research team led by Pablo Villalobos at Epoch AI that claims that ChatGPT will run out of reading quality material by 2027. Since the emergence of the printing press in the 15th century, humans have published approximately 125 million titles, as the researchers at Google Books find. The Epoch team estimates that approximately 10 million to 30 million of these books are digitalised to be machine-readable. When AI has read all the books ever produced – and our reliance on and obsession with ChatGPT becomes a routine – it can’t ingest quality prose anymore. As such, ChatGPT will recycle the same patterns of prose created by itself. We’re off to a prose wasteland. That sounds dystopic, but that’s apparently likely.

Noam Chomsky, Ian Roberts, and Jeffrey Watumull, in their recent pitch in *The New York Times*, disqualify ChatGPT as an authentic tool for generating quality prose as such. They claim that the crux of machine learning is description and prediction. The mark of true intelligence, however, is an explanation. Intelligence also consists of creative conjectures, creative criticism, and moral thinking. Any AI-powered system critically lacks these attributes. Language – and the ability to use language in a creative and ethical fashion – is genetically endowed. Because machines can’t understand and utilise the sophisticated principles and parameters of creating an infinite number of sentences with a finite means of rules of syntax and word formation (that’s grammar!), software like ChatGPT is built on the “fundamentally flawed conception of language and knowledge,” they claim. When, then, ChatGPT succeeds, we fail.

Therefore, the popularity of ChatGPT worries septsics and scholars alike. It’s a disruptive discovery. Banning it doesn’t end it, because we can no longer uninvent it. Writing is a high-stake activity. It critically determines professional success and intellectual excellence.



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Green stone

5 Overlook

9 Heartburn

11 Annual visitor

12 Pink shade

13 Zeal

14 Mine material

15 Money business

17 Support

19 “My word!”

20 Police trap

21 Cacao holder

22 Unfettered

24 Likely

26 Waits in the dark

29 Serving feat

30 Warning, watchdog-style

32 Soaking up the sun

34 West of films

35 Took a part

36 Conjure up

38 Long attack

39 Hamlet extras

40 Shucking units

41 Snowman’s carrots

DOWN

1 “Twilight” werewolf

2 Old markets

3 Not roundabout

4 Greek vowel

5 Grifter’s target

6 Rainbow color

7 High

8 Private’s boss

10 White rat, e.g.

11 Joined the choir

16 Luanda native

18 Highland attire

21 Job extra

23 Swelled

24 Spiny tree

25 Annoy

27 Eastern robe

28 Medusa’s hair

29 Degrade

30 Await

31 Gaggles group

33 Frat party

37 Big truck

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TUESDAY’S ANSWERS

PHASES

SECURE

INTRACTABLE

FSTOP

FREE

PIED

HOG

INAF

AL

RET

ALOE

MINT

DRAW

ROLE

BISHOP

CAT

FOG

RO

TRACT

ALLIES

RED

LAW REVIEW

A case against the Digital Security Act 2018

JULIAN RAEAH

The Digital Security Act (DSA) of 2018 was preceded by the controversial Information and Communication Technology Act 2006 (later amended in 2013). Even though the DSA was enacted to ensure digital security and identification, suppression and trial of offences committed through digital devices, various provisions of the Act are being used to suppress the freedom of expression of the people.

Freedom of expression has been guaranteed as a fundamental right under article 39 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Even though the provision imposes several restrictions, such restrictions must be reasonable and subjected to judicial review. The right to freedom of expression has also been guaranteed under article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Bangladesh has acceded to in 2000.

Section 8 of the DSA empowers the Director General of the Digital Security Agency and law enforcement agencies to block or remove information in digital media if it threatens 'digital security'. This extremely vague provision creates scope for censorship for the independent press. Section 21 of the DSA states that if any person is involved in making any kind of propaganda or campaign against our liberation war of 1971, the spirit of liberation, the national

anthem or the national flag, such person shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years and if it is done repeatedly, shall be punished with imprisonment for life or a fine of Tk 3 crore. Such provisions are not only vague in terms of imposing content-based restrictions but also in providing disproportionate penalties.

Section 25 of the DSA criminalises the transmission and publication of any offensive, false or threatening information with an intention to affect the image or reputation of the country or to spread confusion, which again is too wide to be justified by any domestic or international standard. Section 31 again criminalises the intentional publishing or broadcasting of any digital format, which will destroy 'communal harmony'. These vague and wide terms bring a chilling effect on the freedom of expression on matters of public concern.

Section 53 provides that offences specified in sections 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34 shall be cognizable and non-bailable. This gross criminalisation violates the right to liberty guaranteed under article 9 of the ICCPR which protects the right to liberty and security of a person and provides that 'it shall not be a general rule that persons awaiting trial shall be kept in custody.' At the same time, section 53 undermines one of the cardinal principles of criminal law, i.e., the presumption of innocence. Article 9(3) of the ICCPR allows pre-trial detention as an exception, but in the DSA, pre-trial detention has become a norm.

Some of the recent DSA cases show a bizarre pattern: the accused is first forcibly disappeared, and then shown arrested under the Act, which is a clear violation of the directives given by the Supreme Court of Bangladesh in

the *BLAST and Others v Bangladesh & Others* case (decided on 24 May 2016) and the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act 2013.

In *Douglas v Jeanette* 319 US 157 case, the Supreme Court of the United States opined that freedom of speech and expression is not confined to any particular field of human interest but guarantees the broadest exercise of the right for religious, political, economic, scientific or informational ends. In *Schacht v US* 398 US 58, the court found that the right to discuss public affairs includes the right to criticise the government including its defence policy and the conduct of the armed forces. In *Hector v AG of Antigua and Barbuda* (1990) 2 All ER 103, 106, in the words of Lord Bridge of Harwich, '[i]n a free democratic society, it is almost too obvious to need stating that those who hold office in government, and who are responsible for public administration must always be open to criticism. Any attempt to stifle or fetter such criticism amounts to political censorship of the most insidious and objectionable kind.'

Lastly, in the case of *State of Bihar v Sailabala* AIR (1952) SC 329, it is mentioned that advocacy of a certain political ideology cannot be restricted on the ground of security of state unless it is accompanied by the use, or threat, of violence. Such cases show that the current trend in democratic societies all around the world is to expand the ambit of freedom of expression as much as possible.

The DSA is not only limited to criminal charges and detentions but also hinders the implementation of many fundamental rights, including freedom of movement, freedom of thought, conscience, and opinion, right to life, and freedom of religion and belief. It is high time we made necessary reforms to the DSA.

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



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

RIGHTS WATCH

Some unanswered questions in SULTANA JASMINE'S DEATH

SURIYA TARANNUM SUSAN

Custodial torture and death continue to be infamy in the criminal justice system of Bangladesh. Despite the presence of constitutional safeguards and legislative provisions, this gross violation of human rights persists to cover headlines. As per a report of Ain o Shalish Kendra (ASK), 1,426 incidents of custodial deaths took place from January 2017 to July 2020. A recent addition to this grim statistics is the death of Sultana Jasmine, an employee of Naogaon Union Land Office, allegedly in the custody of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) on March 24.

Starting from Sultana's arrest, there has been a perpetual violation of due process rights. According to media reports, she was picked up on March 22 by RAB officials. One of the pieces published on 30 March in *The Daily Star* titled "How did Sultana Jasmine die?" unravels that she was sued under the Digital Security Act 2018 more than 31 hours following her detention by RAB. In a writ petition filed seeking judicial inquiry into the matter, the High Court Division questioned under what authority she was picked up without her being an accused at the time, who interrogated her, and whether she sustained any fresh wounds after she was being detained. The Court also questioned the jurisdiction of RAB to pick anyone up without any formal complaints. The director of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital stated that Sultana was brought in critical condition on March 24, and she died with her already deteriorating health. Multiple intracranial bleeds and external injuries were found on her head. However, RAB officials claimed that Sultana died from a stroke. On the contrary, her family members have repeatedly asserted that Sultana was in perfect health prior to her arrest. The autopsy report handed over on April 3 divulged that she died of shock due to excessive brain hemorrhage.

Articles 33 and 35 of the Constitution lay down the safeguards regarding arrest and detention, and trial and punishment. Bangladesh enacted the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act 2013 in compliance with the Convention against Torture and Other, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984. The Act mentions two core offences, firstly, torture by a law enforcement officer, and secondly, custodial death due to torture. Section 2(6) of the Act defines torture as physical or psychological torture that hurts and mentions specific criteria like extorting confession, punishing or intimidating any suspected person, etc. It covers the death of a person in custody of a public officer, the death of any person during illegal detention, or death during arrest or interrogation as custodial death. Though the Act provides easy avenues of complaint and investigation, victims or their relations still fear seeking remedies against law enforcement agencies.

The Act mentions in section 5(5) that the investigation will be conducted by a police officer superior to the accused officer. The proviso of section 5(2) states that the court may authorise a judicial inquiry upon satisfaction of an application by an aggrieved person that a fair investigation is not possible by the police. The sole verdict till now under this Act has been against three police officials for the death of Ishtiaque Hossain Jonny. It is pertinent to mention that the victim's family was able to secure a judicial inquiry.

The higher judiciary of Bangladesh has provided many landmark judgments concerning the issue of arbitrary arrest, custodial torture, and death. In *BLAST v Bangladesh* (2003) 55 DLR 363, the High Court Division issued 15 directives to be followed in the arrest, detention, remand, investigation, and treatment of suspects. The Court also suggested shifting the burden of proof in custodial death cases to law enforcement agencies. The Appellate Division upheld the decision of the High Court Division on 24 May 2016. In the case of *Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) v Government of Bangladesh*, the High Court Division directed RAB to comply with the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 while arresting any citizen and to ensure the safety of persons detained in their custody.

Custodial torture contravenes due process of law. The breach of procedural requirements in Sultana's arrest and the imputations raised by her family remain to be answered. Sultana's death has also made us ask some questions which are yet to be answered by the concerned stakeholders. When will citizens be protected from oppression at the hands of law enforcement agencies? When will the judicial directives pertaining to custodial protection be strictly complied with? It reminisces the empathetic observation by the High Court Division in *AHM Abdullah v State and others* (2005) 25 BLD 384 that ordinary citizens often lack the resources and ability to protest against police excesses and to seek court's redress.

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

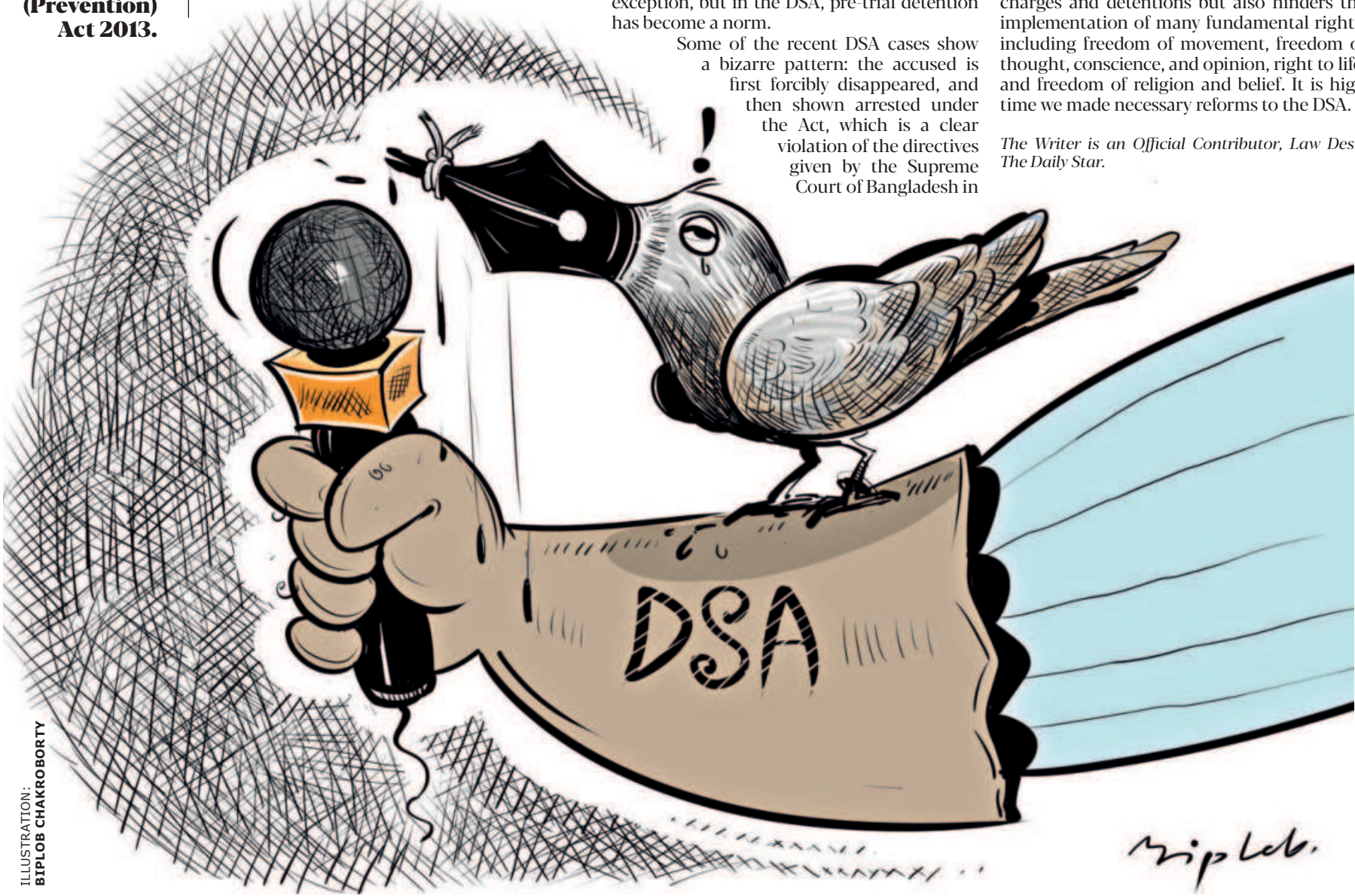


ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

LAW LETTER

The state of witness protection in Bangladesh

S M MAHBUBULLAH

In both civil and criminal aspects of any justice system, witness evidence is a vital point. Witness evidence plays a critical part, among the many types of evidence, in leading to a conviction. Oral account of a witness is considered strong evidence in a trial, meaning, reliable witnesses ensure justice be delivered, whereas the lack thereof may lead to the acquittal of the offender. That is why, it is crucial to ensure the safety and security of the witnesses.

In Bangladesh, it has been extensively recorded that witnesses face threats, intimidation and even physical violence from the accused parties specially in criminal cases. In many cases, witnesses backtrack or refuse to testify in fear for the safety of their person and family.

According to Narcotics Control Department, all accused in 23,535 narcotics cases filed during the last 20 years were acquitted, mainly for the failure to produce witnesses.

In 2023, arrest warrants were issued against 34 witnesses, as they refused to come and testify in Court, in a case where 11 people were burned alive in Chittagong. Countless more instances of witness intimidation and murder exist, tarnishing the legal system of this country. Many of these instances may have been prevented by the witness protection schemes.

In Bangladesh, section 503 of

the Penal Code 1860 provides for punishment for the commission of criminal intimidation. Section 14 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012 provides for punishment for threatening victims and witnesses. But there are no unified

the matter to the law ministry and the ministry drafted the Witness Protection Act in the same year. In Writ Petition No. 8769 of 2010 filed by BNWLA, the High Court Division ordered the government to enact a law to protect the victim and witness of sexual harassment.



witness protection laws, nor any judicial mechanism in place. In 2006, Bangladesh Law Commission submitted a report on a proposed law relating to protection of victims and witnesses of crimes involving grave offences. Again, in 2011, it submitted another report on

In 2015, a High Court Division bench passed an order directing for the enactment of a witness protection law. Furthermore, in August 2017, with the joint effort of the UNDP and the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, the Witness Management Policy for

subordinate Courts and Tribunals 2017 was drafted. Despite all these steps, no witness protection law or scheme has been enacted to this day.

Bangladesh has one of the lowest conviction rates in the world, meaning, most crimes go unpunished, and most criminals are not put to justice. A major reason for this is lack of evidence. In most of the rape and murder cases, the accused are acquitted for lack of witness testimony. It is not difficult to understand why, as people would want to testify in court with an axe hanging over their family's neck. So, there is a desperate need for a witness protection policy in our country. An effective witness protection policy, or law, if enforced appropriately, would drastically improve the speed and efficiency of investigation and prosecution stage. It would possibly also speed up the trial, and slowly drain the oceans of pending cases that is clogging our courts.

To bring positive changes in our sluggish legal system, it must be ensured that witnesses are protected and feel safe to come forward and testify. This requires a unified legislation, comprehensive legal framework and increased resources for protection, and efforts to combat corruption and impunity.

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

Indo-Pak relations cloud WC build up

REUTERS, New Delhi



Six months out from the likely start of the Cricket World Cup in India, the match schedule for the tournament is still under wraps as geopolitics cloud the buildup to the showpiece event.

The delay is in stark contrast to the 2019 event, when the dates and venues for the tournament in England and Wales were announced more than a year out in keeping with usual practice for major sporting events.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has previously co-hosted three ODI World Cups and organising the 10-team event in October-November should present no major difficulties for the world's richest board.

However, soured political relations between India and Pakistan have complicated matters and cricket finds itself caught in the geopolitical crossfire between the feuding neighbours, who play each other only in multi-team events.

India have ruled out travelling to Pakistan for the Asia Cup in September and are likely to play their matches at a neutral venue after organisers agreed on a 'hybrid' model - a move that looks likely to prompt a tit-for-tat response.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) denied media reports that it had made a similar demand at the ICC board meetings in Dubai last month but in a statement last week said it may push for the hybrid model "at the proper ICC forum at the right time".

Should Pakistan agree to travel to India, the BCCI would have to secure visa clearance from the Indian government.

A source with direct knowledge of the deliberations told Reuters that moving matches out of India had not even been discussed and the fixtures would be announced in "due course".

Cricket news website cricinfo.com has reported that the BCCI has yet to obtain a tax exemption for the tournament from the Indian government, which is part of the hosting agreement it signed with the ICC.

Should it fail to obtain the exemption the BCCI has said the amount could be deducted from its share of the ICC's central revenue pool.

'It was a pretty easy decision'

AFP, London

Frank Lampard insisted it was an "easy decision" to make his surprise return to Chelsea as caretaker manager until the end of the season on Thursday, just over two years after he was sacked by the Premier League club.

Lampard, Chelsea's record goalscorer, previously managed the Blues from July 2019 until January 2021, when he was replaced by Thomas Tuchel.

The 44-year-old's unexpected move back to Stamford Bridge came after Tuchel's successor Graham Potter was dismissed on Sunday with the club in the bottom half of the Premier League.

"We are delighted to welcome Frank back to Stamford Bridge," Chelsea co-controlling owners Todd Boehly and Behdad Eghbali said in a statement. "Frank is a Premier League Hall of Famer and a legend at this club.

"As we continue our thorough and exhaustive process for a permanent head coach, we want to provide the club and our fans with a clear and stable plan for the remainder of the season."

Former England midfielder Lampard had been out of a job since January when he was sacked by relegation-threatened Everton after less than a year in charge.

Lampard claimed he did not have to swallow his pride to return to Chelsea despite his brutal exit during Roman Abramovich's reign as owner. "It's a pretty easy decision for me. This is my club. I have a lot of emotions and feelings," Lampard told a press conference minutes after his appointment was announced.



Bangladesh players left the field distraught after all three sessions on the third day of their lone Test against Ireland at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur on Thursday. Led by Lorcan Tucker's brilliant 108 on debut, the Irish side staged an incredible fightback to keep their hopes alive in the game.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

What happened to Shakib?

SPORTS REPORTER

"It has been the greatest day in Ireland's Test history," international commentator Andrew Leonard told this reporter when talking about what transpired on the third day of the one-off Test, which saw Ireland take a 131-run lead against hosts Bangladesh.

While the Irish commentator was ecstatic, his companion, South African Deon Ackerman, was pondering a more menacing query of his own related to Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan. "What happened to Shakib? Is he injured?" he inquired.

When told no injury concerns had been reported, he seemed a bit perplexed. Shakib had bowled just three overs in Ireland's first innings, so that question was very much the proverbial elephant in the room.

Tajjul Islam had bagged five wickets in the first innings and it had been apparent that spin held sway on the second day. But given that Bangladesh had five specialist bowlers in the line-up excluding Shakib, the argument that could be developed was that the skipper was gauging the strength of the rest of the bowlers.

Shakib took the ball from the very beginning on the second day during Ireland's second innings and bowled seven overs, inciting a top-order collapse as he produced two wickets with the new ball and Ireland slumped to 13 for four before reaching 27 for four at the close of play.

Coming into the third day, Shakib bowled three more overs on

the trot. That turned out to be his biggest spell in the second innings, with the visitors managing to play out 107 overs with a majority of their batters getting starts. Tajjul bowled 38 of those and the pace trio managed 27.

Lorcan Tucker struck a hundred during two big partnerships and,

can't say I am disappointed that he didn't bowl so much today," he said.

"I really don't know why he hasn't bowled enough today," pace bowling coach Allan Donald said at the press conference yesterday.

Donald felt that Shakib could have done what he does best.

I think a massive tick today was the resilience that Ireland showed. We knew that coming to the ground today wasn't gonna be a walk in the park. We would not have disrespected whatever Ireland would throw at us

Bangladesh fast-bowling coach Allan Donald said after Ireland's fightback on Thursday.

The wicket is playing well. It will break up a little bit more. We know we can take wickets to win the game tomorrow [Friday]. We hope to give Bangladesh a real target to chase. We think all the pressure is on them.

Ireland's centurion Lorcan Tucker said after the third day's play.



Argentina go top after 6 years

REUTERS

World champions Argentina dethroned Brazil and returned to the top of the FIFA rankings on Thursday after a six-year gap.

Argentina, who won last year's World Cup in Qatar by beating France in the final, achieved the No. 1 spot after Lionel Scaloni's side beat Panama 2-0 and Curacao 7-0 in friendlies.

Bangladesh held on to 192th spot among 211 nations after 1-1 draw at home against Seychelles, who jumped forward two places from 199.

France moved up one place to second after a 4-0 win over the Netherlands and 1-0 victory in Ireland in Euro 2024 qualifiers, while Brazil slipped to third after losing 2-1 away to Morocco in a friendly.

Belgium remained fourth, England were fifth followed by the Netherlands in sixth, Croatia seventh and Italy eighth. Portugal and Spain completed the top 10.

The Central African Republic were the biggest movers in the latest rankings, jumping 10 places to 122nd.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh held on to 192th spot among 211 nations after 1-1 draw at home against Seychelles, who jumped forward two places from 199.



A second-half hat-trick from star forward Karim Benzema saw Real Madrid bounce back from a one-goal semifinal first leg deficit to beat archrivals Barcelona 4-0 in the second leg at their home and reach the Copa del Rey final in stunning fashion on Wednesday.

Benzema became the first Real player to score a hat-trick in a Clasico at the Nou Camp since Ferenc Puskas in 1963.

With 16 goals to his name in 43 appearances, Benzema has now become the 4th-highest scorer in El Clasico after Lionel Messi, Alfredo Di Stefano and Cristiano Ronaldo.

Benzema also became the first Real Madrid player to score a hat-trick in El Clasico against Barca since Ivan Zamorano in 1995.

Benzema (25 goals in 48 matches) also surpassed Cristiano Ronaldo (22 goals in 30 games) to become the top scorer for Real Madrid in Copa del Rey.

Having netted thrice in a La Liga encounter with Real Valladolid in his previous game, Benzema's hat-trick on Wednesday saw him score consecutive trebles for the first time in his career.

More records on Kings' agenda

SPORTS REPORTER



Bashundhara Kings will look to make history by winning the professional football league four times in a row as the Bangladesh Premier League resumes today following a six-week midseason break for the transfer window and international engagements.

At the end of the first phase, leaders Kings are nine points clear of closest rivals Abahani, which is a record gap since the inception of the professional football league in 2007.

When Kings entered the top flight in the 2018-19 season, the biggest gap between first and second place at the midseason point in any prior season was four points. Abahani had led Sheikh Jamal by that margin in 2009-10 while Muktiyoddha Sangsad had four more points than Mohammedan in 2010-11.

Interestingly, Kings maintained that gap by going four points clear of nearest rivals Abahani at the midseason mark in their debut season before widening that gap to eight points against nearest rivals Sheikh Jamal in their second season at the same point of the season. In that second season, they ultimately finished 13 points clear of runners-up Sheikh Jamal.

However, Kings were challenged in their third season as Abahani refused to go away. They were leading by four points at the midway point, but their lead against second-placed Abahani ballooned to 10 points by the end of the season, securing a hat-trick of titles.

In the past, only two teams have overcome a deficit to lift the title. Abahani have done so thrice, overcoming gaps of one or two points, while Sheikh Jamal once recovered from a four-point deficit to win the title. But this time, six-time champions Abahani and three-time champions Sheikh Jamal are a long way away from the unstoppable Kings, who are on a roll with 10 straight wins. They have 30 points followed by Abahani's 21, Bangladesh Police's 16 and Sheikh Jamal's 14.

Today, Kings will meet newcomers Azampur FC Uttar at the Rofiq Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium in Mymensingh.





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Birds long dead, money meant for their feed ‘embezzled’

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Forest department officials have shown dead exotic birds of an aviary in Chattogram as alive in documents allegedly for six years embezzling the money meant for bird feed.

The Sheikh Russel Aviary and Eco Park was inaugurated in 2013 with 740 exotic and 199 native birds in Rangunia upazila.

But a committee formed in February this year to count the birds found only 183, most of which are mallards and ducks, according to Shitol Pal, assistant conservator of forest, who was the member secretary of the committee.

On paper, the park had 30 species of exotic birds, but in reality, the committee found only five: pelican, jandaya parakeet, bar-headed goose, and blue and gold macaw. There were also 169 turtles in the lake.

According to records obtained by The Daily Star, the park spent about Tk 3.08 lakh to feed 740 birds for just 18 days in January and the park authority allocated Tk 50 lakh for bird feed in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

An employee of the park, who feeds the birds, said the feed mostly contains grain husks and a small amount of bananas, sunflower seeds and eggs that doesn't cost more than Tk 80,000 a month.

Employees of the park on 520 acres of hilly area said most of the birds died during a 2016 cyclone that damaged all the cages. But the losses were not recorded on paper.

The birds listed by the committee include mallards and ducks 78, quail 26, local parrot 17, common peafowl 17 and turkey 11.

Contacted, Rangunia Range Officer Masum Kabir, who was in-charge of the park at different times from 2020 to January 2023, did not give a direct answer when asked why there was such a discrepancy between the number of birds found by the committee and the number shown on food ration documents.

He claimed the birds died at different times and the list was revised regularly.

When he was reminded about the January diet chart that mentioned 740 birds, he said ducks were bought to restore the stock. He didn't directly answer when asked about the mention of exotic birds on documents.

A day after the committee counted the birds, the contractor supplied the ducks, he said, adding that the park now has the number of birds mentioned on paper.

According to records, M/S Meem Traders has been supplying feed to the park since it was established.

Asked how many birds his firm has been supplying the feed for, Babul, the proprietor, said he would not answer the question and told this reporter never to call him again.

Alimul Raji, the veterinarian of the aviary, said it was difficult for the exotic birds to cope with the climate.

Most of the birds flew away or died during cyclone Roanu in 2016. Besides, a landslide coupled with heavy downpour damaged four cages, but no list was prepared of the remaining birds, he added.

On paper, the park had 30 species of exotic birds, but in reality, the committee found only five: pelican, jandaya parakeet, bar-headed goose, and blue and gold macaw.



DAYTIME OWL

A short-eared owl, also informally called “shortie”, poses for the camera in Rajshahi’s Padmar Char. These birds are diurnal -- unlike most owls, they prefer to be out during the daytime to hunt for food, mainly small mammals, in grasslands or marshlands. The short-eared owl has one of the most widespread distributions among owls and can be found in every continent except Australia and Antarctica. As their name suggests, they do have ear tufts but are often not clearly seen. However, if taken by surprise, or to deter predators, the owls erect the tufts to resemble horns. Short-eared owls are in the “least concern” category of IUCN’s red list, but their numbers have been declining in many areas over a long period due to habitat loss.

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN

Iran, KSA vow to bring Mideast ‘security, stability’

Top envoys of the two countries meet in China

AFP, Beijing

Top diplomats from Middle East rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia met in Beijing yesterday, pledging to work together to bring “security and stability” to their turbulent region following a surprise China-brokered deal.

In a joint statement released after talks between Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan, the two sides vowed to continue to work together to improve ties.

“The two sides emphasised the importance of following up on the implementation of the Beijing Agreement and its activation in a way that expands mutual trust and the fields of cooperation and helps create security, stability and prosperity in the region,” said the statement.

Tehran and Riyadh announced a Beijing-brokered agreement in March to restore relations that had been severed seven years ago when protesters in Iran attacked Saudi diplomatic missions.

The ministers’ visit to Beijing came as French President Emmanuel Macron and EU chief Ursula von der Leyen were also

Saudi Arabia, the world’s biggest oil exporter, and Shia-majority Iran, strongly at odds with Western governments over its nuclear



Iranian FM Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, right, meets Saudi FM Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud in Beijing, China yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

in the Chinese capital, seeking to make Europe’s case in a meeting with Xi Jinping for bringing an end to the conflict in Ukraine.

The shock rapprochement between mainly Sunni Muslim

activities, has the potential to reshape relations across a region characterised by turbulence for decades.

The two sides “negotiated

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Sarcophagus of Pharaoh Ramses II unveiled in Paris

AFP, Paris

The sarcophagus of ancient Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II was unveiled to reporters in Paris yesterday following its rare journey outside of Egypt.

The ornate coffin will be on show to the public in the French capital from April 7 to September 6.


Benedicte Lhoyer, scientific advisor to the exhibition, told AFP the “exceptional” loan was thanks to “an unprecedented cooperation between France and Egypt”.

The Ramses II exhibition is on a tour that includes the United States and Australia, but only France is receiving the sarcophagus, in recognition of the assistance from French scientists who helped save the mummy from decay following a previous visit to Paris in 1976.

The mummy itself has stayed behind this time, since Egyptian law now forbids transporting royal

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Tangail AL leader sued for raping teen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

An Awami League leader, also elder brother of a ruling party lawmaker in Tangail, has been sued over the rape and torture of a teenager.

According to the case statement, the 17-year-old victim is now pregnant due to the rape.

The accused, Golam Kibria Boro Moni, is vice-president of Tangail town AL and secretary general of the district’s Bus-Minibus Owners’ Association.

He is the elder brother of Tanvir Hasan Soto Monir, a Tangail-2 AL lawmaker.

Moni’s wife Nigar Altaf was also accused of torturing the girl, according to the case filed with Tangail Sadar Police Station early yesterday.

The victim, who used to live alone since the death of her parents, is allegedly a relative of the accused.

Banking on the fact that she was alone, Moni would stalk and keep a close watch on her. On December 17, he called and asked her to come to his home in the town’s Purbo Adalatpur area, reads the case statement.

When she went there, he raped her at gunpoint and took photographs. He then released her but not without a warning that he would publish the photos on social media if she shared the matter with anyone.

Boro Moni raped the girl multiple times in phases

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



Boro Moni

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Rokia Afzal Rahman
(24 September 1941 – 5 April 2023)

ICC Bangladesh The world business organization is deeply shocked and grieved at the sad demise of Mrs. Rokia Afzal Rahman, ICC Bangladesh Vice President and Former Advisor to the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh. She died in Singapore at around 2.00 a.m. on Wednesday, 5 April 2023. Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un.

Mrs. Rokia Afzal Rahman started her career in 1962 as a Banker, she was one of the few women who chose to be a banker and became the first woman Bank Manager in 1964. She was a sponsor Director of MIDAS Financing Limited, Director in Reliance Insurance Ltd., Chairperson of Media World Limited the owning company of The Daily Star, Director in the Mediastar and ABC Radio. Mrs. Rahman also served for three years as Member of the Board of Directors of Bangladesh Bank. She was also Members of the Board of a number of NGO's: BRAC, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Bangladesh Freedom Foundation and NGO Foundation.

In 1980 Mrs. Rahman ventured into her own agro based industry. As Chair and CEO of two agro industries she worked with 15000 small farmers. She facilitated loans to farmers by standing as guarantor to a commercial bank taking loans for them and retailing the loan to them.

Mrs. Rahman was founder President of the first Women Entrepreneurs Association in Bangladesh (formed in 1994), Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs' (BFWWE) – formed in 2006. In 1996 she formed Women in Small Enterprises for development of small enterprises.

Mrs. Rahman has been in the ICC Bangladesh Executive Board as Vice President since 2012. She also served as President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka.

May Allah SWT rest her soul in peace, in Jannatul Ferdous, Aameen.

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