



Sonar Bangla Express slams into freight train

30 hurt, tomorrow's trip cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka-bound Sonar Bangla Express hit a freight train at Nangalkot of Cumilla causing seven carriages and the locomotive to derail yesterday evening.

At least 30 people were injured and five among them were in serious condition, said Jashim Uddin Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Laksham Railway Police Station.

He said the five seriously injured were sent to hospitals.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The mangled carriages of Sonar Bangla Express at the Hasanpur Railway Station of Cumilla's Nangalkot yesterday evening. The train was apparently diverted to the wrong line where a freight train was stationary. The collision left at least 30 people injured.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

No let-up in heat until Eid

Experts blame unusual weather conditions, urban sprawl for rising mercury

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The hot and dry weather during the day and plummeting mercury during the night are highly unusual phenomena in Bangladesh, said experts, blaming urbanisation and a set of weather conditions for the heatwave.

Dhaka experienced the hottest day since 1965 (40.5 degrees Celsius) yesterday.

The temperature was 40.4 degrees Celsius during the day on Saturday and 28 degrees that night, said Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD).

The highest temperature in the country that day was in Chuadanga, 42.2 degrees Celsius, but the night-time temperature there was a pleasant 23.5 degrees Celsius.

Meteorologists and experts said such differences between day and night

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

PICK FOR BARISHAL MAYOR A resolute Hasina prevails

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Barishal dominated the talks when the ruling Awami League's nomination board sat on Saturday to pick mayoral candidates for five cities.

Held at the Gono Bhaban with AL President Sheikh Hasina in the chair, the meeting didn't take long to finalise nominees for Khulna, Gazipur, Rajshahi and Sylhet.

But for Barishal, there was a lengthy discussion between Hasina and Abul Hasnat Abdullah, the MP from Barishal-1 constituency and also a cousin of the AL chief.

The other members of the board kept silent all along.

According to insiders, Hasnat repeatedly pleaded with Hasina to nominate his son and incumbent Barishal mayor, Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah.

But the AL chief backed Abul Khair Abdullah, the youngest brother of Hasnat, after the names of those who collected the nomination forms were placed at the meeting, said three board members who attended the meeting.

The nomination panel went with the party chief.

Arguing for his son, Hasnat said he was the current mayor and a strong contender.

If Sadiq didn't get the ticket, his political career would come to

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



KEY TO PROSPERITY It's political power, not military rule

Says PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that political leadership and decisions -- not military rule -- are the most important factors for a country to prosper.

"Whenever our country was outside political decisions, which means under direct or indirect military rule, it did not register its development and prosperity. The people of the country have to realise this."

The premier said this while delivering her introductory speech at the eighth meeting of the National Training Council held at the Gono Bhaban.

She said that development is every

SEE PAGE 7 COL 5

BUSINESS

Govt honours 71 exporters

STORY ON B1

FIRE-RAVAGED NEW SUPER MARKET Shops on ground, 1st floors to reopen today

MD ABBAS and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Traders of Dhaka's New Super Market are desperately trying to reopen their business after the firemen doused the fire and handed over the market to the market authorities around 10:00am yesterday.

The busy clothing and crockeries market remained closed since a fire broke out around 5:40am on Saturday and gutted 243 shops, causing huge loss to

traders, who were expecting brisk business before Eid.

"We have started the cleaning up work and hope to complete it by tonight [Sunday]. The shops on the ground and first floors will be opened by tomorrow [Monday]," Kazi Abul Khayer, member secretary of Dhaka New Super Market Bebohayee Samity (South), told The Daily Star.

PHOTO ON PAGE 2

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

WALTON Smart Fridge

ডিজিটাল কম্পিউটাইজড মিক্সড ২-৭-এ পেচে পারেন

৩০১ টি কিনে ১০১ টি ফ্রি

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শুধু ২০২৩

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৩০১ টি পণ্য ফ্রি পেলেন

মনোয়ারা বেগম, পিতা: আব্দুল মজিবুর কুলাউড়া, মৌলভীবাজার

মোয়াজ রুপনিয়া ইলেকট্রনিক্স রুপনিয়া, যশোর থেকে গ্রিক কিনে

৩০১ টি পণ্য ফ্রি পেলেন

জনাব মো: মোশারফ হোসেন, পিতা: গোলাম কুদ্দুস ঘুরী, যশোর সদর, যশোর

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Universal Jeans Limited has been awarded "BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIB EXPORT TROPHY (GOLD)" as the highest exporter of Bangladesh for the year 2019-2020.

Two other companies of the group Pacific Jeans Limited NHT Fashions Limited have been awarded GOLD & SILVER TROPHY for being the highest exporter of Export Processing zone, Bangladesh.

Syed M. Tanvir, Managing Director and Syed M. Tahmir, Director of Pacific Jeans Group received the trophies. We dedicate the achievement to our mentor, honorable Chairman late Md. Nasir Uddin.

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FACEBOOK POST Sherpur judge withdrawn for 'hurting religious sentiments'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Md Iman Ali Sheikh, judge of Sherpur's Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman (Women and Children Repression Prevention) Tribunal, has been withdrawn and attached to the law ministry over "hurting religious sentiments" through his Facebook status.

The ministry yesterday issued a notification to this effect.

It says that Iman Ali, a judicial officer with the rank of district and sessions judge, has been attached to the law and justice division of the ministry and ordered to join there immediately after handing over the responsibility of the current position.

Contacted, Anisul Huq, law, justice and parliamentary affairs minister, told The Daily Star that he has hurt the religious sentiments. As a judge and under the code of conduct, he cannot do it.

He said departmental proceedings would also be initiated against Judge Iman Ali under the relevant rules for his act.

In reply to a query, Anisul said his ministry has taken the action in consultation with the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the SC administration yesterday issued a notification asking the lower court judges to strictly follow the restrictions imposed on using social media on September 22, 2019.

The SC administration issued a notification with a set of directives for the lower court judges on using social media, asking them not to upload images and video clips of SC judges and also not to publish information or make comments that go against the national unity and spirit.

The notification also said the lower court judges have to stop using social media during their working hours from 9:30am to 4:30pm.

If the instructions are defied, it will be considered misconduct and Bangladesh Judicial Services (Discipline) Rules 2017 alongside other relevant existing laws and rules will be applicable in this regard.

The notification also asked the judges to refrain from uploading, sharing, tagging, any status update, post, link, and image that are "irrelevant, unnecessary, defamatory, and unethical".



Shop owner Ismail Hossain tries to assess the damages to his wholesale boutique in the capital's New Super Market, a day after a massive blaze tore through the market. Traders yesterday returned to their shops there to calculate their losses and somehow try to start afresh.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

APPROVAL FOR LABOUR RECRUITMENT

Malaysia's transparency questioned by Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has questioned Malaysia's transparency in the approval process for recruiting Bangladeshi and other foreign workers as researchers and the media are increasingly exposing their exploitation and defrauding in the Southeast Asian country.

"Not a single worker is supposed to be jobless if the Malaysian government's foreign worker recruitment approval process is transparent," said Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia in a statement on Saturday.

Based on preliminary surveys, researchers said there could be thousands of migrant workers, mainly Bangladeshis, facing precarious conditions without jobs for months after arriving in Malaysia.

Independent researcher Andy Hall, who is based in Nepal but has his researchers in Malaysia, said many bogus Malaysian companies in connivance with the Bangladeshi agents are hiring Bangladeshi workers for making money. Those companies don't have actual workites and thus the workers are being left jobless.

"Our preliminary surveys found Bangladeshi workers' recruitment cost ranges from Tk 4 to Tk 5 lakh. When they

are arriving here [Malaysia] and finding no jobs, it means they are getting irregular and debt bonded," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Hall said the previous records of labour recruitment from Bangladesh to Malaysia suggest presence of syndication linked to the powerful lobbies in both the countries. Now that Malaysia is increasingly recruiting workers from Bangladesh, several examples of defrauding and exploiting the workers suggest that its scale is quite high.

Malaysia freshly started recruitment from Bangladesh in August last year, four years after suspending in 2018 on the allegations of excessive recruitment fees, corruption and labour exploitation. A syndicate of 10 Bangladeshi agents was allowed to send workers then.

Last year, Malaysia initially allowed 25 Bangladeshi agents to recruit workers in Malaysia and then it was expanded to 100 agents.

According to Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia, Malaysian labour department has approved recruitment of 3,58,892 Bangladeshi workers. Of them, 1,34,595 workers have already arrived there and arrival of 2.25 lakh more are in the process.

It said it got to learn from media reports and personal sources of the joblessness of foreign workers, including those of Bangladeshis, and has taken initiative to address the problems.

The high commission further said Malaysian authorities through diplomatic letter clarified that the Bangladesh mission in Malaysia should not inspect the project sites of companies that were applying for Bangladeshi workers, rather the inspection was under the purview of the labour department.

The statement claimed that the number of workers not getting jobs is small compared to the total number of those arriving there for jobs and workers of other countries also face the similar situation. The high commission is working to place the jobless workers under new employers.

"We are also closely working with the Malaysian government so that not a single Bangladeshi worker coming legally here faces harassment," the statement said.

Last week, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission arrested Human Resources Minister V Sivakumar's private secretary and another senior officer in connection with an investigation into the approval of migrant worker quotas.

Hold single admission test for all public univs

President tells UGC

UNB, Dhaka

President Abdul Hamid, who is also chancellor of universities, has directed the University Grants Commission (UGC) to take necessary measures to hold a single admission test for all public universities for the 2023-24 session.

A media release signed by Md Mahmudul Alam, joint secretary of secondary and higher education department of the education ministry, conveyed the directive yesterday.

The release also said the public universities that earlier held admission test in the cluster method for 2022-23 session were asked to complete the admission process.

DB gets 11th date to submit report in Tipu murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again asked the Detective Branch of police to submit its probe report in a murder case filed over the deaths of Awami League leader Jahidul Islam Tipu and college student Samia Afran Jamal Prity by June 15.

This is the 11th date given by the court as DB failed to submit its report.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Sheikh Sadi passed the order after Md Yasin Sikder, a DB inspector and the investigation officer of the case, failed to submit any report yesterday.

The duo was shot dead in the capital on March 24 last year.

Journo gets bail in DSA case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A cyber tribunal in Rangpur yesterday granted bail to Rahim Shuvo, Thakurgaon correspondent of Protidin Bangladesh, in a DSA case filed on April 18, 2020.

Hearing the bail petition, Judge Md Abdul Majid passed the order around 12:50pm.

Around 5:30pm, the journalist walked out of Rangpur jail.

Asked, Rahim told The Daily Star that he was given interim bail.

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

UK cancels new 'smart motorways'

AFP, London

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has cancelled the building of new "smart motorways" amid concerns about safety and cost, the Department for Transport said.

Fourteen planned smart motorways, which use technology to regulate traffic flow and ease congestion, will be removed from the governments road building plans, the department said.

Sonar Bangla Express

FROM PAGE 1

The express train from Chattogram rear-ended the stationary freight train at Hasanpur Railway Station of Cumilla, claimed locals.

Abdur Rahman, divisional railway manager (Chattogram), such a collision with a freight train is rare. "I cannot say what caused it. A four-member probe body, led by Divisional Transport Officer (Chattogram) Tarique Md Imran, has been formed."

However, a railway official said the signalling system was broken at the station and that the switch there was mistakenly directing trains to a loop line instead of the main line, which does not require a train to stop at the station.

The official claimed that the express was doing 70kmph when it hit the freight train, causing extensive damage to carriages.

Historic Mujibnagar Day today

FROM PAGE 12

president of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, while vice president Syed Nazrul Islam became the acting president.

The Pakistan army massacred thousands of unarmed Bangalees in Dhaka and elsewhere on the night of March 25.

At the Mujibnagar ceremony, a contingent of police presented a guard of honour to the acting president. He received the salute and hoisted the national flag of independent Bangladesh.

The Mujibnagar government with Tajuddin Ahmed as prime minister led the country's nine-month Liberation War that ended in surrender of the Pakistani forces on December 16, 1971.

Capt M Mansur Ali, AHM Qamaruzzaman and Khondoker Moshataque Ahmed were cabinet members.

The ruling Awami League and its associate bodies will observe the historic Mujibnagar Day amid due enthusiasm and importance as various programmes have been

BR Director General Quamrul Ahsan said the driver should have stopped the train if the signal was not functioning. He overshot the signal causing the crash, he said.

Of the seven carriages that got damaged, three were AC chair carriages and four were non-AC carriages.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Railway last night cancelled today's Dhaka-Chattogram trip of Sonar Bangla Express. People had bought advance ticket for this trip on April 7. BR, however, said the ticket holders will travel on a special train that will leave Kamalapur Railway Station at 8:00am on April 19, said Nahid Hossain Khan, director (public relation) of BR.

He said if anyone wanted to cancel their trip, they could do so via the BR online portal and they would be refunded.

Shops on ground, 1st floors to reopen today

FROM PAGE 1

After a meeting of the affected traders, Khayer said the badly affected 243 shops on the second floor will be reopened once the shops are ready while the others on the floor will resume their business today.

He added that business will start using generators if power supply is not restored.

"We have already incurred loss. If the market remains closed for another day, the traders will face further loss," he said.

Khayer said they would work with the nine-member investigation committee of the Dhaka South City Corporation to prepare a list of the affected traders and seek compensation accordingly.

The DSCC has formed the body yesterday to determine the cause of the fire, the extent of damage and prepare the list. The committee has been asked to submit its report in three days.

During a visit to the market yesterday, it was found that most of the market's gates were closed, and only shop owners and staffers were allowed in.

Traders, along with their staffers, were seen busy cleaning up the floors. Some were arranging the retrieved clothes on the shelves on the second floor, while the others were removing the burnt ones from their shops.

Some traders were lamenting their loss.

Holding back his tears, Abdur Razzak, owner of MR Block and Boutiques-1 and -2, said he had borrowed Tk 25.6 lakh from a lender, a multipurpose society and relatives to stock up for Eid sale.

"I invested a lot to recover the losses incurred during the Covid-19 pandemic, but the fire destroyed everything," he told this paper while removing the burnt sarees from one

of his shops.

"How will I repay?" he asked with a despairing tone.

He also expressed doubt over how he would pay his staffers.

In another development, business resumed at adjacent New Market, Gausia, Chandrima and Nurjahan markets yesterday morning.

Traffic movement was restored from Science Lab to Home Economics College around 6:00am yesterday, said New Market police.

Akhtaruzzaman, assistant director (Dhaka) of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said the market building was handed over to the authorities around 10:00am, as the situation came under control.

The cause of the fire is yet to be determined, and an investigation committee will be formed to find the cause of the blaze and assess the damage, he told reporters at the spot.

Akhtaruzzaman said the market lacked a fire safety plan, adding, "A few fire extinguishers were found in the market."

At a press conference in the headquarters of the Directorate of Fire Service and Civil Defence yesterday, Lt Col Mohammad Tajul Islam Chowdhury, director (operations and maintenance), advised the market authorities to increase manpower on the night shift at shopping malls and markets across the country to prevent such fire accidents.

No case has been filed in connection with the fire incident, said Shafiqul Gani Sabu, officer-in-charge of New Market Police Station. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday questioned the recent fire breaking out before dawn.

"We are investigating the cause of the fire," he said at an event in the capital.

No let-up in heat until Eid

FROM PAGE 1

temperatures are usually seen in desert areas.

They also said April is the hottest month in Bangladesh.

However, Abdul Mannan, a former meteorologist of BMD, said heatwaves are usually created by hot winds, but this year it has happened due to cloud-free skies over the region.

Explaining the situation, Ashraf Dewan, professor at the School of Earth & Planetary Sciences at the Curtin University of Australia, said, "It is because of high pressure in and around West Bengal and a low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal. Because this high pressure is not allowing moisture to

penetrate from the Bay of Bengal, people are experiencing low humidity inland than on the coast."

He said that a disturbance is currently over Iran and Pakistan and it is expected to reach Bihar, West Bengal, and Bangladesh – bringing not westers, rain, hail, and severe lightning from April 23.

The second reason for the current heatwave is another weather phenomenon called Mason Julian Oscillation, Kamal said, adding that it periodically creates suppressing conditions for cloud formation and favourable conditions for cloud formation over the Bay.

Unfortunately, for the last 15 days, Mason Julian Oscillation has been going through a suppressing phase and it is expected to be in a favourable condition for forming clouds from April 20, he said.

He said clouds will start flowing over Bangladesh and rainfall may start from April 21 over the Sylhet division. Rain is expected across the country after April 23.

Mohan Kumar, executive director at National Oceanographic and Maritime Institute (NOAMI), said there is almost no cloud and moisture content support from the Bay and the winds are too weak.

Meteorologist Mannan said the weather and heatwave patterns this month are very unusual.

He said the heatwave is gradually expanding. Usually, heatwaves sweep over the western region of the country like Khulna, Rajshahi, and some parts of Rangpur. But this year Barishal, Chattogram, and Dhaka regions have also been affected.

Experts, however, also blame rapid urbanisation, and depletion of forest and water bodies for the gradual rise of temperature in the country.

Researcher Mostofa Kamal said the smaller the green space and water bodies in an area, the faster it becomes hotter.

Prof Dewan said the issue of urban temperatures, especially in Dhaka, has become a serious concern and this is a result of the increase in air conditioner usage, rapid loss of green-blue space, construction of high-rises and increased industrial activities.

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FIRE HAZARD

Repeated warnings,
little action

DIPAN NANDY

In Dhaka, the scent of burning rubble has become all too familiar as the city is experiencing a cycle of recurring fire tragedies, particularly in markets. Despite warnings from the fire service, little has been done to prevent such incidents.

In 2018, a survey conducted by the fire service on 1,300 markets of the capital revealed that all but five were at risk of catching fire. Of these, 622 were marked as "very risky" and 678 as "risky."

Shockingly, no action was taken to address the risks identified in the report. Just twelve days ago, Bangabazar shopping complex was ravaged by a blaze, devastating the hopes of Eid traders.

In response, fire service conducted another survey of 58 markets, all of which were deemed risky. Nine of these markets were classified as highly risky, including Gausia Market, Barishal Plaza Market, Rajdhani and New Rajdhani Supermarket, Alauddin Market, Shakil Anwar Tower, Sharif Market, Maya Katara, and Rosenil Vista.

Besides, 14 were listed as moderately risky and 35 as risky.

Tragically, on Saturday, Dhaka New Super Market was also gutted by a fire, causing significant losses to local

businesses and traders. It was listed as a risky market in the latest survey.

What is particularly concerning is that both Bangabazar market and Dhaka New Super Market were also deemed risky in the 2018 list.

Contacted, Lt Col Mohammad Tajul Islam Chowdhury, director (operation and maintenance) at fire service, stated that they update the list of risky buildings annually and identify problems before informing the building owners.

If the issues are not addressed, banners are put up to raise awareness among the public, he said.

Contacted, Rafiqul Islam, president of Gausia Market Shop Owners' Association, stated that despite a recent visit by the fire service, no meeting had been held to discuss fire safety.

Asked about what action they had taken to address the risks, he replied that they had trained security personnel of the risky buildings in fire safety.

Contacted, urban planner Adil Muhammad Khan expressed his concerns, stating that while the fire service conducted a survey in 2018, none of the authorities concerned took action. He added that authorities need to take initiative to address these risks and prevent future disasters.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina calls on President Abdul Hamid at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

FARDIN MURDER

Court orders
CID to probe
further

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to further investigate into a case filed over the death of Buet student Fardin Noor Parash in November last year.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Shanto Islam Mallik passed the order after Fardin's father filed a no confidence petition against the DB report, clearing Amatullah Bushra, an accused of the case, of murder charges.

In the petition, the victim's father Kazi Nooruddin Rana, also the complainant, sought further probe, alleging that investigation officer Yasin Shikder did not probe the case properly. He also accused the IO of submitting a biased report.

The magistrate directed CID to submit the probe report by May 24.

Bushra, who was granted bail on January 8, attended the court yesterday.

Yasin Shikder, an inspector of the Detective Branch, on February 6 submitted the final report to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka.

In the report, the IO said Fardin committed suicide in November last year. Fardin's father insisted that his son could never die by suicide.

Police arrested Bushra from her Banasree house in the capital on November 10 last year, after Fardin's father filed a murder case with Rampura Police Station.

Fardin, a student of civil engineering, was found dead in the Shitalakkhya in Narayanganj on November 7, three days after he went missing.

A rickshaw ride
through the alleys
of old town

RRB

After midnight, rickshaw rides in Old Dhaka are an experience. If you have not tried one yet, then you should, especially during the Eid break. A summer breeze flowing through your hair, only a handful of cars plying the roads that are silent with no honking of horns, a street dog accompanying you until the turn of the road — these are a pleasant change of scenery from what we are accustomed to seeing during the day.

I hired a rickshaw from Chankharpool and asked him to take me to my favourite spots scattered in the narrow lanes and by-lanes of that part of the town. The puller asked for Tk 300 per hour, and we happily zoomed towards my favourite egg-paratha roll place, a shanty in Chankharpool opposite the students' hall. Crisp and oil-free, the paratha rolled in a fluffly hot omelette is the best midnight snack you can ever try.

My next destination was Nazirabazar. I was craving Dhaka's best lemonade from Beauty Lassi, and guzzled down two glasses of chilled, lime juice in a sugar syrup with crushed ice. After my thirsty body and soul were soothed, I was riding towards my favourite

Nazimuddin Road. I must add that Pannu Khan Tea Stall at Nazirabazar offers the finest milk tea, and Tayabat Hotel and Restaurant is known for its kala bhuna and paratha. Besides, Bismillah Kabab Ghar has chicken chaap almost like a



schnitzel and very much an in-demand dinner. And then there is Hajir Biryani.

A particular narrow lane, Kazi Alauddin Road to Nazira Bazar Chowrasta, is a foodie's haven and can be like our own Khao San Road. A stark contrast to the popular tourist destination of Bangkok, the lane is littered with garbage, and hardly any of the store owners pay heed to aesthetics, while the



city corporation has no desire to clean the garbage either. For what could have been a great walk, hopping from one food stall to the other, it is a nasty lane.

Anyway, heading towards Nazimuddin Road, I stopped at the turn of a mazar, beside the old jail walls, and ordered a takeaway of soft succulent beef kabab. If you are here, you should not miss Nasu Faruker Bakarkhani, which comes in multiple variants, from sugary treats to ones with different flavours of cheese.

After some retail therapy, I turned towards Hotel Star in Thataribazar, Nawabpur. A cup of their frothy milk tea is divine. Another amazing midnight snack is dunking their crisp ruti in this cup of hot tea.

Dhaka at night is a romantic city, a city I love so much. You should plan a rickshaw ride to see Dhaka during these late hours this coming holiday season. For a foodie, this midnight trip to old Dhaka on a rickshaw is indeed a pleasure on a totally different level.

'Will take steps
to ensure fair
election'

Says president-elect

BSS, Dhaka

President-elect Md Sahabuddin yesterday vowed to do whatever necessary to hold a fair, participatory and acceptable Jatiya Sangsad election.

"As the president, I will do whatever is needed to ensure a free, neutral, participatory and acceptable parliamentary election," he told journalists at a ceremony, in which Agami Publications handed over a copy of his book "Egiye Jabe Bangladesh" at the capital's Gulshan.

Sahabuddin said, "National election is

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Expand
Teletalk's
network'

JS body recommends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday recommended that the government expand Teletalk's network to improve services of the state-owned mobile operator.

The parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology made the recommendation at its meeting held at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The parliamentary watchdog asked the ministry to take measures to enhance the network of Teletalk.

Chairman of the JS body AKM Rahmatullah presided over the meeting, while its members State Minister for ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Rejwan Ahammad Toufiq, Ahmed Firoz Kabir, Monira Sultana, Zakia Parvin Khanam, Aparajita Haque and Shahdab Akbar attended it.

Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology Minister Mustafa Jabbar participated in the meeting on a special invitation.

High government officials, including the ICT secretary and posts and telecommunications secretary were also present.

Using lethal means
to snatch rickshawsTwo members of gang
arrested, say police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They were members of a rickshaw-snatching gang that used to be active on the roads of Narayanganj, Jatrabari and Demra areas. If anyone messed with its plans, the members didn't mind killing them.

Police claimed to have arrested two members of such a gang, which strangled two rickshaw-pullers to death recently.

The arrestees are — Nayeem, 23, and Zahid, 20. Two stolen rickshaws were seized from their possession.

Police Deputy Commissioner of Wari Division Ziaul Ahsan Talukdar informed this to the press at DMP media centre yesterday.

He said an unidentified body was found in Amulia Model Town of Demra on March 13 and another on April 3. Two separate murder cases were filed with Demra police station in this connection.

The two dead rickshaw-pullers are Swapan Islam, 35, and Miraj Hossain, 26.

"During the investigation into Swapan's case, the criminals were located using CCTV footage and other intel, after which the duo was arrested in a raid in Demra," said the DC.

On April 2 after midnight, Nayeem, Zahid, and two other youths named Nayan and Raihan went to Jatrabari to snatch a rickshaw. The gang targeted a rickshaw at a Laguna stand behind Jatrabari police station. The members then hired the rickshaw under the pretence of transporting car parts.

Nayan and Nayeem got on the rickshaw, while Zahid and Raihan followed them closely in another auto-rickshaw. They reached a pre-decided spot

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Kabori, the 'Mishti
Meye' of cinemaA look back at her career on
her 2nd death anniversary

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Kabori was a stalwart of the silver screen for decades. Her smile would earn her the moniker of "Mishti Meye" of Bangladeshi cinema. On this day in 2021, she departed from this life, after a hard-fought battle with Covid.

At the age of 13, the young Mina Pal would become Kabori, debuting on the silver screen along with Subhash Dutta in "Sutorang" (1964). "Neel Akasher Nichey" (1969) was also a hit among the Bangladeshi audience. Who can forget "Ektai Gaan Hoye Ele", where the actress paired up with Razzak? Another landmark in the actress's career is "Moynamoti" (1969). When "Onok Sadher Moyna Amar" was played during the movie, it was reported that most people in theatres started bawling their eyes out.

"Sareng Bou" (1978) still holds a place in the hearts of the people living in the coastal areas of Bangladesh. "Ore Nil Doriya", composed by Alom



SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PRAYER
TIMING
APRIL 17

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------|------|---------|------|
| Fazr | Zohr | Asr | Maghrib | Esha |
| AZAN 4:17 | 12:45 | 4:45 | 6:24 | 7:45 |
| JAMAAT 4:27 | 1:15 | 5:00 | 6:34 | 8:15 |

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

| RAMADAN | APRIL | SEHRI | IFTAR |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| 25 | 17 | | 6:24 |
| 26 | 18 | 4:11 | 6:25 |
| 27 | 19 | 4:10 | 6:25 |

'Will clear my stance soon' Says Sylhet mayor about participating in SCC polls

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Sylhet

Sylhet City mayor Ariful Haque Choudhury said BNP will not go to the elections, but will respect the people's aspirations.

He made the remark while talking to the journalists present in Sylhet yesterday afternoon, after a 14-day visit to the UK ahead of Sylhet City Corporation elections.

However, he said that he will clear his position about participating in the upcoming June 21 election.

Six classmates sued for student's murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Six classmates have been sued for the murder of SSC candidate Mehedi Hasan Sajib of Bhulta School and College in Rugganj, Narayanganj.

Police said the deceased's father Shafikul Islam filed the case with Rugganj Police Station against six named and three to four unnamed persons on Saturday night. All the named accused are the victim's classmates.

Mehedi Hasan Sajib, 16, was hacked to death and his three friends were injured in a clash between two groups of students in front of Bhulta School and College around 12:30pm on Saturday.

Inspector Ataur Rahman of Rugganj Police Station said there was a row between two groups of students over a girl and they locked in a clash. Police are trying to arrest the accused, he said.

Abdul Awal Molla, principal of Bhulta School and College, said Mehedi was supposed to sit for the SSC examination this year.

Robbing people

FROM PAGE 5

"The gang would be outfitted with Rab uniforms, walkie-talkies, handcuffs, toy pistols, and other law enforcement equipment. When the first group signalled, the second one arrested the target, seized the cash, and threw them in a secluded location. In most cases,

the victim was subjected to physical abuse, and in some cases, even death," he said.

Harun said Jalal Uddin identified himself as retired captain Jalal, but in reality, he is a sacked army member. The robbers also admitted to two previous robberies, one in Narayanganj and the another in Cumilla.

Under-construction

FROM PAGE 5

did not know any information about when the works would be completed.

He advised contacting the project director.

Contacted, Lt Col Shah Ali, director of the mega project, said, "The foundation works have almost been completed, and I think, the

construction... would be finished in the first week of May."

He added that they cannot open the culvert for vehicular movement soon after the completion of construction works, as at least 28 days will be needed for the curing period and 60 more days for resetting the utility lines.

Five dead in road

FROM PAGE 5

Masudur Rahman, in-charge of Dhambar police outpost, said the accident happened when the auto-rickshaw was travelling from Laxmankhola stand to Madanpurbus stand and collided with a speeding truck coming from the opposite direction.

The bodies of the deceased were handed over to their relatives without an autopsy on their request. Police seized the truck immediately after the incident, but the driver and his helper fled the scene. A case is under process of being filed, he added.

Take steps to protect

FROM PAGE 5

the orders are being ignored..." she said.

Rizwana was addressing a discussion on hill cutting at a city hotel yesterday.

The government agencies should take strict actions against those who are destroying the hills with political identity, she added.

Aliur Rahman, general secretary of Bangladesh Environment Forum, stressed the need for implementing the existing laws to save the hills.

A total of 120 hills out of 200 disappeared from

Chatto gram city in the last four decades, said Prof Khaled Misbahuzzaman of the forestry institute at Chittagong University.

Meanwhile, some environmental organisations yesterday staged a protest at Chattogram Press Club, demanding justice for a wildlife conservationist, Mahfuj Russel, who was allegedly attacked by miscreants in Matiranga, Khagrachhari.

Activists of nearly 10 green organisations condemned the attack at the protest.

Form task force

FROM PAGE 5

During the meeting, the committee recommended reducing the additional 5 percent tax on tourists staying at Hotel Sonargaon and Hotel Intercontinental to 1.5 percent from May 1.

The meeting was attended by the chairman of National Board of Revenue,

secretary of the Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives, secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, additional secretary of the Ministry of Finance, and officials of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, among others.

Will take steps

FROM PAGE 3

knocking at the door... Everyone is saying that the election will be very crucial, but I don't think so, as the country has a Constitution, and there is nothing to be worried about."

The newly elected president categorically said, "As the supreme

commander, I will do whatever necessary to maintain this neutrality and keep law and order normal."

While commenting on his book, he said the book has different incidents, from Sahabuddin's childhood to his political, prison, work, family lives.

Using lethal means

FROM PAGE 3

in Amulia Model Town, and at one point, Nayan wrapped a towel around the rickshaw-puller's neck. After the puller resisted, the gang hit him with a brick and eventually strangled him to death.

Later, Nayeem and Zahid left with the auto-rickshaw, and Nayan went on his way.

A month ago, at the same place, in the same way, they killed another rickshaw-puller and stole his rickshaw.

The arrestees gave their confessional statements before a Dhaka court admitting their involvement in the two murders.

Demra Zone Assistant Commissioner Madhusudan Das said they identified the gang in Demra Staff Quarter area. Nayeem joined the group six months back, while Zahid, based in Chonpara of Narayanganj, has been doing this for two years. He is also accused in several narcotics cases.

Kabori, the Mishti

FROM PAGE 3

Khan, from this film is still regarded as one of the best Bangla songs to ever be made. Kabori also worked with the great Indian director, Ritwick Ghatak, on his film, "Titas Ekti Nadir Naam" (1973). Based on a novel by Advaita Mallabarman, the movie explores the life of the fishermen on the bank of the Titas river.

In Chashi Nazrul Islam's "Devdas", Kabori played the role of Parvati, to Bulbul Ahmed's Devdas. Kabori brought people to tears with her performance as Parvati—who had to

witness the love of her life die in front of her. Kabori became a director with her debut movie "Ayna", which was critically appreciated. Her last project "Ei Tumi, Shey Tumi", remains unfinished, as she passed away before completing it.

Some of Kabori's iconic folk films include "Saat Bhai Champa", "Arun Barun O Kiranmala", "Parul er Shongshar", among others. Kabori was the epitome of beauty and grace. Her presence is forever embedded in our mind, so is her celestial smile, which made her the "Mishti Meye" in the first place.

Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd.

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 107 OF 2023

IN THE MATTER OF:

Linde Bangladesh Limited and another

---Petitioners

VERSUS

The Registrar, Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock
Companies and Firms and others

---Respondents

NOTICE OF EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING (VIRTUAL) OF THE SHAREHOLDERS AND MEMBERS OF LINDE INDUSTRIES PVT. LTD.

This notice is hereby given to all the shareholders and members of Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. that in accordance with the direction of the Hon'ble High Court by an order dated 16.03.2023 passed in the Company Matter No. 107 of 2023, an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting (Virtual) of the shareholders and members of Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. will be held on 11 May 2023 at 1:00 pm virtually by using digital platform through the following link <https://meetbd.live/egmoflindeindustries> to transact the following business:

APPROVAL OF THE SCHEME OF ARRANGEMENT FOR DEMERGER

To consider, and if thought fit, to pass the following resolutions as special resolution, with or without modification: -

"RESOLVED THAT Draft Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger of Linde Bangladesh Limited ("the Scheme") be and is hereby approved and subject to sanction of the Scheme by the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and subject to approval of the Scheme by the creditors of Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. and creditors and shareholders of Linde Bangladesh Limited, in accordance with the provisions of Section 228 and 229 of the Companies Act, 1994, let Demerged Undertaking of Linde Bangladesh Limited be demerged and vested to Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. in terms of the Scheme."

The shareholders and members of the Company are being requested to attend the meeting on the date, time and at the place mentioned above.

By the order of the Board
Sd/-

Moloy Banerjee
Chairman
17 April 2023

The Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger shall be kept open in the registered office of Linde Bangladesh Limited and Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. 285, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208, and is available for inspection by all the Concerned (during Office Hours). A copy of the Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger is also available on the website of the Company: <http://www.linde.com.bd>.

Linde Bangladesh Limited Notice of Extra-Ordinary General Meeting



This notice is hereby given to all the shareholders and members of Linde Bangladesh Limited that in accordance with the direction of the Hon'ble High Court by an order dated 16.03.2023 passed in the Company Matter No. 107 of 2023, an Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of Linde Bangladesh Limited will be held virtually by using digital platform through the following link <https://meetbd.live/egm2023linde>, on Thursday 11 May 2023 at 10:30 am to transact the following business:

1. APPROVAL OF THE SCHEME OF ARRANGEMENT FOR DEMERGER

To consider, and if thought fit, to pass the following resolutions as special resolution, with or without modification:

"RESOLVED THAT Draft Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger of Linde Bangladesh Limited ("the Scheme") be and is hereby approved and subject to sanction of the Scheme by the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and subject to approval of the Scheme by the creditors of Linde Bangladesh Limited and creditors and shareholders of Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd., in accordance with the provisions of Section 228 and 229 of the Companies Act, 1994, let Demerged Undertaking of Linde Bangladesh Limited be demerged and vested to Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. in terms of the Scheme."

The shareholders and members of the Company are being requested to attend the meeting on the date, time and at the place mentioned above.

By order of the Board
Sd/-

Abu Mohammad Nisar FCS
Company Secretary
12 March 2023

Registered Office
Corporate Office
285 Tejgaon I/A
Dhaka 1208

Notes:

- The Members will be able to submit their questions/comments and vote electronically 24 hours before commencement of the EGM and during the EGM. For logging in to the system, the Members need to put their 16-digit Beneficial Owner (BO) ID number and other credential as proof of their identity by visiting the link: <https://meetbd.live/egm2023linde>.
- A member eligible to attend the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote on his/her behalf. No person shall act as proxy unless he/she is entitled to be present and vote in his/her own right. The "Proxy Form", duly filled, signed and stamped at BDT 20 must be deposited at the office or e-mail at info.bd@linde.com no later than 72 hours before commencement of the EGM.
- The Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger shall be kept open in the registered office of Linde Bangladesh Limited and Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. 285, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208, and is available for inspection by all the Concerned (during Office Hours). A copy of the Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger is also available on the website of the Company: <http://www.linde.com.bd>.

Legal Notice
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 107 OF 2023
IN THE MATTER OF:
Linde Bangladesh Limited and another
.....Petitioners
-VERSUS-
The Registrar, Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock
Companies and Firms and others
.....Respondents
Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under section 228 & 229 of the Companies Act, 1994 for approval of Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger of Linde Bangladesh Limited was filed before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Upon preliminary hearing, Mr. Justice Khazir Ahmed Choudhury by an order dated 16.03.2023 was pleased to admit the said application.
Any person or persons having interest in the said application may appear before the Hon'ble Court either personally or through duly authorized Advocate.
Copy of the said application may be obtained from the office of the undersigned on payment of required costs.
Yours sincerely,
Sd/-
(Kazi Ershadul Alam)
Barrister-at-Law
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Tanjib Alam & Associates, BSEC Bhaban (Level 11) 102 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh

Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd.

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 107 OF 2023

IN THE MATTER OF:

Linde Bangladesh Limited and another

---Petitioners

VERSUS

The Registrar, Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock
Companies and Firms and others

---Respondents

NOTICE OF MEETING (VIRTUAL) OF THE CREDITORS OF LINDE INDUSTRIES PVT. LTD.

This notice is hereby given to all the creditors of Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. that in accordance with the direction of the Hon'ble High Court by an order dated 16.03.2023 passed in the Company Matter No. 107 of 2023, a meeting (virtual) of the creditors of Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. will be held on 11 May 2023 at 1:30 pm virtually by using digital platform through the following link <https://meetbd.live/Creditorsoflindeindustries> to transact the following business:

APPROVAL OF THE SCHEME OF ARRANGEMENT FOR DEMERGER

To consider, and if thought fit, to pass the following resolution, with or without modification: -

"RESOLVED THAT Draft Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger of Linde Bangladesh Limited ("the Scheme") be and is hereby approved and subject to sanction of the Scheme by the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh in accordance with the provisions of sections 228 and 229 of the Companies Act, 1994, let the Demerged Undertaking of Linde Bangladesh Limited be demerged and vested to Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. in terms of the Scheme."

The creditors of the Company are being requested to attend the meeting on the date, time and at the place mentioned above.

By the order of the Board
Sd/-

Moloy Banerjee
Chairman
17 April 2023

The Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger shall be kept open in the registered office of Linde Bangladesh Limited and Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. 285, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208, and is available for inspection by all the Concerned (during Office Hours). A copy of the Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger is also available on the website of the Company: <http://www.linde.com.bd>.

Linde Bangladesh Limited



LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 107 OF 2023

IN THE MATTER OF:

Linde Bangladesh Limited and another

---Petitioners

VERSUS

The Registrar, Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock
Companies and Firms and others

---Respondents

NOTICE OF MEETING (VIRTUAL) OF THE CREDITORS OF LINDE BANGLADESH LIMITED

This notice is hereby given to all the creditors of Linde Bangladesh Limited that in accordance with the direction of the Hon'ble High Court by an order dated 16.03.2023 passed in the Company Matter No. 107 of 2023, a meeting of the creditors of Linde Bangladesh Limited will be held virtually by using digital platform through the following link <https://meetbd.live/Creditorsoflindebd> on 11 May 2023 at 12:30 am to transact the following business:

APPROVAL OF THE SCHEME OF ARRANGEMENT FOR DEMERGER

To consider, and if thought fit, to pass the following resolution, with or without modification: -

"RESOLVED THAT Draft Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger of Linde Bangladesh Limited ("the Scheme") be and is hereby approved and subject to sanction of the Scheme by the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh in accordance with the provisions of sections 228 and 229 of the Companies Act, 1994, let the Demerged Undertaking of Linde Bangladesh Limited be demerged and vested to Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. in terms of the Scheme."

The creditors of the Company are being requested to attend the meeting on the date, time and at the place mentioned above.

By the order of the Board
Sd/-

Moloy Banerjee
Chairman
17 April 2023

The Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger shall be kept open in the registered office of Linde Bangladesh Limited and Linde Industries Pvt. Ltd. 285, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208, and is available for inspection by all the Concerned (during Office Hours). A copy of the Scheme of Arrangement for Demerger is also available on the website of the Company: <http://www.linde.com.bd>.



Placing her child on her lap, a mother pours a pail of water on the little one's head amid the ongoing heatwave. This photo was taken in Malibagh area recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'Take steps to protect hills'

Urge three green orgs after submitting memorandum to CCC mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), Forum for Planned Chattogram, and Association for Land Reform and Development yesterday submitted a memorandum to Chattogram City Corporation mayor to take initiative to protect hills.

Bela networking member Aliur Rahman said after submitting the memorandum at the mayor's office, they demanded that the mayor take steps to stop hill cutting and take legal action against those involved in the activity.

"The mayor assured us of meeting our demands. He will start working soon to protect the hills in coordination with other government agencies in Chattogram," he added.

Meanwhile, a hill in Beltalighona of the port city's Akbar Shah area has reportedly been razed under the direction of CCC to make way for a road. A landslide occurred at the site recently, which killed one and injured three.

Earlier in January, environmentalist Syeda Rizwana Hasan was attacked by the followers of a ward councillor while

she was trying to inspect a site to confirm hill cutting in Akbar Shah, according to eyewitnesses.

After the incident, Rizwana sued the councillor.

She alleged, "The government agencies of Chattogram -- including Chattogram City Corporation, District Administration, and the Department of Environment -- are ignoring court orders on hill protection."

"The mayor assured us of meeting our demands. He will start working soon to protect the hills in coordination with other government agencies in Chattogram."

ALIUR RAHMAN
Bela networking member

"The court had ordered in 2012 to take appropriate steps to protect the hills of Chattogram region. Then another order was given to protect the hills of the port city's Akbar Shah area in 2015. But both

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Five dead in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Five people were killed in three separate road accidents across the country yesterday, according to our correspondents.

In Pirojpur, a three-wheeler overturned in Sadar upazila, killing Jahid Sheikh, the driver, and seriously injuring three passengers.

According to witnesses, the accident happened after the iron bars the vehicle was carrying got stuck with the road, causing the vehicle to sway and eventually fall into a nearby field.

Police recovered the body and sent it for an autopsy, confirmed AJM Masuduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Pirojpur Sadar Police Station.

In Dinajpur's Birampur upazila, a bus of Nabil Enterprise collided head-on with a pickup van, killing both drivers, Md Azad and Golam Rabbani, and injuring at least 10 passengers.

Suman Kumar Mohanta, OC of Birampur police station, said the bus was heading to Dinajpur from Dhaka when the accident occurred.

Locals and fire service rescued the injured passengers and took them to nearby Phulbari Upazila Health Complex. Four of them were later transferred to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital.

In Bandar upazila of Narayanganj, a truck collided head-on with an auto-rickshaw, resulting in the deaths of two passengers, Jahirul Islam and Md Mukul, and the injury of two.

The injured were taken to a local clinic for treatment. Inspector

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Under-construction culvert brings misery

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

People have been suffering for more than two months due to the delay in completing construction work of a culvert over a canal in Muradpur of Chattogram city.

Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) has been implementing the project at the city's busy Muradpur intersection since January 17, said sources.

At the site, a new culvert is replacing an old one under CDA's mega project to address waterlogging in the port city.

Project sources said there is no chance to restart vehicular movement through the intersection before July.

As the construction is ongoing in the middle of the road, the vehicles from Muradpur to Bibirhat, Hamzerbagh, Raufabad, Aturar Depot and Oxygen areas have to take an alternative route, which takes both extra time and fuel.

Commuters are the worst sufferers for this delay.

Recently, the workers were seen working to build the foundation of the culvert. Although the authority built a makeshift walking bridge over the canal



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

near the construction site so that the pedestrians can cross, many -- especially women, children and the elderly -- have to struggle to do so.

Patients and pregnant women who need to go to hospitals along this road have to suffer a lot.

Abdul Hamid, an elderly man from Bibirhat, said, "During the start of the project, the officials said the works would be completed very soon."

"As work seems to be still at the primary stage, we don't know how much time it will take..." he said.

Hamid -- who was crossing the canal through the makeshift

bridge on foot -- said he will have to take another vehicle on the other side to go to his destination.

Parvin Sultana from Hamzerbagh was taking her ailing mother to a doctor by a rickshaw along Muradpur. They had to face similar difficulty to cross the canal.

Parvin said, "The sooner the construction works are completed, the better it is for the people."

Contacted, CDA chief engineer Hasan Bin Shams said as Bangladesh Army has been implementing the mega project and as the construction of the culvert is the part of that, he

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Principal suspended over Facebook post

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) yesterday temporarily suspended the principal of its women's college over a Facebook post that allegedly hurt religious sentiment.

Chattogram Bandar Mohila College Principal Salina Akhter was suspended through a letter issued by CPA Director (Admin) Md Momunir Rashid after the post's screenshot went viral.

Mominur Rashid told The Daily Star, "Considering the overall situation, the teacher was suspended over her Facebook post. Departmental action is underway. She will be served a show-cause notice seeking her explanation as to why she made the post."

The suspension letter read, "Such an act is a punishable offence under Digital Security Act and gross violation of social media user guideline 2019 and CPA service rules."

The Daily Star correspondent could not reach the teacher for comments.

Robbing people in guise of law enforcers

DB arrests 7 from Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives claimed to have arrested seven robbers who used to impersonate as members of police and Rab from the capital's Rampura area.

A team of DB's Khilgaon Zone arrested them on Friday. The gang of robbers targets Motijheel-based traders who transact large amounts of cash from banks, money exchanges, and markets, said Harun-or-Rashid, chief of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, at his office yesterday.

The arrestees are Jalal Uddin alias Captain Jalal, a sacked army member, his second-in-command Badal Hossain Sheikh alias Badal Majhi, Syed Monir Al Mahmud, Khokon, Shahadat Hossain, Babul, and Mahidul Islam Sheikh.

DB seized a toy pistol, seven Rab jackets, one DB jacket, one pair of handcuffs, two walkie-talkies, two batons, a police bag, a microbus used for robbery, and nine phones from their possessions.

The DB chief said that the robbers would inspect various banks, financial institutions, and markets in Motijheel before targeting individuals carrying significant sums of money.

The group then gathered information about the target's location and business before rehearsing the robbery several times by selecting a location to steal money.

Regarding the strategy, Harun explained that a group would follow the target a day before the robbery. The second group, along with a car, would station itself by high-end hotel a day before the heist.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN GULSHAN, BANANI Form task force to identify their commercial use: JS body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary standing committee recommended the formation of a special task force to identify residential buildings in Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, and Dhanmondi areas of Dhaka that are used for commercial purposes.

The meeting, chaired by chairman of committee on Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism RAM Obaidul Moktadir Chowdhury, was attended by members

of the committee, including State Minister for Civil Aviation Mahbub Ali, Mosharraf Hossain, Ashek Ullah Rafiq, Syeda Rubina Akhtar, and Kaniz Fatema Ahmed.

Additionally, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazole Noor Taposh and Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqul Islam participated in the meeting upon special request.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Upazila Engineer

Sariakandi, Bogura

www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.1081.000.14.001.23-575

Date: 16/04/2023

Invitation for Tender (OTM) e-Tender Notice No. 08/2022-2023

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

| Sl No. | Name of work | Package No. | Tender ID No. | Tender security (Tk) | Tender last selling date & time | Last date and time of tender receiving |
|--------|---------------------------------|---|---------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 01 | Char Chaluabari GPS under PEDP4 | e-Tender/PEDP4/ BRG/SAR/ 2022-23/ W17.01279 | 816869 | 17500.00 | 7-May-2023 Time: 16.00 | 8-Mar-2023 Time: 14.45 |

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 7-May-2023 at 16.00. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.cyro.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Md. Tuhin Sarker
Upazila Engineer
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GD-704

The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd. (SPCBL)
Gazipur-1703

International e-Tender

International e-Tender is invited in The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd. (SPCBL)'s e-Tender site <https://spcbltender.bb.org.bd> for Overhauling of the following machines of SPCBL as per e-Tender schedule. Necessary information is given below:

| e-Tender No. | Names of machines | Date of publish | Last date & time for submission of e-Tender | Date & time for opening of e-Tender |
|--------------|---|-----------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 32/2022-2023 | Overhauling of 02 (two) Super Simultan, 02 (two) Super Numerota and 01(one) Super Intagliocolor Banknote Printing Machines manufactured by M/s Koenig-Giori-Delarue (presently named as M/s Koenig & Bauer Banknote Solutions). | 17/04/2023 | 31/05/2023 up to 11.00am | 31/05/2023 at 11.15am |

For more details, please visit/contact the followings:

Website : www.spcbl.org.bd
Cell : 88-01534002184/01818-081801
Telephone : 88-02-9205110-15, 9205116
Fax : 88-02-9205108, 9205109
E-mail : info@spcbl.org.bd
e-Tender site : <https://spcbltender.bb.org.bd>

Rashid Ahmed
General Manager (Foreign Purchase)
Phone: 88-02-996695103
Email: info@spcbl.org.bd

GD-705

INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine reports bloody fighting in Bakhmut

Russia's Wagner group releases 100 Ukrainian prisoners of war for Orthodox Easter

REUTERS, Moscow

Ukrainian and Russian armed forces are fighting extraordinarily bloody battles in the smothered eastern city of Bakhmut, but pro-Kyiv forces are still holding on, Ukraine's military said yesterday.

Russia's defence ministry said earlier that fighters from the Wagner mercenary group had captured two more areas of Bakhmut, the main target of Moscow's offensive in eastern Ukraine.

Wagner has spearheaded Russia's attempt to take Bakhmut since last summer in what has been the longest and deadliest battle of the war for both sides.

"Bloody battles unprecedented in recent decades are taking place in the middle of the city's urban area," said Serhiy Cherevatyi, spokesperson for Ukraine's eastern military command.

"Our soldiers are doing everything in bloody and fierce battles to grind down (the enemy's) combat capability and break its morale. Every day, in every corner of this city, they are successfully doing so," he told the 1-1 television channel.

The Russian defence ministry said Wagner units had taken two areas on the northern and southern outskirts of

the city. Russian army paratroop units were supporting the claimed advance by holding back Ukrainian forces on the flanks, it added.

Britain said in an intelligence update on Friday that Ukrainian troops had been forced to cede some territory in Bakhmut as Russia mounted a renewed assault there, with intense artillery fire over the previous two days.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made no mention of Bakhmut in his daily video address later on Saturday and reiterated Kyiv's desire to join Nato as soon as possible. Ukraine would need effective security guarantees before that happened, he said, but gave no details.

Meanwhile, Wagner group sent at least 100 Ukrainian prisoners of war back to Ukrainian forces to mark Orthodox Easter, according to a video posted by the group's founder, Yevgeny Prigozhin, yesterday.

"Prepare all of them, feed and water them, check the wounded," Prigozhin was saying in the video. A group of Ukrainian prisoners were then shown being told that they would be passed back to Ukrainian forces. "I hope you don't fall back into our hands," an armed Wagner soldier was told telling the men before they were ordered into a truck.



(From Left to Right) Britain's Foreign Secretary James Cleverly, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Japan's Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly, French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna and Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani pose at a welcoming ceremony for G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Karuizawa, Japan yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

HEADSCARF ROW

Iran seals 150 businesses

AFP, Tehran

Iranian police said yesterday authorities had closed more than 150 businesses in 24 hours for not respecting the obligation for women to wear headscarves under Iran's strict Islamic dress code.

The closures were announced a day after police said they have now implemented a plan to deal with women who violate the law, using surveillance cameras and facial recognition technology.

The requirement for women to wear the headscarf in public was enshrined in law shortly after the Islamic revolution of 1979.

"Unfortunately, police have had to seal 137 shops and 18 restaurants and reception areas for not heeding previous warnings" on the dress code, the Tasnim news agency quoted police spokesman Said Montazerolmahdi as saying.

The crackdown comes after the number of women defying the code has risen since a protest movement triggered by the death in custody last year of Kurdish-Iranian Mahsa Amini, 22, for allegedly flouting it.

Last week, police chief Ahmad-Reza Radan said those who remove their headscarves would be identified using "smart equipment".

Police have warned that car owners will receive a text message if a female passenger breaks the code, and that they risk having their vehicle seized in the case of a repeat offence.

Last month, judiciary chief Mohseni Ejei said women who removed their headscarves "will be punished".

POWER STRUGGLE

56 civilians killed as Sudan battles rage on

Three UN workers among dead; around 600 injured; world powers condemn violence

AFP, Khartoum

Fighting in Sudan raged for a second day yesterday in battles between rival generals who seized power in a 2021 coup, leaving over 50 civilians including three UN staff dead and sparking international alarm.

Deafening explosions and intense gunfire rattled buildings in the capital Khartoum's densely-populated northern and southern suburbs as tanks rumbled on the streets and fighter jets roared overhead, witnesses said.

Violence erupted early Saturday after weeks of power struggles between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, commander of the heavily-armed paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), with each accusing the other of starting the fight.

"The gunfire and explosions are incessant," said 34-year-old Ahmed Hamid from a northern Khartoum suburb.

"The situation is very worrying and it doesn't seem like it will calm anytime soon," said Ahmed Seif, another Khartoum resident, who fears his building had been damaged by gunfire but said it was too dangerous to go outside to check.

Both sides claim they control key sites, while state television broadcast patriotic songs without commentary.

Daglo's RSF say they have seized the

presidential palace, Khartoum airport and other strategic sites, but the army insist they are in charge.

Footage obtained by AFP showed heavy smoke billowing from a building near the army headquarters in Khartoum, with the military saying a building had "caught fire" amid the clashes but that it had been contained.



Yesterday, the stench of gunpowder wafted through Khartoum's streets, deserted except by soldiers as frightened civilians sheltered inside their homes.

The Central Committee of Sudan Doctors said they had recorded 56 civilians killed as well as "tens of deaths" among security forces, and around 600 wounded.

Fighting has also erupted outside Khartoum, including in the troubled western Darfur region and in the eastern border state of Kassala, where witness Hussein Saleh said the army had fired

artillery at a paramilitary camp.

The United Nations said three employees of its World Food Programme (WFP) had been killed in clashes in North Darfur.

It was not immediately clear whether the three deaths on Saturday were included in the tally provided by the medics.

UN Special Representative Volker Perthes condemned the killings in a statement, saying "civilian and humanitarian aid workers are not a target."

WFP said an aircraft managed by the organisation "was also significantly damaged" at Khartoum airport.

UN chief Antonio Guterres called for "an immediate cessation of hostilities", while US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the fighting "threatens the security and safety of Sudanese civilians". Similar appeals came from the African Union, Britain, China, the European Union and Russia, while Pope Francis said he was following the events "with concern" and urged dialogue.

The AU was to hold an emergency meeting yesterday, as is the Arab League, following a request by Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Medics on social media have continued to call for help, pleading for safe corridors for ambulances and a ceasefire to treat the victims, warning the streets were too dangerous to bring many casualties to hospitals.

ALABAMA SHOOTING

4 killed, multiple people hurt

REUTERS

Four people were killed and at least 20 more were injured in a shooting on Saturday night in the small town of Dadeville, Alabama, a local TV station reported yesterday, citing investigators on the scene and a release from the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency.

The shooting occurred around 10:30 pm ET on Saturday, according to the agency release cited in the report by TV station WRBL. The FBI, the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Fifth Circuit District Attorney's Office had also responded to the scene.

There was no confirmation about what led to the shooting and it was not known if any suspects had been taken into custody. Local reports indicated that the shooting occurred at a dance studio during what seemed to be a teenager's birthday party.

OPEN CALL FOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

The Centre for Governance Studies (CGS), in collaboration with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Bangladesh, is calling for applications for the fellowship titled "Young Voices in Geopolitics." Under this fellowship program, three next generation researchers and journalists will avail grants to conduct research on geopolitics in Bangladesh. To avail this fellowship, the candidate has to be a working journalist or a PhD student. To know more about the fellowship program, please visit: <https://cgs-bd.com/articles/13452/Fellowship>
Deadline: 30 April, 2023.



A resolute Hasina prevails

FROM PAGE 1

an end. "My political career too will be over," he told the meeting, according to sources.

Hasina wouldn't buy it and said Sadiq, also the general secretary of Barishal city AL, will not bring any good for her or Hasnat, the sources added.

At that, Hasnat urged the PM to take him out of the game as well - if his son weren't picked, he would not continue to be in politics.

At one point, Hasnat fell sick. Hasina called in her personal doctor who checked his health and found nothing to worry about, said the insiders.

After the break, Hasnat proposed that his son be nominated for the mayoral polls and Khair for parliamentary election from Barishal-1.

In reply, Hasina said that as per the party decision, Khair would be nominated as mayoral candidate, and the AL Parliamentary Nomination Board will decide on Barishal-1 constituency when time comes, according to the meeting sources.

Recalling the memories of the August 15 bloodbath in 1975, Hasina said Khair was shot in the massacre. Yet he didn't get anything and never wanted anything and so he should be given a chance.

On August 15, 1975, when Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated along with most of his family members by a group of army personnel, Abdur Rab Serniabat, the father of Khair and Hasnat, was also shot to death at his Minto Road residence.

Serniabat was then the minister for irrigation and flood control. Six members of the family were killed on that fateful night.

Khair doesn't hold any portfolio of the party and was a member of the previous committee of Jubo League.

Barishal district and city AL units proposed only Sadiq's name as the mayoral candidate before the central committee though there were several other mayoral aspirants. A total of seven aspirants bought nomination papers for the mayoral post.

After being elected Barishal mayor and Barishal city AL general secretary, Sadiq Abdullah earned a bad name for his grip over launch, speedboat and bus terminals, locals said.

His relationship with the local administration deteriorated and it all came to the fore in August 2021 when an upazila nirbahi officer's home was attacked.

Barishal Administrative Service

not allowed there.

Meanwhile, sources said Khair may visit Barishal tomorrow to start electioneering.

Hasnat Abdullah is the president of Barishal district Awami League, the lawmaker from Barishal-1 and a member of AL's central working committee, all at the same time.

With Sadiq as the general secretary of Barishal city AL and city mayor, the father and son control the AL politics in the district, without giving their political rivals any space.

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Barishal Administrative Service

Association even demanded his arrest.

There are several incidents where Sadiq disrespected and physically assaulted senior leaders of the party, according to locals.

During his tenure, he increased holding taxes by around four times, angering the city dwellers. Besides, he made approving building designs a lengthy process.

Yesterday, AL candidate for Sylhet Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, the joint general secretary of the party's UK wing, met AL chief at the Gono Bhaban and expressed his gratitude by offering bouquet.

Then PM asked him to go for all-out campaign and work with all party leaders and activists, said sources.

Anwaruzzaman is going to Sylhet today and will formally start his electioneering.

Leaders and activists of Gazipur visited Azmat Ullah Khan, the AL pick for the city, at his Tongi residence. He is the president of Gazipur city AL.

Apparently, there was no excitement among the leaders and activists of Khulna and Rajshahi cities as they were somehow convinced long ago that the incumbent mayors were getting the party tickets again.

It's political

FROM PAGE 1

sector was ensured under political leadership.

"At least I can claim that from 2009 to 2023, the unprecedented development of the country was done through political decisions."

Hasina added that her government has adopted the ideals of independence and has followed them while running the administration.

"We are getting the results. Because of this policy, we have attained the status of a developing country."

She urged all to sustain this momentum of development and democracy to benefit the generations to come.

"We have to keep our focus particularly on this," she said.

The PM put utmost importance on training, saying it is urgently needed for a nation to develop.

"The world is changing and now an era of technology is underway. We have to advance further in compliance with the era ..."

She said it should be ensured that the country's manpower gets proper training for the appropriate advancement in the coming days.



বাংলাদেশ প্রকাশন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা

কেন্দ্রীয় লাইব্রেরি

লাইব/৪৭/সংগ্রহ/টেভার/২০২২-২০২৩/ডি-৬৯

তারিখঃ ১৫.০৪.২৩

বই সংগ্রহের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিদেশী প্রিন্সিপালদের/প্রকাশকদের/ডিস্ট্রিবিউটরদের প্রকৃত এজেন্টদের নিকট হইতে বুয়েট গ্রন্থাগারে বিদেশী বই সরবরাহের লক্ষ্যে এতদ্বারা সীলমোহরযুক্ত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে।

স্থানীয় এজেন্ট/সরবরাহকারীদের দরপত্র কেবলমাত্র তখনই গ্রহণযোগ্য হইবে যখন দরপত্র দলিলাদি ক্রয়ের নিমিত্তে তাহারা বিদেশী প্রিন্সিপাল/প্রকাশকদের নিকট হইতে এজেন্সীশিপের কাগজপত্র এবং অন্যান্য প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্র/সার্টিফিকেটসমূহ যেমন- (ক) বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক-এর অনুমতিপত্র/এলসিএ (খ) ইনডেনটিং রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট (গ) হালনাগাদ পরিশোধকৃত আয়কর সার্টিফিকেট (ঘ) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট (ঙ) ট্রেড সার্টিফিকেট এবং (চ) কাস্টমস কর্তৃক হালনাগাদ বিল অফ এন্ট্রি সমূহ পেশ করিতে সক্ষম হইবে।

ইচ্ছুক ও যোগ্য দরদাতাগণ গ্রন্থাগারিকের নিকট হইতে লিখিত পূর্ব অনুমতিপত্র প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে গ্রন্থাগারের দস্তর হইতে সকল কর্মদিবসে (শনিবার-বুধবার) সকাল ১০.০০টা হইতে বিকাল ৪.০০টার মধ্যে দরপত্র দলিলা সমূহ ক্রয় করিতে পারিবেন। দরপত্র নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে ১০.০৫.২০২৩ইং বেলা ১১.৩০টা পর্যন্ত গ্রহণ করা হইবে এবং ঐ দিনই বেলা ১১.৩৫ মিনিটে দরদাতাগণের উপস্থিতিতে, যদি কেহ থাকেন, উক্ত দরপত্রসমূহ উন্মুক্ত করা হইবে। দরপত্র খোলার দিন কোন দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হইবে না।

দরপত্র দলিলা লাভ করিবার পূর্বে দরদাতাগণকে দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য বাবদ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নির্ধারিত ফরমে সোনালী ব্যাংক, বুয়েট শাখা, ঢাকা-এর হিসাব নং ৩৩০০০০১১ (খাত নং-৫০৩) খাতে টাকা ১৫০০.০০ (এক হাজার পাঁচশত) টাকা মাত্র জমার রশিদ এবং যে কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের লাইব্রেরিতে ১ বছরে কমপক্ষে ২০ (বিশ লক্ষ) টাকার বিদেশী বই সরবরাহের সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি জমা দিতে হইবে।

বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন বা সমুদয় দরপত্র আংশিকভাবে বা সম্পূর্ণভাবে গ্রহণ বা প্রত্যাখ্যান করিবার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

জিডি-৭০৩

লাইব্রেরিয়ান

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Amnesty for black money is unethical

It will not reduce capital flight, only encourage the corrupt

We wholeheartedly agree with the chief of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) who opposed the proposal to reintroduce unconditional amnesty to whiten black money by investing it in real estate. Recently, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) made the proposal for a return of this opportunity for five to ten years in order to prevent money from being laundered abroad. Such a suggestion would be considered preposterous under different circumstances. Unfortunately, this is not the first time that we are hearing about this "indulgence".

In FY 2021, the government gave this opportunity for black money to be legalised through investments in real estate, no questions asked about the source of funds, upon payment of a certain amount of tax. The amnesty allowed black money subject to a 10 percent tax, while a compliant taxpayer had to pay 30 percent in tax which was later reduced to 25 percent.

But as the CAB's president, also a former chief of the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC), has said: this practice is not acceptable because it would only encourage the illegal accumulation of wealth. Many individuals in the country earn money legally but do not show that in income tax returns, resulting in assets becoming untaxed. Thus, the government's efforts to improve its tax revenue will be nullified with an unconditional amnesty as it will only encourage tax evasion.

We agree that this move would be unethical and unconstitutional. It will give the wrong message to those who earn illegal income – that it is "okay" to do so as long as they invest it in real estate later. On the other hand, it is discriminatory towards those who faithfully pay taxes and contribute to the country's development. Moreover, in the long run, it will be detrimental to our society, with more and more real estate being gobbled up by a certain group of people who do not care how much the prices go up, leading to further inequality of wealth and assets.

The justification given by the FBCCI is that investments in flats, plots, commercial buildings and shopping malls will keep money inside the country and thus curb capital flight. Even if that were true, a country cannot bend the rules of ethics to prevent money from being laundered abroad. Also, can it really be guaranteed that individuals who have, over the years, laundered thousands of crores of illegally-earned takas and bought expensive real estate abroad, will suddenly start investing at home because of this amnesty?

It should be noted that the National Board of Revenue has since imposed rules that taxpayers will have to pay 25 percent on undisclosed funds and pay a 5 percent penalty on payable taxes. We echo the CAB chief's opinion that all businesses and individuals are responsible for paying their fair share of taxes and abiding by laws and regulations. Therefore, the government should focus on reducing corruption which is the root cause of the massive accumulation of black money. The proposed amnesty, if reinstated, will only increase corruption instead of curbing it.

No relief yet from extreme heat

We must be careful and address underlying reasons behind it

Bad news: the severe heatwave that has been sweeping through the country for about a week may continue for a few more days. On Sunday, Dhaka experienced its hottest day in the last 58 years, with a temperature of 40.5 degrees Celsius. Things are even worse off in some places outside the capital, with Chuadanga recording 42.2 degrees Celsius on Saturday – the highest in this season. In such a situation, the risks of heat strokes are quite high, with people experiencing cold-related illnesses.

Doctors say that a heat stroke, if untreated, can have immediate and long term health consequences. One may recall that last July, during a lengthy heat spell in the northern region, at least 70 people died of heat-related illnesses. No doubt, the ongoing record-breaking heatwave and the relentless air pollution in urban centres make a terrifying combination for the ordinary people, with the poor and disadvantaged suffering disproportionately.

The problem is, the causes behind the ongoing heatwave are so multifaceted that there is no single entity that we can point our finger to or seek redressal from. There are no easy solutions either. While experts recommend that children and elderly people should remain indoors during the day, this is not an option for many, particularly day labourers and informal-sector workers who cannot afford to not work. Given the insanely high prices of most essentials, people are forced to bear the impossible heat during work, commute, and even rest.

There is no denying that human-induced climate change is largely to blame for the heatwave. It is a fact that our cities, particularly Dhaka, are ill-planned. Structures are being erected on any piece of land that is empty, without a care about how it will affect the surrounding environment. Tall buildings clustered around each other not only block wind flow and trap heat; the heavy use of air conditioners also contributes to higher temperatures. In the countryside, rivers are drying up, leaving behind sandy patches which emanate unbearable heat, making living and livelihood difficult for local communities. Given the increasing lack of wetlands across the country thanks to pollution and encroachment, people feel hotter than they otherwise would. And with more greenery being destroyed than is planted, it is no wonder that we are facing this intense heatwave.

Only long-term planning and thoughtful policies can rein in the extreme weather events we are witnessing today. We urge the city corporations, local administrations and all development authorities to stop the current trend of mindless urbanisation and deforestation. Water bodies must be protected from encroachers. Those responsible for choking rivers and canals must be brought to book. Decentralisation of Dhaka, too, must be prioritised. While the public must be aware of how to not fall ill during an extreme heatwave, global and local leaders must stamp down on the larger causes behind it.

Fiscal policies that could tackle air pollution and climate change



MACRO MIRROR

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FAHMIDA KHATUN

Bangladesh is going through a rapid urbanisation process, and its economy is undergoing significant structural changes. This transformation has the potential to harm the environment as carbon footprints tend to increase with urbanisation, as many studies have shown. As industrialisation progresses, it drives urbanisation and elevates energy consumption, resulting in a surge of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. This, in turn, causes a major environmental and climate-related problem – specifically air pollution.

Pollution has resulted in an alarming level of PM_{2.5} concentration in the air of Bangladesh, which was found to be much higher than the WHO recommended levels in recent times. This worrisome trend highlights the urgent need for effective measures to tackle the detrimental effects of industrialisation on the country's environment and public health.

Bangladesh has made a pledge through its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to significantly reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions unconditionally by 6.73 percent in five crucial sectors by 2030: electricity generation, transportation, industry, waste management, and land use. Under conditional commitment, i.e. with foreign financing and technology support, Bangladesh is targeting a further reduction of 15.12 percent in GHG emissions. Implementation of these commitments will require huge resources, for which, the country needs to generate resources domestically, too. And doing so requires appropriate fiscal measures.

Environmental degradation and climate change impacts create externalities that can be reduced through appropriate pricing mechanisms. This would help generate resources to address the negative impacts of climate change. Besides, government spending also needs to be aligned with environmental and climate goals. Given that Bangladesh is at the forefront among climate victims, we must adopt fiscal initiatives that address this issue. The national budget is one avenue for taking such initiatives as it spells out specific measures for spending and generation of resources from various sources.

Our existing fiscal policies to promote green transformation are limited. However, there are a few initiatives in place to facilitate the greening of our economy. The



FILE PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Without proper planning and monitoring, urbanisation can lead to significant environmental degradation.

Renewable Energy Policy 2008, for one, grants VAT exemption for certain renewable energy equipment and associated raw materials, as well as the corporate income tax exemptions for renewable energy producers for a five-year period. The Finance Act, 2014 introduced an environment protection surcharge, and two green funds have been established by the Bangladesh Bank – the Refinance Scheme for banks and financial institutions, and the Green Transformation Fund for export-oriented industries.

To encourage sustainable production and consumption, more accessible tax incentives and green funds are needed. Climate-focused fiscal measures involve not only spending on green initiatives, but also generating resources through appropriate taxation. The government can leverage the high demand for a green transition in different sectors by mobilising resources through budgetary measures, and allocating them towards greening the economy. In order to tackle air pollution and climate change, the government can take some important measures right away.

First, the government ought to fulfil its commitments as outlined in the Renewable Energy Policy. Presently, there are VAT exemptions for solar panels and batteries. But no

considered for electricity generated from renewables. The Renewable Energy Policy provides for the possibility of such an incentive tariff, allowing it to be priced up to 10 percent higher than the highest purchase price for electricity generated from fossil fuels.

Third, under the Finance Act, the one percent surcharge on goods produced by industries that contribute to environmental pollution must be fully enforced as soon as possible, in order to encourage environmental conservation.

Fourth, to promote the transition towards more sustainable practices, an effective strategy is to introduce a carbon tax on fossil fuels. Several studies have suggested that raising the price of carbon is the most effective and potent approach to tackling global warming and minimising air pollution. The revenue generated from this tax can be allocated towards the development and advancement of renewable energy sources. The Bangladesh government aims to implement a five percent carbon tax on fossil fuel prices by 2025, with a subsequent increase to 15 percent by 2041. However, from FY2024, the government may commence a carbon tax initially set at three percent. A carbon tax will serve as a significant incentive for businesses and individuals to shift away from fossil fuels and towards cleaner energy alternatives.

Sources, it is imperative for the government to gradually phase out fossil fuel use. This process can be initiated by reducing the subsidies provided to the fossil fuel industry, which would lead to an increase in the cost of using fossil fuels, making them less attractive to consumers. The resources saved from these subsidies can be redirected towards the development and promotion of green energy technologies. This would help in creating an enabling environment for the growth of renewables, which have a much lower carbon footprint than fossil fuels.

Sixth, to decrease air pollution from transportation, it is suggested that the current advance income tax (AIT) system for private motor vehicles be revised. This would involve implementing higher AIT rates for fossil fuel-powered vehicles compared to hybrid and fully electric vehicles, with the degree of increase ranging from 5 to 50 percent, depending on the size of the engine and electric motor.

Fiscal policy measures like these are key towards addressing air pollution and combating climate change impacts. Implementing them will require an efficient and modern institutional mechanism. There should also be coordination among various institutions as the issue is cross-cutting in nature.

TEXTBOOK REVISIONS IN INDIA

History rewritten is not really history



A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her Twitter handle is @tasneem_tayeb

TASNEEM TAYEB

"Gandhiji's death had an almost magical effect on the communal situation in the country. Partition-related anger and violence suddenly subsided... The government of India cracked down on organisations that were spreading communal hatred. Organisations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh were banned for some time."

These are some of the lines that have been erased from Indian school textbooks by the Indian National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in the name of "review" and "text rationalisation." This, however, is not the first time that the current regime (or any regime) in India has tried to rewrite history to allegedly push their narrative and mould the impressionable minds of young students.

In 2002, when the first NDA government was in power, led by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, authorities had tried to portray Muslim rulers as invaders in textbooks, depicting the mediaeval period of Indian history as a dark phase.

When the UPA government came to power in 2004, they had their share of chances to push their own agenda.

Cartoons of Jawaharlal Nehru and BR Ambedkar that were deemed offensive had been removed from textbooks. This led to NCERT advisers Yogendra Yadav and Suhag Palshikar resigning from their positions, as they did not agree with the changes.

And then, in 2017, the current regime initiated a new campaign to drive a more right-wing national narrative among school students.

In three phases, major changes have been made in school textbooks, removing the significance of Mughal rulers in Indian history, the dislike of Mahatma Gandhi by the Hindu right wing, and all references to the 2002 Gujarat riots – during which the current prime minister was the chief minister of the state – that killed more than 790 Muslims and 254 Hindus, according to conservative official estimates.

A helicopter view of the recent changes made in history, political science, and sociology textbooks helps identify how specific segments – containing what are unpalatable truths from the current regime's perspective – have been strategically deleted to curate a certain narrative. While entire chapters might not have been

deleted in all cases, specific contents have been erased, so that students get only a watered-down version of some historical events. For instance, while the chapter "The Mughal Empire" in the history textbook for Class 7 remains with an overview of the Mughal empire, a two-page table on the milestones during the regimes of emperors Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb has been removed.

While it is important to update textbooks to keep students updated with recent events, a deliberate attempt to rewrite history – as has been extensively attempted by the Modi government, with Amit Shah in a 2019 speech saying, "It is our responsibility to write our history" – is highly irresponsible, not to mention detrimental to the holistic development of the young generation and to nation-building overall. It will essentially keep the young generation uneducated about certain aspects of their history – events that have shaped their collective national identity.

While historians and academics in India have condemned the recent changes in textbooks from an academic point of view, there are fears that, over time, such moves will further marginalise minority communities – especially Muslims – and create an environment where they feel isolated. Any representation of them as invaders who had ruled India with savagery may lead to further communal tensions.

The Indian authorities must realise that by rewriting history, they are only taking away from the ability of

the young generation to rationalise their roots. Such moves would in fact prevent them from becoming inclusive or feeling empathy for the diversity that India is known and admired for.

In this regard, it would be unfair if I do not reflect on the textbook revisions that have occurred in our own country. Over the years, various governments have tried to shape our own national history to drive their version of events, especially those surrounding the Liberation War, and the roles individual leaders played in our struggle for independence.

Apart from that, earlier this year, the government had to pull two books out for correction amid pressure from certain quarters. This is a highly unfortunate scenario. We are a nation proud of its religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity. We must embrace this and do everything possible to promote our true national essence.

Coming back to India, the authorities there have contributed tremendously to the economic growth and development of India, and do not need to resort to historic revisionism to win the upcoming 2024 elections. But in the current context of high religious polarisation, which has reached a point where the historic Nalanda's Bihar Sharif was burnt by a Hindutva mob, such moves by the government to erase Muslim history from textbooks will only contribute to the collective marginalisation of the community. Indulging in such activities will also be counterproductive for the current regime in the long run. After all, the truth always comes out eventually.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND EXPENDITURE SURVEY 2022

A poverty, inequality, and growth puzzle



Dr. Zahid Hussain is former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

ZAHID HUSSAIN

Some key findings from the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2022, released on April 12, challenges constructing a sensible economic narrative on poverty, inequality, and growth in Bangladesh. Backward calculations of poverty based on the reconstructed 2022 upper and lower poverty lines have not been done yet. It is therefore technically incorrect to compare the 2022 headcount ratios and poverty gap measures with their counterparts in previous surveys.

The poverty trend emerging from valid comparisons with the previous rounds of HIES may or may not be different. We won't know until we know what the comparable numbers on poverty headcounts and gaps are. We hope the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) will finish their unfinished work sooner rather than later. Meanwhile, all we can do is search for the story within the available data, assuming the trends are robust.

Three notable urban-rural differences

First, the incidence and depth of rural and urban poverty tended towards convergence (narrowing differences). The headcount ratio and poverty gap measures improved faster in rural than urban areas. This is most notable in the case of extreme poverty, but it is also true for the headcount ratio based on the upper poverty line. Poverty gap measures, based both on the upper and lower poverty lines, suggest the same pattern. Reduction in depth was faster in rural areas.

Second, trends in relative inequality diverged. The urban Gini coefficient (which measures inequality) increased and the rural decreased. This is true irrespective of whether the Gini is computed from the distribution of income or consumption. Urban income Gini increased 8.2 percent and consumption Gini increased 7.9 percent in 2022 relative to 2016, compared, respectively, with 1.8 percent and 3 percent decline in the rural areas over the same period.

Third, real income and consumption growth were higher in urban locations. Real monthly household income, after deducting the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from nominal income growth, increased 49.6 percent in urban areas, compared with 48.3 percent increase in rural areas in 2016-22. Growth in the monthly average real household consumption of urban and rural households was 65.4 percent and 50.4 percent, respectively.

An apparent puzzle

These together create a puzzle. Lower income or consumption growth are associated with reduced inequality and faster poverty reduction! Poverty reduction was faster in rural areas where inequality declined, while real income and consumption growth were lower. Poverty reduction in urban areas was

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slower with a sharp increase in inequality and stronger income and consumption growth. What could possibly explain this phenomenon?

Structural changes can at best be part of the story. This includes almost universal access to electricity in 2022, most notably in the rural areas from 68.9 percent in 2016 to 99.1 percent in 2022. Electricity access in urban locations improved from 94 percent in 2016 to 99.7 percent in 2022. Electricity can directly increase welfare by enabling households to access a variety of services such as food preservation, education, health, and information. Rural households caught up with their urban counterparts on developmental dimensions. However, it begs the question why such large improvements in access to electricity did not show up in stronger rural real income and consumption growth,

without which it cannot have a stronger effect on poverty measures.

There is no such discernible rural catch-up on other structural indicators. For instance, improved toilet facilities were reported by 95.3 percent urban households, compared with 90.9 percent rural households. Access to drinking water from tube wells remained unchanged at around 95 percent in rural areas, while access to "supply water" improved from 37.3 percent in 2016 to 56.6 percent in 2022 in urban areas. Households opening a bank account in the past 12 months increased from 7.6 percent in 2016 to 13.4 percent in 2022 in rural areas, compared with 7.3 percent and 15.7 percent, respectively, in urban locations.

Changes in social and demographic indicators are mixed. Male dominance in decision-making remained unchanged at around 87 percent in households that became somewhat larger in size in both urban and rural areas. The literacy rate in rural areas increased from 63.3 percent in 2016 to 70.3 percent in 2022, and in urban areas it increased from 71.6 percent to 82 percent, respectively.

It's not a Kuznets phenomenon

The Kuznets Curve (KC) has gained resonance in the establishment view of the data. Inequality increases in the early stage of economic development, peaks at a mid-income level, and then falls as development proceeds further. Bangladesh is categorised in the early stage of development and, therefore, it must be that KC is operative here.

The evidence on the validity of KC is at best mixed in the HIES data. In the three surveys (2010, 2016 and 2022), urban monthly income per household exceeds rural, and urban Ginis exceed rural Ginis, giving the appearance



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

of a KC. However, the income in rural areas increased in 2022 relative to 2016 while inequality decreased, which disputes KC. Moreover, data do not bear out the standard Kuznets story that the pattern is caused by a dual economy dynamic generated by the switch from agricultural to industrial sector.

Yes, the rise in the share of industry in GDP raised urbanisation, but employment shifted in the opposite direction. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2022 shows that urban share in total employment declined from 27.9 percent in 2016 to 25 percent in 2022. Employment level in industry declined by 2.8 percent, probably in urban-centric large and medium industries. The increased labour force and displaced industrial workers were absorbed by a 30.4 percent increase in agricultural and 12.4 percent increase in services employment – not quite the KC types. A source of increase in inequality in the Kuznets world is the influx of cheap labour from rural to urban areas.

Evidence from recent development experiences is similarly weak. Kuznets himself recognised the fragile empirical basis of his grand generalisation, calling it "perhaps 5 percent empirical information and 95 percent speculation, some of it possibly tainted by wishful thinking."

The missing links

What may explain the tripartite disconnect? There are several candidates.

A shift in employment towards rural-centric activities is consistent with a rise in inequality in urban areas, its fall in rural areas, faster rural poverty reduction, and stronger urban income growth. The urban-centric large and medium industrial enterprises grew the fastest. Decreased employment means decreased labour incomes of below-poverty-line urban households, while increased employment in the lowest productivity agriculture suggests greater sharing of incomes among the rural poor. This could have resulted in weaker

income growth, decreased inequality, and faster poverty reduction in rural areas relative to urban areas.

A second candidate is Piketty, who hypothesised that inequality increases when the rate of return on capital exceeds the rate of economic growth. When capital grows faster than the economy, the concentration of wealth speeds up along with the concentration in income and consumption.

Perhaps the excess of return on capital over economic growth increased in the urban areas. The HIES 2022 data shows that average household loans to income ratio increased in urban areas and decreased in rural areas during 2016-2022. If the increased loans was concentrated among the privileged urban households, they were probably able to leverage a higher return on capital by hook (investment) or crook (loan defaults) – or both. This could have caused the stronger but more concentrated income and consumption growth and a slower pace of poverty reduction in urban locations.

A third candidate, seemingly related to the above, is a sharper digital divide in urban areas. A digital divide exists for groups who lack resources and the capacity to access smartphones, computers, and Wi-Fi. The new digital opportunities can only be accessed by those who have capital and digital literacy. Not surprisingly, therefore, the digital divide is greater in rural areas. The BBS Survey on ICT Use and Access by Individuals and Households 2022 shows that the proportion of households with access to the internet is 63.4 percent in urban areas, compared with 29.7 percent in rural areas.

However, variations in digital access between urban and rural socioeconomic groups matter. Since 68.5 percent of the total population live in rural areas (Population Census 2022), the 29.7 percent rural internet users constitute 20 percent of the total population, while the 63.4 percent urban internet users also constitute 20 percent of the total population. The digital divide taking quality into account – lower-performance computers, lower-speed wireless connections, lower-priced internet connections, and limited access to subscription-based content – is probably more pronounced between different age groups, genders, occupations, and

Are we headed towards the sixth mass extinction?



Dr. Quamrul Haider is a professor of physics at Fordham University in New York, U.S.

QUAMRUL HAIDER

Over the past 540 million years, a short period of time on the geological scale, there were five events of mass extinction, caused by such things as severe ice age, an asteroid impact, invasive species taking over the planet, reconstruction of the Earth's crust some 250 million years ago, and other forces of nature. The most recent was 66 million years ago, which led to the extinction of dinosaurs. During each extinction, more than 75 percent of all species on the planet died.

Extinction is also a natural process. A species may become extinct and be replaced by another species, or it may gradually evolve into one or more new species. An important aspect of natural extinction is that niches remain occupied, but the species filling them change radically. The demise of the dinosaurs, though

dumped by us. The toxins are in the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. As the renowned explorer and environmentalist Jacques Cousteau said, "Water and air, the two essential fluids on which all life depends, have become global garbage cans."

Such a society cannot live forever. Climate change per se is unlikely to cause our extinction. However, the synergistic feedback of the continued emission of planet-warming greenhouse gases (GHGs) can trigger the onset of "runaway greenhouse effect," which will eventually turn the Earth into an inferno with virtually no life. Several billion years ago, Venus was an Earth-like planet with an abundance of water in oceans overlain by an oxygen-rich atmosphere. The current hellish condition on Venus where the surface temperature is a

With the introduction of humans as an ecological factor, there has been a shift from the gradual, natural replacement-type extinction to an abrupt niche-emptying extinction. The way humans have attacked the species of the world varied from outright assault to insidious nibbling, both of which have the same destructive result. Many animals disappeared simply because they were edible. Others became extinct because they were fashionable in human eyes.

not natural, gave new species an opportunity to grow, from which human beings eventually evolved.

With the introduction of humans as an ecological factor, there has been a shift from the gradual, natural replacement-type extinction to an abrupt niche-emptying extinction. The way humans have attacked the species of the world varied from outright assault to insidious nibbling, both of which have the same destructive result. Many animals disappeared simply because they were edible. Others became extinct because they were fashionable in human eyes. The rate of extinction is now about 1,000 times faster than before humans arrived.

It leads one to wonder whether we are on track for the sixth mass extinction. Many scientists believe that the question is not "whether," nor "if," but "when." And this time, the cause will not be global cooling or asteroid impact. It will be the work of a single species – *Homo sapiens* – driving themselves to extinction.

The UK-based Global Challenges Foundation lists nuclear war, pollution and climate change, overpopulation, biotechnology, and pandemics as the most viable threats to the existence of humans.

Of the many possible scenarios, nuclear conflict is the most likely one by which human civilisation will become extinct. Our vulnerability to this threat is growing because of the escalating political tensions between nuclear-armed superpowers.

In an open threat of a nuclear war, Russia's Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev did not mince words when he publicly said that a defeat for Russia in the war against Ukraine could provoke a nuclear war. Meanwhile, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, warned that "an attempt to destroy Russia [by Nato using Ukraine as a proxy] will mean the end of the world."

Yes, the patriarch is spot on. Today, the US, Russia, and China possess enough nuclear weapons to kill every man, woman, and child on this planet. If any of these countries initiates the use of such weapons, especially against another one that possesses them in abundance, the inevitable result will be the annihilation of the human race.

If we are spared the nuclear holocaust, then pollution and anthropogenic climate change will be responsible for our extinction. Today, we live on a planet poisoned by toxins

blistering 460 degrees Celsius was caused by runaway greenhouse effect.

A rapidly growing human population is putting us in the throes of extinction. With a population that increased three-fold since 1950, food, water, and a whole lot more required for sustenance of life in the future will be in short supply. In fact, we are surviving today by stealing from the future. Hence, it is not unlikely that once the population reaches a "critical mass," natural resources vital to our survival will not be adequate enough to support us, unless we can replace them with sustainable alternatives. As a result, starvation will bring us face-to-face with extinction.

The misuse of biotechnology is another existential risk. With the advancement in DNA manipulation technology, it is quite likely that scientists working for a roughish state actor or a terrorist group can engineer a "superbug" for biological warfare, and in the process obliterate our entire civilisation. Besides, the abuse of biotechnology to develop deadly, quick-spreading pathogens that can hasten our extinction cannot be ruled out. For example, the pathogen often called the Spanish Flu, which killed an estimated 50 million people worldwide in 1918 and 1919, was resurrected by a group of US scientists in 2005. And a professor in the Netherlands came under fire in 2011 when he engineered a deadly, airborne version of the flu virus and attempted to publish the details of his work.

We cannot rule out the possibility of fast-spreading devastating diseases, such as Covid-19, which, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), claimed at least three million lives since 2020. In the past two millennia, besides the Spanish Flu, the other pandemics that can be labelled as global catastrophes of a bigger magnitude were the Black Death of the 1340s that felled more than 10 percent of the world population, and the great Plague of Justinian in 541 and 542 that wiped out an estimated 13-17 percent of the global population at that time.

Surreal as it may seem, we have clearly embarked on the path to self-annihilation. Indeed, several recently published scientific studies warn that the sixth mass extinction is already underway. Lest we forget, our ancestors – Neanderthals, Denisovans, *Homo erectus* – became extinct, leaving just their descendants, the *Homo sapiens*, to follow them. The question is: How soon?



(L) Captain Manohar Singh Rathore, the Company Commander of 18 BSF Battalion at Petrapol-Benapole ICP. Photo Courtesy: Brigadier General Mahipal Singh Rathore, son of Captain Manohar Singh Rathore. (R) Leaders of the Mujibnagar Government listening to the national anthem: Amar Sonar Bangla Ami Tomai Bhalobashi. April 17, 1971.

Honouring Mujibnagar Heroes

The untold story 18 BSF Battalion's contribution to the oath taking ceremony and thereafter

The Petrapol Company of 18 BSF Battalion was instrumental in providing security to many top Bangladeshi freedom movement leaders, including the Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad, Acting President Nazrul Islam, and the military Commander-in-Chief Lt. Col. MAG Osmani, during their meetings

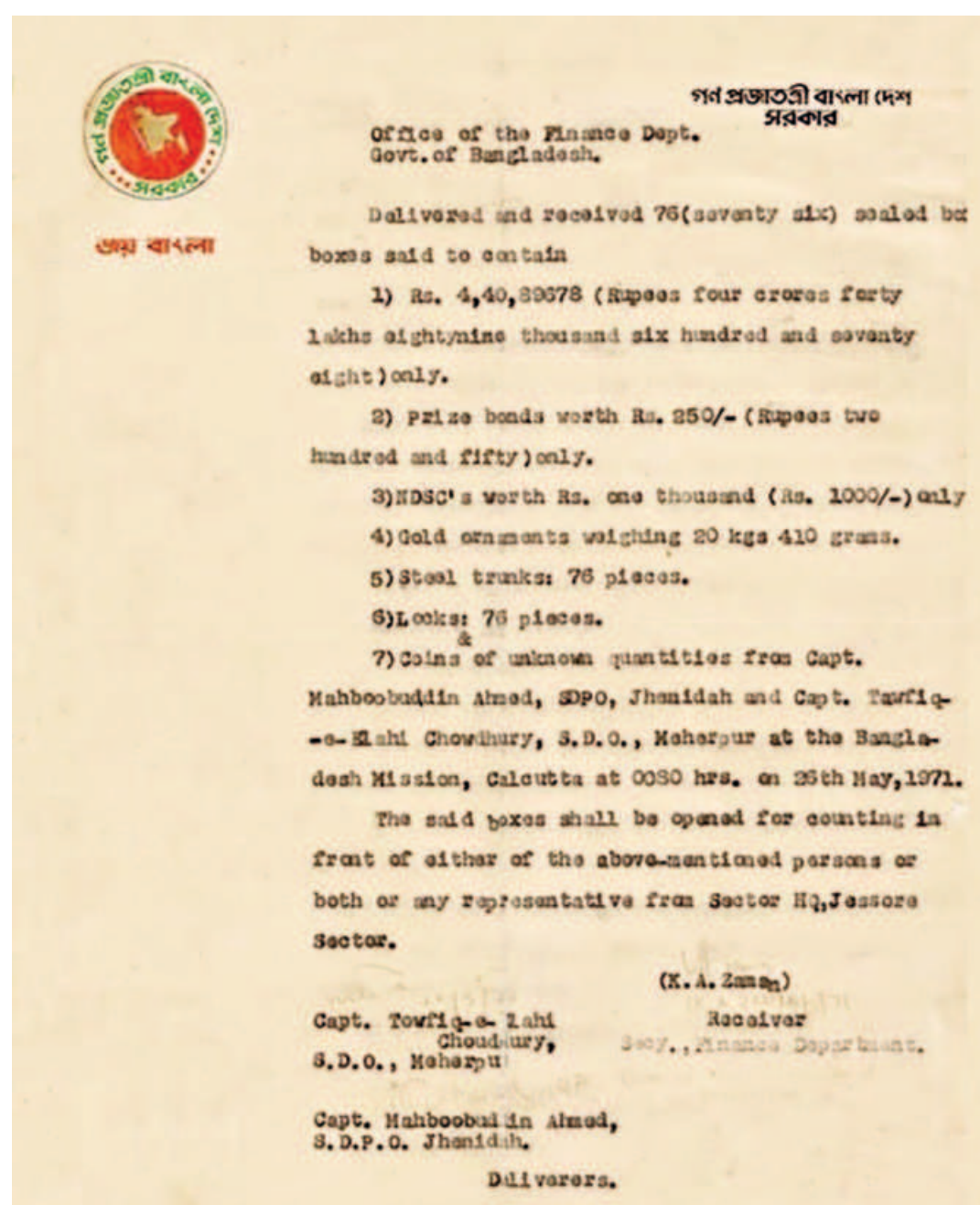
MAHBUB UDDIN AHMED BIR BIKRAM
April 17, 1971, is a historic day that shines brightly in the collective memory of Bangladesh with immense pride, unwavering strength, and boundless enthusiasm. It marks the moment when the world witnessed the birth of a free Bangladesh on the global stage. In a small, uncharted corner of the newly emerged Bangladesh, countless remarkable and unexpected events unfolded. Thousands of people gathered with a resolute purpose, laying the political, constitutional, and geographical foundation of our newfound state. This day remains an indelible beacon in the annals of history, cherished by those who contributed to its creation. It also symbolizes the invaluable support of our friendly neighbor, India, in our journey towards existential glory.
The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) provided crucial assistance, including deploying urgently needed security measures, to thwart any potential incursion from Pakistan during the Oath Taking Ceremony. This was made possible through the strategic decisions orchestrated by Indira Gandhi, facilitated by Khushro Faramuz Rustamji, the DG of BSF.

The entire West Bengal BSF, led by Inspector General Golok Majumder, played a pivotal role in this effort. Following Golok Majumder's instructions, Mr. Chakraborty, the Commanding Officer of BSF in Twenty Four Parganas, and his subordinate Captain Mohapatra, were deputed to guard the VIPs in the Bodyanathtala of Meherpur, disguised in civilian clothes with concealed weapons. Captain Manindra Singh Rathore of the 18th Indian BSF battalion, under the command of Colonel Megh Singh, led the security arrangement at the venue.
Allow me to recount the remarkable tale of Captain Manohar, his commanding officer Colonel Megh Singh, and their battalion 18 BSF, whose unwavering courage and dedication made a monumental contribution to the liberation war.
Assistant Commandant (Captain) Manohar Singh Rathore was a young and dynamic officer of 18 Battalion BSF. Since he had previously participated in the 1965 war in the Gurkha Regiment, his CO Lt. Col. Megh Singh appointed him as Company Commander and Mortar Platoon Commander of 18 BSF Battalion. His company, along with the Mortar platoon, was initially deployed

at Meherpur to provide protection and fire support during the swearing-in ceremony of the 1st Independent Government of Bangladesh on 17th April 1971, and later at Petrapol-Benapole area.
Captain Rathore witnessed and provided protection to the Oath taking ceremony dressed as a withdraw after the successful raid. As the mortars were firing and it was raining heavily, the 18 BSF troops could not retrieve the two base plates from the fire position after the raid. Once the entire party reached back safely at Benapole and were being debriefed by Lt. Col. Megh Singh, it was learned that the base plates were
In addition, personnel from the 18 BSF Battalion also conducted many daring raids against the Pakistan Army to capture their weapons and inflict casualties, dressed as Mukti Bahini in lungi and shirt or Punjabi suit, in areas along the Rd Benapole-Navaron-Jhikargacha-Jashore to provide depth and security to the ICP throughout the nine months of the liberation war.
Capt. Manohar of the 18 BSF Battalion became the custodian of the money collected by this author and Dr. Tawfiq Elahi, SDO for more than a month before it was eventually handed over to the Government of Bangladesh. The keys had been kept with Maj Usman Chaudhary, the Sector Commander of Bangladesh forces, and the room was under the safe protection of the Petrapol Company of the 18 BSF Battalion. All of this was possible due to the dynamic leadership of Lt. Col. Megh Singh, who was willing to contribute as much as possible to the Freedom Fighters of Bangladesh in their liberation war effort.
18 BSF Battalion later moved out from Benapole when the Indian offensive commenced in December 1971 to the Western borders and were airlifted to Jaisalmer. Capt. Manohar was awarded the highest Gallantry Award given to the Paramilitary Forces called the President's Police Medal for Gallantry in 1972 for his actions in the Eastern Sector which had resulted in the elimination of 40-50 Pakistan Army personnel in the nine-month long deployment at Petrapol-Benapole ICP area during the Liberation war. The 18 BSF Battalion was deployed in Petrapol on 28 March 1971 and remained closely associated with all the activities that happened west of Jashore during the nine-month long liberation war.
I urge the Government of Bangladesh to recognize the gallant acts of the members of the 18 BSF Battalion. They made immense contribution at the grassroots level by providing safe conduct for the swearing-in ceremony of the 1st Independent Government of Bangladesh in Mujibnagar. Their efforts in protecting the Bangladesh Flag over nine months during the liberation war at Benapole-Petrapol ICP are exemplary. Their custody of the money collected by Dr. Tawfiq and Mahbub Uddin Ahmed for 40 days contributed towards the liberation war effort in a great way. They also participated in the liberation war by conducting raids and attacks deep inside Pakistani-held territory along with the 1st EBR troops led by Maj. Hafiz.
Mahbub Uddin Ahmed Bir Bikram was in charge of presenting the guard of honour to the acting president of the government-in-exile, Syed Nazrul Islam, at the oath-taking ceremony on April 17, 1971.



The Mujibnagar Monument with 23 pillars and a brick square in the centre, which marks the spot where the Mujibnagar government ministers took their oaths.
PHOTO: MASUM AL HASAN/WIKIMEDIA



The receipt of Rupees 4.40 crore and 20 kgs of Gold collected by Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury and Mabub Uddin Ahmed from government banks and treasury of the free zones of the Kushtia district.

Bangladeshi Muktiyodha personnel in civilian clothes as per the direction of their CO, Lt Col. Megh Singh (who was also there with Maj. Hafiz).
I recall a conversation I had with someone who appeared to be Capt. Rathore, possibly from 18 BSF Battalion. He was wearing a whitish maroon kurta and salwar. I asked him, "Bhai, aap idhar kyu? Aap to Indian Army ke lagte ho". He replied, "Mein 18 BSF Battalion ka hu aur mere ko yaha mere CO, Col. Megh Singh ne bheja hai". I was inquisitive and asked, "Aap yaha kya kar rahe ho"? He replied, "Hum log idhar VIP logon ko safety dene ke liye charon taraf deployed hai. Idhar Bangladesh ka swearing in hogi, to hum sab Pakistan attack ko nahi hone dene ke liye deployed hai. Hamari Battalion yaha civilian kapde mein deployed hai". I replied to him, "Bahut shukriya aap ko, hum bhi yaha hai aur Mukti Bahini Pakistani ko dekh lega." We saluted each other and went on to our respective work. I couldn't see his personal arms, and he was wearing jungle shoes. Later, after the ceremony, I met Capt Mohapatra, who was the BSF company commander at the nearest BSF post at Changkhali, and whom I had met earlier as well. He told me that 18 BSF Battalion was providing protection at the venue of the ceremony dressed as Mukti Bahini in civilian clothes.
Capt. Manohar was subsequently deployed with his company at Petrapol-Benapole ICP, providing protection to the Bangladesh flag hoisted after the April 17, 1971 ceremony, by ensuring and assisting all defensive deployments of Mukti Bahini in the area. During the months of April and May 1971, the company supported Major Hafiz of 1st East Bengal Regiment in conducting a raid on April 21 on a Pakistan Army artillery gun position at Navaron, approximately 13 kilometers inside East Pakistan territory.
Major Hafiz narrates in his book about the raid and how the Muktiyodhas of 1st EBR were provided with effective mortar fire to safely

left behind by the mortar detachments while exfiltrating in a hurry under heavy Pakistani fire. Despite knowing the gravity of the situation and the possibility of Pakistani soldiers being alert in the area, Capt. Manohar volunteered to take a few boys and retrieve the base plates.
According to Maj. Hafiz, this was a daring operation inside enemy territory, knowing fully well that the enemy was dominating that particular area. Notwithstanding, Capt. Manohar reached the firing position again at night by infiltrating from a different direction, dug out the base plates, and exfiltrated back to Benapole around first light. This was among the most daring operations deep inside enemy territory by the 18 BSF Battalion.
The Petrapol Company of 18 BSF Battalion was instrumental in providing security to many top Bangladeshi freedom movement leaders, including the Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad, Acting President Nazrul Islam, and the military Commander-in-Chief Lt. Col. MAG Osmani, during their meetings/briefings at the Benapole ICP where the Bangladesh flag was flying with its safety and security ensured by 18 BSF Battalion. It was ensured that the Bangladesh flag would keep flying high till the end of the liberation war. In addition, many Indian media personnel and international journalists frequently visited this place.
On the nights of 23-24 April and 8-10 May 1971, the Pakistan Army attacked Benapole from the North (Kagajpukur side). Captain Manohar Rathore was among the few Indian officers who fought alongside the Mukti Bahini as a muktiyodha, dressed in a lungi and shirt during the attack, and did not allow the enemy to cause any damage to the Bangladesh flag.
In addition, Major Hafiz also narrated the incident involving Lieutenant Colonel Megh Singh and how he replied to the Eastern Army Commander during his many visits

U-17 girls eye 2nd round spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are looking forward to securing a place in the second round of the AFC U-17 Women's Championship Qualifiers when they will begin their campaign against Turkmenistan in Singapore on April 26.

In their second and final Group D game, the girls in red and green will take on hosts Singapore on April 30.

"We have taken a good preparation for the qualifiers and playing the SAFF U-17 Women's Championship was quite a good experience for the girls, especially playing against Russia in the tournament," said head coach Golam Rabbani Choton at the press conference yesterday. Choton also added that their target is to finish top of their group.

Captain Ruma Akter said, "We want to give our level best in the qualifiers as we have prepared well."

Bangladesh had previously qualified twice for the final round of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship, which has turned to the U-17 meet this time.

Bangladesh will leave for Singapore on April 23.



After sub par performances in his previous two games, Najmul Hossain Shanto on Sunday smashed a century to help Abahani Limited to a comfortable five-wicket win over City Club in their Dhaka Premier League encounter at the BKSP-4 Ground. Shanto's unbeaten 112-ball 102 ensured Abahani's joint-stay at the top of the table alongside defending champions Sheikh Jamal DC with 20 points.

PHOTO: STAR

Chirag shines with own mantra

SPORTS REPORTER

Legends of Rugganj skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza has an eye on solidity and his teammate Chirag Jani has the skipper's approval when it comes to crunch situations. He finished the last Dhaka Premier League among top-five run scorers with the bat and at number three in the top wicket-takers' list.

Performance wise, this DPL, Chirag's third, is no different for the Indian all-rounder. He is in amongst the top two in the highest scorers' list and at sixth with the ball, and at 33, Chirag only wants to progress further.

"I enjoy playing here, it's my third time. I played for Brothers in my first year and then played for Rugganj for two seasons, so, I have a good idea about the conditions and the players," he told The Daily Star on his consistency.

Chirag knows the process he can maintain and Mashrafe earmarked him as one of those cricketers, who, not only in DPL but at the international level, is really adept at rotating strike.

"You have 300 deliveries and you need to take the game deep. You have to try to take singles so you won't feel the pressure. You will get a bad delivery after two-three overs and you need to take the opportunity," Chirag said regarding how he paces his innings. "Last year the wickets were a bit dicey but this season DPL wickets are improving."

His performances have flowed from winning the Ranji Trophy (Red ball) and Vijay Hazare Trophy (one-day) this year. "We are Ranji champions this



Where BFF failed but others succeeded

ANISUR RAHMAN

The Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) once struggled to roll tournaments on the ground due to financial constraints as the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) together had provided the board an inadequate USD 500,000 per year.

However, the scenario drastically transformed in the recent past as FIFA and AFC went on to triple their allocated fund for the BFF. On top of USD 1,500,000 (approx. Tk 16 crore), the BFF was also presented with a glorious opportunity to receive USD 7,067,406 (approx. Tk 74.9 crore) from 2016 to 2022, courtesy of the FIFA Forward programme - from which the game's global governing body offers

While India, Nepal, and Maldives availed complete funding as of September 2022 since 2016, the BFF received 15 per cent of the total approved amount of approx. Tk 74.5 crore from FIFA Forward fund.

its member association on the basis of pilot projects.

After becoming the president of FIFA in 2016, Gianni Infantino introduced the FIFA Forward programme, standing on three main principles: more investment, more impact, and more oversight. The aim was to improve the way FIFA develops and supports football across the globe so that football gets to flourish in every single country, allowing them to maximise their potential by overcoming barriers.

Interestingly, Bangladesh was the first



nation to get the approval of the Forward programme in 2017 but could hold on to the eligibility status.

The disclosure of the financial irregularities by the Investigatory Chamber of the FIFA Ethics Committee on Friday had shown how the BFF spoiled the opportunity to capitalise on the FIFA Forward fund. On the other hand, neighbouring India, Maldives and Nepal paint a completely contrasting picture in this regard.

As per the FIFA Forward requirements, the member associates are barred from spending the Forward funds beyond their respective approved projects. The BFF, however, according to the FIFA's Investigatory Chamber, had misused the Forward funds several times despite repeated warnings.

FIFA had inevitably stopped channelling Forward funds to the BFF who, in turn, resorted to stopping the development projects at the grassroots and youth level

in the past few years while citing financial constraints.

Back in March 2017, the BFF president Kazi Salahuddin had told The Daily Star: "Although we have not received the official letter, I have heard that the FIFA Development Committee approved the development proposal [worth USD 2,120,000] we submitted to them last year [2016]."

"Bangladesh is the first country to get approval as the [FIFA] Development Committee considered Bangladesh's proposal ahead of the ones from two other countries," Salahuddin had further said.

That time, Abu Nayeem Shohag, the now terminated general secretary, informed the media that under the FIFA Forward programme, the board included the following projects: three youth development plans - comprising U-12, U-14, and U-19s - three women's development plans (U-12, U-14 and U-19s), grassroots age-group festival

for U-12, U-14, U-16 and U-18s, U-18 National Championship, National School Championship, the Pioneer Football League, National Football League and youth tournaments of the Bangladesh Premier League and Bangladesh Championship League.

Except for a few competitions - the likes of Pioneer Football League, youth competitions of BPL and BCL and age-group festivals - the rest of the aforementioned ones could hardly take place due to the misuse of FIFA Forward funds by BFF.

The FIFA website showed Bangladesh availed only USD 621,438 out of approved USD 7,067,406 Forward fund against seven projects from 2016 to 2022. The total available fund in that timeframe was USD 11,445,000.

Bangladesh, thus, had failed to utilise a staggering 85 per cent of the allocated fund, whereas India (USD 4,250,000 against nine projects), Maldives (USD 4,250,000 against five projects) and Nepal (USD 2,249,999 against 10 projects) availed their share of approved funds till September, 2022.

India, Maldives, and Nepal used the Forward funds to the fullest - in improving infrastructure, domestic leagues and the national teams. Unfortunately for Bangladesh, however, despite the flow of money from FIFA increasing by leaps and bounds, the game's local governing body still continues to cite financial limitations as their struggle to complete all its competitions in a calendar year lingers on.

The misuse of Forward funds by the BFF has seemingly driven the country's football on the brink of calamity, for which the board can find none but themselves to blame.

Unstoppable Haaland destined for more

AGENCIES

Manchester City's Erling Haaland equalled the goal-scoring record in a 38 game Premier League season when he scored twice against Leicester City on Saturday to take his tally to 32.

The Norwegian striker has eight matches left in the season to break the all-time record shared by Andy Cole and Alan Shearer, who scored 34 goals in 42 game seasons.

Haaland, in his maiden Premier League season, could obliterate the record in the remaining games.

Haaland has now drawn level with Mohamed Salah's record of 32 goals in a 38 game season, achieved by the Egyptian in 2017/18.

With 47 goals, Erling Haaland has broken the record for most goals in one season in all competitions by a Premier League player, surpassing Mo Salah in 2017/18 and Ruud van Nistelrooy in 2002/03 (both 44).

Southampton, Bournemouth, Everton, West Ham, Wolves, Nottingham Forest, Crystal Palace and Chelsea have all scored fewer Premier League goals this season than Haaland. He trails the combined efforts of his teammates 45-32.

City boss Pep Guardiola took him off at halftime, with the second leg versus Bayern looming on Wednesday. The popular player lingered long on the Etihad pitch after the final whistle, however, waving and smiling at fans. He said Haaland's response to sitting out the second half was "excellent as always", pointing out that his star



| PLAYER | CLUB | GOALS | SEASON |
|----------------|-----------|-------|-------------------|
| Andy Cole | Newcastle | 34 | 1993-94 |
| Alan Shearer | Blackburn | 34 | 1994-95 |
| Erling Haaland | Man City | 32 | 2022-23 |
| Mohamed Salah | Liverpool | 32 | 2017-18 |
| Alan Shearer | Blackburn | 31 | 1993-94 & 1995-96 |

striker was coming off a groin injury.

"You see his body language, his face during the game. He's like John (Stones), John and he come from injuries... and after 45 minutes, (it) was good for them to rest."



Arsenal defender Rob Holding stands in disappointment after watching Bukayo Saka misses a penalty in the 52nd minute against West Ham United, with the score reading 2-1 in favour of the title aspirants at the London Stadium on Sunday. Rubbing salt on their wounds, West Ham forward Jarrod Bowen netted home just two minutes later and the contest ended 2-2, reducing Arsenal's cushion to four points with second-placed Manchester City left a game in hand.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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MADARIPUR ROAD CRASH Guardrail could've saved many lives

Finds Buet's Accident Research Institute, suggests audit on Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga expressway to identify safety lapses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While tyre burst could be the most plausible cause for the March 19 road crash in Madaripur's Shibchar upazila, it was the absence of guardrails that led to many fatalities and severe injuries, said Buet's Accident Research Institute (ARI).

Nineteen people were killed and 26 were injured in the crash, which occurred on the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga expressway – the first in the country and open to traffic since March 2020.

There was no continuous guardrail – a major inconsistency and lacking for such an expensive and high-standard expressway.

The ARI revealed the information while disseminating the investigation findings at Buet's Council Bhaban.

It recommended conducting urgent Road Safety Audits on that corridor of the expressway to identify safety lapses and install a continuous safety barrier.

The institute also said 264 people were killed in 222 road accidents in nine months since June last year (almost one death every day) on this very expressway.

"This essentially suggests that only construction of high standard capital-intensive infrastructure is not enough to ensure safe mobility.

Mainly, infrastructural deficiencies led to so many fatalities and severe injuries. Even though crashes can't be prevented, fatalities can be averted with very low-cost but highly effective countermeasures.

PROF SHAMSUL HOQUE
Director of Buet's Accident Research Institute

There is a need for vehicles that are fit and expressway-worthy; competent drivers, standard road safety devices and, most importantly, well-enforced safe and disciplined traffic operating conditions," said Prof Shamsul Hoque, director of ARI.

"It would be highly regrettable if this 'proven-to-be safe' expressway gradually becomes hazardous and fails to improve the [road] safety situation in Bangladesh."

After the Madaripur crash, a government probe committee said the registration of the Enad Paribahan bus had been suspended for involvement in accidents before and thus, was not eligible for plying highways, especially with its overspeeding being another plausible reason behind the accident.

The driver did not have the licence for operating heavy vehicles and might have lost control over the wheel as the road was slippery after rain.

The ARI probe, however, nullified many of these findings.

It prepared a speed profile of the bus with the speed data available on the Akash TrackMe server as the bus had an Event Data Recorder.

From the data, the ARI found the bus was operating at a speed of 79kmph when the accident occurred, Prof Shamsul said.

"The driver was not speeding and had enough scope to take rest. So, speeding or tiredness are not likely to be the reasons behind the accident," he said, adding that the weather too was unlikely to be a factor.

The bus was registered with Bangladesh Road Transport Authority in 2018 but was later modified to increase the number of seats.

Meanwhile, the tyres were relatively new but of poor quality, and one was found punctured.

Shamsul said that in this given situation, a tyre burst could be the most plausible cause for the crash.

He said there was no protection on the road for derailed vehicles, adding that many fatalities could have been avoided if there were guardrails.

"Mainly, infrastructure deficiencies led to so many fatalities and severe injuries. Even though crashes can't be prevented, fatalities can be averted with very low-cost but highly effective countermeasures."

Prof Shamsul further said drivers are always targeted after an accident. "People at the top level should be held accountable instead."

He said pre-safety audits should be made mandatory before opening a highway or expressway and imported tyres should be examined.

He also emphasised maintaining lane discipline to ensure road safety on the expressway.

Former Indian MP, brother shot dead live on TV

AFP, Prayagraj

Gunmen seemingly posing as journalists shot dead a former Indian member of parliament and his brother live on TV as they were being taken in handcuffs to hospital by police, authorities said.

Atiq Ahmed, 61, who had been jailed since 2019 and was convicted of kidnapping, was answering reporters' questions late Saturday when he and his brother Ashraf were shot at close range, the television images showed.

"According to preliminary information, three persons posing as journalists approached them and opened fire... The attackers have been held and are being questioned," police official Prashant Kumar said.

The TV clip in the northern city of Prayagraj shows the assailants shouting Hindu slogans after the brazen attack.

Following the shooting, gatherings of more than four people were banned yesterday across the crime-rife Uttar Pradesh state of 200 million people that is ruled by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

The two victims were from India's Muslim minority but police did not say whether they were investigating a possible sectarian motive in the killings.



SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Makeshift shops and illegally parked people carriers, popularly known as Leguna, hamper the construction work of Dhaka-Padma Bridge rail link in Gandaria Rail Station area. It seems that the authorities concerned have not taken any steps to evict them. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Both US, AL want free polls

Says Momen

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said both the United States and the AL want free and fair elections in Bangladesh and there is no difference of opinion between the two sides on this.

Since holding free and fair elections is a government's commitment, the repeated calls from the US helped them make the commitment afresh, Momen said.

"No pressure. We want free and fair elections. It's our own commitment," the minister replied when asked whether the government feels any pressure amid such calls from the US.

"We are very happy," he told reporters at the foreign ministry.

He, however, said the government and the Election Commission alone cannot ensure free polls but it requires sincerity and commitment from all political parties.

Regarding his recent meeting with US Secretary of State Antony

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Public audit law in the offing

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and REJAU KARIM BYRON

The government is set to enact the first-ever public audit law that will usher in more transparency and accountability in public expenditure and expand the scope of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh.

The draft of the Public Audit Bill 2023 was uploaded to the website of the finance division soliciting opinions from concerned government offices and the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry by May 7.

At present, the CAG is performing its duties with the constitutional mandate and with the Comptroller and Auditor-General (Additional Functions) Act, 1974. The new law would supplant it.

After the law is enacted, CAG will be able to audit public-private partnership arrangements that were initiated under the Bangladesh Public-Private Partnership Act, 2015 or PPP Agreement, Public-Private Partnership System and others.

The CAG will get to audit the government funds provided to private institutions or organisations like NGOs, foundations, trusts, charities and civil society organisations or any other private institution or organisation.

It will be able to verify whether the conditions on which the grant or loan was extended were being fulfilled satisfactorily.

The new law will make the audit process specific. Following the best international practices, the CAG can communicate, coordinate or sign cooperation deals with similar national and international institutions and agencies, as per the draft.

Itekharruzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), the local chapter of the global anti-corruption watchdog, welcomed the move.

"There are a few areas that need to be more closely considered. For instance, terms like frugality, efficiency and effectiveness should be clearly defined to ensure robustness in the performance audit."

In principle, the new law has created the scope for increasing accountability and transparency. But there are risks of abuses.

ZAHID HUSSAIN
Former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

500-yr-old Inca ceremonial bath found in Peru

REUTERS, Lima

Archaeologists in the Peruvian Andes have discovered an Inca bathing complex built half a millennium ago, which they believe may have served the elite of the sprawling empire that once dominated large swathes of South America.

Found near the "House of the Inca" in the Huanuco Pampa archaeological zone in central Peru, local archaeologists believe that the bath may have served a religious purpose for high-ranking members of the Inca empire, which 500 years ago extended from southern Ecuador to the centre of Chile.

Luis Paredes Sanchez, project manager at Huanuco Pampa, said the structure was similar to "more hierarchical, restricted and sacred spaces within the Inca administrative centres, because rather than having a utilitarian or hygienic function, they also served for religious functions and worshipping ancestors."

The "finely carved" bath averages some two-metres in depth, with independent pools and spillways and a central passage taking water into a drainage duct that divides the room into two small platforms, or "benches" for the Inca, Peru's culture ministry said in a statement.

The Huanuco Pampa archaeological site is part of the Qhapaq Nan project, a complex 25,000-km-long road network that linked Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina. The road system was declared a World Heritage Site in 2014.

Peru is home to hundreds of archaeological sites across the country, including the Machu Picchu citadel in the Inca capital of Cusco, and the Nasca lines, massive designs drawn in Ica's coastal desert region over 1,500 years ago.



At least 18 of 81 flats of this 10-storey building have been demolished by the Dhaka South City Corporation as a portion of it was built over the Kalinagar canal next to Road-1 of Mahadi Nagar residential area in the capital's Kamrangirchar. Despite the risks involved, at least 22 families of the building are still living there. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BNP team meets US envoy, talks election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-member delegation of the BNP held a meeting with the US ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas yesterday.

The delegation, led by BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, went to US ambassador's residence at 12:00 noon and held the meeting for around an hour, said sources.

During the meeting, they discussed the importance of free and fair elections and a nonviolent political process, according to the US embassy.

The BNP's standing committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and Organising Secretary Shama Obayed were the other members of the delegation.

Contacted, Fakhru said it was a normal discussion and refused to make further comments.