

P3 The financial struggle of mess residents



P6 Meet Barbie's Bangladeshi actor



P7 China simulates striking Taiwan



P11 No Riyadh as plan progresses



Liquid waste from different factories have darkened the water of the Buriganga in Postogola area in the capital. The water remains in this state until monsoon when heavy showers increases the water flow. The photo was taken last week. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

EID JOURNEY HOME Roadworks, bottlenecks, breakdowns can ruin it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ongoing road development work may lead to severe congestion between Dhaka and Gazipur on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway and Elega and Hatikumrul on Dhaka-Rangpur highway during the Eid rush.

On top of this, nonautomated toll collection at Padma, Meghna, and Bangabandhu bridges and the Dhaka-Mawa Bhangra expressway could cause long queues.

Traffic could grind to a halt due to breakdowns of rickety, unfit vehicles and crashes caused by the large number of motorbikes that will be on the highways.

Unlike the last Eid-ul-Azha, the government will allow bikes on the highways, but not on the Padma Bridge.

The relatively short holidays this year is likely to put extra pressure on the other transport modes and many bikers could choose to use their vehicles for the journey.

These issues came up at a meeting of the road transport and bridges ministry arranged at the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority headquarters yesterday. The meeting was on how to make the Eid trips smooth and safe.

Representatives from different ministries, local administration, police, transport association, and road safety campaigners joined the meeting chaired by Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader.

Before last year's Eid-ul-Azha holidays, people heading for the north and north-western parts

suffered immensely in congestion. According to an estimate by Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, around 1.2 crore people will leave Dhaka ahead of this Eid. Another 5 crore will make journeys from one district to another, it said.

THE CONCERNS Quader claimed that Dhaka-Chattogram and Dhaka-Sylhet highways will not see major tailbacks during the rush. "But I am fearful of the Dhaka-Gazipur corridor where construction of the BRT [Bus Rapid Transit] is going on," he said.

"This is our biggest concern. This section has to be kept passable by any means," he said.

On the Elega-Sirajganj-Bogura highway, he said development work has to be

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



SCBA IFTAR MAHFIL Over 50 pro-BNP lawyers sued over 'attack'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A criminal case has been filed against 50 to 60 pro-BNP lawyers including AM Mahub Uddin Khokon and Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal on charges of attacking, threatening and attempting to kill lawyers and vandalising furniture at an iftar mahfil organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association on April 6.

Md Robiul Hassan, administrative officer of SCBA, lodged the case with Shahbagh Police Station in Dhaka yesterday also requesting the police to arrest the accused of the case and to take legal action against them.

In the case, names of 24 lawyers, including AM Mahub Uddin Khokon and Ruhul Quddus Kazal, who were the candidates for the posts of president and secretary in the SCBA election held on March 15 and 16 from pro-BNP

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

ELECTIONS IN 5 CITIES AL to go for fresh picks in Gazipur, Sylhet

Undecided on Barishal; incumbent mayors of Rajshahi, Khulna likely to get AL tickets

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

The mayors of Khulna and Rajshahi cities are likely to get Awami League nominations to run for mayor in the coming elections.

In Gazipur, Azmat Ullah Khan, the city AL president, may be nominated by the party, while in Sylhet, Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, who recently returned from the UK, may get the AL ticket to run for mayor.

In Barishal city, Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah has recently been asking people for blessings. But the AL may not nominate him this time around, sources in the party say.

His uncle Abul Khair Abdullah collected a nomination form, and he has a greater chance of getting the party ticket, they add.

Current Rajshahi city Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton told The Daily Star yesterday that he met AL President Sheikh Hasina at her Sangsad Bhaban office and got the green light from her.

"I will collect the nomination paper tomorrow [today]," he added. It is common knowledge in political circles that Khulna Mayor Talukder

Abdul Khaleque is going to get the AL nomination again.

Sheikh Salahuddin Jewel, lawmaker of Khulna-2, recently named Khaleque as the party candidate. Khaleque's nomination form was collected from the AL chief's political office in the capital's Dhanmondi by AL Organising Secretary (central) SM Kamal Hossain. As of yesterday, no one else from Khulna has collected the form.

In Sylhet, Anwaruzzaman, AL joint general secretary in the UK, has been meeting people and asking for "blessings" in the race for mayor.

He also met the prime minister yesterday, and later said the AL "high command asked me to work for Sylhet".

AL sources say the party is in a dilemma over who to choose for Gazipur City Corporation.

Suspended Gazipur mayor Mohammad Zahangir Alam, acting mayor Ashadur Rahman Kiran and Gazipur City AL President Azmat Ullah Khan are in a race to get the nomination.

But none of them collected the nomination form after the AL started selling nomination forms yesterday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

It's tantamount to assault on press freedom

120 citizens say about call for cancelling Prothom Alo's declaration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One hundred and twenty eminent citizens yesterday said that the demand for cancellation of the Prothom Alo declaration is an attack on freedom of the media and journalism.

They in a joint statement condemned the move to gag the media and called for scrapping of the Digital Security Act.

"We, the citizens who believe in the freedom of the press, strongly condemn any attempt to suppress the voice of the media and call for repealing the Digital Security Act and protecting freedom of expression and ensuring freedom of the media," the statement said.

The statement goes on to highlight that the charges against Prothom Alo and its reporter Samsuzzaman Shams are still sub-judice and unproven.

No group that respects democracy, human rights, and free thought can support such an attack on the media, the statement said.

They called upon people from all professions to be vocal for ensuring freedom of the media.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



An excavator yesterday removes the debris from Bangabazar, which was destroyed by a massive fire on April 4, as traders are going to start their business on Wednesday by setting up makeshift shops there.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BANGABAZAR FIRE Burning cigarette or mosquito coil possible cause Says DSCC probe body

DIPAN NANDY

Investigators of Dhaka South City Corporation suspect a burning cigarette or a mosquito repellent coil caused the devastating fire at Bangabazar Shopping Complex in the capital.

They also said the fire might have started somewhere between Adarsha and Mahanagar markets of the complex on April 4. The investigators, however, ruled out an electric short circuit as a cause of the fire.

The fire destroyed around 3,000 shops and ready-made garments stored in them to ashes. Shop owners' leaders claimed that goods worth around Tk 1,000 crore were lost.

The eight-member probe committee of DSCC was supposed to file its initial report yesterday after talking to security guards, traders, shop owners, employees of the markets, and witnesses.

Several members of the committee, seeking anonymity, said the fire broke out in an embroidery factory on the second floor of Adarsha Market, adjacent to the Mahanagar Market.

They added that there was no electricity distribution box near the factory.

Except for a few places, the entire complex's power supply was turned off, they said, adding that electricity supply of the two markets was also out from 11:00pm to 7:00am.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Heatwave sweeps parts of country

UNB, Dhaka

People in different parts of the country are experiencing a sweltering heatwave with the mercury soaring to 37.4 degrees Celsius in Dhaka yesterday.

The country's highest temperature 38.5 degrees celsius was recorded in Chuadanga.

Day labourers, rickshaw pullers, farmers, and others who generally work outdoors are finding it challenging to continue working under the intense heat of the sun.

Animals and birds are also restless and struggling in the scorching heat.

According to a Met office bulletin, mild to moderate heatwave is sweeping over Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal divisions and Rajshahi, Pabna, Bogura, Moulvibazar, Chattogram, Rangamati, Chandpur, Noakhali, Feni, Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts.

Day and night temperatures may rise slightly over the country, it said.

Meanwhile, the Khulna region is currently experiencing temperatures between 37 and 38 degrees Celsius, which is causing great discomfort to workers and animals alike.

As the day progresses, the temperature keeps rising, making it unbearable for people to move around in the scorching heat.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Three killed in truck-pickup collision

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Three people were killed in a collision between a pickup and a truck in Jamalpur's Melandah upazila last morning.

The deceased were identified as Shah Alam, 35, Chanchal, 32, and Kajol, said Delwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Melandah Police Station.

Police and locals told The Daily Star that the driver of the Dewanganj-bound pickup van lost control over the vehicle and collided head-on with a Jamalpur-bound truck in Malancha on the Jamalpur-Dewanganj highway around 7:30am.

Two people died on the spot while another was declared dead on arrival at the Melandah Upazila Health Complex, said the OC.

Among the deceased, two were pickup van passengers while another was a passenger of the truck.

The bodies have been kept at the health complex for autopsy, the OC said.

Both vehicles are in police custody, the OC added.



A local resident removes debris from his house damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russian missiles hit southeast Ukraine

France denies presence of its soldiers in Ukraine

AGENCIES

A 50-year-old man and his 11-year-old daughter were killed after Russian missiles struck a house in the southeastern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, officials said yesterday.

It was the latest Russian strike on civilian infrastructure in southeast Ukraine as Moscow's invasion stretches into its second year.

"The enemy carried out a missile attack on Zaporizhzhia and killed another Ukrainian family," the head of the State Emergency Service, Sergiy Kruk, said on social media.

The girl died in an ambulance, said the head of Zaporizhzhia City Council, Anatoliy Kurtiev. Rescue workers pulled the girl's 46-year-old mother alive from under the rubble.

Her elder daughter was not at home when the Russians struck at night, the State Emergency Service said.

Kurtiev said two Russian missiles struck a residential building, adding that windows and roofs were damaged in dozens of neighbouring houses, reports AFP.

The region of Zaporizhzhia is one of four Ukrainian provinces Russian President Vladimir Putin claims to have annexed last year.

Meanwhile, the French defence ministry has denied the presence of French soldiers in Ukraine, as allegedly revealed in documents attributed to the Pentagon and leaked to Russian networks mid-week.

Top secret Pentagon documents, reportedly containing charts and details about anticipated weapons deliveries, battalion strengths and other sensitive information, were spread on Twitter and Telegram last week.

A spokesperson for the Minister of the Armed Forces, Sébastien Lecornu said: "There are no French forces engaged in operation in Ukraine. The documents cited do not come from the French armies. We do not comment on documents whose source is uncertain."

Top secret Pentagon documents, reportedly containing charts and details about anticipated weapons deliveries, battalion strengths and other sensitive information, were spread on Twitter and Telegram last week.

One slide suggested that a small contingent of less than a hundred special operations personnel from Nato members France, America, Britain and Latvia were already active in Ukraine.

EMBASSY REOPENING Delegation set to visit KSA: Iran

AFP, Tehran

Iran's foreign ministry said yesterday a delegation will visit Saudi Arabia by Friday to pave the way for reopening its diplomatic missions there following a similar move by Riyadh.

The announcement comes a day after a Saudi delegation arrived in Tehran on a similar diplomatic trip, and follows a historic meeting between the two Gulf countries' foreign ministers in China.

"We are expecting a foreign ministry delegation to visit Saudi Arabia" by Friday, Deputy Foreign Minister Alireza Enayati said in an interview with state television.

"Two separate delegations will go to Riyadh and Jeddah", ahead of reopening Iran's embassy and consulate respectively.

Saudi Arabia severed relations with Iran in January 2016, after its embassy in Tehran and consulate in the northwestern city of Mashhad were attacked by protesters demonstrating over Riyadh's execution of Saudi opposition Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr.

Roadworks, bottlenecks, breakdowns can ruin it

FROM PAGE 1

stopped for days if needed to facilitate traffic movement during the rush.

The government is turning the 190km Gazipur-Elenga-Hatikumrul-Rangpur highway into a four-lane highway. The Bangabandhu Bridge approach road in the east has two lanes, which could become a bottleneck.

Project Director Waliur Rahman said vehicles heading north will use the main road while Dhaka-bound vehicles will use a bypass from Bangabandhu Bridge.

"We got good results with this initiative during the last Eid-ul-Fitr rush. But a large number of unfit vehicles breaking down blocked the road before Eid-ul-Azha," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Proper traffic management is the key, he said, adding that 14km out of the 19km Bangabandhu Bridge approach road in the west is already four lanes.

Cumilla Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Shamim Alam said the

server for Daudkandi Toll Plaza goes offline occasionally. "If such an event occurs during the rush, it will create a huge problem. I request preparations so that the toll can be collected manually if needed," he said.

Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun echoed him.

In most toll booths of Padma Bridge, Meghna Bridge, Bangabandhu Bridge and Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway, booth operators take the money from vehicles and give receipts printed by computers connected to a server.

Bridge Secretary Monjur Hossain said the authorities were working to install an Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) system at the Padma Bridge but it would not be done before Eid.

On March 20, the Bridge Division held a meeting where recommendations were made for more toll booths on the expressway, keeping extra change at the booths, and stopping unfit vehicles before

they hit the roads.

Ilias Kanchan, chairman of Nirapad Sarak Chai, a platform working on road safety, said, "It is possible to curb road crashes if the number of unfit vehicles can be reduced."

Jatiya Press Club President Farida Yesmin also said road crashes would not reduce until the authorities pay more attention to the fitness of vehicles.

A record 5.42 lakh registered vehicles, which should have renewed their fitness certificates, did not do so as of October 15 last year.

Khandaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of the Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, said it was not possible for the association to track unfit vehicles.

He requested the BRTA to give the local administration and the police a list of such vehicles for taking action.

He said many garment workers hire buses to go home during the holidays and urged factories to give them leave in phases so that pressure on the roads

is less.

However, the Dhaka Road Transport Owners Association, of which Enayet is the general secretary, yesterday asked its members "not to rent out unfit and rundown buses outside Dhaka".

Mozammel Hoque Chowdhury, secretary General of Jatri Kalyan Samity, said only one day of holiday before Eid day, expected to be on April 22, is not enough for all to leave the capital.

He demanded the government add another day of holiday ahead of Eid. Quader said, "We can't bring discipline on the road and transport sectors." He termed it the biggest challenge.

He directed the authorities concerned to sit with transport associations regarding unfit vehicles.

Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, who moderated the meeting, said they want to set this year's Eid journey as a model.

AL to go for fresh picks

FROM PAGE 1

AL leader Zahangir, who became Gazipur mayor in the 2018 election, was expelled from the AL on November 19, 2021, after he was seen in a viral video clip making derogatory remarks about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and expressing doubts about the number of martyrs in the Liberation War.

Seven days after his expulsion from the party, the government suspended him from his mayoral post. The ruling party, however, granted him amnesty on January 21 this year.

Seven aspirants collected nomination forms for Gazipur City Corporation election.

The Election Commission on April 3 announced the schedules of elections to five city corporations.

Polls will be held in Gazipur on May 25, Khulna and Barisal on June 12, and Rajshahi and Sylhet on June 21.

A total of 17 aspirants collected nomination forms on the first day.

Five mayoral aspirants collected nomination forms for Sylhet and four for Barisal.

AL sources say, disgruntled AL leaders running as independents may become a serious issue for the party in the polls.

Since the BNP boycotted most of the national and local elections held after 2008, ruling party nominees faced major challenges from such independents popularly known as "AL rebels".

This time, the AL is preparing for the election assuming that the BNP will not participate, and according to insiders, the top AL leadership will be tough on "rebels".

The AL wants to flaunt its popularity and organisational strength by winning the city polls before the national election.

Besides, the AL-led government wants to show that fair and transparent elections can be held when it is in power.

Over 50 pro-BNP lawyers

FROM PAGE 1

lawyers' panel, have been mentioned.

Other named accused of the case are Kayser Kamal; Kamrul Hasan Sajal; Shah Ahmed Badal; Kamrul Isalam, Yunus Ali Robi; Mostafizur Rahman Ahad; Mirza Al Mahmood; Mahdeen Chowdhury; Mehedi Hasan; Noor-A-Alam Siddique Sohagh; Jamiul Hoque Faisal; Nazrul Islam Chhoton; Mohsin Kabir Roki; Faisal Siddique; Shafiqul Alam Shofur; Ehsanur Rahman; Md Shahidul Islam; Monjurul Alam Sujan; Md Mahbubur Rahman; Mahfuz Bin Yusuf; Redwan Ahmed Runjib and Isha.

It has been said in the case statement, the accused along with some outsider terrorists entered the two hall rooms of SCBA where Iftar Mahfil was organised with a procession chanting slogan in the

name of fugitive convict Tarique Rahman and Jamaat (Jamaat-e-Islami) and they scratched the banners containing the name of the chief justice, vandalised the chairs and tables and created a chaotic situation there.

The accused hurt and injured some lawyers including Rafiqul Islam, Pannu Khan and Shahnewaz when they tried to prevent the accused, read the statement.

Accused Noor-A-Alam Siddique Sohagh attempted to kill Rafiqul Islam by blowing with a stick on his head and Rafiqul Islam got serious injury, according to the case statement.

The accused persons left the place after directing the general lawyers not to take Iftar, Robiul said in the case statement.

Burning cigarette or mosquito coil possible cause

FROM PAGE 1

Quoting security guards of the complex, the investigators said there was electricity in only the living spaces for the guards, the mosque, and the office of the complex. Wi-Fi access points were on, they added.

Investigators said there was a room for security personnel to stay on the roof of the Adarsha Market. The embroidery factory and a warehouse were beneath the room.

During sehri, cigarette butts from the roof might have fallen on the second floor and goods in the embroidery factory or the warehouse caught fire. Apart from this, the fire could also ignite from a burning mosquito repellent coil in the place where the security personnel stay, the investigators suspect.

Marina Nazneen, executive officer at Dhaka South City Corporation Zone-1, who is leading the committee,

told The Daily Star, "We have almost completed all the work. But we are yet to get the list of the affected people. We will submit the report tomorrow [Monday]."

Asked about the cause of the fire, she said, "We will make our observations in the final report."

However, no fire expert has been included in the committee that was formed with councillors and officials of the DSCC on April 4. It has been asked to investigate the cause of the fire, assess the extent of the damage and assess the list of the victims and submit a report in three working days.

Fire Service and Civil Defence also formed a seven-member probe body on the day and the committee has been asked to submit a report in eight working days.

Meanwhile, the affected traders of Bangabazar held a meeting with

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday afternoon over the reopening of the market.

After the meeting, the mayor told reporters that the market would be temporarily open on Wednesday when the debris have been removed.

"We are expecting to get the list of the affected traders by tomorrow [Monday]. We will complete the cleaning up work within the time. Bricks will be laid so that traders can start their business," he added.

Helal Uddin, president of Bangladesh Shop Owners Association, said each affected trader will get a space of 17 and a half square feet to run business in a makeshift shop.

In another development, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry has announced Tk 1 crore in grants to rehabilitate the Bangabazar traders.

Besides, the Hijra community yesterday donated Tk 20 lakh for them.

Make law

FROM PAGE 12

and oppose freedom.

"I have heard that the Law Commission has proposed such a law. I will call for this law to be passed in this parliament to keep the nation protected."

Pointing to the BNP, the minister said they tried to question the last two elections to make parliament ineffective. They are plotting to make Bangladesh a dysfunctional and failed state.

"Since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had people involved in jail killings and Bangabandhu murder prosecuted, she can have this law enacted to punish the anti-state and anti-independence elements of the country," he added.

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Politics devoid of passion now

JP lawmaker tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party lawmaker Kazi Firoz Rashid yesterday told parliament that politics is now just a profession, not a result of passion, as it was in the past.

"Before, people used to do politics for the passion, but it has just become a profession now," he said.

Firoz mentioned that politics is the only way to change one's life overnight. "Earlier, people risked their lives to do politics, because of passion." During the Pakistan era, he recalled that if a man was involved in politics, he could not marry, because he would not get any job.

Besides, he claimed that the parliament has many achievements along with weaknesses.

"Till date, it has not been able to form a commission [on Bangabandhu's murder]. If the nation cannot know who was involved, there is no point in keeping a fragment of history. Bangabandhu was killed through a huge conspiracy; it's not like Dalim, Farooq and Rashid just went and did it [assassinated Bangabandhu]," he said.

Aside from this, Firoz Rashid mentioned that the nation is now divided into two parts. "There is no neutral person. Teachers, doctors, intellectuals, journalists are all divided."

DESIRE FOR FREEDOM LARGELY ABSENT IN JS

Gonoforum lawmaker Mokabbir Khan, in his speech, said the philosophy of the Father of the Nation, spirit of the Liberation War, and the desire for freedom are largely absent in today's parliament.

"Sadly, even today, parliament passes indemnity laws for the corrupt, money launderers, looters. It's a shame," he remarked.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Ahead of Eid, it seems even vendors on foot-bridges near Dhaka New Market are seeing more business than usual. As the sellers carry on doing business, occupying a large section of the foot-bridge amid the lack of authority's intervention, they cause great suffering for commuters. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



EMINENT PERSONS ON ZERO WASTE

Prof Yunus appointed as advisory board member

UNB, Dhaka

Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus has been appointed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres as a member of the Advisory Board of Eminent Persons on Zero Waste.

The appointment was made in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolution on Zero Waste (77/161) adopted on December 22, 2022.

In a letter addressed to Prof Yunus, Guterres said, "As a board member, I trust

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DHAKA FLOW

Getting familiar with breathwork

RBR

Your mind and body are very much in sync with the air, water, and land you live in. This means that your inner well-being and peace are directly proportional to the external space and elements you are accustomed to, especially if you want to achieve a healthy lifestyle and want to bring about positive changes within the community to do so.

Thus, when Shazia Omar, founder of Dhaka Flow, a wellness platform says "I need clean air to breathe, pure water to drink, to be in good spirits. Healthy people and a healthy planet go hand in hand", it resonates well with your plan to promote a sustainable lifestyle of self-growth and mindfulness. It has to be a concerted community effort.

Dhaka Flow's most recent programme is a 14-day pre-iftar "Pranayama challenge" that started on April 7 and ends on April 20. It is an online session in which every day at 5:00pm, different yoginis will teach you breathwork from the Facebook page of Dhaka Flow.

"Pranayama or breathwork has many profound benefits for our health. It helps us increase the intake of oxygen in our blood, which in turn nourishes all our cells. The breathwork will help focus and allow you to breathe deeper for the energy you are missing," explains Shazia.

Breathwork like Brahmari, Lion's breath, Chandra Bhedana, Nadi Shadhona, and Dancer's breath will be taught to help you relax. The Pranayama course features 14 different breathing mechanisms from ancient Vedic times. The sessions will

be conducted by 14 teachers, who will help you bring a shift in your outlook toward healthy living and wellness.

After Covid-19, doctors have started suggesting Pranayama techniques to people to help them strengthen their respiratory systems. Athletes regularly practise breathwork, as do mental-health patients to help them achieve calmness and focus, lower heart rates, and reap other health benefits.

"Dhaka Flow: Festival of Yoga & Wellness" in December 2022 brought together over 30 vendors of wellness products, 30 fitness teachers and healers, and 1,500 participants under one platform, to build a community, celebrate health and healing, honour the environment, and elevate the spirit. It was a momentous way of creating demand for mindfulness and helping to meet the demand under one platform.

For example, Dhaka Flow also has a list of vegetarian food vendors to help you eat healthily. Mental-health therapy is a huge sector, and you can initiate your therapy sessions from the Dhaka Flow platform.

Ramadan is the time when everyone thinks about streamlining their bad habits and embracing good practices like living healthy, being energetic, and being conscious of what we eat. Wellness platforms are slowly gaining ground, and Dhaka Flow brings yoga practitioners and groups of people together to work on wellness.

"We did this to raise awareness. We have to change our unhealthy consumer product-based living and bring back healthy Ayurvedic habits that went unpopular but are coming back now," Shazia Omar explains.

Those interested can visit facebook.com/dhakaflowfestival

The financial struggle of mess residents

Rising cost of essentials makes life harder for bachelors

MD ABBAS

Living in a mess, an accommodation arrangement where individuals share their living space with others, has been a common practice for bachelors in Bangladesh, particularly for those living in urban areas.

The messes have been an affordable option for many, especially for those who are students or job aspirants with limited income. However, with the rise in the prices of all essentials, including food, housing, and utilities, bachelors residing in messes are struggling to make ends meet.

Joy Banik, a resident of Monipuripara in the capital, shared his struggles with The Daily Star.

Joy said that just three years ago, he could cover his monthly food expenses with Tk 2,500. However, now, even after spending Tk 4,000 a month, he struggles to manage. Members of the mess he lives in are forced to cut their consumption of protein due to the rise in food prices.

Just a year ago, they used to consume chicken and fish on every alternate day with meal prices averaging around Tk 40-45. However, now, they have been forced to modify their diet, limiting their meat and fish intake to only two days a week.

Despite the changes in diet, the cost of each meal has gone up to Tk 60-65. As Joy is still jobless, he is dependent on financial support from his acquaintances, but it is becoming increasingly difficult for him.

Nuruzzaman, who lives in a mess on Dilu Road, shared similar experiences, saying that there has been a significant

shift in dietary habits over the past few years. Previously, they used to consume beef or mutton twice a week. However, now, they do not dare to think of consuming beef or mutton even once a month. Nuruzzaman added that they often eat potato, pulse, and eggs as the price of vegetables is also very high.

FALLING ILL FOR PROTEIN DEFICIENCY

Habibur Rahman, a private-university student residing in a mess in Farmgate area, revealed that he has fallen ill on

“The increase in food prices has forced them (mess residents) to modify their diets and cut down on protein intake, leading to protein deficiency. This deficiency can even lead to chronic diseases.”

PROF SK NAZRUL ISLAM
Director of the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science at Dhaka University

at least three occasions after dining there. He even had to be admitted to the hospital once, and the doctor had diagnosed him with protein deficiency. Habibur is still taking medicine.

Sajjad Hossain, a private-sector employee living in a mess in Gulshan area, shared a similar experience, concluding that eventually he had to move to a different mess. He said the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Exhausted from waiting hours in traffic under the sun, a rickshaw-puller takes refuge in the shadow of a rickshaw in front of him yesterday. This photo was taken in the capital's Shajahanpur area.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Sultana died due to torture after abduction

Claims Fakhru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that Sultana Jasmine died due to torture after her abduction.

"Picking up a citizen and also a public servant is a gross violation of law and the Constitution. Under which law was she picked up?" he said at a discussion organised by Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal at the capital's Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Sultana, a union-level land office employee in Naogaon, died in the custody of Rab in late March.

The BNP leader said Sultana was picked up from the street following an allegation made by a joint secretary. "It cannot happen in a civilised country. Sultana's killing proved that the ruling-

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SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

Deadline to submit report extended for 97th time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday extended the deadline for submitting the probe report of a case filed over the murder of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi till May 22.

This is the 97th deadline extension. Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Rashidul Alam passed the order after Rab Additional Superintendent of Police Khondoker Md Shafiqul Alam, also the investigation officer of the case, failed to submit the report yesterday, said court sources.

On March 5 this year, the same court asked Rab to submit the report by yesterday.

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BANGABAZAR FIRE

Hijra community donates savings to traders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a gesture of kindness, a group of around 100 members of the hijra community visited the site of Bangabazar Shopping Complex yesterday to hand over Tk 20 lakh to the affected traders. The community raised the funds from members across the country, saving money from their Eid expenses.

Kashmiri Dipali Hijra, president of Bangladesh Hijra Development Organization, said that they have been collecting money from Bangabazar traders for the past 40 to 45 years and are happy to have stood beside them in their time of crisis.

Another hijra leader, Bakul Haji, said that they are not buying any new clothes for Eid to show their solidarity with the traders.

She also said that they would have collected

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Deadline

FROM PAGE 3

Earlier, two separate courts expressed dissatisfaction over the probe, and the investigators' failure to unearth the motive behind the murders and arrest the real culprits.

Sagar, news editor at private TV channel Maasranga, and his wife Runi, senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed in the early hours of February 11, 2012, in their rented flat in the capital's West Razabazar.

Their only son Mahir Sarwar Megh, then five, was home at that time. Nousher Ali Roman, brother of Runi, filed a case with Sher-e-Bangla Police Station on the following day.

The financial

FROM PAGE 3

cost of each meal was exorbitant, Tk 70 and even sometimes more, and was frustrated about not getting good food even after paying such an amount.

The increase in food prices has forced them to modify their diets and cut down on protein intake, leading to protein deficiency and falling ill, said Prof SK Nazrul Islam, director of the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science at Dhaka University.

"This deficiency can even lead to chronic diseases," he added.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, food inflation was 9.09 percent and non-food inflation was 9.72 percent in March.

Three months earlier, food inflation was 7.76 percent and non-food inflation 9.84 percent.



Although designated dumping zones exist in the city, locals repeatedly dump garbage openly on the busy Sirajuddolla Road in Narayanganj. As a result, city corporation workers are seen picking up garbage off the spot in the afternoon, which lead to congestion on the road. This photo was taken yesterday.

Rule on Tarique

FROM PAGE 5

rulings of the higher courts, saying that a fugitive accused can get a lawyer if they are unable to appear before the proper court due to security reasons.

ACC Public Prosecutor Mosharrif Hossain Kajol opposed the petition saying that both the High Court and Supreme Court had settled the issue earlier and ruled that a fugitive cannot get any lawyer to defend them at the court in their absence.

Earlier on January 19, the court directed the government to publish a gazette asking the couple to appear before it by February 6 in the case.

Tarique and Zubaida have been in London since 2008.

The same court on November 1 last year issued arrest warrants against them after accepting the charges brought against them.

On June 26 last year, the High Court declared Tarique and Zubaida as "fugitives" and rejected their writ petitions, challenging the filing of the graft case. On September 26, 2007, the ACC filed the case against Tarique, his wife Zubaida, and her mother Syeda Iqbal Mand Banu for amassing assets worth Tk 4.82 crore through illegal means and concealing information of Tk 2.16 crore.

OC, SI on leave

FROM PAGE 5

ASM Mahtab Uddin said, "I am not informed that OC Nazim is on leave..."

Several SIs, ASI and constables of CMP, wishing not to be named, said if any SI or constable is sued for custodial torture, they would have been suspended without any delay.

Bangladesh Human Rights Foundation (BHRF) is providing legal support to Mostakim at court.

Advocate Zia Habib Ahasan of BHRF told The Daily Star, "The court also served a show-cause notice to OC Nazim and the SI."

Police said the officers gave written explanation to the court on April 6 but no further details could not be known immediately.

Despite repeated attempts, the OC and SI could not be contacted over phone.

Locals protest

FROM PAGE 5

He also said that no land would be given to anyone if it harms the indigenous people.

After the human chain, the demonstrators handed over a memorandum to the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs ministry, the chairman of the Bandarban Hill District Council, and the deputy commissioner, demanding the hotel authority stop its construction work and leave the land.

This newspaper refrained from mentioning the hotel's name, as its authorities could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts.

Sultana died

FROM PAGE 3

party people want to stay in the office through killing and filing cases."

Criticising the case filed against Prothom Alo's editor and a reporter, Fakhrul said the UN Human Rights Commission talked about amending Digital Security Act, but a minister said DSA would not be scrapped.

Hijra community donates

FROM PAGE 3

money from the traders this year too if the fire had not ravaged the markets.

Hijra leader Aleya from Uttara also handed over Tk 2 lakh separately as a donation to the traders early yesterday morning.

Aleya said she had saved the money to perform hajj, but gave it to the traders so that they could bounce

back.

"It was heartbreaking to see this market being burnt down. Once we used to collect Tk 10 to 20 from these traders in the markets. Today, they have lost everything. So, this is my little contribution," Aleya said.

"I want them to survive," she added.

The traders, who have

approximately lost more than Tk 1,000 crore worth of investment in the fire, thanked the community for its generous contribution.

There were around 2,500 shops in the market, one of the most popular clothing hub in the capital for retailers and wholesalers. The shop owners had invested heavily to profit from the biggest shopping spree ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Prof Yunus

FROM PAGE 3

that I can count on your knowledge, experience, and expertise to promote zero-waste initiatives."

"The board has an important role to play in supporting zero-waste initiatives in the context of sustainable development," the letter read.

The Advisory Board will consist of 13 eminent persons, including Emine Erdoğan, first lady of Türkiye (serving as chairperson); Jose Manuel Moller, chief executive officer and founder of Algramo; Prof Yunus, co-founder and chairman, Yunus Environment Hub; Carlos Silva Filho, president of International Solid Waste Association; Laura Reyes, director of Ejecutiva Cempre - Economía circular; Lara van Druuten, chief executive officer of The Waste Transformers; and Professor Saleem Ali of energy and the environment department at the University of Delaware, USA.

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Engineering Department
Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi
eraishahi.portal.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.12.0000.006.99.341.22.797 Date: 09.04.2023

e-Tender Notice
(IFT-18/2022-23)

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

Sl	Tender ID	Lot description	Tender document last selling date & time
01	813748	Construction of asphalt carpeting road with RCC drain from Amana Hospital to Election Commission Office at Ward No. 07.	
02	813749	(i) Construction of asphalt carpeting road with RCC drain from west side of Helimkhia Graveyard road to Nadim Palash Goolan to Dorikhatona Primary School at Ward No. 13. (ii) Construction of asphalt carpeting road from Selim House to Farukh House at Ward No. 19. (iv) Construction of asphalt carpeting road with R.C.C drain from Chakpara Prof. Imtiaz House to Md. Farukh Aziz House at Ward No. 26.	02-May-2023 12:30pm
03	813750	(i) Construction of two-storied Market & CDC Cluster (Lal Golap) & near Court Station Mour in Ward No. 02.; (ii) Construction of two-storied Market & CDC Cluster (Shapla Cluster) & near Paramedical Pond at Ward No. 06.	
04	813751	(i) Construction of two-storied Market & CDC Cluster (Chandra Mukhi) & near Borokuthi in Ward No. 12. (ii) Construction of two-storied Market & CDC Cluster (Asar Ato) & near Mohonpur flyover in Ward No. 30.	
05	813752	(i) Construction of Children Park in Nogoopara at Ward No. 02.; (ii) Installing of electrification Pole in Tikapara graveyard in Ward No. 27.	

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

১৯৭১: পল্লভা-নির্বাচন অর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরের তদন নির্মাণ (১ম সংশোধিত) প্রকল্প
পুনঃপ্রকাশ নং-০২/২০২২-২০২৩ তারিখ: ০৮/০৪/২০২৩

Md. Mahamudur Rahman
Executive Engineer (Civil-1)
Rajshahi City Corporation
Mobile: 01717-136233
E-mail: emson-ccc@gmail.com

WE MOURN

Mr. Mirza Ejaz Ahmed,
M/No. 00062 (FCC 16th Batch) Honourable Founder Donor Member of Cadet College Club Ltd and an Ex Cadet of Faujdarhat Cadet College has breathed his last around 09:22pm on 04th April 2023 (Innah Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajiun). He was 65. He left behind 01 son, 01 daughter, relatives and well wishers to mourn his death. May his departed soul rest in eternal peace. **AMEEN.**

NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
Company Matter No.73 of 2023
IN THE MATTER OF: An application under Section 43 of the Companies Act, 1994,
AND IN THE MATTER OF: Kamal Mustafa
.....Petitioner
-VERSUS-
ICB Islamic Bank Ltd. Bangladesh and other
.....Respondents

Notice is hereby given to all concerned that the petitioner above named has filed and moved an application under section 43 of the Companies Act, 1994 for the rectification of the share register of ICB Islamic Bank Ltd. Bangladesh before the High Court Division of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon preliminary hearing, his Lordship, **Mr. Justice Khazir Ahmed Choudhury** by an order dated 02.03.2023 was pleased to admit the said application. Any person or persons having interest in the said application may appear either personally or through duly authorized Advocate on the date so fixed. Copy of the said application may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on payment of the required costs.

Sifat Mahmud, Barrister-at-Law
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Chamber: House No.5 (Ground Floor), Road No.5, Section-6, Block-A, Mirpur, Dhaka-1216.

North-West Power Generation Company Ltd.
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Office of the Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)
Soydabad, Sirajganj.

Ref: 27.28.8878.101.07.001.19.088 Date: 09/04/2023

e-Tender Notice

The following e-Tender has been invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief Description of Tender	Publication Date	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date
1	799551	Spare parts for Air Conditioner, Lighting and Electrical System Accessories	09/04/2023	30/04/2023, 15:00 PM	30/04/2023

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

১৯৭১: পল্লভা-নির্বাচন অর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরের তদন নির্মাণ (১ম সংশোধিত) প্রকল্প
পুনঃপ্রকাশ নং-০২/২০২২-২০২৩ তারিখ: ০৮/০৪/২০২৩

পুনঃপ্রকাশের বিজ্ঞপন

বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘর বাংলাদেশ জাদুঘর ১৯৭১: পল্লভা-নির্বাচন অর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরের তদন নির্মাণ (১ম সংশোধিত) প্রকল্পের আওতায় "কম্পিউটার ও আনুষঙ্গিক প্রযুক্তি সরবরাহ" কাজ করার জন্য প্রকৃত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে পুনঃপ্রকাশ আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

পুনঃপ্রকাশের বিজ্ঞপন বিস্তারিত তথ্যাদিসহ বরপত্র দাখিল (সিডিউল) বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘরের নিম্নলিখিত ওয়েবসাইট www.bangladeshmuseum.gov.bd থেকে বিনামূল্যে ডাউনলোড করা যাবে। এই পুনঃপ্রকাশের দাখিলের নথীসমূহের আবেদন ২০/০৪/২০২৩ থেকে ২৯/০৪/২০২৩ তারিখ অফিস সন্ধ্যাকালীন সময়ে এবং সর্বশেষ ৩০/০৪/২০২৩ তারিখ বেলা ২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘরে রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বাজেট দাখিল করতে হবে। কোন কারণ বশতেনা ব্যতীতই যে কোন/সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

(স্বাক্ষর)
সচিব (মুদ্রাসিদ্ধ), অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্ব
বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘর

প্রকল্প পরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্ব)
১৯৭১: পল্লভা-নির্বাচন অর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরের তদন নির্মাণ (১ম সংশোধিত) শীর্ষক প্রকল্প।

Engr. Brojendra Kumar Sarker
Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)
NWPGL, Soydabad, Sirajganj.

বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘর
শাহবাগ, ঢাকা-১০০০।
১৯৭১: পল্লভা-নির্বাচন অর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরের তদন নির্মাণ (১ম সংশোধিত) প্রকল্প
পুনঃপ্রকাশ নং-০২/২০২২-২০২৩ তারিখ: ০৮/০৪/২০২৩

পুনঃপ্রকাশের বিজ্ঞপন

বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘর বাংলাদেশ জাদুঘর ১৯৭১: পল্লভা-নির্বাচন অর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরের তদন নির্মাণ (১ম সংশোধিত) প্রকল্পের আওতায় "কম্পিউটার ও আনুষঙ্গিক প্রযুক্তি সরবরাহ" কাজ করার জন্য প্রকৃত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে পুনঃপ্রকাশ আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

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School of Engineering, Technology and Sciences
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Locals protest 'hotel's attempt to grab land'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Over 700 locals of Naikhongchhari upazila in Bandarban staged a demonstration yesterday against authorities of a renowned private hotel that allegedly is attempting to encroach upon some 150 acres of land.

They formed a human chain around 9:00am in front of the upazila parishad, claiming that the authorities tried to encroach their land in the name of setting up a private school and boarding.

While speaking, Swee Thowi Ching Marma said some 300 Marma families have been living on this land for many years, but a private hotel based in Cox's Bazar encroached on the land.

"If the hotel authority is allowed to start its construction work, then many Marma families, who have lived on the land for years, will be evicted and turned into refugees," he said.

Mongching Chak, another demonstrator, said the land in question has been encroached upon by various companies and establishments in Naikhongchhari in the past.

As a result, the families of eight Chak communities and eight Marma communities, who were evicted between 2006 and 2014, still live a life of uncertainty, he said.

Naikhongchhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Romen Sharma expressed solidarity with the protesters and urged the local people to be aware of land encroachments.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



Reviving Moulvibazar's 'dead canal'

Re-excavation brings hope for an end to waterlogging

MINTU DESHWARA

The Gogalichara canal in Kulaura municipality of Moulvibazar, the only means to drain water, has been a victim of filling and encroachment for many years. As a result, even a little rain causes waterlogging on the roads in the area, creating public nuisance.

The encroachment made the canal so narrow that locals now call it "Mora Gogalichara", which can be translated as "the dead canal".

However, there is renewed hope as the Water Development Board (WDB) recently started re-excavating the canal under the "River, Canal and Beel Re-dredging Program in 64 Districts (Phase I)".

The job was given to M/s M Rahman, a contracting firm from Mymensingh, with an estimated cost of about Tk 64 lakh. The work began on February 19 and is expected to be completed by June 30.

According to Kulaura municipality authorities, the Gogalichara canal originates from the hills of Gazipur area of Moulvibazar Sadar upazila, passes through various areas of the municipality, and joins Fanai river at Kadipur union.

Fanai is connected to Hakaluki haor. During a visit to the site, it was found that re-excavation is underway with excavators in Sonapur, Uchhlapara, and Dakshin Magura parts of the canal. However, some people have built culverts and boundary walls on both sides of

Waterlogging is a perennial problem for the municipality, and the re-excavation work is a step towards resolving the issue. The boundaries of the canal have been marked before the work began, and the residents have been requested to remove any illegal structures.

SIPAR UDDIN AHMED
Mayor of Kulaura municipality

the ridge, which must be removed before the work can be completed, said project insiders.

The once drought-prone canal has suffered due to a lack of necessary measures to protect it. The canal was once wide and flowing, but now, it has basically

turned into a narrow drain, said local Abul Hossain. He hopes that the re-excavation work will put an end to their suffering from flooding. Other residents echoed the same.

Sadek Mia, a local farmer, said that cultivation is not possible in croplands due to long waterlogging.

Apart from re-excavation, the municipal authorities have taken the initiative to de-encroach the canal, and after the work is completed, a road will be constructed on both sides of the waterway in some places.

Mayor Sipar Uddin Ahmed emphasised that waterlogging is a perennial problem for the municipality, and the re-excavation work is a step towards resolving the issue.

The boundaries of the canal have been marked before the work began, and the residents have been requested to remove any illegal structures, he said.

Al Amin Sarkar, Deputy Assistant Engineer of WDB Kulaura Region, who is supervising the re-excavation work of the canal, said that about 80 percent of the work has already been completed and is expected to be finished within the stipulated time.

'Free journo held in DSA case'

Local journalists demand at human chain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Local journalists formed a human chain at Thakurgaon town intersection yesterday demanding immediate release of Rahim Shuvo, Thakurgaon district correspondent of Daily Protdiner Bangladesh, and withdrawal of all cases under DSA against journalists across the country.

People from different professions participated in the hour-long programme, jointly organised by Thakurgaon Television Journalist Association and Online Journalist Association, to express solidarity with journo.

Judge of Rangpur Cyber Tribunal Md Abdul Majid sent Rahim Shuvo to jail while he went to the court on last Thursday for seeking bail in a DSA case filed on April 18 in 2020.

Mominul Islam Bhashani, president of Baliadangi upazila unit of Swachhasebak League filed the case against Rahim and three others for tarnishing his image.

The investigation officer of the case, Sub-inspector Khademul Islam, placed a charge sheet on April 30 accusing one Shawan Amin and Rahim Shuvo.

'Repeal Digital Security Act'

Demands Chhatra Odhikar Parishad

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University unit of Chhatra Odhikar Parishad held a rally on campus yesterday, demanding repeal of the Digital Security Act (DSA).

The participants, with their mouths tied up with black clothes, protested the government's "repression of freedom of expression".

During the rally, the participants showed a "red card" to the DSA, symbolically calling for the act to be disqualified.

They claimed that the DSA was established to silence dissenting voices of journalists and the public, and that it was being used to intimidate journalists from reporting on government corruption.

Besides, Gonotrik Chhatra Jote also held a protest on campus, calling for the immediate repeal of the DSA.

GRAFT CASE

Rule on Tarique-Zubaida's defence on April 13

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court will decide on April 13 whether BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman will get any lawyers to defend them in absentia in a graft case filed by Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in September 2007.

After an hour-long hearing, Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court set the date for passing an order on the issue.

The couple's defence submitted an application on March 29, seeking permission to defend them in their absence in the case.

During yesterday's hearing, lawyer Masud Ahmed Talukder, representing Tareque-Zubaida, cited different

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

CUSTODIAL TORTURE

OC, SI on leave to avoid action?

One Syed Mohammad Mustakim, who was arrested during a protest against the price hike of kidney dialysis at CMCH, alleged that he was brutally tortured inside the police station.

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Two Chattogram police officers, accused in a case filed for torturing a youth in custody, have been on "sick leave" for more than 45 days, raising questions about whether they are trying to avoid arrest or departmental action.

Following a court order, Md Shahnewaz Khaled, superintendent of police of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Chattogram, filed the case with Panchlailsh Police Station on February 22, accusing its officer-in-charge Nazim Uddin and sub-inspector Abdul Aziz.

On February 20, OC Nazim arrested one Syed Mohammad Mustakim during a protest against the price hike of kidney dialysis at Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Police filed a case with the station, accusing Mustakim of assaulting the law enforcers.

Later, he received bail from a Chattogram court and on February 21 filed a complaint with a Chattogram court, alleging that after his arrest, he was brutally tortured inside the police station.

The court took the case filed by

Mustakim into cognizance. It asked the CID to investigate it and submit a report, and also file a case against the OC and SI over custodial torture.

Meanwhile, the police officers went on "sick leave", said Chattogram Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner (DC-North) Mokhlesur Rahman.

They are yet to join office, said police. Several senior police officers, seeking anonymity, said OC Nazim is doing it to fend off his arrest in the case with the help of some colleagues in the high-ups.

DC Mokhlesur Rahman told The Daily Star, "OC Nazim submitted some prescriptions and hospital documents and applied for medical leave."

When asked what kind of health problem Nazim mentioned in the leave application, the DC said, "I don't know. His medical leave was granted as he had valid reasons, that's it."

Asked why the OC has not been suspended although he has been made accused in a case, the DC said, "I don't want to tell the details. CID is investigating it."

Contacted, CMP Additional Commissioner (Crime and Operation)

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

PRAYER TIMING APRIL 10

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
JAMAAT 4:25	12:45	4:45	6:22	7:45
AZANAT 4:35	1:15	5:00	6:32	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IFTAR
18	10		6:22
19	11	4:19	6:22
20	12	4:18	6:23

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Department of Immigration and passports

Security Services Division

Ministry of Home Affairs

Memo No:58.01.0000.102.55.001.20(part-2)- 252

Date: 05/04/2023

Tender Cancellation Notice

Tender for Procurement of "1.5 Million Machine Readable Passport Booklets and 2 Million Lamination Foil" invited by the Department of Immigration and Passports vide Tender Invitaitaion Memo No. 58.01.0000.102.55.001.20(part-2)-111 dated: 26thFebruary 2023 published on 27th February 2023 in the "Financial Express", "The Daily Star", "Kaler Kantha" and "Ittefaq" is hereby cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

(Abu Nayem Masum)
Deputy Director
(Procurement)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh						
Office of the Executive Engineer						
Health Engineering Department (HED), Gopalganj Division, Gopalganj						
E-mail: xenhedgopalganj@gmail.com, Phone:478821263						
www.hed.gov.bd						
Memo No. 45.02.0000.382.20.001.2023-346						
Invitation for e-Tender						
Invitation Reference No. 45.02.0000.009.008.22-686, Date: 27/03/2023						
e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following packages of Routine and Periodical Maintenance Works:						
Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of works	Document price (BDT)	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time
1	810361	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/01	Repair, maintenance of civil works (plaster, wooden door shutter, R.C pad, glass pan, painting etc), sanitary & plumbing works and electrical works (switch, socket, point wiring etc) of Doctor's Dormitory (3 unit) at Tungipara Upazila Health Complex in Gopalganj District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
2	810362	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/02	Repair, maintenance of civil works (plaster, wooden door shutter, R.C pad, glass pan, painting etc), sanitary & plumbing works and electrical works (switch, socket, point wiring etc) of Nurse's Dormitory (2 unit) at Tungipara Upazila Health Complex in Gopalganj District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
3	810363	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/03	Repair, maintenance of civil works (plaster, wooden door shutter, glass pan, painting etc), sanitary & plumbing works and electrical works (switch, socket, point wiring etc) of Class-II staff Qtr (8 unit) and Class-II Qtr (1st Floor, 2 unit) at Tungipara Upazila Health Complex in Gopalganj District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
4	810364	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/04	Repair, maintenance of civil works (plaster, wooden door shutter, painting etc), sanitary & plumbing works and electrical works (switch, socket, point wiring etc) of Pakerita Union Sub Center (RD) at Tungipara Upazila Health Complex in Gopalganj District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
5	810365	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/05	Construction of Privacy wall with Gate of Kotalpara UZHC at Kotalpara Upazila in Gopalganj District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
6	810366	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/06	Repair, maintenance of civil works (plaster, wooden door shutter, veranda grill, tiles, tile aluminium, painting etc), sanitary & plumbing works and electrical works (switch, socket, point wiring etc) of Doctor's Qtr (6 units) at Kashiari Upazila Health Complex in Gopalganj District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
7	810367	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/07	Repair, maintenance of civil works (brick works, plaster, wooden door shutter, MS window shutter & grill, glass pan, tiles, ladder, painting etc), sanitary & plumbing works and electrical works (switch, socket, point wiring etc) of Class-II staff Qtr (6 units) at Kashiari Upazila Health Complex in Gopalganj District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
8	810368	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/08	Repair, maintenance of civil works (plaster, wooden door shutter, glass pan, tiles, painting etc), construction of one No. attached new toilet of Jatrapur Union Health Sub-Center (RD) at Sadar Upazila in Gopalganj District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
9	810369	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/09	Repair, maintenance of civil works (shed with MS truss, CGI sheet, GI pipe, plaster, wooden door shutter, glass pan, tiles, painting etc), sanitary & plumbing works and electrical works (switch, socket, fan supply, point wiring etc) and external works (Garden fencing) of Sadar UH&PO office at Sadar Upazila in Gopalganj District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
10	810370	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/10	Construction of Gate & internal road at west site of Mukusdipur Upazila Health Complex, Gopalganj.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
11	810371	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/11	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (RC pad, aluminium window, grill, wooden door, plaster and painting), sanitary, plumbing and electrical works of MO (1000st) Quarter (2-storied 4 unit) at Falahat Upazila Health Complex in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
12	810372	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/12	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (RC pad, tiles aluminium window, grill, wooden door, plaster and painting), sanitary, plumbing and electrical works of Male & Female ward (Diarhoea & Corona ward) at first floor of rear block, office room of UH&PO, kitchen room and 2 Nos. Nurses duty room at Shoronkhola Upazila Health Complex in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
13	810373	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/13	Repair, maintenance, renovation and re-construction of RCC roof slab of existing room (old part) & construction of one No. attached new toilet of Jatrapur Union Health Sub-Center (RD) at Sadar Upazila in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
14	810374	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/14	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (RC pad, RCC roof of Chikhotka, aluminium window, grill, wooden door, plaster and painting), sanitary, plumbing and electrical works of MO (1000st) Quarter (1-storied 2 unit) at Mongla Upazila Health Complex in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
15	810375	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/15	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (RC pad, tiles, aluminium window, grill, wooden door, Plaster and painting), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of class-II (800st) Quarter (2-storied 2 unit) at Shoronkhola Upazila Health Complex in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
16	810376	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/16	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Aluminium window, grill, wooden door, Plaster and painting), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of MO (1000 st) Quarter (2-storied 4 unit) at Falahat Upazila Health Complex in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
17	810377	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/17	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (RC pad, wooden door, Plaster and painting), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of MO Quarter (2-storied 2 unit) at Chitalmari Upazila Health Complex in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
18	810378	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/18	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Tiles, RC pad, Plaster, painting & CC road), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of Gaborkhali Community Clinic of Gotapara Union at Sadar Upazila in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
19	810379	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/19	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Tiles, RC pad, Plaster, painting & CC road), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of Badokhali Community Clinic of Sattogombaj Union at Sadar Upazila in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
20	810380	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/20	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Tiles, RC pad, Plaster, painting & CC road), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of Mollahat Community Clinic of Udaypur Union at Mollahat Upazila in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
21	810381	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/21	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Tiles, RC pad, Plaster, painting & CC road), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of Narandrapur Community Clinic of Ranpara Union of Kaucha Upazila in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
22	810382	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/22	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Tiles, RC pad, Plaster, painting & CC road), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of Madantola Community Clinic of Gazalia Union of Kachua Upazila in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
23	810383	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/23	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Tiles, RC pad, Plaster, painting & CC road), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of Kharaikhal Community Clinic of Ponchokoron Union at Morigonj Upazila in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
24	810384	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/24	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Tiles, RC pad, Plaster, painting & CC road), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of Kismetambus Community Clinic of Batabania Union at Morigonj Upazila in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
25	810385	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/25	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Tiles, RC pad, Plaster, painting & CC road), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of Borotola and Chandantola Community Clinic of Jeoghara Union at Morigonj Upazila in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
26	810386	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/26	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Tiles, RC pad, Plaster, painting & CC road), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of Pagla Ghanosharmagar Community Clinic of Fakihat Union of Fakihat Upazila in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
27	810387	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/27	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Tiles, grill, wooden door, Plaster and painting), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of Class-II (800 st) Quarter (2-storied 4 unit) and Class-II (800 st) Quarter (2-storied 4 unit) at Fakihat Upazila Health Complex in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00
28	810388	HED/GD/GOB-Repair-2022-23/28	Repair, maintenance & renovation of civil works (Tiles, grill, wooden door, Plaster and painting), Sanitary, Plumbing and Electrical works of Office of the Assistant Engineer, Health Engineering Department (HED) in Bagerhat District.	1000.00	25-04-2023 17:00	26-04-2023 14:00

MEET RAMZAN MIAH

Barbie's Bangladeshi actor

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA



"I can't say much about the film as it's all a secret, but being on set with Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling, let's just say you are grateful to be there for every moment."

Recently, Warner Bros released the official trailer of *Barbie*, and fans loved it. Ramzan Miah, a British Bangladeshi actor, will be playing a South Asian Ken doll and will be showing off his dance moves from one of its peppy tracks, which can be seen in the trailer.

Previously, the actor has worked in super hit movies and shows including *Aladdin*, *Enola Holmes 2* and *Eternals*.

The Daily Star contacted the actor to know more about his *Barbie* project and what attracted him to acting.

What made you choose acting?

I started acting in Bengali drama. I would say that my foundation of work started in the UK, when I graduated from my performing arts school in 2016. There, I began to audition for different roles in TV, commercials, and films. From there on, my first TV series was *SAS Rogue Heroes*, and afterwards, I had the opportunity to work with Martin Freeman and Paul Whitehouse in *Ghost Stories* and Will Smith and Naomi Scott in *Aladdin*.

How does it feel to become the first South Asian Ken doll in the 'Barbie' movie?

It's refreshing, to be honest, everyone wants to feel represented - South Asians are significantly under-represented. However, I am even more grateful and proud to be Bangladeshi, and that's more powerful to me - as more people can hopefully take this opportunity to feel represented in our community.

Can you tell us a bit about your character? How was it working with Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling?

I can't say much about the film as it's all a secret, but being on set with Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling, let's just say you are grateful to be there for every moment. Being a small part of this process has been a highlight of my career.

How did you prepare yourself for the role?

The casting started in January, and then we began to prepare ourselves for the film in February, for three months. All of the Kens had to train and do stunt work, and there's also a dance number which you can see in the trailer, so it's all exciting to be part of the *Barbie* world.

Do you have any plans on working in Bangladeshi projects?

Yes, of course - being Bangladeshi is part of my identity, so it would be amazing to work there; it would be great to do an English movie/series in Bangladesh. I would love to collaborate with my Bangladeshi directors.



PHOTO: COURTESY



Amid death threats, Salman Khan buys a bulletproof SUV

Bollywood actor Salman Khan has received many death threats from Lawrence Bishnoi and his crew over the last few months. In addition to receiving protection from the Indian police, the actor is also taking precautions for his personal safety.

He just bought a bulletproof Nissan Patrol SUV to bolster his security. Online reports claim that the actor drove his brand-new vehicle to a recent Nita Mukesh Ambani Culture Center event in Mumbai.

Khan previously drove a bulletproof Land Cruiser LC200. However, it appears to have shifted to a Nissan Patrol SUV. The actor specifically imported this car because it isn't yet accessible in Indian markets.

Pori Moni starrer 'Maa' to release on May 19



Dhallywood actress Pori Moni starrer, Liberation War-based film *Maa*, directed by Aranya Anwar, is all set to be released on May 19.

A press conference was held on Saturday to unveil the promo and poster of the film.

The cast and crew of the film, including Pori Moni and Sariful Razz were present at the event.

The story of the film is set in the background of our Liberation War in 1971. The feeling of loss and desperation of a mother, when her 7-month-old baby is declared dead, will be portrayed in the film.

The film also stars Azad Abul Kalam, Sazu Khadem, Farzana Chabi and Shahadat Hossain, among others.

NEWS

Democracy, human rights

FROM PAGE 12
to Myanmar, and promote regional security through UN peacekeeping operations.

On April 4 last year, Blinken met Momen to celebrate and reflect on the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh-US relations.

They discussed the "tremendous economic potential" of the relationship and reflected on the ways the two countries collaborated over the last half century - including in growing people-to-people ties with vibrant Fulbright exchanges.

Blinken reaffirmed the importance of protecting human rights, the rule of law, and freedom of religion as the basis for safe and prosperous democratic societies.

Talking to reporters on Wednesday, Momen said, "I'd say we're lucky because the American secretary of state doesn't give invitations frequently. We got three in a row. America is paying much attention to our journey on the highway of development."

Momen said the US is the only country which provided a large number of vaccines to Bangladesh for free during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The US helped Bangladesh manage Covid very efficiently, he added.

"They even supported us the most after the Rohingya influx. Other countries helped us as well. I'll express our gratitude when I meet him [Blinken]," Momen said.

Rana Plaza owner's bail

FROM PAGE 12
for the state during the hearing, told reporters.

On April 24, 2013, the nine-storey Rana Plaza caved in killing at least 1,135 people and injuring more than 2,500 others, in what was one of the worst industrial disasters in the nation's history. Wali Ashraf, sub-inspector of Savar Police Station, lodged the murder case against Sohel, his father and several others on the same day.

Rana had extended the Rana Plaza without taking approval from the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk), he said, adding that the tragedy has damaged the image of the country's garments sector internationally.

Besides, some co-accused of the case made confessional statements before the magistrate involving Rana, Bappi added.

Earlier in the day, the state filed the petition with the Appellate Division through the attorney general's office seeking a stay order on the HC verdict of bail.

On April 6, the HC granted bail to Rana in the case following a bail petition filed by him.

His lawyer Qamrul told The Daily Star that day that his client has been suffering in jail for 10 years in the case.

There are 594 witnesses in this case, but the trial court has recorded statements from only 35 in the last 10 years, he added.

Journo beaten up

FROM PAGE 12
Sheela's car driver, bodyguard and some supporters of Siddiqur started beating him and snatched his mobile phone and money, Roni alleged.

Hearing his screams, locals came and took him to Bakshiganj Health Complex where he was undergoing treatment.

Contacted, Zilla Parishad member Sheela Sarwar denied all allegations saying that journalist Roni had made

her video viral on social media after editing.

She called Roni to know about the video posted on his Facebook.

Echoing Sheela, Siddiqur also said that his supporters did not assault Roni.

Sohel Rana, officer-in-Charge of Bakshiganj Police Station, said, "We have not received any complaint. We came to know about the matter from a social media post."

Heatwave sweeps

FROM PAGE 2
Water scarcity is also becoming a pressing issue in the coastal areas of Khulna, adding to the suffering of the people.

Ramadan has coincided with the intense heat, which is adding to the struggles of low-income workers.

Md Anisul, a day labourer, said, "I work for Tk 500 per day and find it difficult to work in the extremely hot weather."

Rickshaw driver Majnu said he is also facing similar difficulties.

His rickshaw does not have a battery and needs to be driven using foot pedals, which is very difficult to do in the scorching heat.

Despite this, he still has to take his rickshaw out to earn a living and provide for his family.

The senior meteorologist at the Khulna Meteorological Office, Amirul Azad, said that the heat will persist for the next 3-4 days.

With the intense heat causing such discomfort, many people are flocking to electronic and hand-fan shops in the city to find some relief.

Shams gets bail

FROM PAGE 12
juxtaposed against a photo of an adolescent boy.

Sensing that people might assume the quote was the adolescent boy's, Prothom Alo took down the card within 17 minutes.

Around 4:00am on March 29, Shams was detained from his home in Savar. His whereabouts were unknown until police took him to the court premises around 30 hours later.

On March 30, a court rejected his petition for bail and sent him to jail. He walked out of jail five days later.

Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matiur Rahman, an unnamed photographer and unnamed others were also accused in one of the cases.

On April 2, the High Court bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice Md Aminul Islam granted Matiur Rahman anticipatory bail for six weeks and asked him to show up at the metropolitan sessions judge's court in Dhaka after six weeks to seek fresh bail.

It's tantamount to assault on press freedom

FROM PAGE 1
The signatories are Dhaka University former teacher Abul Kashem Fazlul Haque, DU Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Chowdhury, former DU VC Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury, senior lawyer Zi Khan Panna, activist Farida Akhter, economist Anu Muhammad, Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar, activist Khushi Kabir, TIB Executive Director Itekharruzaman, DU Prof Asif Nazrul, lawyer Syeda Rizwana Hasan, DU Prof Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, film director Nurul Islam Atik, JU Prof Manosh Chowdhury, researcher Saydia Gulrukh, DU teacher Moshahida Sultana, RU Prof Saleh Hasan Naqib, Brac University teacher Mahboob Hossain, JU Prof Kamrul Ahsan, JU Prof Jamal Uddin, RU Prof Itekharrul Alam Masud, CU Prof SM Nasrul Quadir, CU teacher Maidul Islam, researcher Monjure Khoda Torik, US's Framingham State University teacher Jahed Arman; lawyer Mohshin Rashid, Cumilla University teacher Mutasim Billah, poet Tokon Thakoor, writer Chanchal Ashraf, artist Arup Raheer, politician Firoz Ahmed, director Ashfaq Nipun, director Shamol Shishir, publisher Dipankar Das, North South University teacher Saimum Parvez, fact-checker Qadruddin Shishir, activist Kallol Mustafa, activist

Parvez Alam, writer Faham Abdus Salam, politician Joly Talukdar, writer Afsana Begum, writer Zia Hasan; activist Baki Billah, writer Luna Rushdi, writer Alvi Ahmed, ALRD Executive Director Shamsul Huda, writer Umme Farhana, women rights activist Mahfuza Mala, journalist Bithy Soptorshi, writer Hamim Kamrul Haque, poet Salehin Shipra, senior journalist Masood Kamal, translator GH Habib, director, Narigrantha Prabantana Sayyida Akhter, film director Prosun Rahman, poet Ahmed Swapan Mahmud, columnist Dhrubo Sadiq, JU teacher Snigdha Rezwana, JNU teacher Fatama Sultana Suvara, poet Muiz Mahfuz, writer Gazi Tanzia, writer Papri Rahman, singer Amal Akash, writer Mahbob Morshed, writer Salah Uddin Shuvo, publisher Mahbob Rahman, writer Ahsan Mahmud, artist Krishnokoli Islam, painter AH Chanchal, Supreme Court lawyers Barrister Jishan Mohsin, Nur Arshad Siddique, Tajul Islam and Barrister Zubair Ahmed Bhuiyan; lawyer Barrister Asaduzzaman Fuad, former National Press Club president Kamal Uddin Sabuj, writer Syed Abdal Ahmed, former National Press Club general secretary Elias Khan, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists President M Abdullah, Dhaka Union of Journalists General

Secretary Shahidul Islam, organiser Zafor Sadiq, human rights researcher Rozyna Begum, expert on Democratic Governance, Human Rights & Geopolitics in the South Asia region Sultan Mohammed Zakaria, Barrister Aneek R Haque, human rights activist Rezaur Rahman Lenin, writer Dilshana Parul, organiser Ariful Islam Adib, Peshajibi Adhikar Parishad Convener Zafor Mahmud, women's organiser Nasreen Sultana Mily, activist Nusrat jahan, engineer Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, writer Maruf Mallick, Poet Shawkat Hossain, columnist Arshad Siddiqui, writer Rabiul Karim Mridul, writer Zakaria Polash, writer Shohel Rana, poet Shimul Salahuddin, activist Tuhin Khan, writer Ferdous Ara Rumi, poet Mahbob Aziz, journalist Faruk Wasif, former diplomat Saquib Ali, activist Sahul Ahmed, film maker Zayed Siddiki, researcher ATM Golam Kibria, writer Rakkhal Raha, writer Tonmoy Imran, prose writer Wasi Ahmed, film maker Khandaker Sumon, DU teacher Mohammad Azam, lawyer Nabayon Ahmed, poet Razu Alauddin, actress Bonna Mirza, former BFJU secretary general MA Aziz, Prof Khaliquzzaman Elias, poet Ranak Zaman, poet Bayazid Bastami, writer Helal Mohiuddin and translator Raushan Jamil.

Youths account for 28pc

FROM PAGE 12
highest population: 3.41 crore. This accounts for 20.13 percent of the total population. Rajshahi division accounts for 12.24 percent of the total population.

Of the total population, 31.66 percent live in urban areas and the rest in rural areas.

Referring to the earlier census reports, Sen said urbanisation was

faster before.

The latest census shows the pace of urbanisation slowed in the last ten years.

In developed countries, 40 percent of the total population lives in the urban areas, he said, adding that the ratio is still low in Bangladesh though it is graduating to the developing country bracket.

"Policymakers should find out the

reason behind this," Sen added.

There has been significant development in the rural areas, said Shamsul Alam, the state minister for planning.

"Urban facilities are available in rural areas. There are English medium schools in villages," he added.

BBS Director General Matiar Rahman and Project Director Dildar Hossain also spoke among others.

Trial in Mitu murder case

FROM PAGE 12
Court against the framing of charges. Seeking time, they appealed to the court to begin recording testimonies after Eid.

The court declined and ordered Mosharraf's testimony be recorded.

Speaking to this newspaper, Mitu's father said, "I informed the court about Babul in details - how he

beat up my daughter after she learnt about his illicit relationship."

On March 13, charges were framed against Babul and six others in the murder case.

The other accused are Kamrul Islam Musa, Ehteshamul Haque Bhola alias Haniful Haque, Motaheb Mia Wasim, Md Anwar Hossain, Md Khairul Islam Kalu, and Md

Shahjahan Mia. Bhola is now out on bail while Musa is absconding.

On June 5, 2016, Mitu was stabbed and shot dead when she was walking her son to his school bus stop at the port city's GEC intersection.

On June 6, 2016, Babul filed a case with Panchlaish Police Station. Following an investigation, PBI said Babul plotted his wife's murder.

ROCKET FIRE

Israeli army launches strikes in Syria

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel launched artillery strikes on Syria yesterday morning, the Israeli army announced, after several rockets were fired from there and landed in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

Israel's retaliatory strike to rocket attacks from Syria – which no one has claimed – is the latest episode in escalating violence in the region.

"In response to the rockets fired from Syria at Israel earlier today, IDF Artillery is currently striking in Syrian territory," the military tweeted.

A drone was also "currently striking the launchers in Syria from which rockets were launched into Israeli territory".

Six rockets were launched towards Israel Saturday night, with two landing in the Golan Heights, the army said. At least one was intercepted by the Israeli air defence system.



Jewish visitors walk protected by Israeli security forces at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, also known as the Temple Mount complex to Jews, in Jerusalem yesterday, during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan, also coinciding with the Jewish Passover holiday.

PHOTO: AFP

SECOND DAY OF DRILLS

China simulates Taiwan strikes

US says watching military drills closely

REUTERS, Taipei

China's military simulated precision strikes against Taiwan in a second day of drills around the island yesterday, with the island's defence ministry reporting multiple air force sorties and that it was monitoring China's missile forces.

China, which claims democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, began three days of military exercises around the island on Saturday, the day after Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen returned from a brief visit to the United States.

Chinese state television reported that the combat readiness patrols and drills around Taiwan were continuing.

"Under the unified command of the theatre joint operations command

centre, multiple types of units carried out simulated joint precision strikes on key targets on Taiwan island and the surrounding sea areas, and continue to maintain an offensive posture around the island," it said.

The de facto US embassy in Taiwan said yesterday the United States was monitoring China's drills around Taiwan closely and is "comfortable and confident" it has sufficient resources and capabilities regionally to ensure peace and stability.

A source familiar with the security situation in the region told Reuters that China had been conducting simulated air and sea attacks on "foreign military targets" in the waters off Taiwan's southwestern coast.

"Taiwan is not their only target," the

source said, speaking on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media. "It's very provocative."

Taiwan's defence ministry said that as of yesterday midday they had spotted 58 Chinese aircraft, including Su-30 fighters and H-6 bombers, as well as nine ships, around Taiwan.

The ministry said they were paying particular attention to the PLA's Rocket Force which is in charge of China's land-based missile system.

"Regarding the movements of the Chinese communists' Rocket Force, the nation's military also has a close grasp through the joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance system, and air defence forces remain on high alert," the ministry said.

TALKS WITH HOUTHIS

Saudi, Omani envoys arrive in Yemen

REUTERS, Riyadh

Saudi and Omani delegations arrived in Yemen's capital Sanaa, Houthi-run media said yesterday, to negotiate a permanent ceasefire deal with Houthi officials and end Riyadh's military involvement in the country's long-running war. The visit indicates progress in the Oman-mediated consultations between Riyadh and Sanaa, which run in parallel to UN peace efforts. Peace efforts have also gained momentum after arch-rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran agreed to re-establish ties in a deal brokered by China. The envoys, who landed late on Saturday, will meet with the head of Houthi Supreme Political Council, Mahdi al-Mashat, to hold talks on ending hostilities and lifting a Saudi-led "blockade" on Yemeni ports, Houthi news agency SABA reported. Sources have told Reuters that the Saudi-Houthi talks are focused on a full reopening of Houthi-controlled ports and Sanaa airport, payment of wages for public servants, rebuilding efforts and a timeline for foreign forces to exit the country. Yemen's war is seen as one of several proxy battles between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The Houthis, aligned with Iran said they are rising up against a corrupt system and foreign aggression.

RAPID SURGE IN CASES

Covid curbs back in 3 Indian states

AGENCIES

With most parts of India witnessing a significant rise in Covid-19 cases over the last few days, three states – Haryana, Kerala, Puducherry – have made masks mandatory again, while others advised to observe caution. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya earlier this week held a review meeting and asked states to stay alert and review the preparedness of health facilities. A nationwide mock drill is planned today and tomorrow to assess emergency preparedness of both public and private hospitals, reports NDTV. On a possible fourth wave of the Covid pandemic, the health minister said there's a need to be alert. The last Covid mutation was BF.7 sub-variant of Omicron, and now XBB.1.6 sub-variant is causing the surge in infections, he said, adding that in the ministry's experience, sub-variants are not too dangerous.

India's tiger population rises above 3,000

AFP, New Delhi

India's wild tiger population – by far the largest in the world – has risen above 3,000, according to a census released yesterday, boosting efforts to conserve the endangered species.

The largest of all cats, tigers once roamed throughout central, eastern and southern Asia.

But in the past 100 years the tiger has lost more than 93 percent of its historic range and now only survives in scattered populations in 13 countries, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The Indian census estimated there were 3,167 tigers in the wild across the country, up from 2,967

reported in the last such exercise.

Surveys are conducted every four years, using camera traps and computer programmes to individually identify each creature.

The rate of increase has slowed to less than seven percent over the period, down from more than 30 percent in the previous four years.

But Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the new figure was a "proud moment".

"Our family is expanding," he said at a ceremony in the southern city of Mysuru. "This is a matter of pride not only for India but the entire world."

Deforestation, poaching and human encroachment on habitats have devastated tiger populations across Asia.

HAMBURG FIRE


Police warn of possible toxins in air

REUTERS, Frankfurt

Police and fire officials in the German city of Hamburg warned locals of possible toxins in the air after fires broke out early yesterday at multiple storage facilities.

Some 140 people were evacuated, and it is not yet possible to say exactly how dangerous the situation is, a police spokesperson said.

A spokesperson with the fire department said they had reduced the threat level somewhat, even though the fire was still burning at midday, but that people should remain indoors with windows closed.



North-West Power Generation Company Ltd.
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & OHSAS 45001:2018 Certified
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Office of the Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-3)
NWPGCL, Soydabad, Sirajganj-6700.

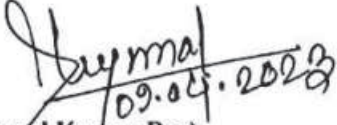
Ref: 27.28.8878.301.07.001.20.43 Date: 09/04/2023

e-Tender Notice

The following e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief Description of Tender	Publication Date & Time	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
1	806962	Procurement of Hydraulic system instruments	09/04/2023, 3:00 PM	09/05/2023, 2:00 PM	10/05/2023, 10:00 AM
2	806963	Procurement of Different types of Gauges, Switches & Actuators.	09/04/2023, 3:00 PM	09/05/2023, 2:00 PM	10/05/2023, 12:00 PM
3	806964	Procurement of Spares for Air Dryer, N2 Generator and different accumulators	09/04/2023, 3:00 PM	09/05/2023, 2:00 PM	10/05/2023, 10:00 AM
4	806966	Procurement of Tools and Workshop Items	09/04/2023, 3:00 PM	09/05/2023, 2:00 PM	10/05/2023, 12:00 PM

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


(Shyamal Kumar Das)
 Plant Manager (S.E.)
 Sirajganj 225 MW CCPP (Unit-3)
 NWPGCL, Soydabad, Sirajganj-6700.
 Contact No.: + 880177736401

GD- 653

Jagannath University
Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences
Master of Pharmacy (Professional) Program
Department of Pharmacy
Admission Circular (Batch: 04P)
Fall 2023 (August-January)

Key Features of the program

Degree/Award: Master of Pharmacy
Major: 1. Industrial Pharmacy, 2. Pharmaceutical Marketing
Course duration: One year (2 semesters) Total credits: 32
Class time: Friday and Saturday
Application fee: Tk. 1,000.00
Application open: Till July 10, 2023 (9 am – 3 pm, week-days only)
Admission test: July 14, 2023, Friday. Test Result: July 16, 2023
Admission period: July 17, 2023 to July 27, 2023.
Orientation: August 04, 2023

Eligibility for submission of application

A. Minimum 16 years of schooling; having S.S.C. (or equivalent) 10 years, H.S.C. (or equivalent) 2 years and Graduation (or equivalent) 4 years. **B.** Graduated in pharmaceutical sciences or relevant areas (CGPA 3.00 or more out of 4.00). **C.** No third class/division (or equivalent).

Application submission

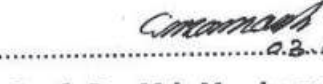
A. Filled-up application form (available in www.jnu.ac.bd), **B.** Attested 3 copies of passport size photographs, **C.** Copies of the certificates and mark-sheets of all the previous examinations (attested by the Chairperson of the department of graduation) and **D.** Application fee.

Completed application can be submitted to the office of Dean, Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences, Jagannath University. Or, the application fee (1000 taka + transfer charge 20 taka) can be sent to +8801781453704 by bKash payment and then the full application set can be mailed to biswas121@yahoo.com as the PDF file along with the bKash reference number.

N.B. The authority keeps the right to cancel the application/admission at any time due to submission of incorrect application or misleading information.

Contact (Application form and further information)

Office of the Dean, Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences
6th Floor, New Academic Building (+88029587900 Office)
Department of Pharmacy (+88029515035 Office)
Prof. Dr. Bishyajit Kumar Biswas, Program Director (+8801781453704)


Prof. Dr. Md. Maniruzzaman Khandaker
 Dean
 Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences
 & Convener, M. Pharm. (Professional) Program Admission Committee

GD- 648

Ragging is nothing but abuse

UGC must hurry up with an anti-ragging policy

We are dismayed that despite all the reports in the media about the cruel ragging in public universities – a practice that can only be described as abuse – no policy has been formulated yet to ban it. Academics and rights activists have for long been demanding an anti-ragging policy with a clear definition of the term “ragging” so that offenders can be given strict punishment. So why has the University Grants Commission (UGC) still not been able to come up with this much-needed policy?

The extent of the physical and mental abuse in the name of ragging has come to the limelight, once again, after a female student in her first year was tortured by some women BCL leaders and activists in a residential hall of Islamic University in Kushtia because she stayed at the hall without their “permission”. A recent report in this paper has found that it is mainly pro-ruling party students who are very active in “ragging” freshers at different campuses, although “regular” students in some universities have kept up this cruel tradition of initiation, too. Ragging, considered for far too long a frivolous and harmless activity, includes all kinds of psychological and physical torture. The consequences of such abuse are, of course, devastating for victims and may cause post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, dropout and, in the worst cases, suicide. Despite knowing how harmful this practice is, why is it still being allowed?

The problem of ragging, however, is largely related to the way the residential halls have been practically “taken over” by ruling party cadres. Moreover, with the seating crisis in public university dorms, BCL members “arrange” seats for freshers in common rooms and guest rooms when they can’t get seats. These are also the places where the entrants are tortured in the name of ragging. In most cases, victims are too afraid to complain to the authorities, fearing retaliation; in the few cases that complaints are filed, they inevitably fall on deaf ears. The power and implicit impunity of the BCL render the hall authorities virtually disempowered to put a stop to this senseless abuse.

An anti-ragging policy, though much needed, can only eliminate this practice if it is properly enforced by the university authorities. The UGC, the apex body of all the affiliated public, private, and international universities in Bangladesh, must play a more active role in ensuring compliance of the university authorities in establishing safe campuses where critical thought and learning are prioritised over ruthless exercise of power. We urge it to finalise a policy, after consultation with relevant stakeholders, without any more delay, and engage with the government to ensure its strict enforcement.

The dumpster that once was a river

MMC must take action now to stop the trashing of a lifeline

We are alarmed that the once mighty Old Brahmaputra River has been allowed to turn into a dumping zone, without any concern about how such reckless trashing of a vital waterbody would affect the environment, the community at large and people’s livelihoods which depend upon it. According to a report by this daily, some powerful quarters in the locality have been dumping concrete waste and storing construction materials near the river at Mymensingh city’s Kachari Ferry Ghat area for months. Locals allege that the Mymensingh City Corporation (MCC) and local Water Development Board (WDB) have refused to take any initiative against those partaking in such illegal activities, despite repeated reminders and memorandums submitted to the Mymensingh deputy commissioner and MCC mayor urging them to take action. The question, as always, is: why do our authorities care so little about the relentless attack on our rivers?

Across the country, our rivers have become dumping zones for industrial and plastic waste, leading to clogging and the suffocation of aquatic life. Rivers are contaminated with harmful chemicals and heavy metals, posing a significant risk to the health of locals, to say nothing of the loss of income of the fisher communities for whom the rivers once used to be the source of sustenance. A recent study by the Rivers and Delta Research Centre (RDRC) confirmed that at least 56 major rivers in the country are dying a slow but painful death due to extreme pollution, with little to no concrete measures taken to save them, despite rivers being granted the legal status of “living entities” four years ago.

If the countless reports – and subsequent editorials we have written – on river pollution are any indication, the blame for the current tragic state of our lifelines falls squarely on the authorities. And let’s be honest: no number of editorials, laws, policies or court orders can protect our rivers from the apathy of the authorities, unless we start holding those who are supposed to monitor and stop the encroachers and polluters accountable for their ostensible failure to do so.

In this regard, it is inspiring to see the locals of Mymensingh mobilising to convince the authorities to do their part to save the Brahmaputra. Earlier this year, the same forum had raised concerns about dumping of industrial and household waste into the Old Brahmaputra River at Kalibari Puran Gudarghat. Despite promises at the time that action will be taken, we are frustrated to note that nothing has changed for the better.

If the concrete waste and other construction materials aren’t cleaned up immediately, it will mix with the river water once monsoon begins. We join the locals of Mymensingh in demanding swift action from MMC and WDB. Should they fail to do their job – once again – legal action should be taken against them.

What’s driving the govt’s U-turn on banking sector reform?



THE OVERTON WINDOW

Eresh Omar Jamal is assistant editor at The Daily Star. His Twitter handle is @EreshOmarJamal

ERESH OMAR JAMAL

On March 1, Moody’s, one of the big three global rating agencies, revised its outlook for Bangladesh’s banking sector from “stable” to “negative.” It also mentioned Bangladesh among the list of countries that will have a worsening state of banking operations in 2023, which is particularly concerning, given that the sector’s health was already on a deteriorating trend.

Moody’s explained that an increase in asset risks and tightening of the liquidity situation in Bangladesh is what prompted it to make this decision.

We already know that the Bangladesh Bank approved emergency loans for Islamic Bank Bangladesh, Social Islami Bank Limited, First Security Islami Bank, Global Islami Bank, and Union Bank worth Tk 14,790 crore in December last year. Such emergency funds are usually taken during extraordinary circumstances. And the Shariah-based banks, which do not borrow money by offering interest, had to borrow from the Bangladesh Bank at 8.75 percent interest as their cash reserve ratio (CRR) fell short of the central bank-stipulated rate for an acute liquidity crisis.

Islami Bank, which is currently under investigation by the central bank for gross irregularities over the disbursement of loans amounting to Tk 7,246 crore among nine companies, took the highest amount from the emergency fund. Reports about the investigation apparently led to a confidence crisis among depositors of the five banks, all of which have Chattogram-based business conglomerate S Alam Group well-represented in their boards.

By now, it is relatively well-known what has been happening at these banks. The massive irregularities surrounding them sums up, to an extent, the sorry state of our banking sector as a whole. The sharp rise in defaulted loans, scams, irregularities, mismanagement, lack of good governance, and the regulator’s willingness to bend the rules for some – supposedly under pressure from influential quarters – at the cost of many have made it one of the most troubled sectors in the country that, in turn, has exposed the economy to unnecessary risks.



VISUAL: STAR

The downgrading by Moody’s will only add to our economic woes. As confidence of investors and foreign institutions in the sector further erodes, it will become harder for Bangladesh to attract foreign investment – which is already one of the lowest in Asia – and make obtaining loans costlier for businesses and banks operating in the country. This may result in stressed assets for banks to rise, as businesses (to which banks have large exposure) are facing slowing external demand due to inflation in many of their key markets and rising costs due to higher import prices.

The downgrade also reflects the government’s decreased capacity to provide the same unconditional – and often questionable – support for banks because of its worsening external position. This comes at a time when systemwide loan-loss reserves as a proportion of non-performing loans (NPLs) is hovering at a pretty low level of 56 percent as of September last year, which is inadequate to provide sufficient buffers against rising loan losses.

Moody’s, of course, has also put Bangladesh’s years-long Ba3 rating under review. According to experts,

about the continuing growth of bad debts and asked the government to implement various reforms. Recently, a spokesperson for the Bangladesh Bank told *Nikkei Asia* that efforts towards institutional reform of the whole sector were already underway and “amendment to the banking and financial laws” were also in the pipeline.

Even though the spokesperson did not specify any particular law, on March 29, this newspaper reported that the cabinet had cleared the draft Bank Company (Amendment) Act, 2023, which would initiate major consequences for habitual loan defaulters and restrict the influence of families on banks’ boards. Interestingly, it was the Awami League government that had increased the influence of families in banks’ decision-making in the first place, to the great detriment of the sector.

So, it seems like the government, which had refused to listen to domestic calls for reforms, is now giving in to foreign pressure. But will it go through with it?

On March 15, it was reported that, according to the latest Bangladesh Bank data, default loan rescheduling and interest waivers had increased at

an unusual rate. Lenders had waived off some Tk 5,064 crore loan interests while rescheduling loans in 2022, which was Tk 3,209 crore higher than the previous year. Additionally, banks rescheduled loans worth Tk 27,279 crore in 2022, which was more than double the amount from the year before.

The benefit of the loan waiver,

according to a central bank official quoted in the report, had apparently gone to large groups, instead of going to small borrowers (which would have truly benefited our economy). Meanwhile, the managing director of a private bank said this was “not the actual amount of defaulted loans” in the sector, which was still being “hidden in various ways.”

Given this reality, one must ask: how does the government expect to implement proper corrective measures without bringing in full transparency? The question also remains whether the government will truly use the bank law amendment to go after habitual defaulters, who are closely connected to certain influential and political circles. As it frequently happens with all other laws in Bangladesh, it is possible that this might also fall by the wayside in the implementation stage.

However, given that more and more banks have recently started to suffer from a severe liquidity crisis, it is possible that the day of reckoning is not too far away when the government will be left with only two options: either implement serious reforms, or allow the banking sector to usher in a major crisis for the country.

If we cannot hit climate targets, then what?



RMG NOTES

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

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

A business owner I know is 100 percent committed to sustainability and to doing the right thing by the planet. The same owner spent many years preparing to develop science-based targets (SBTs). All seemed to be going according to plan until they took a closer look at some of the targets. At that point, it became apparent that the targets were simply unattainable, provided that the business wished to continue growing. As a consequence, they chose not to set SBTs and are now in the process of reconsidering how best to approach this pressing issue.

I’ve been thinking about this subject a lot lately. Recently, I watched an interesting debate unfold on social media. One person was arguing that companies need to consider “degrowth” or “no growth” business strategies. Degrowth is a radical economic theory that broadly means shrinking rather than growing economies to use less of the world’s dwindling resources. A second person was saying that this is simply not realistic, because it would essentially be tantamount to financial suicide. For instance, if a major global retailer announced a degrowth strategy, investors would likely pull out of it while shareholders would become extremely nervous.

To me, the degrowth movement seems to be gaining traction as concerns about the climate grow. Even organisations as prestigious as the World Economic Forum are openly

talking about degrowth strategies. But a company adopting such a strategy could face financial ruin – and then what?

Also, which major fashion retailer would be the first to adopt “degrowth” as a strategy? Or would they have to all do it at once in order for it to be effective?

On the one hand, I see a scenario where SBTs are, in some circumstances, extremely difficult – if not impossible – to achieve without making decisions that could affect the long-term financial ability of a company. This could be for many reasons. In some cases, a company might be involved in the sourcing of raw materials with very high environmental footprints. In other circumstances, a company could be sourcing from a country where the national grid has been slow to shift to renewable energy, and so their Scope 3 (supply chain) emissions remain stubbornly high. If there is no adequate alternative sourcing destination, what is that business supposed to do?

Meanwhile, I see many of the world’s largest fashion retailers struggling to get Scope 3 emissions under control. In fact, the only time Scope 3 emissions have fallen by any significant extent during the past decade was during the pandemic. But this was inevitable because supply chains were shut down for extended periods at that time.

In the meantime, major fashion retailers report in their annual results

that carbon emissions continued to increase. We have seen this with a number of major reports in recent weeks from NGOs and also the UN Fashion Charter, the signatories to which are all struggling to reduce supply chain emissions despite having made commitments to do so.

Big retailers are under enormous

There is no escaping the fact that producing clothes involves many different steps – from the sourcing of raw materials, wet processing, to production and shipping. There are limits to what can be achieved, even for the most committed sustainability proponent. What happens when you have done all that you can, but your emissions continue to go in the wrong direction?

pressure to publicly commit to climate goals and reduce supply chain emissions. At the same time, I cannot help but think that they are setting themselves up for failure with some of the targets. I see fashion retailers coming under fire for setting targets that look unrealistic. At the same time, businesses are criticised for not setting targets, being accused of not showing enough ambition.

As a business owner myself, I

know how hard it is to make genuine environmental strides. I have invested heavily in various ways to reduce the carbon footprint of my factory. Some investments make a difference quite quickly, but after a while, one experiences diminishing returns in terms of environmental gains. There is no escaping the fact that producing clothes involves many different steps – from the sourcing of raw materials, wet processing, to production, shipping and so on. What I am saying is that there are limits to what can be achieved, even for the most committed sustainability proponent. What then? What happens when you have done all that you can, but your emissions continue to go in the wrong direction?

I cannot speak for other industries, but I think it is hugely important that the fashion industry has an open debate about this issue. Too often, I see the debate around climate change become a finger-pointing exercise, which is a shame because this vital issue requires robust debate involving all industry stakeholders.

Big fashion brands come in for a lot of criticism, and there is so much talk of greenwashing at the moment. On climate, however, I firmly believe there is a genuine desire in some of fashion’s most senior people to do right by the planet. Many of these people have families and children. This issue is personal for them and they want to make a positive difference.

Sadly, they are running up against a conundrum that is proving vexing for even the brightest of the industry minds. Business growth and continuity or doing right by the planet – is this the choice we now have to make?

There has to be a third way as the alternative is too dark to contemplate. It’s time for us all to sit down and decide what this third way might entail.



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

Govt stubbornness sends ominous signal



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

ALI RIAZ

The news that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has recommended repealing two sections and amending eight sections of the Digital Security Act (DSA) is not surprising. These sections and many other provisions of the draconian law were already criticised by human rights activists of Bangladesh since the law was in the making in early 2018. The two sections the OHCHR recommended to be repealed are sections 21 and 28, and the ones that have been recommended to be amended are sections 8, 25, 27, 29, 31, 32, 43 and 53.

It may be recalled that when the government took the initiative to pass this law in the wake of the 2018 elections, there were extensive discussions and protests from various quarters about these provisions. On September 29, 2018, the Editors' Council issued a statement explaining its concerns over the DSA, identifying some fundamental flaws in nine sections (8, 21, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 43 and 53) of the act. In the last four and a half years, those who have followed the state of human rights, right to expression of the citizens, and freedom of the press in Bangladesh have repeatedly said this law as a whole and some sections in particular are unacceptable, and are inconsistent with the international conventions signed by the country.

The two sections the OHCHR has asked to repeal were widely discussed because they are opaque, include vague concepts, and are deemed to have a large scope for political use. Section 21 states, "If any person, by means of digital medium, makes or instigates to make any propaganda or campaign against the liberation war of Bangladesh, spirit of liberation war, father of the nation, national anthem or national flag, then such act of the person shall be an offence," and that he or she will be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years, or with a fine not exceeding Tk 1 crore, or both. A second time or repeated offence will land the offender with imprisonment for life, or with a fine of Tk 3 crore, or both.

Section 28 of the DSA says, "If any person or group willingly or knowingly publishes or broadcasts or causes to publish or broadcast anything in website or any electronic format which hurts religious sentiment or values, with an intention to hurt or provoke the religious values or sentiments, then such act of the person shall be an offence." The punishments have been set at imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or with a fine not exceeding Tk 10 lakh, or both. Repeat of such offence will lead to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years, or with a fine not exceeding Tk 20 lakh, or both.

The scope of such a law is so wide that any person can accuse anyone of violating this law, and therefore they can be arrested, imprisoned or even be pronounced guilty. In research conducted since January 2020 by

the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS), we have tracked how these DSA sections have been used. In my research on the use of the DSA since it came into effect, the four sections we found to have been most widely used were sections 25, 29, 31 and 35. Three of our published reports (April 2021, April 2022, and January 2023) highlighted different aspects of it.

Under this project, we have been able to collect complete data of 1,295 cases filed between October 2018 and March 2023. In these cases, 3,644 people were accused and 1,378 of them were arrested. While many of the detainees are out on

The OHCHR sent its recommendations in June last year, but there is no sign that the government is taking them into account. Moreover, the number of cases under the Digital Security Act has been increasing lately. Recently, there was an uproar at home and abroad after a case was filed against Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman and journalist Samsuzzaman Shams under this act.

bail, many are under trial. Writer Mushtaq Ahmed died in jail while in custody. Mushtaq was languishing in jail for more than 10 months and courts had repeatedly denied his bail applications. We don't know how many are facing the same situation as the government is unwilling to share the information.

The information we have gathered shows that 18 cases have been filed under Section 21, in which 242 people have been accused and 19 have been detained. The information we could gather about the professional background of the accused was of 112 people, of whom politicians were the largest victims (81), followed by lawyers (11). Forty-four cases have been filed under Section 28. A total of 118 have been accused and 25 have been arrested. We were able to gather professional identities of 34 people, which showed that most of the accused are journalists and teachers, with six cases each; two and three people were arrested, respectively. Politicians follow them to be accused and detained. An analysis of the statistics shows that 21.19 percent of the accused were arrested.

The use of the sections for

which the OHCHR has called for amendments (8, 25, 27, 29, 31, 32) are quite concerning. Section 25 is a case in point. Our research shows that 212 cases have been filed, 688 have been accused and 141 have been detained. There is a similar trend in the application of Section 29; under this section, 211 cases have been filed and 677 people have been accused. Section 29 states, "If any person publishes or transmits any defamatory information as described in section 499 of the Penal Code (Act XIV of 1860) on a website or in any other electronic format, he shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 (three) years, or with a fine not exceeding Taka 5 (five) lac, or both." Penal Code 500 through 501 have dealt with defamation and have the provision of punishment of up to two years of imprisonment.

But it has been found that after DSA's introduction in 2018, cases are being filed under this law instead of the Penal Code. This is in large measure due to the police's prompt action if a case is filed under the DSA. This is particularly true when a case is filed by the government or an activist of the ruling party. Besides, since most of the sections of the DSA are non-bailable, the persons arrested under the law remain in jail as pre-trial detainees for a long period – almost for an indefinite period. In our study, we have also found that the period of imprisonment becomes long and uncertain due to the police not filing the investigation report within the maximum stipulated period of 75 days. As such, various provisions of the DSA have become a tool for harassing rivals, particularly political opponents.

The OHCHR sent its recommendations in June last year, but there is no sign that the government is taking them into account. Moreover, the number of cases under this law has been increasing lately. Recently, there was an uproar at home and abroad after a case was filed against Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman and journalist Samsuzzaman Shams under this act. Although the significance and importance of these two cases are enormous, in some measures they are not an exception.

The government and the leaders and activists of the ruling party are filing cases against their opponents almost every day somewhere in the country, and the accused are being detained without delay. These are signs that this trend will increase before the elections. Law Minister Anisul Huq told reporters last week that the law cannot be repealed in any way. Harsher words came from Information Minister Hasan Mahmud, who said in unequivocal terms that there was "no possibility of repealing the Digital Security Act," although the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk on March 31 called for an immediate suspension of the law.

Despite the data showing a clear pattern of the DSA being used as a tool to instil fear in society, protests of civil society members against the wanton use of the law, demand by human rights organisations to repeal the law altogether, and the OHCHR recommendations to suspend it, the government is doubling down. This only indicates that the law is likely to be used far more widely by the government and its supporters ahead of the elections. This is an ominous signal.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

The Post-Human Desert



Dr Slavoj Žižek, professor of philosophy at the European Graduate School, is international director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities at the University of London and the author of *Heaven in Disorder*.

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

The Future of Life Institute's open letter demanding a six-month precautionary pause on artificial intelligence development has already been signed by thousands of high-profile figures, including Elon Musk. The signatories worry that AI labs are "locked in an out-of-control race" to develop and deploy increasingly powerful systems that no one – including their creators – can understand, predict or control.

What explains this outburst of panic among a certain cohort of elites? Control and regulation are obviously at the centre of the story, but whose? During the proposed half-year pause when humanity can take stock of the risks, who will stand for humanity? Since AI labs in China, India, and Russia will continue their work (perhaps in secret), a global public debate on the issue is inconceivable.

Still, we should consider what is at stake here. In his 2015 book *Homo*

agents (algorithmic market trading is merely the first step in this direction). The choice left to us will be between a new form of communism and uncontrollable chaos.

The new chatbots will offer many lonely (or not so lonely) people endless evenings of friendly dialogue about movies, books, cooking or politics. To reuse an old metaphor of mine, what people will get is the AI version of decaffeinated coffee or sugar-free soda: a friendly neighbour with no skeletons in its closet, an Other that will simply accommodate itself to your own needs. There is a structure of fetishist disavowal here: "I know very well that I am not talking to a real person, but it feels as though I am – and without any of the accompanying risks!"

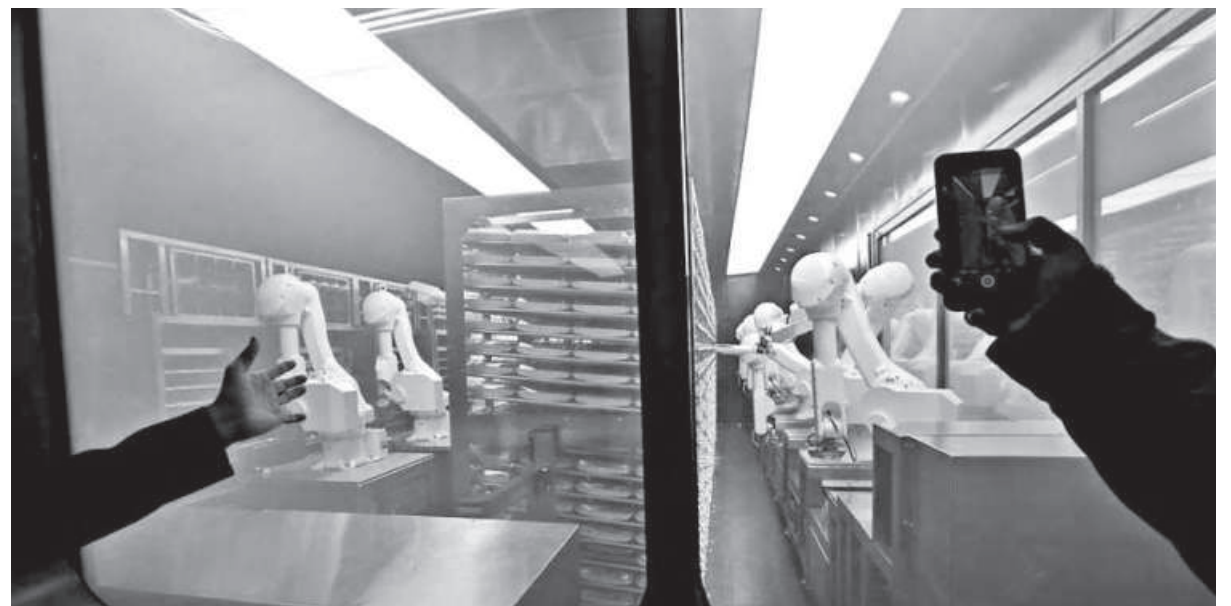
In any case, a close examination of the AI letter shows it to be yet another attempt at prohibiting the impossible. This is an old paradox: it is impossible for us, as humans, to

of contingent, unplanned emergent properties might "black box" AI models acquire for themselves? No one knows, and therein lies the thrill – or, indeed, the banality – of the entire enterprise.

Hence, earlier this century, French philosopher-engineer Jean Pierre Dupuy discerned in the new robotics, genetics, nanotechnology, artificial life, and AI a strange inversion of the traditional anthropocentric arrogance that technology enables:

"How are we to explain that science became such a 'risky' activity that, according to some top scientists, it poses today the principal threat to the survival of humanity? Some philosophers reply to this question by saying that Descartes' dream – 'to become master and possessor of nature' – has turned wrong, and that we should urgently return to the 'mastery of mastery.' They have understood nothing. They don't see that the technology profiling itself at our horizon through 'convergence' of all disciplines aims precisely at nonmastery. The engineer of tomorrow will not be a sorcerer's apprentice because of his negligence or ignorance, but by choice."

Humanity is creating its own god or devil. While the outcome cannot be predicted, one thing is certain. If something resembling "post-



The panic about AI stems from the fear that even those who are spearheading its progress will be unable to steer it.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Deus, the historian Yuval Noah Harari predicted that the most likely outcome of AI would be a radical division – much stronger than the class divide – within human society. Soon enough, biotechnology and computer algorithms will join their powers in producing "bodies, brains, and minds," resulting in a widening gap "between those who know how to engineer bodies and brains and those who do not." In such a world, "those who ride the train of progress will acquire divine abilities of creation and destruction, while those left behind will face extinction."

The panic reflected in the AI letter stems from the fear that even those who are on the "train of progress" will be unable to steer it. Our current digital masters are scared. What they want, however, is not public debate, but rather an agreement among governments and tech corporations to keep power where it belongs.

A massive expansion of AI capabilities is a serious threat to those in power – including those who develop, own, and control AI. It points to nothing less than the end of capitalism as we know it, manifested in the prospect of a self-reproducing AI system that will need less and less input from human

participate in a post-human future, so we must prohibit its development. To orient ourselves around these technologies, we should ask Lenin's old question: freedom for whom to do what? In what sense were we free before? Were we not already controlled much more than we realised? Instead of complaining about the threat to our freedom and dignity in the future, perhaps we should first consider what freedom means now. Until we do this, we will act like hysterics who, according to the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, are desperate for a master, but only one that we can dominate.

The futurist Ray Kurzweil predicts that, owing to the exponential nature of technological progress, we will soon be dealing with "spiritual" machines that will not only display all the signs of self-awareness, but also far surpass human intelligence. But one should not confuse this "post-human" stance for the paradigmatically modern preoccupation with achieving total technological domination over nature. What we are witnessing, instead, is a dialectical reversal of this process.

Today's "post-human" sciences are no longer about domination. Their credo is surprise: what kind

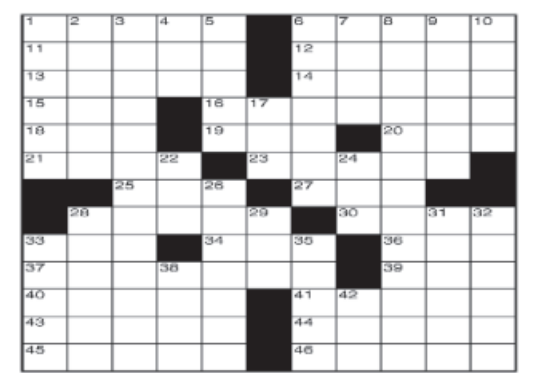
humanity" emerges as a collective fact, our worldview will lose all three of its defining, overlapping subjects: humanity, nature, and divinity. Our identity as humans can exist only against the background of impenetrable nature, but if life becomes something that can be fully manipulated by technology, it will lose its "natural" character. A fully controlled existence is one bereft of meaning, not to mention serendipity and wonder.

The same, of course, holds for any sense of the divine. The human experience of "god" has meaning only from the standpoint of human finitude and mortality. Once we become *homo deus* and create properties that seem "supernatural" from our old human standpoint, "gods" as we knew them will disappear. The question is what, if anything, will be left. Will we worship the AI that we created?

There is every reason to worry that tech gnostic visions of a post-human world are ideological fantasies obfuscating the abyss that awaits us. Needless to say, it would take more than a six-month pause to ensure that humans do not become irrelevant, and their lives meaningless, in the not-too-distant future.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
1 Raucous bird
6 Accords
11 Find too cute
12 Maui greeting
13 Fountain treat
14 Lament
15 That lady
16 Did the walls
18 Hosp. parts
19 That lady
20 Put into words
21 Some bucks
23 Ready for battle
25 Pitch's kin
27 Brief time
28 Daughter of Lear
30 Highlands
- girl
34 Lobster trap
36 Keg need
37 "Royal Wedding" star
39 One – time
40 Way to go
41 Museum piece
43 Slip
44 Boring movie
45 Flight units
46 Periphery
- DOWN**
1 Prepared potatoes
2 Stick
3 Burlap feature
4 Torah cabinet
5 Sheds tears
6 Coddles
- 7 Baby wipe additive
8 College listing
9 Spool stuff
10 Yellow-gray
17 "That's it!"
22 Cloth scrap
24 Crooner
Torme
26 Some swords
28 Vacation spot
29 Negative link
31 Swift work
32 Word separators
33 Long-eared mammals
35 Hardly wordy
38 Resting on
42 Final part



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.



(L) André Malraux with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 1973 (R) During her world tour to gather support for the cause of Bangladesh, Indira Gandhi appeared alongside André Malraux at a press conference held at the Embassy of India in Paris in the Autumn of 1971.

Honouring André Malraux's Legacy

A Look Back at His Visit to Bangladesh

Malraux also wrote a letter to the American President: "When the most powerful army of the world could not destroy the barefooted people of Vietnam, then how do you think that from a distance of twelve hundred miles, the army of Islamabad could get back a country desperate to achieve its independence?"

MAHMUD SHAH QURESHI

During the middle of the past century, two Frenchmen were known and admired around the world. They were General de Gaulle and André Malraux. Malraux became a celebrity in the 1930s as a writer, adventurer, and orientalist. He was also a freedom fighter who fought for the liberation of Spain and France and advocated for most non-self-governing territories. We, the students in France during the 1960s, had great admiration for him.

In 1971, the first diplomatic mission for Arab countries was formed with Mollah Jalal, an MNA, and me. But before leaving Delhi, I had the chance to suggest several Frenchmen's names for the Bangladesh conference, including his name. However, in September, Malraux made a declaration that he would not join the conference.

It was in April 1973 that André Malraux (1901-1976), France's most legendary living figure in the domain of arts and letters, politics, and philosophy, came to Bangladesh for a short visit. Since his early youth, Malraux traveled around the four corners of the world, but the four days he spent here just 50 years ago were indeed an extraordinarily memorable voyage for him as well as for the country he visited. Why? Because he

of the side of the people who had been capable of saying 'No.' The people of Bangladesh dared to say 'No' to the oppressors and usurpers of their sovereignty. But for this, they had to pay too much in the form of misery, and death.

On 18th September 1971, Malraux made a declaration to the media that instantly became a world event. He said that he would not participate in the conference called to support



André Malraux in Dhaka, 1973.

Bangladesh in Delhi. Rather, he would come to fight in a company of tanks as he had some experience in it, provided the governments of Bangladesh and India permit him. He also wrote a letter to the American President: "When the most powerful army of the world could not destroy the barefooted people of Vietnam, then how do you think that from a distance of twelve hundred miles, the army of Islamabad could get back a country desperate to achieve its independence?" (Le Figaro, 17th Dec. 1971)

By mid-December, the fate of the war was decided in favour of Bangladesh. Even before things got totally settled, the intellectuals of the newly born nation wanted to greet this distant friend, and Malraux received an invitation from Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

On 21st April, Malraux, accompanied by Madame Sophie de Vilmorin, his last companion, Mr. Garofalo, photographer of the Paris-Match and two journalists of the French television, alighted at the old airport of Tejgaon. Foreign Minister Dr. Kamal Hossain with Mr. Arshad Uzzaman, the chief of protocol on the one hand and two renowned members of Bangladesh intelligentsia, Begum Sufia Kamal, poet and social worker, and Prof. Syed Ali Ahsan, Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, waited on him.

After a colourful reception while he advanced amidst the lined-up school children who cried 'Vive Malraux' in lieu of the usual words of slogans 'Joy' or 'Zindabad'. Malraux lifted a boy from the ground and said, "As I cannot embrace everyone, so by doing this on this lone face, I wish to kiss Bangladesh". Instantly, he was taken to the Presidential Palace, where he was to stay during his visit and to meet the Prime Minister, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. When asked what he might expect from Monsieur Malraux, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman replied: "All that I want is the love, the affection and the respect that one should offer to my people. Have not you seen my beautiful people, my magnificent country, and my green

fields?" After the brief meeting, Malraux was brought to the Dhaka University campus, where he had an exclusive meeting with the Deans and senior teachers. Dr. Abdul Matin Chowdhury, the Vice Chancellor, offered him tea with 'poneer' - the Bengali cheese, which he seemed to have relished but did not forget to tell his host that there are 236 varieties of cheese in his country. Then, on arrival at the Teacher-Students' Center, he was offered by the Vice Chancellor a silver boat, a symbol of the riverside of Bangladesh, as a token of love. Malraux made a very emotional speech while addressing the students: "For the first time, I speak in this University where there are more dead than living. Students of France know that your teachers and your friends embraced death for liberty, and they know that nowhere else ever before, students and teachers paid such a heavy price for liberty. They also know that among so many of the students who fought, there is one place where the students would rightfully tell those who would come later: 'We have fought with our bare hands' ... Your dead here rendezvous with the fate of Bangladesh, but now it is up to you to make the nation."

Then after the official luncheon offered by the Prime Minister, Malraux was taken to visit the National Mausoleum at Savar. He placed a wreath while the army bugle was being played. Suddenly there was a brief but torrential rain, and the former freedom fighter entered the hospital for war victims. As everyone there knew who the visitor was, he was profusely garlanded, but Malraux took a garland from his neck and put it on a young man who had lost one hand and one leg. He also visited the monument for the martyrs of the 21st February Language Movement and placed a wreath there. In the evening, there was a grand reception for him at the Alliance Française de Dacca. Malraux made a speech by highlighting the nobility of French culture that showed the world courage, justice, and thought for action.

At 7:30 P.M., a sumptuous dinner was offered by the President of Bangladesh, in which artists, intellectuals, and political personalities took part. No formal speech was delivered in the course of the discussion. Malraux opined that he knew that Bengali literature had a rich tradition, but he had only read Tagore. About Kazi Nazrul Islam, the National Poet of Bangladesh, he could learn while traveling from Delhi to Dhaka and was attracted by his personality. An interesting cultural show was presented to end up the first day's programs.

The following day was also a very special day as André Malraux was going to be awarded a doctorate Honoris Causa in a special Convocation at the University of Rajshahi. After two salutatory addresses by Vice-Chancellor Dr. Khan Sarwar Morshed and Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, the President of Bangladesh, André Malraux accepted the honor with a passionate speech.

Following the famous inscription of antiquity to honor them, Malraux advised, "On any of the graveyards of your freedom fighters, in the ditches filled with the dead bodies of your intellectuals, write in large letters: You, who shall pass later on, go tell all of ours that those who fell here were dead because during the nine months of suffering they accepted to fight with bare hands. Salute the dead of the surrounding forest! You have

shown the world that one can never assassinate enough to kill the soul of a person who would not surrender.

"On the roads of the Orient, there are tombs of French knights; on all the roads of the Occident, there are tombs of the soldiers of WWII... And on your tombs, there are perhaps memories of the words of justice and of liberty with which the generals of the Revolution had set Europe on fire. Your culture holds to you in one lone and big word: Spirituality. Your liberation has attempted to unite the language of eternal Bengal with that of our Revolution."

After lunch at the Vice-Chancellor's residence, Malraux visited Varendra Research Museum in the town, three miles away from the campus. This was an extraordinary scene as he seemed to be in his own world with all the statues and the icons around, and he started a very elaborate explanation of the significance of their existence to Madame Sophie de Vilmorin in particular.

Returning to Dhaka, a quiet lunch with the President and his family took place at Bangabhaban. Justice Chowdhury and Malraux discussed the problems of family planning, as well as of China. In the afternoon, he visited the National Museum at Neemtoli (the old site) and then came to the Art College (now the Institute of Fine Arts of the University of Dhaka), where he discussed with the students and teachers. There was also an exhibition of paintings which he watched with care. Then he joined a small cocktail party in the hotel suite of the French Ambassador to celebrate the Easter festival. A sumptuous dinner followed by a musical soiree was arranged at the Foreign Minister's residence. Malraux seemed to have liked the Bengali songs with revolutionary themes and rhythm. He even asked to repeat a song twice.

The third day's visit was at Chittagong, where a festive reception was accorded at the airport. Then Malraux was taken to see the dilapidated war-torn port. A grand civic reception was held at the Chittagong Club. He was presented with an old manuscript, considered the most precious gift to be offered. His speech was very much appreciated, but it was the same as that of Rajshahi, with two excerpts, one in the beginning and one in the conclusion, where he lauded the role of Chittagong for her special contribution to the war of liberation. He reminded that an extraordinary effort of the people was needed to reconstruct the country, in which he would initiate the program of aid as an advisor to the Government of France.

As the ceremony was over, a grand lunch was awaited in the house of Mr. A. K. Khan, industrialist and a former minister. It was indeed an international festival there. Malraux enjoyed it very much and had an exchange of ideas with many. He also made his admirers happy by giving autographs according to their demand, and as per the advice of the ambassador of France, he had an exclusive discussion session on the economic situation of Bangladesh with his host for fifty minutes, along with the present writer as interpreter.

There were two more programs for the afternoon. A quick visit to the Alliance Française de Chittagong. There he liked the 'dab' (green coconut) water with ice cubes on a silver plate. Mr. Juned Chowdhury offered him a copy of the Etude sur l'évolution intellectuelle chez les musulmans du Bengale 1857-1947, which was written by his interpreter (Mahmud Shah Qureshi) who was also the President of

Alliance in those years.

Malraux also had a look at the painting exhibition of the teachers and students of the University of Chittagong there. Then he rushed to inaugurate Chittagong Art Gallery and Folk Museum at Mehdibag, where another exhibition was installed. He was offered a painting of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin, which he accepted with great admiration and respect. In a short speech, Malraux called upon the artists to draw scenes of the local culture on their canvas. He was also moved by the gift of a painting from young Nayak, son of artist Sabih-ul Alam.

Then by helicopter, he was flown to Kaptai, where the houseboat of M.A.K. Khan was ready to show him the beauty of the lake in the middle of Chittagong Hill Tracts. Madame Sophie de Vilmorin, his companion, enjoyed it to the fullest, as she described vividly in her book 'Aimer Encore'. There was another surprise from a few sampan-loaded people who cried "Vive Malraux" (Long live Malraux). The present writer got some exclusive minutes from one of the most famous intellectuals in the world to answer his questions. In the Kaptai Guest House, Malraux left his suit and his tie. He wore a red shirt and enjoyed his dinner with Ruhi fish of the lake.

The next morning he reached Dhaka and faced a very energetic press conference. He insisted on more foreign help for Bangladesh as the actual loss of the country was unaccountable. He also lauded the role of the freedom fighters in liberating the country.

Before leaving Dhaka on a plane at 12.25 pm, he met the President and the Prime Minister. But he also got time to write his best wishes in two books as a gift to his interpreters. From Paris, he wrote an extraordinary letter on May 8, 1973 to this author.

"My dear Professor, On return to Paris (with the book which you have so kindly presented me), I wish to tell you about the friendly memory that I conserve to our collaboration. You have helped me much, and without you, my relationship with my listeners in Chittagong would not have been what it was. The intelligence, the rapidity, and the tonality of your translations established a communication and sometimes a communion for which I am grateful to you. Let us hope that we can now put into realizing what we have undertaken for your country, which has become a little mine, and trust, my dear professor, to my sympathetic memory."

Here is not the end of the story. Shortly after his return to Paris, he appeared before the court to save the young man who wanted to hijack a plane for sending medicine to Bangladesh. I also met him after four months in his residence. He told me that he had done what he promised. He talked to the Education Minister of France not to disturb the teaching of Bengali as it was apprehended and to the Chinese Ambassador in favour of the recognition of Bangladesh to be a member of the United Nations. And needless to say that France would continue to help Bangladesh in a massive way, at least as was expected by the optimist humanist André Malraux.

Dr Mahmud Shah Qureshi is an eminent Bangladeshi scholar. He has been honoured with numerous accolades, including Ekushey Padak and France's Légion d'honneur.



On September 19, 1971, Paris Jour featured a declaration made by Malraux, in which he conveyed his intention to participate in the Bangladesh Liberation War.

responded to the hearty invitation of people who had just founded the country which did not 'exist before' but in whose existence Malraux trusted miraculously. As a matter of fact, he wanted to fight for this country with a fragile body at the age of 70. He could not forget that he had earlier fought for Spain and France and remained all along a vigilant witness of decolonization. Once he wrote, "Nothing is more important, in the history of the world, than to be on

Liton focuses on IPL experience

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh batter Liton Das is eyeing to gain experience on his maiden Indian Premier League campaign as the opener left the country for India yesterday to join his side Kolkata Knight Riders.

While he was enroute to India, KKR had already won a thrilling contest against reigning champions Gujarat Titans at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. KKR have won two out of the three matches they've played so far and Liton is set to join an upbeat side led by Nitish Rana.

Liton, who will be available for selection in KKR's next game on April 14 against the Sunrisers Hyderabad, will however face competition for a place in the eleven, with Afghanistan's wicket-keeper batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Jason Roy already in the squad.

"I don't know whether I'd play or not. It's a learning process. I never went to such an event like this before; this is my first time and obviously, it's a good feeling," Liton told the media before catching his flight yesterday.



Kolkata Knight Riders batter Rinku Singh was embraced by teammates as he turned the match on its head, striking five maximums in a row in the final over to clinch a last-ball win against the reigning IPL champions Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad yesterday. His bludgeoning blows helped KKR to chase down 29 runs in the final over.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Russel lambasts BFF for depriving SAFF champions

SPORTS REPORTER

The Kazi Salahuddin-led Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) continues to receive backlash from different quarters for their failure in sending the national women's team to the Paris Olympics women's qualifiers, and the latest attack came from Zahid Ahsan Russel, the state minister for Youth and Sports.

"I think they [BFF] intentionally didn't send the women's team to the [Olympics] qualifiers ... and [as a result] had tarnished the country's image," Russel told the reporters after the National Sports Council (NSC) executive meeting at the NSC conference room yesterday.

"We need to look into the matter ... and the Prime Minister will be made aware of it. The fact that a small amount of money prevented the women from taking part in the event, there is something behind it for sure," added Russel, who recently returned home after having undergone treatment abroad.

Earlier on March 29, BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag informed that the women's team were pulled out of the Olympics qualifiers in Myanmar due to financial constraints, especially after failing to get the necessary response in time from the Youth and Sports ministry.



"I think they [BFF] intentionally didn't send the women's team to the [Olympics] qualifiers ... and [as a result] had tarnished the country's image," Russel told the reporters after the National Sports Council (NSC) executive meeting at the NSC conference room yesterday.
 Zahid Ahsan Russel
 State minister for Youth and Sports

Russel termed the BFF general secretary's blame on the ministry as "audacious."

"Neither the BFF president nor the vice-president could say anything, and instead an employee of the federation had blamed the government ... it's audacious ... and not acceptable at all."

The state minister for Youth and Sports continued, "We received their letter [asking for financial assistance] on the 27th [March] and instantly we had forwarded it to the finance ministry. However, the BFF announced their decision on the 29th."

"As a result, we were not able to do anything for our women footballers who had brought laurels for the nation. This does not get any more painful for us."

Bangladesh Squad

Tamim Iqbal (Captain), Liton Das, Rony Talukdar, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Towhid Hridoy, Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Yasir Ali Chowdhury, Mehedi Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Ebadot Hossain, Shoriful Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud, Mrirtunjoy Chowdhury

Schedule

May 9
1st ODI
 May 12
2nd ODI
 May 14
3rd ODI

**All the matches will be played at the Clou County Ground, Chelmsford

**South Africa are currently at number eighth in the ICC World Cup Super League standings from where they can now automatically qualify for the World Cup in October. South Africa can now only be knocked out of the top eight by Ireland, who must win all three games in their home series against Bangladesh next month to do so.

No Mahmudullah as plans progress

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh announced a 15-member squad for the upcoming ODI series against Ireland, part of ICC ODI Super League, and the biggest change coming in was uncapped pacesman Mrirtunjoy Chowdhury, in for Taskin Ahmed who is recuperating from an injury.

The 21-year-old has been in the vicinity of the national team, having played for the A side in the West Indies last year. Mrirtunjoy's Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) performances over the years helped him get the nod.

The Tigers are enjoying a great vein of form, looking to notch up their aggressive instincts in the ODI format and the team management had said that several players were set to be tried and tested during the home and away series against Ireland.

The likes of Towhid Hridoy, Rony Talukdar and Yasir Ali were able to hold



Mrirtunjoy Chowdhury

their place for the upcoming series and it brings to question whether veteran Mahmudullah Riyad will get a chance to make a return to the line-up while Afif Hossain still needs to prove his mettle with domestic performances.

Along with Shoriful Islam, Taijul Islam also returned after sitting out the Ireland ODIs at home while Nasum Ahmed was left out.

The BCB president Nazmul Hassan had informed previously that the squad for the Asia Cup will be the one for the World Cup. Ahead of the World Cup in India, the Tigers have assignments against Ireland

in England, Afghanistan at home and the Asia Cup. Thus, the Ireland series will be another key setting to gauge strength.

"Our side is more experienced than before and I feel they are capable enough to adjust to conditions there. Since we will be playing a practice game, I'm hopeful that no matter how challenging, we will be able to do well there," chief selector Minhajul Abedin told members of the media yesterday.

"We have kept quite a few players in our plans and everyone is being monitored. We have also rested a few players. We will be readying the World Cup squad before the Asia Cup so before that the performances will be considered," he added.

Mahmudullah was left out of the squad after the England series. Whether his domestic performances will make a mark with the World Cup approaching fast, remains to be seen.

He produced scores of 58, 48 and then 71 for Mohammedan Sporting in the ongoing Dhaka Premier League but most of Mahmudullah's knocks have failed to make the required impact needed in the current climate.

Yasir Ali recently came back to the squad and has been carried and he will be competing with Mehedi Miraz for a seventh spot in the batting order. With a few players such as Rony and Towhid performing, Mahmudullah's return at the moment looks difficult.

"Everyone is being looked at in equal measure. We will prepare the best possible side for the Asia Cup," Minhajul said as Tigers look to ready a pool of players.

"We have kept quite a few players in our plans and everyone is being monitored. We have also rested a few players. We will be readying the World Cup squad before the Asia Cup so before that the performances will be considered."

Minhajul Abedin
 BCB Chief selector

First Division 'a different experience' for Usha

SPORTS REPORTER

Usha Krira Chakra emerged as the unbeaten champions in the Green Delta Insurance First Division Hockey League with an 11-0 mauling of Dhaka Wanderers Club in their last fixture at the Maulana Bhashani Hockey Stadium yesterday. Champions-elect Usha, who had already won the league with a match in hand after a 7-1 win against Hockey Dhaka United in the penultimate round, completed the formalities as they made a comeback to the Premier Division Hockey League from where they were relegated in the 2017-18 season for failure to turn up in the players' transfers window due to a disagreement with the federation.

The 2023 season of the First Division Hockey League was the first since 2018, and four-time champions Usha finally got their chance after a gap of four years to get back to the top flight.

"It was a different experience for Usha KC, who usually played the Premier Division Hockey League because our target was to become champions to move to the Premier Division. Besides, there were not many quality players in the lower league



to form a strong team. So, we emphasised first on forming a good team with the combination of a few experienced players, who once played in the Premier Division, and foreign players," coach Mamunur Rashid told The Daily Star after the match.

"To be honest, we are ahead of others in terms of tactical aspects as well as the fitness of the players, and we achieved the target," added Mamun whose side struck 77 goals and conceded only eleven in 10 matches.



Manchester City striker Erling Haaland became the fastest player to score 30 goals in a Premier League season (in 27 games) after he scored a brace, including one that featured an outrageous overhead kick, in City's 4-1 win at Southampton on Saturday. City coach Pep Guardiola said the Norwegian goal-machine belongs on "that level" with Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, who edged past Ronaldo to take his European goal tally to a record 702 following his strike for PSG in a 2-0 win at Nice on the same day.

PHOTO: AFP

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Rana Plaza owner's bail stayed by SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday stayed until May 8 the High Court verdict that granted bail to Sohel Rana, owner of the ill-fated Rana Plaza, in a murder case filed hours after the building's collapse about a decade ago.

Rana will not be released from jail after this, his lawyer Md Qamrul Islam told The Daily Star.



Sohel Rana

Justice Md Abu Jafer Siddique, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, passed the order after a petition was filed by the state challenging the HC verdict.

The apex court chamber judge also sent the state's petition to its full bench for further hearing on May 8.

The allegations against Rana are so serious that he cannot be granted bail in the case, Deputy Attorney General Sarwar Hossain Bappi, who argued

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As part of Dhaka North City Corporation's efforts for beautification and to keep people from pasting posters, a pillar of Moghbazar-Mouchak Flyover was painted and daubed with a slogan "Don't honk". The photo was taken at Moghbazar-Tongi Diversion Road yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Trial in Mitu murder case underway

Her father testifies against ex-SP Babul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, City

A Chattogram court yesterday began the trial of seven suspects, including former superintendent of police Babul Akter, in a case filed over the murder of his wife Mahmuda Akter Mitu in 2016.



Mitu

As the first witness in the case, the court of 3rd Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Md Jasim Uddin recorded the testimony of Mosharraf Hossain, Mitu's father and a former policeman.

Mosharraf said Babul murdered his daughter as she learnt about his affair.

"Babul used his informant to kill my daughter. Babul and prime accused Musa knew each other since Babul was Hathazari Circle ASP," Mitu's father told the court.

Babul's lawyer Golam Mowla Murad was there while lawyer Abdur Rashid represented the state.

Before the testimony, Golam informed the court that they filed a petition with the High

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MOMEN-BLINKEN MEET Democracy, human rights, trade to top agenda

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken are scheduled to have a bilateral meeting in Washington today to discuss ways to advance the Bangladesh-US ties on key fronts.

Momen is scheduled to reach Washington from New York Sunday, said a senior official, adding that the meeting is likely to be held at 2:00pm US time.

The US is likely to raise issues related to democracy and human rights, said a diplomatic source.

During the meeting, Bangladesh will seek efforts to enhance relations on trade and investment fronts, reiterate its call for the return of the killer of Father of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, withdrawal of sanctions on Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and discuss issues of mutual interests.

The two sides will also focus on their ongoing cooperation to deal with the climate crisis, meet the needs of Rohingyas, their safe return

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Youths account for 28pc of population

Finds latest census

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's youth population has increased by 15.81 percent to 4.59 crore in the last decade, as per the recent census -- raising the stakes for the government to take measures to make the most of their potential.

"Youth population is the country's wealth," said Shahnaz Arefin, secretary of the statistics and informatics division, at a programme yesterday to unveil the adjusted data of the Population and Housing Census 2022.

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics released the data after scrutiny by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

The total population now is 16.98 crore and 27.96 percent of them are aged between 15-29 years. In the last survey, the total population was 14.98 crore number, 26.4 percent of which were youth.

The census report is published every ten years. The latest report was delayed, with the preliminary report published in July last year.

Arefin went on to underscore the need for studies for the proper utilisation of the youth population.

"The youth need to be utilised properly to cash in on the demographic dividend," said Binayak Sen, director-general of BIDS.

Demographic dividend refers to the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older).

To get the most out of Bangladesh's ongoing demographic dividend phase, Sen suggested creating job opportunities.

"Otherwise, it may turn into a disaster. Policymakers need to find out what students do after graduating from university," he added.

Planning Minister MA Mannan raised questions on why the census, which cost Tk 1,500 crore, is published every ten years whereas many countries publish the population data every year.

The report shows that the Dhaka division has the highest population: 4.56 crore. It is 26.88 percent of the total population.

The Chattogram division has the second

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LIBERATION WAR Make law to punish those who speak against it

Minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq in parliament yesterday sought a new law enabling the government to take action against those who speak against the Liberation War and the spirit of independence.

While speaking during a discussion on a motion on the golden jubilee of the Jatiya Sangsad, the minister said if there is no opportunity to take legal action against those who lie, distort history, oppose freedom, the state may be under threat.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Friday placed the motion in the House on the 50th anniversary of parliament.

In his speech, Mozammel said, "There should be new laws so that action can be taken against those who lie

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Italian artist makes 'largest' Picasso portrait with tractor

THE STRAITS TIMES ONLINE



An Italian artist has created a giant land portrait of Pablo Picasso using a tractor, to mark the 50th anniversary of the Spanish painter's death.

Dario Gambarin created the portrait on a 25,000 sqm wasteland in Castagnaro municipality, 80km south-west of Venice.

Gambarin said he was inspired by Picasso's 1907 self-portrait to create what he said is the largest portrait of the Spanish artist in the world.

Picasso, who created more than 20,000 paintings, drawings, sculptures, ceramics and other items such as costumes and theatre sets, died on April 8, 1973, in Mougins, France.

"I wanted to dedicate this colossal portrait to Picasso because he is one of those masters from whom you never stop learning," said Gambarin.

This is not the first time Gambarin has created larger-than-life land portraits.

Prior to the 2016 US presidential election, he has used a tractor to create a giant portrait of then presidential candidate Donald Trump as well as Trump's rival, Hillary Clinton.

Shams gets bail in another DSA case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Prothom Alo reporter Samsuzzaman Shams yesterday got bail in another case filed with Tejgaon Police Station under the Digital Security Act.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Sheikh Sadi granted bail until May 11 when the next hearing in the case will be held, said an official.

Shams appeared at the court and sought bail through his lawyer.

Earlier on April 3, Shams got bail at another court in a case filed with Ramna Police Station under the same act.

On March 26, the Prothom Alo made a "photo card" to post a report written by Shams on Independence Day on social media. The card had a quote from a day labourer named Zakir Hossain

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People on the bank of the Rupsha in Khulna city wait for iftar time while enjoying the cool breeze after yesterday's scorching heat.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Journo beaten up over report Finger pointed at Zilla Parishad member, UP chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A local journalist in Jamalpur was attacked allegedly by some followers of Jamalpur Zilla Parishad member Sheela Sarwar and Bagarchar Union Parishad Chairman Siddiqur Rahman yesterday.

This incident happened in front of Bakshiganj Upazila Parishad where Roni went after getting a phone call from Sheela.

Victim Rashedul Islam Roni, 45, of Bagarchar village in the upazila, is the upazila correspondent of the daily Bhorer Kagoj.



Rashedul Islam

Contacted, Roni said, "Recently, the chairman of Bagarchar Union, Siddiqur Rahman Siddique, beat up a local journalist over a trivial matter and I reported the incident.

"After publishing the news, Chairman Siddiqur Rahman was angry with me."

Sheela and Siddiqur asked him to go to Bakshiganj Upazila Parishad to settle the matter. As he reached there,

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